

Necessary 'evil' of animal research benefits many

Chevy made the cover of The Battalion last week. He's not a student. He's one of the cats involved in the research of Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, FIV, at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine. Research done on Chevy and his friends may help scientists discover new ways of treating HIV.



MARGARET GORDON
COLUMNIST

they have been deprived of their natural habitats.

Is it right to use these animals for our benefit? Is it fair for them to suffer in order to increase our knowledge? Without the use of animals in research, science and medicine would not be as advanced as they are today.

FIV affects cats in a similar manner that HIV affects humans. The researchers are attempting to induce immunity to the virus. If they are successful, a similar treatment might work on HIV as well.

Unfortunately, if the treatment does not work, Chevy and company might become infected with the virus and die. Like millions of other laboratory animals, Chevy will probably give his life in the name of medicine and science.

Then again, Chevy really doesn't have a choice. Animals are removed from animal shelters, breeding farms and even their natural environments to be placed in cages and subjected to various mental and physical distresses. Their basic needs are provided, but

search, science and medicine would not be as advanced as they are today.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA, states as part of their motto, "Animals are not ours to experiment on." It's true.

Animals are not "ours." But the earth isn't ours either, and we certainly have exploited it. One exploitation doesn't justify another, but the sacrifice of animals to research produces benefits for both humans and animals.

Organizations such as PETA have played an important role in creating more humane conditions in animal research laboratories. PETA's investigations into a painful experiment involving dogs and rabbits at Ohio's Wright State University led to charges by the United States Drug Administration of violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

The Animal Liberation Front, a radical organization that is linked to PETA, has also played a role in exposing laboratories and industries that have cruelly treated animal subjects. They have broken into labs, posed as workers and even destroyed equipment and research data in the name of animal rights. Their motives are commendable, but their methods are questionable.

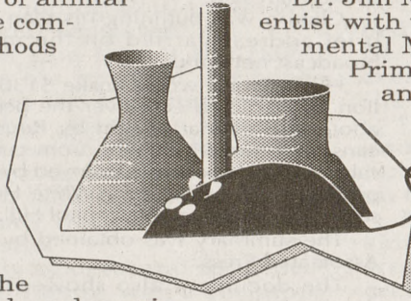
It shouldn't be necessary for radical groups to break the law to prevent inhumane situations. Laws such as the Health Research Extension Act of 1985 exist to protect animals.

These laws regulate the use of animals in research and require research projects to be reviewed by a board of experts before funding is granted. In theory, this ensures that the use of animals in projects is necessary and that their suffering is minimized. But the federal government doesn't have the manpower to prevent cruelty once the animals are in the lab.

The few lowlifes of the scientific community whose inhumanity has been

exposed by PETA and the ALF have made a bad name for all involved in animal research. Contrary to the stereotype induced by PETA and ALF, animal researchers aren't mad scientists who dream of creative ways to torture their subjects.

Dr. Jim Mahoney, a veterinary scientist with the Laboratory for Experimental Medicine and Surgery in Primates, has a deep respect and love for his animals.



He takes care of the primates that are used in AIDS research and vaccine studies.

He has made extra efforts to keep his chimpanzees as happy as possible outside of their natural environment.

They have extra-large cages, plenty of interaction with humans and access to sunlight.

In an article on the internet, Dr. Mahoney admits, "I would very often like to walk out on animal research, but I would feel like a coward for having deserted the cause of human beings. Children should not die of Hepatitis B or

AIDS, malnutrition or malaria, when we have the potential for improving their lives."

Animal research is a necessary evil. It seems unfair for animals to suffer, but if a human life is saved, the use of animals is justified.

PETA suggests alternatives to animal usage, such as substituting computer models for dissections in anatomy courses. That's fine for high school students, but no one wants a veterinarian cutting into their dog, when he only practiced on a computer program in vet school.

Animals, like the earth, are a valuable resource.

Now many species are utilized for various purposes by humans. By using animals, we assume responsibility for their well being.

We must take care of them, ensure that every species is allowed to thrive and prevent unjustified suffering.

We also must realize the enormous contribution of animal research to the health and well-being of humans and animals.

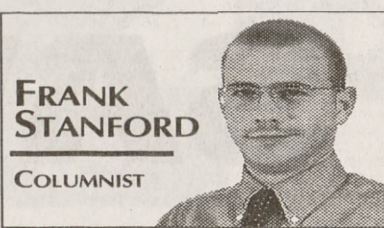
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MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Social interaction dictates political viewpoints

"You're way too conservative. How could you possibly think that way?"
"Me? You're so liberal you wouldn't know reality if it bit you on the butt."



FRANK STANFORD
COLUMNIST

All of us at one time or another, have stared quizzically at a friend or acquaintance and thought to ourselves that we were in the presence of a crazy person.

Not the "Hannibal Lecter" kind of crazy, but more along the lines of why a person might think in a radically different way than we do, particularly about politics.

Regardless of the political ideology with which we identify, our views are most likely based on our social environment.

But because there are too many ideological variations to list, I'm forced to be grossly general and lump everyone as "conservative" or "liberal." We tend to identify more with one or the other anyway.

So, why are some people "uptight" conservatives and other people "weirdo" liberals?

According to Webster's, "conservative" means, "tending to preserve old institutions, methods, customs, and the like; adhering to what is old or established; opposing or resisting change; as a 'conservative' political party ..."

On the other hand, "liberal" is defined as, "favoring reform or progress, as in religion, education, etc.; specifically, favoring political reforms tending toward democracy and personal freedom for the individual ..."

Whichever of these political definitions best describes you is likely to indicate a particular set of socially-induced values - with a social circle to match. Political leanings appear in traits from religious perspectives to fashion choices.

People tend to gravitate toward those who are similar to them in thought, as well as appearance and background.

However, people also tend to assume the values of those who surround them through social pressure. Social pressure is a very sneaky thing. We've all taken it wherever we go.

Social pressure appears to start with your parents, but that is influenced by it as well.

The problem is that if you want to please Mom and Dad, you'll swear they're right, if you don't, you'll swear they're wrong.

Remember, no one is born with political convictions, they are learned.

At a certain point in life, these learned values are either generally accepted or rejected, based on any number of reasons. But the greatest influence is still desire for acceptance by people who bestowed ideas upon you, people who now surround you or people you would like to surround you.

Quite simply, it's not a coincidence that most of your friends have similar political viewpoints or that you share your views with them.

As anyone who has ventured away from this socially protective cover knows, it's very difficult to change or even alter your ideology from those emotionally or physically close to you. The social pressure can be intense, not to mention the temporary loss of identity that frequently accompanies a new viewpoint.

People often feel like they have had to "leave" friends or family members in some way. In fact, "leaving" a socially comfortable value system is so distressing that people often will keep particular viewpoints secret.

How many viewpoints do you keep secret for fear of what certain others might think?

These learned values, which inevitably make their way into your political stance, are either right or wrong. For the most part, they are socially arbitrary values which without strong conviction would mean nothing to the beholder.

I have them and you have them, but our con-

viction doesn't make them the "right" values.

For instance, whenever I'm within earshot of the political moaning that goes on around here, I usually hear something like, "That Bill Clinton is a total idiot ... blah, blah." Or perhaps, "Newt Gingrich is not just a fascist, but a stupid one ..." etc.

If we would just step back from our emotions for a moment we could see that neither of these men is lacking intelligence. In fact, not only are they both considered to be quite bright, but they are also more educated than most of us.

So why must we insist that at least one of these men and his cohorts are dimwits? Why do we stare at our political opponents and wonder, "Are they crazy?"

It's pride. Pride in whichever political viewpoint we've learned to embrace. People have an innate desire to maintain their identity, or else they feel lost.

People tend to gravitate toward those who are similar to them in thought.

Pride maintains political identity as well as religious, ethnic or even collegiate identity. The reasons we may consider ourselves to be conservative or liberal are not based on sanity, intelligence, love of family, humanity, art, life or even God; but on the very interpretation of each and the perceived importance therein. This reasoning should be part of self-actualization, not with whom you associate.

Don't just examine your political beliefs, or even the values that lead to them.

Instead, examine how and why you acquired your values.

Are they really, really your own? Or are they a product of your social environment?

Frank Stanford is a philosophy graduate student

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EDITORIAL

SEEKING SAFETY

The CSPD should adequately protect the Northgate area.

The Northgate area beckons College Station residents each night and every weekend into the throes of its bars and taverns. Most view bars like Duddley's Draw and the Dixie Chicken as convenient places to go and unwind, meet with good friends and to have a few drinks.

But to the College Station police department, Northgate is a thorn in its side. With the large number of people the frequent area establishments, many of whom are consuming alcohol, the possibility of problems is much more prevalent.

Northgate easily can become a concentrated zone of drunken rowdies, especially during football season, that sometimes can warrant two officers on foot patrol, in addition to the officers who patrol Northgate as a part of their beat.

Lt. Scott McCollum, from the College Station Police Department, said the large crowd generated after football games is always grounds for the extra officers, but that even during summer, which is usually much quieter, those extra patrols are called in.

During 1994 in the area from University Drive to

Church street and from Nagle street to Wellborn drive. Police issued 150 tickets to minors in possession; 83 public intoxication citations, each resulting in an arrest; and responded to 25 assaults and 3 aggravated assaults. An aggravated assault constitutes the "use of a firearm or anything made by man to cause death, or causing serious bodily injury."

People who drink have a responsibility to themselves and to others to act with respect. Acting with respect includes arranging for transportation when you've had too much to drink and following the ideals of the Good Rule.

But people aren't perfect, they often make mistakes, and the police are there to correct those mistakes. Northgate is a College Station landmark and a pseudo-mecca for Aggies everywhere, but that doesn't change the fact that it can be dangerous.

The College Station Police Department should evaluate its policies to ensure that there is adequate police patrol and protection of the area at all times, so that Northgate can remain an area of good times and safe fun.



MAIL CALL

Mantle deserved liver transplant

Julie Thomas' June 12 column on Mickey Mantle's liver transplant truly shocked me.

Some of the misleading statistics quoted by Thomas demand clarification.

She quotes an average wait for a liver transplant candidate to be 142 days.

According to her source and how the question was phrased, that may be true.

However, according to the surgeon who performed the operation (interviewed the next day on CNN), the average wait for "someone in Mr. Mantle's stage of liver failure is 3-4 days."

Thomas also neglects to mention that the computer transplant network from which all organs are prioritized and distributed placed Mantle at the top of the list - according to medical condition, not ability to pay.

While I do not condone the alcoholism that admittedly destroyed Mantle's liver, neither do I find Thomas' assertion that by continuing to live, he consciously took a life from another.

Numerous times in the column, Thomas speaks of people being "robbed of receiving a liver" or "why does he deserve to live."

Amazingly enough, Thomas quotes no statistics on those who die because someone famous, or with more money, got "their" liver.

Perhaps the most alarming thing about this column is the impression I got that Thomas deems herself worthy of deciding who lives or dies.

If she was the one who had to look into the eyes of a wife, son, daughter or other relative and say that their loved one was not good enough to get a second chance at life, I believe her views would change.

If not, then perhaps she is worthy of judging life and death.

In that case, an accounting degree from A&M would seem rather unnecessary.

Matthew Gardner
Class of '91

Jackson shows art, musical talent

In response to Amy Uptmor's column on Michael Jackson yesterday, I have a few things that should be pointed out.

First, Jackson did not elect himself as the "king of pop," no more than Elvis elected himself the "king of rock."

The title came from the be-

ginning days of pop music, in which he was an artist who contributed a great deal.

If Uptmor really thinks Michael is a freak, maybe she should take a closer look.

Perhaps it is the media that are the freaks.

Michael Jackson is an artist of music, and he is mostly a hermit. He isn't a camera freak who makes media appearances as often as he can.

If you like any music at all, you will find that most musical artists, and even other kinds of artists, have some problems in their life history that they express through their art.

Jackson's art is that of music, choreography and dance. He expresses it well.

Some may think it is grotesque or freaky, but a true appreciator of real art will see what he is truly showing.

Those who don't take the time to look, won't see.

As far as MTV coverage, if Uptmor is so worked up on freaks, then why does she continue to watch MTV?

Michael Davis
Class of '98

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