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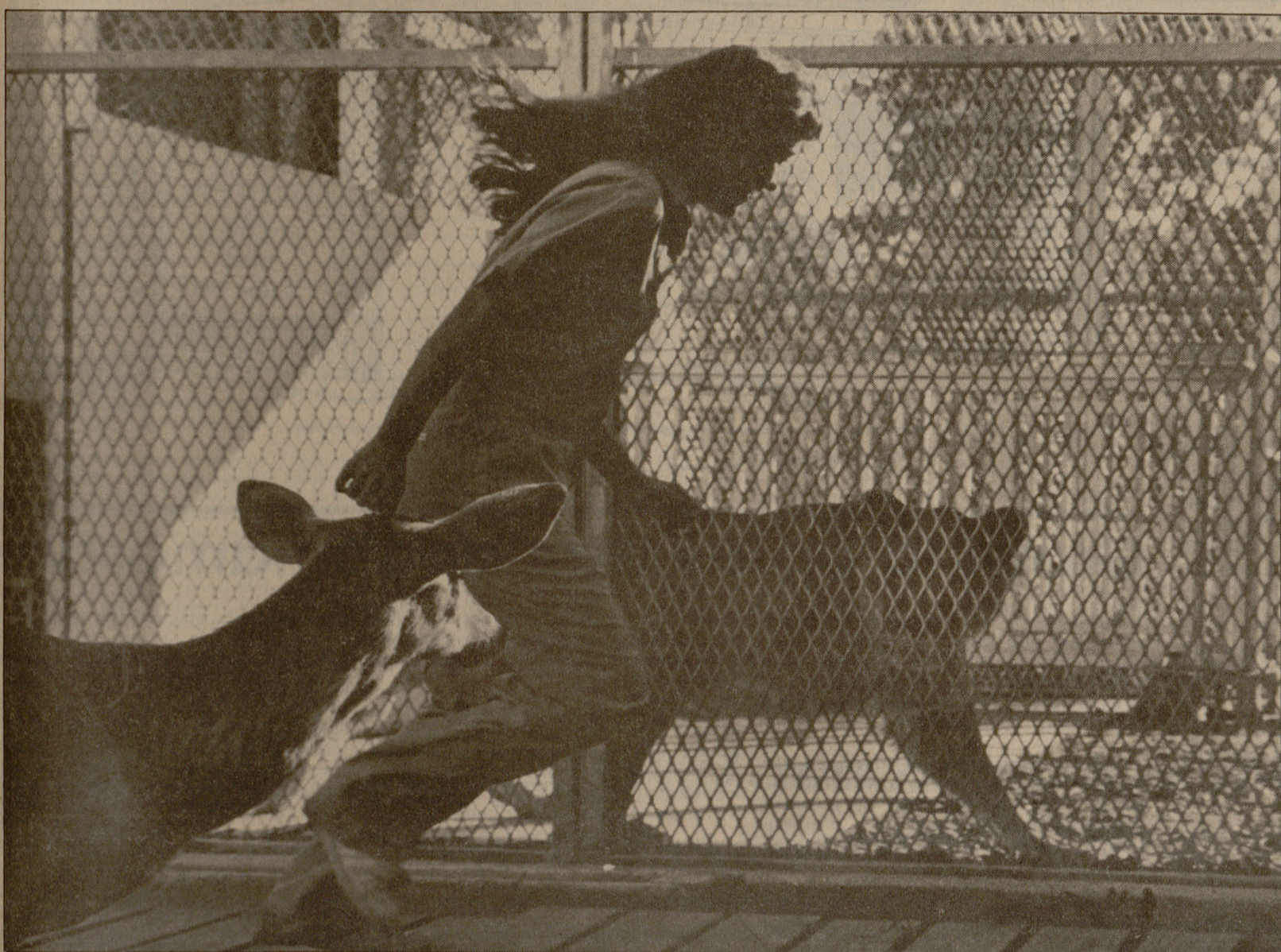


Photo by Tom Ownbey

Here Kitty, Kitty

Joanna Pridgen, a second-year A&M veterinary student, exercises "Delilah" the lioness at the Exotic Animal Center by having the animal

chase her around the cage. "Bucky" the whitetailed deer decides to join in on the fun — also from the safe side of the cage.

A&M team finds new heartworm drug Medicine to make protection of dogs easier for owners

By Lisa Vandiver
Reporter

Dog owners now can do 30-times less work to keep their pets free from a commonplace heartworm disease, thanks to a new preventative drug called Heartgard-30.

The new preventative has been tested and researched at A&M by the research team of Dr. Greg Troy, Dr. Alice Wolf and Dr. Tom Craig, all associated with A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Heartgard-30 — the first new development in heartworm medicine in 25 years — requires giving the dog a small pill once a month rather than the once-a-day treatment now offered.

Heartgard-30 tablets destroy heartworm larvae dogs often acquire from mosquitoes.

Heartworm disease is a condition in which parasitic worms congregate in the right side of the heart and adjacent pulmonary blood vessels of a dog. The worms can grow to 14 inches long with an average length of 11 inches.

Dr. Kenneth Knauer, an A&M professor of

veterinary medicine and a cardiology specialist in the small animal clinic, said the disease is transmitted through the bite of mosquitoes carrying infective larvae. If left untreated, Knauer said, the larvae grow into worms, eventually causing severe damage and possibly death.

This area of the country is a prime target area for the disease, he said. The highest area of infection is along the coasts and river valleys of southern states because of the high mosquito population native to these areas.

"All dogs should be treated with a preventative in this area, whether the dog has been diagnosed with the disease or not," he said. "There is almost a 100 percent chance that a dog exposed to the outdoors in this area will acquire the disease."

The new treatment should cost about \$50 to \$60 a year, which is congruent with the cost of the current treatment — Diethyl Carbamazine Citrate (DEC).

The cost of treating a dog diagnosed with heartworms, however, could cost between \$125 and \$500.

Dogs currently on DEC can be switched to

Heartgard-30 with no problem, Knauer said, but dogs should be checked by a veterinarian before beginning new treatments.

Symptoms a dog owner should look for in detection of the disease, Knauer said, is lack of energy or development of a cough. A dog suspected of having the disease should be taken to a veterinarian as quickly as possible.

"If a dog develops heartworms and it goes untreated, depending on how many worms are contracted, the dog could die within the year," Knauer said.

The new preventative comes in a blister-sealed wheel similar to a birth control package, Knauer said, and has heart-shaped stickers for owners to place on their calendars as reminders of the treatment. In addition, the pills are smaller and easier for dogs to swallow than DEC.

It is available in three doses for three sizes of dogs. Dogs should begin the treatment at about six weeks of age to ensure a longer and healthier life free of heartworms, Knauer said.

The new drug should be available at the beginning of May through A&M's small animal clinic and throughout the state.

Attorneys say Texas should not be fined for prison conditions

HOUSTON (AP) — The state is making a good faith effort to comply with court-ordered prison reforms and should not be fined \$800,500 a day for failure to meet those reforms, state attorneys said Monday.

"The state is in substantial compliance," special assistant attorney general F. Scott McCown said. "What we're asking the court to do is vacate those fines."

U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice on Dec. 31 found the state in contempt of an agreement to improve prison conditions and gave the state until April 1 to comply or face fines of \$24 million a month. The fines were delayed pending the outcome of the hearing that began Monday and was expected to continue most of the week.

"They are not delivering the necessities of life — like clothing, plumbing, heating," William Bennett Turner, attorney for the inmate plaintiffs, said. "There are a number of issues."

Attorneys for both sides said they did not expect Justice to issue an opinion from the bench,

but instead take the matter under advisement.

The state also has appealed the fines to the federal appeals court in New Orleans, which has not yet ruled in the matter.

James Lynaugh, the interim director of the Texas Department of Corrections and the leadoff witness called by the state, outlined what he said were increases in staff hiring within the department and the pressure he put on the governor and Legislature to comply with the court orders.

Lynaugh said the department was recruiting additional medical staff even before the Legislature made an emergency \$12.6 million appropriation to pay salaries for the new help.

"We did everything short of hiring these people," he said.

Lynaugh also noted that the numbers of corrections officers, psychological and rehabilitation aides and supervisory officers also exceeded the court guidelines, and that he had asked for total compliance in his budget request to the Legislature for 1988-89.

Brazos' planned parenthood center out of funds, forced to increase costs

By Kelley Bullock
Reporter

Since Planned Parenthood of Brazos County expended its Title 20 funding from the government in February, many women at Texas A&M cannot afford to pay for birth-control pills and examinations.

"The Title 20 fund is available for agencies that provide family planning and health care for indigent people," Sally Miller, Planned Parenthood clinic director, said. "We have a contract that is renewed annually on a bid basis, and there's just so much that is available for a particular area of the state."

On Sept. 1, 1986, Planned Parenthood was given a contract for \$89,000.

"We use this money in the method that is prescribed by the state until the money is all gone," Miller said. "When the funding is no longer available, in order to keep the bills paid, we have to charge for services. We're giving the maximum amount of care with the minimum amount of pay, in order to keep the doors open."

Miller said Planned Parenthood exhausts Title 20 funds every year. When first informed of the higher prices of pills and examinations, workers at Planned Parenthood said

they were too high.

"Students would come in for the first time and receive services for a reasonable rate," Terry Delagarza, a Planned Parenthood worker, said. "They would come back four months later, and the funding would be gone. They were very disappointed."

Of the 10,880 visitors to Planned

visit would cost \$25 or less, including a full examination and four cycles of pills.

Since funding has ceased, the examination costs \$36 and each cycle of pills costs \$3 to \$4.

Although the prices seem high, Miller said, most still can afford them.

"When you consider the cost of an

for pills at Planned Parenthood without the Title 20 funding, prices for pills at pharmacies cost at least three times as much. On the average, prices of pills range from \$12 to \$14 if purchased at pharmacies.

If students cannot afford to pay for pills and an examination at Planned Parenthood, Miller advises using an alternative form of birth control.

"Foam and condoms are extremely inexpensive and students can get them cheaper here than in the stores," Miller said. "We pass out three free condoms, and they're very effective if used properly."

"Also, if students are on their parents' insurance, sometimes the insurance will cover these visits, depending on the kind of insurance," she said.

A&M students also can receive birth-control pills and an examination at the A.P. Beutel Health Center on campus. An examination costs \$13 for the lab work and pills cost an initial \$2 for filling the prescription plus \$3 for each cycle.

Title 20 funding is still available to other Planned Parenthoods in Texas.

Possible effects from the loss of Title 20 funds, such as an increase in unwanted pregnancies, are too difficult to measure, Miller said.

Analysts deem Texaco's filing 'superb move'

NEW YORK (AP) — The multi-billion-dollar legal war between Texaco Inc. and Pennzoil Co. took a turn in Texaco's favor with Texaco's filing for protection under federal bankruptcy laws, industry analysts said Monday.

In taking the step, Texaco relieved itself of the necessity of posting a potentially debilitating security bond against the roughly \$11 billion judgment won by Pennzoil against Texaco in a 1985 Houston jury decision.

That effectively removed a negotiating club that Pennzoil had been wielding over Texaco, giving the White Plains-based giant oil company plenty of time to negotiate a settlement, they said.

This is a benefit to Texaco because the more time it has, the more chance it has of winning a reversal of the decision, and the more time Pennzoil has to wait to get its money — or some part of the award.

In addition, by putting its fate in the hands of a federal bankruptcy judge, Texaco also opened up the possibility that it could lose its appeals all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court — but still wind up better off, said Bruce Lazier, an analyst at the Prescott, Ball & Turben Inc. securities firm.

"Pennzoil could win the final suit," he said. "But it's up to the bankruptcy judge to determine how much Texaco is going to pay."

In addition, Lazier noted, Pennzoil will have to stand in line for its money with other creditors whose claims are not backed by Texaco assets.

"I think it was a superb move," Lazier said of Texaco's filing for reorganization under Chapter 11 of bankruptcy law. "They had little choice. Their banks, their creditors, their suppliers were starting to shut them down."

In announcing the move Sunday, officials of the White Plains, N.Y.-based Texaco insisted the company will be conducting business as usual while reorganizing its finances.

A few industry watchers suggested, however, that this view was optimistic at best.

"It's not mirrors," said Richard Lieb, a bankruptcy specialist at the Kronish, Lieb, Weiner & Hellman law firm. "It's a real bankruptcy. Texaco's got real problems."

One of those problems stemmed from Texaco's previous warnings that it might file under Chapter 11 if it could not negotiate a resolution to the Pennzoil judgment. This had encouraged worried bankers, suppliers and others to stop doing business with Texaco out of fear of not getting paid.

Those concerns should be less of a

problem now, said Rosario Ilaqua, of the L.F. Rothschild, Unterberg, Towbin securities firm.

"First," he said, "they had \$3 billion in cash on hand. Second, with Chapter 11, their interest and dividend payments are suspended — that's another \$1.5 billion; and third, their cash flow looks like \$3 billion."

Under Chapter 11, Texaco will be free to conduct its business while all debts to creditors remain frozen as it seeks to work out a way to pay the debts.

Bill to give SWC schools right to sue boosters

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas senators gave quick approval Monday to a bill that would let Southwest Conference members sue ambitious boosters who get their alma maters into NCAA violations.

The bill goes to the House for further action.

The measure, by Sen. John Montford, D-Lubbock, received no debate or opposition.

"This is the product of a year of research," Montford told the Senate. "We consider this a workable approach to an increasing problem."

Montford's bill would give colleges and universities and their regional associations, such as the Southwest Conference, the right to bring suit against individuals whose actions result in sanctions against schools by the NCAA.

Colleges and universities currently have no recourse against boosters who are not associated directly with the schools but bring on the suspensions by their violation of NCAA rules.

"Four of the nine Southwest Conference schools are on probation now, mostly because of these violations," Montford said. "This has caused the loss of ticket revenue and the loss of TV revenue and other costs. This bill would allow civil suits to be filed."

Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, asked if the bill would cover the board of governors of a university, in apparent reference to Gov. Bill Clements' former role as chairman of the Southern Methodist University board of governors.

Montford said, "This would allow SMU or the conference to bring suit, but not the board of governors. I would think if this bill had been in effect SMU probably could sue for several millions of dollars."