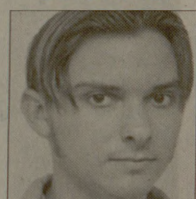


# A shot in the dark

## Animal testing produces errors

Columnist



**Jon Appgar**  
 Sophomore  
 Journalism major

necessity for every college student is a bottle of aspirin. After all, a headache always seems to appear the night as a cramming session. While taking a course of tablets, no one notices much thought to the fact that aspirin can kill a cat. That would have happened if doctors had tested the drug on cats to see if it was safe for human consumption? We probably have to suffer through a hell of a lot more headaches. This is one of countless examples showing animal testing to be faulty, cruel and pointless. Animal testing should be replaced with updated, safer methods of research. A growing number of doctors are acknowledging that animal testing frequently produces leading results that are damaging to humans. Why is animal testing faulty? Because species differ, and animals and humans do not react the same way to drugs. For example, Eraldin, a heart drug, was given to patients for years before side effects such as blindness and stomach growth problems were identified. Eraldin had been tested on animals and shown to be "safe." Thalidomide, a sedative given to pregnant women, caused approximately 10,000

birth defects worldwide. It was also tested on animals without any adverse effects. Dr. Albert Sabin, who developed the oral polio vaccine, told Congress that the work on polio prevention was delayed by misleading experimental models of the disease in monkeys. There isn't a more unreliable form of testing than animal testing. Currently, 8 percent of children born in America have some form of birth defect that can be traced back to the use of products deemed safe by animal testing. So why does animal testing continue? Because it can be used to prove almost anything the scientist wants. Depending on the species used, it can be proven that cigarettes either do or do not cause cancer. Instead of animal testing, medical scientists should use methods proven to be more accurate and reliable. These truly scientific methods, consisting of post-mortem studies, computer models and clinical studies, have provided many breakthroughs. Moreover, by eliminating animal testing, not only would medical research be safer, but unnecessary cruelty to animals would be avoided. Five million animals are killed each year in the United States because of two tests —

the Draize eye test and the LD50 toxicity test.

The Draize eye test consists of spraying chemicals into the eyes of rabbits until they are blind.

Does it take a scientist to realize that spraying a bottle of Clorox into your eyes will make you go blind?

During the LD50 test, a chemical is administered by scientists to a certain number of animals until 50 percent die.

The results of this test approximate the amount of pesticide a family of four supposedly must drink before two of them die.

We need to ask ourselves what the point of this cruelty is if it can be avoided with more modern, updated, safer methods?

If we ever hope to find a cure for cancer or AIDS, animal testing is the most certain way to

**Depending on the species used, [animal testing] can be proven that cigarettes either do or do not cause cancer.**

slow us down.

Besides, chocolate is poisonous to dogs. Imagine what life would be like if someone had chosen a dog to test the safety of chocolate.

Tupac — misunderstood poet or glorified gang-banger? It's a moot discussion now.

Rap artist and proponent of "thug life" Tupac Shakur died Friday of complications from four gunshot wounds, two of them to the chest. He was 25. It was the second time he had been shot in less than two years.

Columnist



**Mason Jackson**  
 Senior marketing  
 major

What happened to him was unfortunate, but it is only the most recent episode in a growing trend in rap music. More and more, hard-core rappers are feeling the need to live out the lifestyles they represent in their music.

It is unnecessary and has become costly to the music industry.

First, Snoop Dogg (the favorite rapper of white, suburban youth everywhere) is in the spotlight because he had a trigger-happy bodyguard. Then Warren G, half-brother of Snoop's mentor, Dr. Dre, gets into similar trouble with his sidekick Nate Dogg (no relation to Snoop Dogg.)

We won't even discuss the troubles of Rick James because, as we all know, he's a Superfreak.

These people represent the most successful acts in rap music today. What's a self-respecting gangsta rapper to do when he needs a criminal record to be considered legitimate?

But wait. Don't jump to conclusions. This doesn't represent an image problem. It is well-cultivated by people in the music industry.

Marion "Suge" Knight, the head of Death Row Records (producers of Dr. Dre, Snoop, Tupac, et al.), was driving the car in which Tupac was shot. Rumors claim the Notorious



B.I.G., who runs a rival record company on the East Coast, was behind the shooting.

Ideally, a fan of rap music, such as myself, is supposed to believe that someone like the Notorious B.I.G. is simply on hiatus from slangin' dope and killin' punk-ass busters (i.e. selling cannabis and reducing the number of opposing gang members).

This is the style that sells — just ask the recently bankrupt Hammer (I guess he felt the moniker M.C., unlike his trademark pants, was too confining.)

Like every other business in the world, the dollar rules rap. So entertainers like Tupac felt pressure to live up to their lyrics.

This is where rap has gotten off track. You don't have to be "real," especially when it is obviously so dangerous.

Other musicians aren't expected to live out life as represented in their songs. Country musicians

would have committed mass-suicide and Bryan Adams would be much cooler than he is.

Is there a solution to this problem that will take us back to the days of Young M.C.'s "Bust A Move"? Probably not.

It might help to lessen media coverage of events involving rap stars and the words "indictment forthcoming."

They usually degenerate into sensationalistic stories that serve as nothing more than free publicity for those involved (which is not at all what this column is).

But ultimately, it is the market that drives the product.

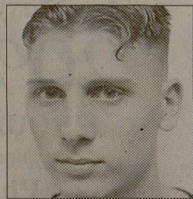
So until we can remedy the socioeconomic woes that make the gang-banger lifestyle attractive to so many, incidents like this will continue to occur.

Or, as some of my rap-impaired friends insist, the rap genre may go the way of disco, and this, too, will be a moot discussion.



## Congress takes step back in time

Columnist



**Bryan Goodwin**  
 Junior English major

Civil rights in America has just taken a step backward: Rather than freeing ourselves from prejudice, we seem to be embracing it.

The right to have a marriage recognized by the federal government is about to be denied to homosexuals. A bill has passed and, strangely enough, our newly liberal president has promised to sign it into law.

First things first: homosexuals are people. Contrary to many people's way of thinking, they are fundamentally the same as heterosexuals. They just happen to be attracted to the same sex. That doesn't define their personalities.

Why should the right to declare love for each other be denied to them?

I've been assured by those who know that the matter lies not in conservative morality, but in concern over tax dollars and special treatment. It strikes me as terribly odd.

Why would anyone assume that granting the right to matrimony to homosexuals would automatically create money-sucking special privileges?

There's a long-forgotten clause in the Constitution that reads, "In the event of two people of the same sex becoming wed, they shall be eligible for extra benefits from the government?" No. Is it reasonable to assume that allowing them to marry will inspire a wave of legislation aimed at giving them your dollars? No.

Good forbid, this legislation would merely allow gay people to be treated more like everyone else. There are programs giving money to qualified heterosexual

married couples; what's good for the goose is good for the gander. If extra help is necessary for heterosexual couples, it must be necessary for homosexual couples as well.

Should they get the money aimed at helping couples raise their children? Only if they're raising some. If the letter of the law is logically applied to homosexual couples, the questions will resolve themselves.

But I've been assured that the only reason people are seeking the recognition of same-sex marriages is a greedy desire for tax dollars. Why else would they?

There couldn't possibly be two people of the same sex in the entire United States who think they're in love with each other, could there?

Actually, yes. And they're the real victims here. There may be people out there lobbying for special money for homosexual couples, intent on creating loopholes in legislation that will financially benefit them. After all, there are members of most other social groups out there doing that.

But not all gay people who want to get married are evil people looking for fast cash. I would venture my humble, uninformed opinion that the great majority are not. They're just two human beings that want to declare their undying commitment to each other. Some would call it love.

Rest assured, if homosexual people could get their marriages recognized by the federal government, they would treat the commitment no differently than do heterosexual couples.

To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, 'til death do them part, Amen.

## Problems continue with on-line service

This message was brought to you after several hours of attempting to get on-line.

Any time I try to log on, I run into the same problems that many others run into — the stupid line is busy and will be for the next few hours.

I realize there are thousands of students who are trying to use the phone lines, but when is the University going to do something about it?

We all pay our \$65 computer access fee.

With all the students paying, why can't something be done to fix the problem?

I would like to get my money's worth, not to mention the information I need.

John Matthew Hensz  
 Class of '00

## A&M football team misses motivation

The senseless losing must be stopped.

The Aggie football team has reached the lowest point this decade with a loss to a team who now has a Heisman Trophy candidate and another to a team who just had the biggest win in school history.

Obviously there are major problems with the Texas A&M football program, and the problems start at the top.

This year's team and many of the past have suffered because of the lack of direction from the coaching staff. Plain and simple: R.C. Slocum must go!

The Aggies aren't mentally prepared to play.

Kyle Hoover  
 Class of '97

Jeff Jones  
 Class of '98

## University cuts too many corners

As I recently swabbed my allergy stricken nose with toilet paper procured from a campus bathroom, I realized I was holding the roughest, toughest stuff in the universe.

This retched attempt by the University at saving a few dollars is putting the traditional definition of "red-ass" in grave danger.

So I beseech students to swallow your pride and vocalize your opposition to this discomfort.

James Collins  
 Class of '99



## MAIL CALL

### USL game lacks the fans' support

In Monday's Sports section of The Battalion the question was asked, "What wrong?"

With the recent two losses our football team has suffered, I'm sure this question is in everyone's mind. I have decided to take it upon myself to answer this. Fingers have been pointed after both of the losses.

I, however, suggest the loss is simply a product of a bigger problem ... lack of spirit.

The lack of spirit has been in both the players and the fans, including myself. It seems as if it takes a 50-plus yard run or pass in order for players to give each other a simple high five.

I remember a day not too long ago when the same celebration came from a first down.

I also noticed our players taking a knee during time-outs in Provo and Lafayette, meanwhile the Cougars and Cajuns were rarely ever caught taking a knee.

Some fans were also guilty of sitting during the lulls in the game, and almost all fans are guilty of a lack of 12th man spirit.

If the players and fans continue in their current attitudes we will be 0-3 this Saturday, and on September 28th we could lose to Colorado by 100 points.

It is time for players and fans to start a rally that will carry us to St. Louis in December for the Big 12 Championship.

Michael J. Carroll  
 Class of '95

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call  
 013 Reed McDonald  
 Texas A&M University  
 College Station, TX  
 77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111  
 Fax: (409) 845-2647  
 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.