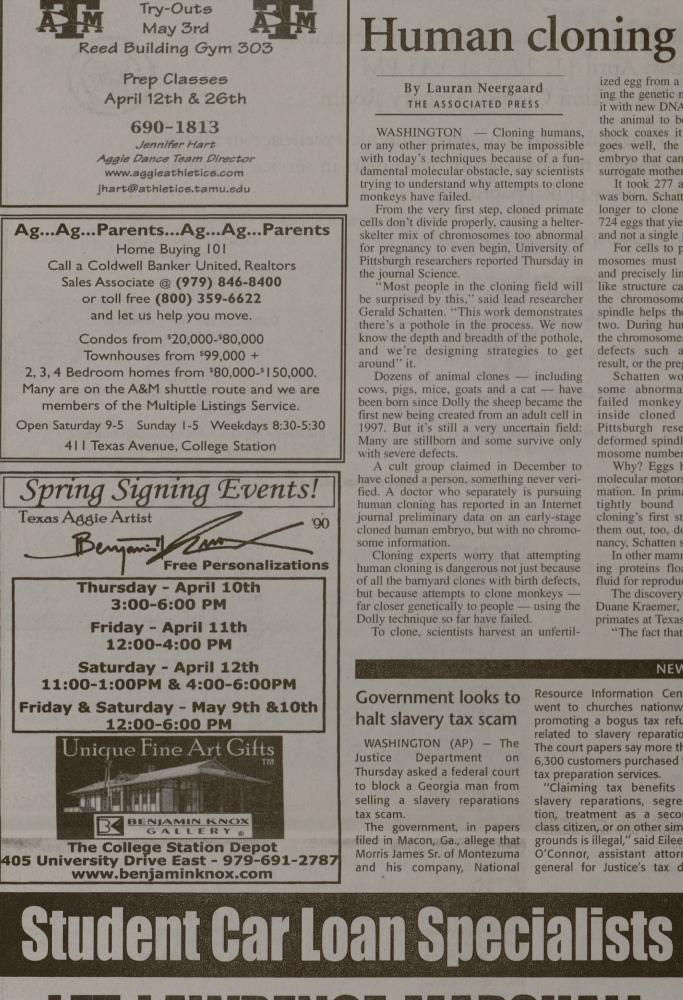


THE BATTALIO



Aggie Dance Team

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Friday, April 11, 2003

## Human cloning may be impossible Pro

### By Lauran Neergaard THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Cloning humans, or any other primates, may be impossible with today's techniques because of a fundamental molecular obstacle, say scientists trying to understand why attempts to clone monkeys have failed.

From the very first step, cloned primate cells don't divide properly, causing a helterskelter mix of chromosomes too abnormal for pregnancy to even begin, University of Pittsburgh researchers reported Thursday in the journal Science.

"Most people in the cloning field will be surprised by this," said lead researcher Gerald Schatten. "This work demonstrates there's a pothole in the process. We now know the depth and breadth of the pothole, and we're designing strategies to get around" it.

Dozens of animal clones - including cows, pigs, mice, goats and a cat — have been born since Dolly the sheep became the first new being created from an adult cell in 1997. But it's still a very uncertain field: Many are stillborn and some survive only with severe defects.

A cult group claimed in December to have cloned a person, something never verified. A doctor who separately is pursuing human cloning has reported in an Internet journal preliminary data on an early-stage cloned human embryo, but with no chromosome information.

Cloning experts worry that attempting human cloning is dangerous not just because of all the barnyard clones with birth defects, but because attempts to clone monkeys far closer genetically to people — using the Dolly technique so far have failed.

To clone, scientists harvest an unfertil-

ized egg from a female donor, removing the genetic material and replacing it with new DNA from an adult cell of the animal to be cloned. An electric shock coaxes it into dividing. If all goes well, the egg grows into an embryo that can be implanted into a surrogate mother.

It took 277 attempts before Dolly was born. Schatten's group tried even longer to clone a rhesus monkey -724 eggs that yielded only 33 embryos and not a single pregnancy

For cells to properly divide, chromosomes must duplicate themselves and precisely line up along a zipperlike structure called a spindle. Once the chromosomes are in place, the spindle helps the cell pull apart into two. During human reproduction, if the chromosomes don't split properly, defects such as Down syndrome result, or the pregnancy fails.

Schatten wondered if chromosome abnormalities were behind failed monkey clonings. Indeed, inside cloned monkey cells, the Pittsburgh researchers discovered deformed spindles and chaotic chro- SOURCE: UM mosome numbers.

Why? Eggs harbor proteins that act as molecular motors that are key to spindle formation. In primates, those proteins are so tightly bound to the egg's DNA that cloning's first step of DNA removal pulls them out, too, dooming hope of later pregnancy, Schatten said.

In other mammals, enough spindle-forming proteins float in the egg's remaining fluid for reproduction to occur, he said.

The discovery is very important, said Dr. Duane Kraemer, a successful cloner of nonprimates at Texas A&M University.

"The fact that they don't get pregnancies

### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

Resource Information Center,

went to churches nationwide

promoting a bogus tax refund

related to slavery reparations.

The court papers say more than

6,300 customers purchased the

slavery reparations, segrega-

tion, treatment as a second-

class citizen, or on other similar

grounds is illegal," said Eileen J.

O'Connor, assistant attorney

general for Justice's tax divi-

"Claiming tax benefits for

tax preparation services.

sion. "The Justice Department is taking vigorous action to stop schemes that undermine the federal tax system and leave honest taxpayers footing the bill."

In a typical slavery reparations scheme, a tax preparer charges the customer to prepare a refund claiming the nonexistent credit. Taxpayers can face a \$500 penalty for filing such claims.

In 2001, the Internal Revenue

**Tiny proteins block** cloning capabilities

at all is suggestive that there is something

different going on there than with the species," he said. "It points to a potential

problem that may have to be solved before

therapeutic cloning — using embryo

stem cells to grow customized tissues medical treatment - may prove harder,

cells growing in a lab dish have abnom

chromosomes, the remaining good 5 percent

the next advance can be made.

could still be used, he added.

How cloning works

An egg's nucleus is removed and replaced with DNA from the cell of the animal to be

Scientists have lone barnyard anin they've discovered why: removed in the cloning p ause a chromosomal

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"This is a tough, one mi it will all wor of important Watkins, a 1 roup Amer Publishers. "I thought

priority. We'v cent cut in i and it's our N The Texas nitially reque new textbool

budget, more textbooks al printed by waiting pays But a \$9.9 no-new-tax-p across state

It's not just bad news for reproductive money for ne cloning. It also means the related field Elde Schatten said. However, if 95 percent

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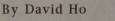
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Service received about 80 to happen to tax returns claiming \$2.7 bi eighbor E in reparations refunds. "They're jus majority of claims come for over the neight taxpayers in the South. he senior res aggressive campaign by authority over Congressional Black Cauc one had a qu and other organizations drast plant someth cally cut the number. nes to ask." Crime sce

The Justice Department recently has obtained cour orders to stop five other to preparers from promoting selling reparations schemes.

Regulators plan to overhau FCC media ownership rule "without any opportunity for



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### THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Fifteen senators asked regulators Thursday to disclose their plans for overhauling media ownership restrictions before going ahead with the changes.

Debate over the Federal Communications Commission's review has heated up as the agency's planned June 2 vote nears.

The FCC is studying whether decades-old ownership restrictions belong in a market altered by satellite broadcasts, cable television and the Internet.

The rules include limits on the national reach of television broadcasters, a ban on mergers between major television networks and a restriction preventing a company from owning a newspaper and a radio or television station in the same city.

In a letter to FCC Chairman Michael five Powell, Republicans and 10 Democrats, most of them on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, said they were disappointed that the updated rules would be released

them beforehand.' "Dramatic changes in structure of our media mark

Congress or the public to revi

place could have long-term co sequences on the diversity voices and free expression our nation," said the lawmake including Sen. Ernest Holling of South Carolina, the commi tee's top Democrat.

FCC spokesman Richard Diamond said the agency working on a response.

Last week, 12 other lawman ers took an opposite position calling the current ownership restrictions outdated and urgin Powell to complete the reviewa schedule. Those lawmake included four members of Senate committee and Rep. Bil Tauzin, R-La., chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The Small Busine Administration wrote to Powel saying that the FCC has move too quickly to alter the rules at should back off, allowing mon time for comments.

Powell said the FCC w seek more comment, but he not inclined to do it without good reason.

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