

Mail Call

Aggies Against Bonfire misquoted

**EDITOR:**  
As a co-founder and former president of Aggies Against Bonfire I am writing this letter in reference to the article by Kristi Lorson, "Agency donates trees from mined land," that appeared in the special section of The Battalion on Nov. 1, 1990.

The information concerning Aggies Against Bonfire was gathered during a personal interview with me. Although I feel that I made myself quite clear during the interview, it seems that she chose to highlight specifically quotes that were the most trivial and failed to represent my major points.

She also wrote, "He suggested cutting trees into firewood for the poor in the local community." This phrase did not appear in quote, I suppose, because I did not say this, have never suggested such a thing and feel that it is unwelcome.

When asked to suggest a substitute use for the trees, I did say, however, that it might be more practical to cord the wood and sell it as firewood to alumni, faculty and students and use the funds for a worthy cause instead of burning the logs for a pep rally. This idea may or may not be workable, but it is significantly different from what The Battalion told readers I said.

Overall the article was certainly slanted (as were many articles appearing in that issue). But that particular article went above and beyond being slanted and into the realm of irresponsibility and misrepresentation.

I hope that the rest of the budding journalists at The Battalion develop more respect for the power that they wield as journalists and learn to use it more responsibly in the future.

Bryan Skipworth '90

Bonfire bashers don't understand

**EDITOR:**  
Once again it has become "Bonfire bashing time." This time every year frustrates me to no end because all I read in The Battalion is people writing about the dangers of bonfire.

I wish that we proponents of bonfire had as much time to spend voicing our opinions as our adversaries do.

I hate having bonfire called an "embarrassment." It embarrasses me that there are people here who judge us as stupid without trying to understand our motivations and goals.

Can all of you faculty members who signed that petition actually say that you have tried to understand personally or talk directly with anyone who works on bonfire? Do you believe us so totally devoid of sense that we volunteer to sacrifice our time and energy to work on something without value?

For those of you who are not aware of the benefits of bonfire, it is a major tool for the making of Aggies (not simply students of Texas A&M University).

The actual construction of bonfire is insignificant, it simply allows a single unifying goal around which all of us can rally around and feel part of.

However, the traditions behind the construction of a bonfire are very important to the goal of unity and spirit. This spirit is something most people take for granted; however, without it we would be no better than schools such as I.S.U. and T.U. Is it because these are not our only goals as students that the Faculty Senate members consider bonfire a needless waste?

I cannot speak for all Aggies, however I speak (I hope) for the majority. Dear "Faculty Senate," please do not consider yourself so intelligent and all-knowing that you can take away something from us which we hold dear simply to satisfy your own personal views of our school's image.

We don't tell you what to do with your free time, don't tell us what to do with ours.

Robbie Pateder '90

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Extreme animal-rights groups war on medicine should end

Recently someone was kind enough to place a copy of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal's (PETA) Catalogue for Cruelty Free Living on my desk.

Between the ads for "cruelty free" toilet bowl cleaner and "Fur is Dead" T-shirts, I read with interest an ad for a PETA video called "No Gravy for the Cat." It detailed the heroic "liberation" of five cats from Dr. John Orem's medical research lab at Texas Tech and their subsequent "escape with their activist liberators on the underground railroad."

What the catalog failed to mention was the fact that the "liberators" did over \$70,000 worth of damage and significantly set back medical research on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, which kills over 5,000 infants every year.

This is just one of many incidents which occur every year in the "animal-rights" war on medicine. The Foundation for Biomedical Research found that, since 1985, attacks on medical research facilities have endangered lives and cost over \$15 million in damage and beefed-up security.

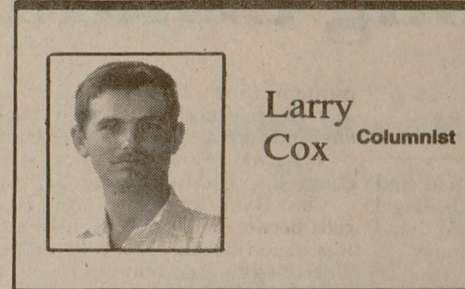
That is \$15 million not spent on medical research. The life which is endangered just might be yours.

Consider the good which has come from animal research. Since 1875, animal research has led to vaccines against diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, smallpox and whooping cough. It has brought about treatment of diabetes, powerful antibiotics, the pacemaker, microsurgery and cancer treatments.

Our average life span has increased by 28 years in the last century, and even as we speak animal research is leading to medical advances against AIDS and Alzheimer's disease. Unless the war on medicine is continued.

PETA and other animal extremist groups believe that animals are the moral equivalent of human beings. Ingrid Newkirk, the head of PETA, stated unequivocally that, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

Newkirk compares the killing of chickens with the Holocaust, telling the Washington Post, "Six million people died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses." What's



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next? Car bombings of Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants?

The militant animal-rights groups claim that animals are no longer necessary for medical research to take place. They claim that animal research is irrelevant, and can be replaced by computers and tissue cultures.

Preposterous! Bessie Borwein, associate dean for research-medicine at the University of Western Ontario said, "That is nonsense. You cannot study kidney transplantation or diarrhea or high blood pressure on a computer screen."

Would you want a drug or procedure tested on you which had previously been tried only on a tissue culture? I think not.

"I cannot conceive of telling parents their sick child will die because we cannot use all the tools at our disposal," says Dr. Michael DeBaakey of Houston's Baylor College of Medicine. "How will they feel about a society that legislates the rights of animals above those of humans?"

The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) which stole the animals from Orem's lab at Tech, as well as their extremist comrades in the animal-rights movement across the country are giving legitimate animal welfare groups such as the SPCA a bad name by being loosely grouped under the "animal rights" banner.

The many valid accomplishments of people who are legitimately concerned about mistreatment of animals are being overshadowed by the malevolent and criminal behavior of zealots in the "movement".

Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, a leading supporter of using animals in biomedical research, says, "I am saddened and a bit angry that we have had to put up with major

disruptions to science by so-called 'animal-rights' activists — who are, in fact, nothing more than animal-rights terrorists."

The FBI agreed with Sullivan when it added the Animal Liberation Front to its list of domestic terrorist organizations, along with groups like Earth First! and Trans-Species Unlimited, whose charter states: "The liberation of animal life can only be achieved through the radical transformation of human consciousness and the overthrow of existing power structures in which human and animal abuse are entrenched."

A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy, indeed. I'm waiting for a group of animal suffragists to start up.

The hypocrisy exhibited by some of these groups is amazing. Consider the case of Cleveland Amory's Fund for Animals, whose animal "liberations" and protests are some of the most highly publicized in the country. It was discovered last year that many of the "liberated" animals were being taken to the Fund's Black Beauty Ranch in Wimberley, Texas which is (you guessed it), a commercial cattle operation. Slaughtering cattle to pay for stealing (oops, I mean liberating) mice and monkeys is the absolute vilest form of two-faced hypocrisy imaginable.

The war on medicine and animal research is being waged daily in our country. Besides the bombings and the other terroristic acts, the movement has at its disposal at least \$50 million annually, millions of which it devotes to stopping biomedical research.

The next time you see Paul McCartney or k.d. lang asking for your contributions for "animal rights," remember that your dollar may go to prevent research which could one day save yours or a loved one's life.

These extremists have the opportunity to make a real statement on their beliefs — by offering themselves in the place of their animal brethren. Until that day (which, of course, will never come), they deserve the same treatment as members of other terrorist organizations — a TV in their cell.

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks for giving

It's a week before Thanksgiving. People already are thinking about turkey and all that food. There'll be some important football games on Thanksgiving, and people are thinking about them, too. And there's a bonfire to build. And there won't be any classes to go to for four days.

Turkey, food galore, football games, bonfire and free time. These are extravagant things.

We should be thankful for such things. And we are. We'll give thanks for everything we have this Thanksgiving. We'll give thanks. Giving thanks — that's what Thanksgiving is all about. Isn't it?

On Thanksgiving, the millionaire gives thanks for his millions. And the billionaire for his billions. Those who have a home give thanks for shelter from the elements. The homeless give thanks for a box they might have found to sleep in. Homeless children give thanks for shoes they found in a trash



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can. Even the turkey gives thanks for being put out of its misery.

But there seems to be something wrong with this picture. Everyone is giving thanks for what they have, but no one is giving. Thanksgiving isn't about thanks for having; it's about thanks for giving.

Many people will give thanks this holiday for everything they have, intending to keep every cent or piece of it. We have lost the true spirit of Thanksgiving. We do not celebrate Thanksgiving as the greatest

thanksgivers did centuries ago.

The Native Americans began the greatest tradition that has ever been passed down from one generation to another. That tradition is giving. The Native Americans, as always, shared with the Earth just enough to survive. And yet they shared what they had — their knowledge, their food, their clean water — with those who needed it.

Today, we have much more than what we need to survive. To most people of the world, what we have in our bedroom is worth more than all they could earn in years of working. Yet most of us want more. We want the maximum. And we will not give to those who have the minimum.

Our culture has trained us to think that getting and keeping as much as possible is the natural thing to do. A culture like ours today cannot truly celebrate Thanksgiving as the Native Americans did.

Their natural tendency was to give,

not to keep. And they gave all year round, not just on special days. To them, giving was not something special that is done by the generous. Giving was the given, the natural order, like breathing. It is unfortunate we have

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buried this beautiful tradition, this beautiful way of thinking.

In today's rush to get, have and keep, we even have abandoned the more beautiful religious actions, as well. I am not an expert on Jesus, but I do know

that Jesus gave all that he had, all that he got, all that he made and all of his life. Should we not, Christian or not, emulate Jesus?

And yet we do not.

I've made about \$70 this semester writing columns. I already have sent of it to the United Nations Children's Fund. The other \$50 I will split between international and local charity organizations. This Thanksgiving, I plan on donating some food and time to the local hunger organization. All in all, it's a tiny sum of time and money, but think about it. If 40,000 students chipped in, the sum balloons to millions of dollars and perhaps millions of hours of time spent on helping people.

Loving reader: Let's give thanks. Let's give, too.

Irwin Tang is a junior political science major.

The Battalion

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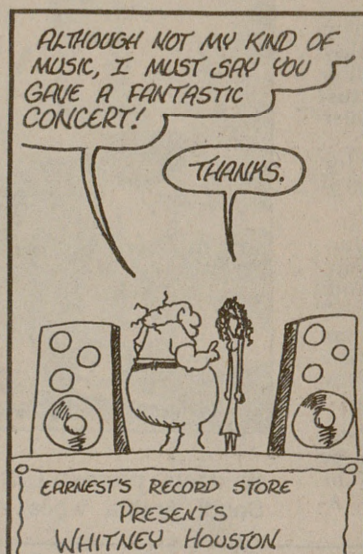
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