Dr. Buyukmihci responds:

Dr. Mathey apparently did not carefully read my state-
ments concerning research. He now has incorrectly com-
pared my philosophy with that es-
poused by those who would
violate human rights, by using
my statement about using hu-
man beings in research com-
pletely out of context. As
should be clear from my next
sentence, I in no way share
anything with the despicable
people he mentioned. I stated,
"If it would be unethical to use
human beings in those circum-
stances, then the same objec-
tive criteria for why it is un-
ethical could and should be
applied to all animals." Assum-
ing that Dr. Mathey agrees
that research on unconsenting
human beings is unethical, he
should now see that, not only
do I agree, I extend the basis
for such proscription to other
unconsenting beings.

Dr. Mathey appears also to
be confused by my statements
on superiority. I was alluding
to the fact that human beings
appear to be unique in being
able to develop a moral code
by which we can conduct our
lives. We do not appear to be
catched in the same inexorable
cycle of the predator and prey
relationships to which he allu-
des. We are able to 'step
outside of nature' and go
about our lives in ways that do
not require, or can minimize,
the harming or killing of oth-
ers. When we choose to do
otherwise, we do not show our
superiority any more than does
the big bully in the schoolyard
when he picks on those
smaller or weaker than him-
self.

Nedim C. Buyukmihci, VMD
Davis, Calif

"Solid fee for superior
service"

After reading the Practitio-
ners' Exchange section of the
Nov 15, 1993 issue of the
JAVMA, concerning the finan-
cial compensation given new
graduates, a nagging question
has resurfaced in my mind. I
have many times pondered the
reasons we veterinarians
charge so little for our services,
which inhibits our ability to
adequately compensate our-
selves or new graduates.

We as a profession have
failed to recognize the impor-
tance of the human/animal
bond.

Many veterinarians don't
appreciate the worth of pets to
their owners because many of
us apparently don't ourselves
believe in a pet's value.

Many of us are intimidated
and permit ourselves to be put
on a guilt trip by pet owners
who demand or expect low
professional fees. This atmo-
sphere infects us with a sense
of providing valueless services.
We counter this type of
thought by saying, "The extent
of care we can provide your
pet depends entirely on you.
We are not in a position to
lend you money."

It feels very good to
charge a good solid fee for su-
perior service.

Ed Wolff, DVM
Missoula, Mont

Communication skills in
veterinary education

Among the recommendations
of the Pew National Vet-
eryinary Education Program's
Future Directions in Veterinary
Medicine was that, in their edu-
cation, veterinarians develop
'skills in oral and written
communication . . . in the
management of information . . .
and in business and manage-
ment.' The recent AVMA
Symposium on Public and Cor-
porate Veterinary Practice
consistently identified commu-
nication skills, including the
ability to work in a group and
to possess management skills,
as attributes required by veteri-
narians for positions in the
public and corporate sector.
Recommendations to the edu-
cational system included in-
creased emphasis on commu-
nication skills at all levels of
the curriculum by increasing
the number of oral and essay
examinations, increased oral
clinical presentations, "role
playing," and research project
presentations. Symposium par-
ticipants universally agreed
on the need for communica-
tion skills by veterinarians,
and most agreed on the need
for improved interpersonal
skills.

Few veterinary colleges
have specific courses in commu-
nication skills and few ap-
ppear to have addressed this
area in any serious way. This is
despite the revelation by re-
cent graduates, in surveys of
perceived shortcomings of
their education, that there is
too little training with regard
to dealing with "difficult cli-
ents," professional conflicts,
communication skills, and
business and practice man-
agement. Most graduating vet-
erinarians are reasonably literate
as a result of their hard work
(including extensive reading)

Letters of publication in the JAVMA are welcome. Please submit in
double-space typed format. Letters pertaining to anything published in the
JAVMA should be received within one month of the date of publication.
Letters exceeding 500 words will be condensed as needed to fit available
space.

Letters containing defamatory, libelous, or malicious statements will
not be published.

Letters will not be published if they represent attacks on or attempts
to demean veterinary societies, their committees or agencies, or persons
serving on such committees or agencies. In such cases, the letter will be
forwarded to the pertinent society, committee, or agency for response.
Not more than three letters per year from one person or source will
be published.