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A&M researchers no longer cloning pets

Missiplicity Project Ended

- Started three years ago with \$4 million grant from Arizona businessman
- He wanted his mixed-breed dog, Missy, cloned
- The project produced the world's first cloned cat, "CC" in December

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

By Rob Phillips
THE BATTALION

The cloning project at Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine, which produced the world's first cloned cat, has come to an end. Arizona businessman John Sperling and the company he created more than three years ago to clone his pet dog, a mixed breed named Missy, have withdrawn their funding from the A&M "Missiplicity" project after it failed to produce a clone of his dog.

That's a loss of \$3.7 million for the program and an end, for now, to the controversial cloning of domesticated pets at the A&M lab that was made famous in the race to clone the most species. Genetic Savings and Clone, the biotechnology company founded by Sperling, will seek an industrial partnership in the hopes of obtaining better technology, said Ben Carlson, vice president of communications for the company. In the meantime, A&M's lab is left

looking for funding through more traditional sources. "We will seek other sources of funding and continue our work through the National Institutes of Health, the United States Department of Agriculture or other private investors," said Dr. Mark Westhusin, Missiplicity team member and A&M associate professor of veterinary physiology and pharmacology. The Missiplicity research team



FILE PHOTO
C.C. is the last domestic pet the A&M Missiplicity project researchers cloned.

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Senate considers mid-term evaluations

By Eric Ambroso
THE BATTALION

The Student Senate presented a bill on Wednesday that would have professors receive mid-semester evaluations to strengthen their classes, hopefully reducing the number of Q-drops used.

Senators pushed for two mid-semester evaluations to be given to students voluntarily along with the end-of-semester evaluation. The current policy mandates that each Texas A&M instructor conduct an evaluation of the class at the end of each semester. The policy introduced by the senate would encourage professors to conduct additional evaluations after the 20th day of class and before the 30th day of class.

"Students in the class (which is) being evaluated do not benefit while in that class from the end-of-semester evaluations," said Natasha Eubanks, Academic Affairs Committee chair. "Usually, evaluations are just venting tools. Additional evaluations would improve communications between instructors and students."

According to the bill, instructors will make their own assessment forms. Each professor would then submit the information to the department head.

Mid-semester evaluations will be compared to the end-of-semester evaluation to show any progress made in the class, Eubanks said. This policy could reduce the amount of Q-drops and better utilize academic resources.

"Instructors, as well as students, need to be held accountable for their performance throughout the semester," Eubanks said. "This accountability cannot be well-established by using a single evaluation at the end of the semester."

The bill will be considered at the senate's next meeting Nov. 20.

In emergency legislation, the senate unanimously passed a

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Ouch!



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Senior marketing major Stephanie Mullins gets a free flu shot from Veronica Shannon, a licensed vocational nurse, in the lobby of the Student

Recreation Center Tuesday afternoon. Maxim Health Care Company, based out of Houston, sponsored the free flu shots given out at various campus locations.

U.N. set to vote on Iraq resolution France makes critical agreement, Bush confident

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States reached a critical agreement with France on a tough Iraq resolution, paving the way for a vote Friday which President Bush expressed confidence in winning.

The U.N. Security Council set the vote for 10 a.m. EST after the United States and its cosponsor Britain, at French urging, changed the wording in a key provision that would declare Iraq in "material breach" of its U.N. obligations.

The change addresses concerns by France, Russia, Syria and others that the original text would have let the United States determine on its own whether Iraq had committed an infraction. They feared that such a determination, would have triggered an attack on Saddam.

The new wording requires U.N. weapons inspectors to make an assessment of any Iraqi violations.

U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte said there was "broad support" for the resolution, which would toughen weapons inspections and threaten Iraq with "severe consequences" if it doesn't comply.

Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov wouldn't say how his government will vote. But a U.S. administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Russian President Vladimir Putin conveyed a "positive" message during a conversation with Bush on Thursday, assuring him that the resolution would pass without saying whether Russia would vote "yes" or abstain.

"We have heard the latest amendments," Lavrov said. "We got explanations that neither of the cosponsors interprets the language as containing automatic use of force, and we will be reporting this to our capitals."

Bush had pushed for a Friday

vote, calling Saddam "a real threat" and declaring that "it's now time for the world to come together and disarm him."

The president was clearly prepared for victory.

Twice during a wide-ranging news conference at the White House, he referred to passage as an issue of "when," rather than "if."

"When this resolution passes, I will be able to say that the United Nations has recognized the threat and now we're going to work together to disarm him," Bush said. "And he must be cooperative in the disarmament."

Language in another key paragraph was also changed to account for Russian concerns of a second hidden trigger.

The world body's chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, said he's confident his team will be back in Iraq soon, after a nearly four-year absence.

\$5 million grant goes to Kingsville

By Lecia Baker
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University at Kingsville (TAMUK) will receive a \$5 million grant from the National Science Foundation over the next five years to provide Ph.D. programs for Hispanic students in the environmental engineering field.

TAMUK currently offers the only engineering doctoral program in South Texas, said Dr. Andrew Ernest, principal investigator for the newly created Center for Research Excellence in Science and Technology-Research on the Environmental Sustainability for Semi-Arid Coastal Areas. The doctoral program began in January 2002. The grant was given to use Kingsville as a springboard to increase research capacity in environmental engineering, he said.

Ernest said the National Science Foundation donates grants to strong programs to conduct cutting edge research. He said the goal is to make the program nationally competitive in five to 10 years.

"It takes a vision and an influx of money to take us from a productive university to a nationally known university," Ernest said.

Ernest said he expects the environmental research program to become more competitive and similar to programs at A&M in College Station.

The grant will be split up among several types of students. The \$1 million per year will give about 10 Ph.D. students \$20,000 a year and give several graduate students \$12,000 a year. The grant will also be used to pay for equipment, conferences, and facilitate faculty exchange, Ernest said.

"The key focus is that we get as many Ph.D. students through as possible," Ernest said.

Dr. Kuruvilla John, associate professor in the Department of Environmental Engineering, said the grant has been divided up into three broad research areas: environmental informatics, environmental systems modeling and living laboratories for academics and research.

John said TAMUK has partnered with many

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Texas A&M Kingsville targets Hispanic Ph.D.s

- Texas A&M Kingsville is trying to build a competitive engineering program using a \$5 million grant
- The money will support 10 Ph.D. students at \$20,000 a year
- The goal is to bring more educational opportunities to South Texas

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Campaigning for Democratic leadership

Rep. Richard Gephardt announced plans Thursday to step aside as House Democratic leader, opening up a race for the job between the second and third ranking Democrats in the House, Reps. Nancy Pelosi and Martin Frost.



Rep. Nancy Pelosi
Born — March 26, 1940.
Education — Trinity College, 1962.
Experience — Elected

Democratic whip in October 2001. Eight-term congresswoman from California's 8th District, which includes most of San Francisco. Serves on the Appropriations and Select Intelligence committees. Chairwoman of the California Democratic Party, 1983-84; Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, 1984-86.

Family — Married to Paul Pelosi; five children



Rep. Martin Frost
Born — Jan. 1, 1942.
Education — B.A. and B.J., University of Missouri, 1964; J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1970

Experience — House Democratic Caucus Chair for past two terms; Twelve-term Congressman from Texas' 24th District, which includes parts of Dallas; U.S. Army reservist, 1966-1972; lawyer in private practice; journalist.

Family — Married to Maj. Gen. Kathy George Frost; three children; two grandchildren

Democrats divided over new House leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two House veterans, Reps. Nancy Pelosi and Martin Frost, jumped into a race for Democratic leader on Thursday, and the jabbing began at once over the future of a party reeling from midterm election losses.

"I think that her politics are to the left, and I think that the party, to be successful, must speak to the broad center of the country," said Frost, a Texas whose rival represents most of San Francisco.

Pelosi, judged by party officials to be the front-runner in the race, sidestepped the attack and turned her fire on the GOP instead. "We must draw clear distinctions between our vision of the future and the extreme policies put forward by the Republicans," she said in a statement. "We cannot allow Republicans to pretend they share our values and then legislate against those values without consequence."

The two began their race as the party's leader, Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri,

told members of the rank-and-file he would not seek another term in the job he has held for eight years.

Democrats "need a leader for the next two years who can devote his or her undivided attention to putting our party back in the majority," Gephardt said.

"It's time for me personally to take a different direction ... and take on this president and the Republican Party from a different vantage point," he added in remarks pointing toward a possible campaign for the White House in 2004.

Later, in an interview in the Capitol office he soon will vacate, the Missouri Democrat said he intends to take the oath of office for a new term next month and has no firm plans beyond that. "I'll look at running for president," he said. "I've done it before and I know a lot about it."

While Pelosi, 62, and Frost, 60, have served side by side for years, they have charted different courses in the House, and

have taken different positions on recent high-profile issues.

Pelosi, who is her party's senior member on the intelligence committee, voted against legislation that authorized President Bush to use force against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Frost supported it.

Frost, a former party campaign chairman, was a late, reluctant recruit to the battle for legislation to reduce the role of money in politics, expressing concern about the impact of the law on the party's ability to compete for funds with Republicans. One of Pelosi's first successes as party whip was to round up enough votes to pass the measure.

On another key issue this year, though, the leadership rivals both voted against legislation strengthening Bush's ability to negotiate international trade deals.

Several party aides said Pelosi, who won an eighth term from her California district this week, begins the leadership race as the favorite.