

Students should volunteer to help community

With the war has come a renewed feeling of patriotism in many Americans. It's time to turn that patriotism into action to improve our little corner of America.

You can take a step toward helping our community on Saturday during the Give Five Telethon, hosted by Post Oak Mall and KAMU-TV. The telethon isn't an attempt to raise money but to raise volunteerism in the Brazos Valley.

Each individual is asked to give merely five hours a week working for a charitable organization. That's less time than soap opera fans spend watching "Days of Our Lives."

The goal of this year's telethon is to get 2,500 individuals to pledge 450,000 hours of volunteer time to Brazos Valley non-profit organizations. Last year, at the first Give Five Telethon, almost 2,000 community members pledged more than 100,000 hours over the goal of 220,000 hours.

This is a super opportunity for Texas A&M students to give a little something back to the community. However, students seem to have some pretty good arguments against doing



Ellen Hobbs
Columnist

volunteer work in the Brazos Valley.

One is that as students, we're not really members of this community. Well, that's silly. We live here for four or more years, we rent here, we vote here, we pay the sales tax. We're members of the community.

But the biggest and most pervasive excuse students use to avoid volunteering is that they just don't have enough time.

I know what you mean. I used to feel that way too. But the more I looked around, I noticed that I knew a lot of students who were doing volunteer work of all kinds, from working with Boy Scouts to delivering meals on wheels to answering hotlines to working for church groups.

These weren't students who were doing poorly in school, either. Some of them were holding down jobs, too. Some of them were in the Armed

Services Reserves. Some of them were quite active in other student organizations. And they even had time to go out and have a beer on the weekends.

It's possible for students to be active community volunteers. And volunteering does make a difference, to other people's lives and to your own. It's well worth the time and effort.

This year the telethon is featuring 20 different local organizations; however, your pledge to any civic or charitable group, whether or not they are featured, will be recorded to help reach this year's goal.

Out of the featured charities, at least one will probably sound interesting to you. There are also many other organizations looking for volunteers in the Brazos Valley, and you should feel free to check into those.

Local churches and campus organizations often know of charities looking for volunteers. And often, finding a charity that suits you means looking no farther than your phone book.

Make a commitment to help your

Groups featured in telethon

This year the telethon is featuring 20 different local organizations; however, your pledge to any civic or charitable group, whether or not they are featured, will be recorded to help reach this year's goal.

- ★ the American Heart Association;
- ★ the Arthritis Foundation — Brazos Valley Committee;
- ★ the Boy Scouts, Arrowhead District;
- ★ Brazos Beautiful;
- ★ the Brazos County Sheriff's Department Jr. Deputy Program;
- ★ the Brazos Maternal & Child Health Clinic;
- ★ BVCASA — Youth Council;
- ★ the Brazos Valley Head Start Program;
- ★ the Brazos Valley Museum;
- ★ the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce Convention

- and Visitor's Bureau;
- ★ the Bryan-College Station Library System;
- ★ the College Station I.S.D. Head Start Program;
- ★ the Girl Scouts, Bluebonnet Council;
- ★ Humana Hospital Auxiliary;
- ★ the March of Dimes;
- ★ the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Brazos Valley;
- ★ Mothers Against Drunk Driving;
- ★ the Spina Bifida Association of Bryan;
- ★ St. Joseph Hospital & Health Center Auxiliary;
- ★ and Twin City Mission Inc.

Information about individual organizations and the Give Five Telethon can be picked up at the Give Five display at Post Oak Mall.

community. Improve your little corner of the United States. Let your patriotism run wild! Give five hours. As the billboards

say, "What you get back is immeasurable." Ellen Hobbs is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

All life is sacred

EDITOR:

Although most of the animal-rights protesters are off somewhere busily protesting the Persian Gulf Conflict, those of us who look out for the interests of the truly helpless see a new and looming threat to our smaller friends.

I cannot help but protest the vile and heartless position espoused by Tim Truesdale in the Jan. 31 issue of The Battalion in regard to the use of animals for drug research.

His position on the use of alternate forms of research would let the burden of sacrifice to science fall on the most helpless of the passengers of Spaceship Earth: the Bacteria. For humans to use them to test our poisons, our mutagens and our toxins is equally as "inhuman" as using animals.

Bacteria are, first of all, a much older form of life than ours, and therefore, possibly wiser. Their "lack" of communication with us is our fault, not theirs, just as we at present cannot communicate with dolphins.

Bacteria do everything animals do, and more. They live in large familial groups (called colonies).

When the local population is too high, they stop reproducing, something the People's Republic of China had to legislate to achieve.

They adapt to new and challenging environments, much as the wild-dog ancestors adapted to living with humans.

They are natural-born chemists and remarkable genetic engineers. They communicate everything from where the best food is to how to resist our best antibiotics.

They live, they reproduce, they communicate. How can we destroy such a culture as this? How can we sacrifice BILLIONS upon TRILLIONS of microbes to the cause of human lives free of debilitating disease and crippling illnesses? Such arrogance of man!

The truth is that the "computer" (that Truesdale has evidently been told about in his urban planning classes) that can faithfully reproduce the entire range of physiological interactions of the human body (as we in the College of Medicine understand them) will not be built before Truesdale has children, and possibly not even in our lifetime.

So then, in at least partial agreement with Truesdale, we truly must send an ultimatum to drug companies.

Stop the manufacture of all vaccines, antibiotics, antidepressants, painkillers and the like.

As a truly HUMANE human race, we must simply accept the increased number of preventable deaths and birth defects in humans as a sacrifice to the rights of animals and bacteria.

To do otherwise is to be less than human.

After all, ALL life is sacred, and (to paraphrase animal-rights groups) "a boy is a dog is an E. coli."

Darren Duvall
first year medical student

A&M should study non-violence

EDITOR:

While no one would deny the importance of respecting the people who have volunteered to fight and die for their country, the question of "support for our troops" has shrouded some of the other important considerations of this war.

One is the question of support/respect for the people who have NOT chosen to fight and die for their countries — civilians, for example.

Recent research reminds us that war does not often follow the rules set for it. William Eckhardt of the Lentz Peace Research Laboratory has compiled statistics on the 42 wars which occurred throughout the world during the 1980s.

He defined "war" as "an armed conflict involving at least one government and causing at least 1,000 deaths per year." The total number of deaths caused by these 42 wars, including deaths from famine and disease where these seemed to be war related, was 5,058,000.

Each war — on the average — caused 120,000 deaths. The majority of those killed (62 percent) were civilians.

Because casualty reports have been censored, exact body counts in the Persian Gulf are unknown. But we have heard of the civilian target bombings in Israel, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

And we can expect, according to Eckhardt's study, that the number of civilian deaths in the Persian Gulf will far outnumber those of soldiers.

Unless we consider, as our government apparently does, the lives of the people of that region to be dispensable, these facts, should, I think, disturb us.

One way to alter this trend of slaughtering innocents would be to encourage Texas A&M to devote research money and time to studies in peace and non-violent conflict resolution.

Would that the people so well trained in methods of war were equally well-trained in practical peacemaking. For the most successful transfers of power in our time — in the Philippines, Poland, Czechoslovakia and eastern Europe, for instance — have relied largely on non-violent tactics.

Violence in the Persian Gulf will bring only more violence — for soldiers and civilians. History and the prophets of our time have proven there to be more effective ways of solving problems.

A&M should demonstrate the leadership needed to study the ways of non-violence.

Catherine Schultz
graduate student

Alternatives take years of testing

EDITOR:

I'm writing in response to the column entitled "Animals

Fall Prey to Drug Testing," in the Jan. 31 issue of The Battalion.

In his article, Mr. Truesdale relates the use of animals in scientific research to the custom of sacrificing animals to the gods in ancient times to ward off disease.

He says the only thing that has changed from then is the name of the god, which he has so adamantly named GREED.

How greed and the sacrifice of animals for research relate, I am not sure. First, researchers work mainly from grants and fellowships that they receive from colleges, non-profit organizations and hospitals.

The funds go to improve equipment, facilities and techniques. The laboratories that produce the vaccines have to make a profit so they can continue to improve their facilities for production.

They also have to compete in the market area. His column was not actually focused on the money aspect of animal research, therefore, making the first paragraph irrelevant to the rest of the column.

His column did, however, deal with research testing on animals. The article did a good job of bringing out everything that has been said against using animals in research.

In his column, he posed the question, "How do scientists who kill animals for a living get sleep at night?"

I would like to turn this around because everyone at sometime or another has put someone or something in jeopardy.

How do you in your respective fields sleep at night knowing that the results of your jobs can harm animals and even people?

As specialists in our own fields, it is natural to think our professions do more good than harm, or do not directly harm anything.

This letter might sound very biased in favor of using animals in research. But all that I am trying to do is show that there is another side to every story. That other side is very important in deciding how to react to the situation.

Mr. Truesdale mentioned in his article that there are alternatives to using animals.

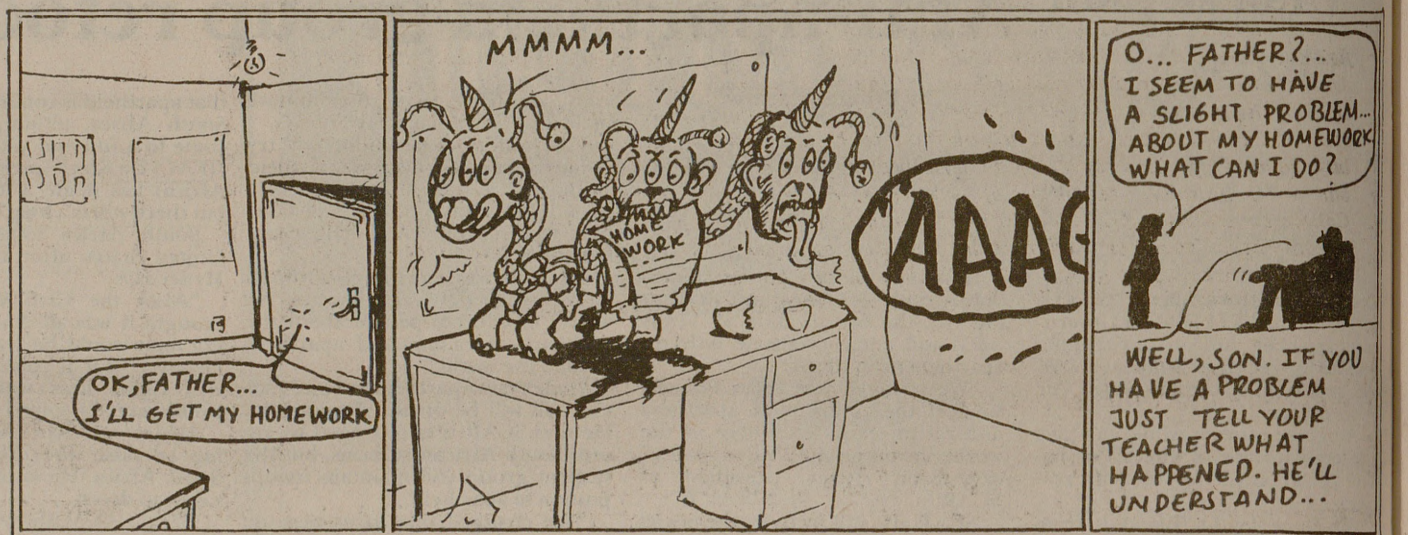
Yes, there are, but do people know how long it would take for scientists to perfect these alternatives enough to cure a virus, such as AIDS, if they were suddenly restricted from using animals for research?

Alternatives take years of improvement and testing before they can be effectively used in an experiment. There are scientists out there who are perfecting these new tests and it will be wonderful when they are ready to be used effectively. But in the meantime, the other tests cannot be tossed out because some people do not agree with the methods.

There has to be a medium somewhere; so research can continue; so animals can be treated in a humane way.

Tammy Shahan '94

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The Battalion

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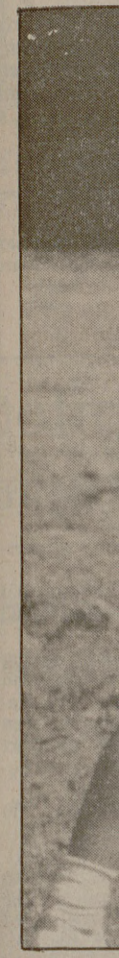
Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion is published daily, except Saturday, Sunday, holidays, exam periods, and when school is not in session during fall and spring semesters; publication is Tuesday through Friday during the summer session. Newsroom: 845-3313.

Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester; \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year: 845-2611. Advertising rates furnished on request: 845-2696.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.



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