Log for Research Project

1-5-02

I reviewed requirements for this project and searched on the internet for information on animal cancer- causes and types. I also gathered info on Zone 7 and other contacts.

1-15-02

I contacted Zone 7 and gathered information on Zone 7’s role in water quality. Now understand I cannot use Zone 7 for info because they deal with just ground water- not surface water.

1-20-02

I contacted Central Valley Water Quality Regional Board-left message with Patrick Norris. Contacted Alameda County Department of Environmental Health. They couldn’t help me- referred me to California Water Quality Regional Board.

1-23-02

I looked on the internet to see of there was a government organization that requires all veterinarian clinics and hospitals to document and submit all disease cases. Called the American Veterinary Medical Assoc. and California Veterinary Assoc. headquarters. Both places told me they only concentrate on the business aspect of veterinary medicine.

A woman from Patrick Norris’ office called me back and said the area that I’m probably looking for information on is in the San Francisco Water Quality Regional Board area. A woman there said there is a huge surface water quality database and I could contact another woman named Melinda from that office so she could fax me certain data. I left Melinda a message.

1-24-02

I called Alameda County District #1- Scott Haggerty’s office to see if I could get a local government officer’s standpoint. They weren’t sure if there was such a requirement for vets to send a record of animal diseases. They referred me to Alameda County Department of Health who then said I should call the local Animal Control. The woman at Animal Control said a vet comes in once a week to treat the animals and they have no time to record such data because they spend their time just making sure the animals are clean and fed.

Melinda from SFWQRB called back and said she wasn’t the correct person to contact. I would have to call the general manager, Will Prunes- so I called him.

1-25-02

Will Prunes called back and said there is a lot of water quality data about the SF Bay, but not much on creeks. I could visit www.sfei.org and go to RMP for data.

I then called the Veterinary Medical Board of California. The woman there said vets don’t have to submit any data of animal diseases, but they do have to record certain diseases like anthrax and the plague. She sent me the notice and list of these diseases. She said I could also contact the Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Animal Health, or the Department of Health- Toxic Substance Control as well.

1-28-02

Went in after school to talk to Mr. Thiel. I told him about all the people I’ve called and how I couldn’t get any information. We decided I should continue this project and now research why the information isn’t available since it could be used to prevent human illness.

1-29-02

I received the letter the woman at the Vet Med Board sent me. It is a letter that is supposed to encourage vets to report unusual diseases in animals.

1-30-02

I talked to Mrs. Emerson today after school to try to find a way to expand my current project and have it cover the requirements for my AP Biology, Senior Seminar, and Advanced Composition classes.

2-8-02

I worked on Tri-Valley Science and Engineering Fair application form.

2-11-02

I sent in my TVSEF application form.

2-18-02

I found information on internet to help me find two similar California counties with similar population, demographics, and socioeconomic status, but one around an area of refineries and pollutants and one away from pollutants or contaminants. These are the counties I will call vets from to compare if they have any records of animal diseases. I want to narrow it down to cities if possible.

2-22-02

Karen J. Kiernan, the TVSEF Director, contacted Mr. Thiel and told him my project was more of a research project than a science project. She was concerned that my project would not do well at the fair. Mr. Thiel and I decided that she was right and that I wouldn’t enter the fair because of my demanding schedule and the fact that I am doing this project for three classes which requires more work anyway.

3-8-02

I worked on my proposal in class today.

3-11-02

I pulled some information I have already typed on my project and added it to my proposal. I went in at lunch to talk to Mr. Thiel about the research and information aspect of my project and what it should be on, but he was on the phone and there were three others there to talk to him. I will go tomorrow at lunch.

3-15-02

I spent over an hour on the US government’s web site on the Census to gather population size, demographics, and average income for specific cities and counties. I decided to choose areas around certain cities since there is probably not 50 veterinary clinics in one city. I brought out a map and began to look at different locations and where they are in relation to Benicia and other known areas of industry.

3-19-02

I talked to Mr. Thiel today about which cities I should choose and he suggested I keep them relatively local. He said Tracy and Brentwood for non-industrial and Pittsburg and Antioch for industrial cities. I went to Yahoo! YellowPages to find phone numbers of vet clinics around the cities Mr. Thiel suggested. I am starting a database of phone numbers to call within the next few days.

3-23-02

Today I spent two hours on Yahoo! YellowPages finding the rest of the 100 phone numbers I will call. I chose the industry area to be around Vallejo, Martinez, Concord, and Antioch. The non-industry area is around Tracy, Manteca, Modesto, and Turlock.

3-27-02

I went to the library during school and researched court cases and cancer clusters online. I found information on the Erin Brockovich story, A Civil Action, and the Love Canal. I also went to the public library and found books on animal testing and environmental sources of disease.

3-28-02

I called about a third of the phone numbers today. I am seeing the results I had expected- clinics do not keep records of anything except in patient charts.

3-29-02

I called more vet clinics today. There were a number of people that gave me phone numbers of animal oncologists or told me to contact the UC Davis oncology department at their medical facility.

3-30-02

I planned out the sections of my introduction information, called more vet clinics, and plan to go to ValleyCare Health Library on Wednesday.

4-1-02

I called Bob Lukas to ask about an interview. He is going out of town on Wednesday and works tomorrow, so maybe he could be my second interview. I plan to call Dr. Sue Marshall to possibly interview her at her office up the street. She is a veterinarian that specializes in felines.

4-2-02

I called Dr. Crow, a veterinary oncologist at Sacramento’s Oncology Center, and he told me that in the early 1970’s, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties created a monograph of the occurrence of diseases in domesticated animals in the area. Albert Dorn and William Prester created the monograph. Today, however, if the disease is not a human risk factor or can be transmitted to a human, then the records are either thrown away or not gathered at all. He also said that veterinary schools around the country used to be on the Veterinary Medical Data Program which was where most of the research data was sent before the schools had their own computer operated systems. The information was transferred to Purdue about 10 years ago and I can call and ask about the data from either Dr. Wally Morrison or Dr. Deborah Knapp who are both veterinary oncologists.

I also wrote about half of my introduction to my web page. I called Dr. Atwater, another veterinary oncologist I was referred to, and will try to reach him again on Friday when he is available. I called California Department of Health Services Veterinary Public Health Section and was transferred to Lucia in the Alameda County area where I left a message.

4-3-02

I visited UC Davis today to take another tour and attend informational sessions. On the way home, I took pictures of Benicia’s Industrial Park and many of the refinery smoke stacks to add to my web site.

4-4-02

I set up an interview with Dr. Monika Connally, a veterinarian from Dr. Sue Marshall’s Feline Medical Center, for tomorrow at 2:45. I created a list of questions to ask her. I continued piecing my introduction together from my sources of information and I finalized my outline for my web site.

4-5-02

I interviewed Dr. Monika Connally today. The main reason feline cancer rates are not kept track of, she said, was animals and humans get almost the same diseases but sometimes from different causes. Cats do not serve as good sentinels of public health because some cats do not go outside at all, and some do not interact with the environment like wild animals do. “A lot of them sleep on a pillow and eat Fancy Feast all day,” she said.

4-7-02

I completed my conclusions, scanned pictures and letters, and saved everything onto a Zip disk to be transferred to a web site.

4-15-02

Today I reported out to my Advanced Composition class on my first interview and how I was going to use that site visit for my paper. I also made the questions I will ask for my next interview. Mrs. Damon suggested I contact the veterinarian she takes her dog, Dr. Chan, to who is downtown.

4-16-02

I left a message with Dr. Chan’s office regarding having an interview with her.

4-17-02

Dr. Chan left a message with my mom, but she was busy when I got the message and tried to call her back.

4-20-02

I spent about an hour and a half looking on the internet for how to write a bill or proposal for a state law. I got a lot of information regarding how a bill becomes a law, but nothing on before the bill process.

4-23-02

Mrs. Emerson gave me some information on how a bill becomes a law and the bill idea could come from anywhere, but it must be endorsed and proposed by a legislator. I need to get in contact with a legislator to find out how this actually works.

4-30-02

I was recommended by numerous people to contact Dr. Atwater, a animal cancer specialist. I left a message with his answering service.

5-1-02

Dr. Atwater’s office called back and we were able to schedule a phone interview for friday at 5:20 pm.

5-3-02

I called Dr. Atwater’s office precisely at 5:20 pm, but he had an emergency with two dogs that came in who had swallowed poison. Surprisingly, he called back about a half an hour later. He thought my idea was a good intention, but cancer has so many variables that it is hard to pinpoint the actual cause. He did say that animals live shorter lives which makes them more likely to get cancer earlier than humans. He didn’t think that our government would not be efficient enough to supply the money and energy to gather and analyze data that would need to be collected.

5-4-02

I compiled most of my facts and things I have already written for this project and put it into a rough draft for my I-Search paper. I still need to integrate my site visit, and interviews into my paper.

5-6-02

I started a really specific outline of my paper during health today. It is helping me see how my paper is structurally. I need to expand upon my introduction and organize my paper in a way that makes sense to persuade the reader of my point.

5-9-02

I integrated my site visit and my interviews into my edit draft.

5-13-02

I asked Mr. Bull, my economics teacher, about how to get my proposal to the state legislature. He said I could either write my local representative a letter, or make an appointment with them or their support staff. Including signatures of people who support me will also help.

5-18-02

I worked on my web site for about 2 hours. I added active links to my pages and worked on my I-Search paper.

5-19-02

I completed my web site with all of the pictures and made sure everything worked as it was supposed to.