



## RLRI 2024 Western Canada Featured Speakers – Pioneer Camp, AB

Friday

February 16

### Evening Challenge

Dr. Rick Graber, DVM

Rick has been married to Linda for 50 years, and they have four married adult children and 12 grandchildren. He graduated from WCVM in 1979, owned and operated a mixed animal clinic in Lacombe for over 20 years. Rick attended Prairie Graduate School and earned his Master's in Christian Studies, which led to short term mission trips to several African nations, Romania, and Mexico. Rick is practicing full time at Red Deer Veterinary Clinic, and is a part-time Pastor at Red Deer Fountain of Life Church.

Saturday

February 17

### Morning Plenary

Pastor Bliss Steele

Bliss Steele lives in Lancaster SC with his wife, Jessica, their son and seven dogs. Bliss has worked with teenagers and adults for nearly three decades in both the church and corporate world. Bliss is currently the Corporate Chaplain for Nutramax Laboratories in Lancaster, SC serving their nearly 800 employees. Bliss uses his unique experiences from growing up on the mission field traveling the world, to serving in the local church, along with his years as a dog trainer to combine biblical truths and practical application showing what it means to be in an obedient and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

### Session I

Drs. Sarah and Brent Wagner, DVM

Sarah graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 2001. She has been working at a small animal practice in Saskatoon for about 16 years. Brent recently retired after over 30 years of research, diagnostics and teaching veterinary parasitology at the WCVM. In 2003 Brent and Sarah spent 6 months in Mongolia volunteering with CVM. In 2019-2020 they travelled, along with their 2 daughters, on an around the world trek which took them to 16 countries. This included a 2 week stop in Mongolia to revisit the people met years earlier. The Wagner's have been active in student ministry

with CVM in Saskatoon for many years and Brent served on the Board of Directors. Besides 2 daughters there is 1 dog, 3 cats and 8 homing pigeons that keep life exciting.

#### Dr. Christiane Orsini, DVM

Dr. Christiane Orsini is a 2014 graduate from the Ontario Veterinary College. Upon graduation, Dr. Orsini did locum work in Southwestern Ontario and GTA regions. She has experience in emergency and general medicine as well as clinical acupuncture. Dr. Orsini has a keen interest in integrative veterinary medicine and has her acupuncture certification from CIVT (College of Integrative Therapies) and has completed courses in Chinese Herbal Medicine and Integrative Canine Rehabilitation (also from CIVT). Long term, Dr. Orsini is looking forward to studying animal osteopathy from the Canadian Academy of Osteopathy in Hamilton and completing her Tui Na massage certification from the Chi Institute in Florida. She currently works as a veterinary telemedicine specialist for Smart.Vet Virtual Pet Care in Ontario. Dr. Orsini is blessed to be able to support the veterinary community and pet population at large by increasing access to care for patients in Ontario through telemedicine services. She resides in Guelph with her family. In her spare time, she enjoys writing worship songs and poetry, playing guitar, piano and drums, reading, hiking, playing squash, swimming, and spending time with family.

### **Session II**

#### Dr. Becky Holvik, DVM

Becky has served on the CVM Canada board for 15 years! With a passion for students, she makes every effort to be at their events. This is not easy as she works as a small animal veterinarian (OVC Class of 1999), runs a hobby farm, and has a family of her own to care for. She has even managed to serve in Kenya on short term mission, and represents Canada on the CVM US board.

#### Dr. Jessica Semper, DVM

Jessica has been with the CVM Canada board since 2018 and is the current Board Chair. She is very thankful to be able to have an insider's look into how the Lord is using CVM Canada for His purposes here at home, and around the world. She lives in the west and has enjoyed mixed-animal mobile medicine so much that she started her own practice in January 2022. She's thrilled to be doing life with her husband Chris as well as their fantastic families, who all live in the same area. Jess's four-legged sidekicks include her horse 'Lyric' and her dog 'Trill'.

### **Session III**

#### David and Dr. Celine Newton, DVM

Celine is recent graduate from the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine program, finishing in 2022, while David is a civil engineer who graduated from the University of Alberta in 2019. They have both been involved in multiple mission organizations and ministries, and have had the opportunity to do short-term missions in Alberta, Mexico, Tanzania, Dominican Republic, and the CVM apprenticeship program in Mongolia. They are currently living in Lacombe, AB, where Celine works at Gull Lake Veterinary Services, working mainly with cattle, and David designs roads at the Red Deer branch of the large engineering firm WSP.

#### Dr. Mark Wickstrom, DVM

Dr. Mark Wickstrom is a retired Professor of wildlife and veterinary toxicology at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and former Chair of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Toxicology at the University of Saskatchewan. Prior to coming to Saskatoon, he worked as a wildlife and environmental toxicologist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the government of New Zealand. Together with his wife Altina he owned and operated several veterinary clinics over a period of 30 years. Mark has been involved with Christian Veterinary Mission Canada for about 20 years, as a member and former Chair of the CVMC Board of Directors.

### **Session IV**

#### Dr. W. Ben Stoughton, DVM, PhD, ACVIM Dipl.

Ben is from Merritt Island, Florida and is a large animal veterinarian and professor at the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC) on Prince Edward Island (PEI). He is currently an AVC CVF advisor and has been involved with CVM (USA) since 2004. He joined the CVM Canada Board in 2022. Prior to God calling his family to PEI in December 2017, he was a Lecturer at Texas A&M University (TAMU). He completed his undergraduate and DVM degrees at the University of Florida, and an internship at the Equine Medical Center of Ocala. After this, he completed a Large Animal Internal Medicine (LAIM) residency at TAMU and became Board Certified in LAIM in 2013. He then completed a Ph.D. studying Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. His family includes his beautiful wife, 4 children, 3 horses, 4 cats, 5 chickens, cattle and 2 dogs. He lives Coram Deo and loves teaching, photography, and vegetable gardening. He also serves on the CVM Canada board.

#### Drs. Colleen and Clark Bertagnolli, DVM

Colleen and Clark are both graduates of WCVM, class of '84. In 1987 they started a mixed practice in Rocky Mountain House. Clark developed the farm animal side of the practice, while Colleen's focus was in small animal. They raised two boys in the practice and for the most part, that doesn't seem to have created too many psychological issues for them. Their initial involvement in CVM was fund-raising at the clinic for various projects, and financial support. Through CVM connections, Clark made a solo mission trip to Peru into the Amazon. Together, they later became involved in an independent mission project through connections in Haiti, traveling back and forth to Haiti for 6-7 years working on establishing a goat farm and goat give-away project for Haiti Arise. During this time they also taught Haitian vet agents through CVM. Recently, Clark and Colleen have made two trips to Ethiopia with CVM and Hope Ethiopia.

### **Evening Devotion**

#### Dr. Neil Connery, DVM

Dr. Neil Connery graduated from Dublin Ireland in 1995 and after a time in practice and a surgical residency, gained specialization in small animal surgery in 2002 and a master's degree in 2003. Neil moved to Calgary with his family in 2003 and has worked offering surgical services to the surrounding community since then. He has been married to Jan for over 24 years and has 4 daughters and 3 cats currently, (but is always open to rescuing the one with the crooked leg!). He enjoys reading and writing poetry. Neil first learned of CVM during his residency in Dublin when he attended the prayer breakfast at the ACVS surgeon's conference. He has been involved with CVM

Canada leadership since 2014 and is committed to seeing a flourishing CV fellowship group at the University of Calgary Vet school.  
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Sunday

February 18

### Morning Devotion

Lisa Balzer, CVM Canada Director

Lisa came to CVM Canada two years ago, from the world of long-term missions. She and her husband and their two children lived and served in Southeast Asia for 15 years, leading development work in community radio and refugee engagement. Her professional background is in broadcasting, international development, and she recently completed a master's degree in refugee studies. Lisa's family also has deep and life-changing ties to vet medicine, which brought her to CVM. She is passionate to see students and professionals supported and encouraged in school and in the workplace, and to grow the outreach of CVM Canada in the years to come. Lisa lives in rural Saskatchewan with her husband, Steve, and their dog, Delilah.

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