

Dr Paul Pion, co-founder of the Veterinary Information Network correspondence

On 26 August 2010 I made the first of a series of posts on the discussion boards of the Veterinary Information Network www.vin.com introducing the members (alleged to number 40,000 vets) to the information contained in *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health*. Over the succeeding three months I posted the first six chapters of the book together with plentiful photos and other supporting information pointing out the inadequacies of conventional veterinary teaching and practice — and, I hoped, helping vets to see better alternatives.

Alas, instead of the VIN vets welcoming information already 20 years old and published in book form in 2001, they rose up as one and denounced the book and its author. Mostly I ignored their hostility. I do admit, here and there, to mocking their hysteria and paranoia. However, completely without warning on 24 November 2010, the website owner Dr Paul Pion banned me from the site. He wrote:

Unless you see a reason for me to reconsider, which means that you can learn to be civil in your discussions, I will ask the VIN office to refund all your money — as I would rather not have your money — and we'll leave it at that.

Typically as so often happens when a whistleblower is vilified, the truth becomes inverted. It was the VINers who were aggressive and uncivil. I asked for the ban to be overturned and for important discussions to continue:

From: Tom Lonsdale [mailto:tom@rawmeatybones.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 25, 2010 2:33 PM
To: Paul D. Pion, DVM, DipACVIM
Subject: RE: Raw Meaty Bones

Hi Paul,

Thanks for the message.

Not sure what VIN rule or convention I've broken. And I don't remember one, two or possibly three warnings before the expulsion.

Actually, and immediately before this action of yours, I was heartened and encouraged by Jennifer Fiala's public, even handed acknowledgement -- something that's been rare to non-existent in the veterinary responses since I first posted the cover of *Raw Meaty Bones* in late August.

It appears that for twenty years you and VINers generally have avoided the topic. It took three months from receipt of first letter ... before you allowed me to speak on the matter. But soon shunted the discussions to a deep dark corner of VIN. Now you ban me and what I have to say without warning and I believe without justification.

You have a genuine opportunity to do some good concerning the junk pet-food grip on the vet profession. Please reconsider and reinstate my membership.

Cheers,

Tom

Here's Paul Pion with the last word:

Date: 28 November 2010
From: "Paul D. Pion, DVM, DipACVIM" <Paul@vin.com>
To: "Tom Lonsdale" <tom@rawmeatybones.com>
Subject: RE: Raw Meaty Bones

Tom,

I have no confidence that no matter what I have said on the boards, in email, or in a past or future phone conversation would ever make you understand.

You have been given instruction and notice by myself and many others within the VIN community. I believe you have sincerity in your heart but that you are simply lacking in a degree of humility or socialization that allows you to accept that yours is not the only perspective. Similarly, you seem unable to enter into discourse, disagreeing with others, and more so having them disagree with you, politely and with dignity.

I have tried everything I have learned in 20 years of observing the VIN community to avoid reaching this point. You have the honor of belonging to a club of fewer than 10 colleagues for which I have needed to make this decision.

What they all have in common are 3 things:

1. A disregard for or unwillingness to listen to and consider the opinions of others
2. An inability to enter debate and keep it about the topic and not make it about the people possessing those opinions
3. A singular mission to change the minds of others on a specific topic with no interest in making any other contribution to or using any other feature of VIN.

With regard to number 3, I have learned a lesson where I equate you to many with commercial interests who approach me about participating on VIN. They, like you, approach me with the desire to "sell" something. You are trying to sell an idea, they a product, but the outcome is the same.

No one can join a community and be accepted when their sole mission is to tell all you can reach, "YOU DON'T HAVE OR KNOW THIS – AND I AM HERE TO SELL IT TO YOU (PRODUCT OR IDEA)" – whether you want it or not – no matter the price to my dignity, your enjoyment of your day, or your desire for the PRODUCT. And if you resist, I will just push harder and insult you.

Given that I personally share many of your views regarding the influence of pet food manufacturers upon our profession, I might have missed some hints of your true intent and personality and tactics in communicating them.

In that I failed you and the VIN community. But I much prefer to err on the side of taking a chance and opening dialogue than ever obstructing it. However, that does not include allowing the type of anti-social behavior and tendencies you exhibit to become a spoiler of the enjoyment of the VIN community. The pity is taking a different tact, I believe you could be successful in educating others to a more moderate position – even if they likely aren't ever going to reach your level of zealotry.

I'm guessing this attempt at explaining will be dismissed by you as just another closed-minded colleague who wants to perpetuate the lie of the veterinary - pet food conspiracy. And in that, I'm guessing that the time taken to write it is a waste of my time.

But as my colleague, I think you at least deserve that. I wish you well.

>>>Paul<<<

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