



Coalition For Animals & Animal Research CFAAR Arizona Newsletter

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In this issue...

Bill Passed to Protect Animal Researchers' Privacy [1](#)

Pamphlets Targeting UCSC Researchers Found at Coffee Shop [3](#)

Firebomb Attacks Anger, Worry UC Scientists Who Use Animals in Research [4](#)

Academic Research Bill Passes Senate [5](#)

The War on Animal Research [6](#)

Big Fish on Campus [8](#)

Protein Power: Researchers Trigger Insulin Production in Diabetic Mice [9](#)

Brain Drug Target Discovery in MS [10](#)

Bill Passed to Protect Researchers' Privacy

By Angelica Dongallo & Stephanie M. Lee

Following a series of attacks on the homes of researchers throughout the UC system, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill Sunday that will limit the activity of animal-rights protesters at researchers' homes. Assembly Bill 2296, or the Researcher Protection Act of 2008, makes it a misdemeanor to publish personal information about academic researchers or their family members with the intent to use this information to threaten or attack those researchers.

The bill also makes it a misdemeanor for protesters to enter researchers' property for the purpose of interfering with their academic practices. "The fact that there have been attacks on academic researchers highlighted the need for the bill," said Assemblymember Gene Mullin, D-South San Francisco, who introduced the bill in February. "The fact that there are enhanced criminal penalties now present will act as a deterrent."

The bill comes after attacks on the homes of researchers at multiple UC campuses throughout the past few years. At UC Berkeley, there have been more than 20 reports of vandalism at researchers' houses, including broken windows and vandalized cars.

Anti-animal research activists firebombed the homes of two UC Santa Cruz researchers in early August, according to UC police. "We think it's going to enhance the safety of researchers throughout the state at public and private universities, and we're very pleased," Mullin said. However, officials from some animal rights organizations said the act is a violation of free speech.

Officials from animal rights organizations, such as the North American Animal Liberation Press Office, have previously said the bill would do little to mitigate attacks on researchers since the underground people behind them have shown disregard for the law. Other groups including the Animal Protection Institute of America, who opposed the act after it was first introduced to the Assembly, chose not to take an official stance on the amended versions of the bill.

Campus administrators in favor of the law have previously said it would protect animal researchers and their families who have been subject to attack by animal rights extremists without inhibiting "lawful expressions of free speech."

On Sept. 22, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau wrote a letter to the governor that urged him

CFAAR: Who We Are

CFAAR is a nonprofit educational organization which formed in response to activists who were attempting to discredit animal research and animal researchers in 1988. Several local CFAAR chapters have since sprung up across the country.

CFAAR chapters share the following objectives:

- To **organize** students, faculty, and staff at institutions where animal research is performed so effective letter writing campaigns can be initiated quickly.
- To **educate** the public, in general, and the campus, in particular, about the true nature of animal research and animal researchers.
- To **support** responsible and humane use of animals in biomedical research.

Through our newsletter, we will help inform you about legislation and other "happenings" concerning attacks on animal research. Our goal is to make it as easy as possible to contact your Washington, D.C. representatives.

The key to the effectiveness of this organization is you! We need your willingness to write an occasional letter, perhaps talk with a school group and, of course, give a few dollars to cover the cost of printing the newsletter and educational materials.

**HELP SUPPORT CFAAR
SO WE CAN SUPPORT YOU**

to sign the bill. "While UC Berkeley passionately and unequivocally supports the civil and free expression of views, including those that oppose the use of animals in research, we have an obligation to keep our faculty, staff and campuses safe," Birgeneau wrote. "The escalation and severity of attacks in recent years clearly crosses the line of civil and free expression."

(Daily Californian, 9/30/08)

Animal Rights Protesters Torment Scientists By Marcus Wohlsen

In the hills above the University of California's Berkeley campus, nine protesters gathered in front of the home of a toxicology professor, their faces covered with scarves and hoods despite the warm spring weather. One scrawled "killer" in chalk on the scientist's doorstep, while another hurled insults through a bullhorn and announced, "Your neighbor kills animals!" Someone shattered a window. Borrowing the kind of tactics used by anti-abortion demonstrators, animal rights activists are increasingly taking their rage straight to scientists' front doors.

Over the past couple of years, more and more researchers who experiment on animals have been harassed and terrorized in their own homes, with weapons that include firebombs, flooding and acid. Scientists say the vandalism and intimidation threaten not just themselves and their families but the future of medical research. Specialists in such fields as addiction, eyesight and the aging brain have been targeted. "It used to be everyone was worried about their laboratories being broken into and their data being destroyed, their animals being taken away," said Jeffrey Kordower, head of the Society for Neuroscience's animal research committee. "What they've decided to do now is make things more personal."

Accompanying the attacks is increasingly tough talk from activists such as Dr. Jerry Vlasak, a spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front press office. In an interview with The Associated Press, he said he is not encouraging anyone to commit murder, but "if you had to hurt somebody or intimidate them or kill them, it would be morally justifiable."

The Washington-based Foundation for Biomedical Research said researchers were harassed or otherwise victimized more than 70 times in 2003, up from just 10 the year before. The number of attacks has held steady or risen ever since, according to the group. Activists say the escalation in tactics results from a frustration that nonviolent methods have failed to stop what they call the needless torture and killing of animals. "An animal has as much of a right to life as we do. To take a life without provocation is immoral, it's violent, there's no excuse for it," said Jacob Black, 23, organizer of demonstrations at the homes of UC Berkeley researchers. "To name and shame these people as morally bankrupt in our society is key."

A web site aimed at Berkeley lists the names of a dozen researchers and their home, work and e-mail addresses, their photos, and often their home numbers. The roster also includes graphic descriptions of each scientist's purported work with animals. "This information is here so that others may pressure these individuals with legal protests — we do not participate in or encourage illegal activity," the Web site says. Despite that disclaimer, the late May protest in the Berkeley hills left a window of the toxicology professor's home shattered along with the window of a neighbor, who sprayed demonstrators with a garden hose to drive them away.

Many scientists are reluctant to discuss the effect these incidents have had on biomedical research. They worry that any sign the attacks are succeeding could just lead to more of the same. At least one researcher decided the pressure was too much. In 2006, activists began besieging the homes of several UCLA professors. Masked protesters converged on scientists' homes late at night, banging on doors, throwing firecrackers and chanting, "We know where you sleep," according to court documents.

Threatening calls and e-mails followed. Firebombs were left near homes three times; two failed to go off, while the third charred a front door. One professor's home was flooded when a garden hose was shoved through a broken window. During the onslaught, which lasted two years, a UCLA scientist with small children informed protesters he had stopped doing animal research. "Effective immediately, I am no longer doing animal research," vision researcher Dario Ringach wrote in an e-mail. "Please don't bother my family."

Though no one has been seriously hurt since the jump in home protests, the attacks have drawn the attention of the FBI. The agency has broad authority to investigate animal rights incidents under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act of 2006. "We consider this to be a serious problem, especially when people's lives are being disrupted," said agent David Strange, who oversees a domestic counterterrorism squad at the FBI's Oakland office. "We call it terrorism because it is a violent act violating federal criminal laws that has a political or social motivation to it."

Six members of a Philadelphia-based organization were sentenced to federal prison after they and the group itself were convicted in 2006 of using a web site to incite threats, harassment and vandalism against people connected with a company that tests drugs and household products on animals. Few activists have been prosecuted, because of free speech concerns and the movement's extreme secrecy.

Recently, federal investigators joined a probe into an alleged assault against the husband of a University of California, Santa Cruz breast-cancer researcher who experiments on mice. Police said masked activists pounded on the family's front door during a birthday party for their daughter, and one threw a punch when the husband tried to force them to leave.

Afterward, UC Santa Cruz Chancellor George Blumenthal backed a proposed state law that would limit activists' access to public information about animal experiments. Blumenthal called acts against animal

researchers "the greatest threat to academic freedom that I've seen in the history of this campus."

Activists say researchers drill holes into the skulls of monkeys and cats in pursuit of esoteric discoveries that will never help anyone. But scientists say every effort is made to minimize the suffering of animals used in experiments. Rigorous government and university regulations provide detailed protocols for the humane treatment of lab animals. And scientists must show they have exhausted all other options to obtain data before they turn to animals as test subjects.

In Kordower's work, drugs are used to induce symptoms of Parkinson's in monkeys, which are then given experimental treatments. Afterward, the monkeys are anesthetized and killed and their brains dissected. The research, says Kordower, director of neurobiology at Rush University in Chicago, has led to clinical trials for promising genetic therapies to treat Parkinson's.

Kordower has not faced attacks or protests. University of Utah neuroscientist Audie Leventhal has. The Animal Liberation Front claimed responsibility for dousing a home owned by Leventhal with glass-eating acid and covering it with animal rights slogans. Leventhal estimated the damage at \$20,000. At another home, the group claimed responsibility for putting glue in locks and pouring salt to destroy the front lawn.

Leventhal said he will never abandon his research into the effects of aging on the brain. In Leventhal's experiments, anesthetized monkeys are paralyzed, put on life support and shown flashing patterns on a screen as implanted sensors measure brain activity. "Even if I retire, I'm going to tell them I didn't retire," said the 56-year-old scientist. "There's no way they're winning." Still, he said, he has mostly been living out of state since the protests began two years ago. He said he refuses to teach classes to avoid having a fixed time and place where activists can find him. His wife got so scared after activists scaled the gate at their home in a Salt Lake City suburb that she bought a gun, Leventhal said. "I can see what they've done to me — if it gets enough publicity — preventing people with half a brain in graduate school from doing what I do," he said.

(Az Daily Star, 7/7/08)

Pamphlets Targeting UCSC Researchers Found at Coffee Shop By J.M. Brown

Threatening pamphlets publishing the personal information of UC Santa Cruz biomedical researchers were found at a downtown coffee shop. Police spokesman Zach Friend said a customer at Caffè Pergolesi, 418 Cedar St., gave police the stack of about a dozen pamphlets, saying the papers had been left by an unknown person. The flyers, which police are investigating as threats of a possible attack following a string of incidents this winter, target scientists who use mice, fruit flies and other animals in their work.

According to a copy provided by police, the flyers say, "Animal abusers everywhere beware; we know where you live; we know where you work; we will never back down until you end your abuse." The names, home addresses, home phone numbers and photos of researchers also were published on the flyers, but police have not verified those personal details are correct.

Anyone found to be responsible for the pamphlets could be charged with intent to terrorize or additional charges if the pamphlets could be linked to future violence or incidents targeting researchers, Friend said. "The clear intent of these pamphlets was to terrorize and intimidate through complete cowardice," Friend said. "They are targeting families that have young children and (other relatives) completely uninvolved in animal testing."

As a precaution, UCSC spokesman Jim Burns said the university is notifying UCSC employees whose names appear on the flyers. No researchers have reported any recent harassment, the university and police confirmed.

Friend declined to identify the customer who notified authorities about the flyers, but said the person removed all of them and turned them over to police out of a concern that they might incite violence. Friend said it was unclear exactly when the pamphlets were left at the coffee shop, which is popular with students, but that employees had not previously reported seeing them.

The pamphlet discovery is the first incident reported since a series of vandalism cases this winter targeting UCSC researchers and UC Berkeley scientists. In February, masked demonstrators rattled the front door of a UCSC researcher, whose husband chased the intruders away while the researcher protected her children in the back of the Westside home.

Hours after the attempted home invasion, authorities raided a Riverside Avenue house where several students live. No arrests have been made, and police say the hard drive of a laptop confiscated at the house had been cleaned several times, increasing suspicion among investigators.

Police have shared the pamphlets with the FBI, which is aiding in the investigation of all the incidents that occurred during the winter. No specific animal rights group has taken responsibility for any of the incidents, and Friend said it was not immediately clear whether the flyers were even connected to the previous incidents.

In response to the winter incidents, Assemblymember Gene Mullin, D-San Mateo, authored a bill called the Animal Enterprise Protection Act, which would have made such flyers and other harassment of animal researchers a specific crime. Although the bill passed out of the Judiciary Committee last month, it has been moved to the Senate's inactive file, the reasons for which were not immediately clear.

UCSC had supported the measure as needed protection for researchers. "As we have said many times, the faculty, students and staff engaged in health-related research on this campus shed light on the causes of breast cancer, neurological diseases and on the toxic effects of lead and other metals," Burns said, in reaction to the flyers. "The work they do is vitally important."

In the weeks immediately after the attempted home invasion incident, the university hired private security guards to protect researchers, but Burns declined to say Wednesday whether the service was still being provided. "Any security steps we take to help safeguard our people are, for obvious reasons, not something we will be discussing publicly," he said.

Police ask anyone with information about the flyers to contact investigators at 420-5820 or an anonymous tip line at 420-5995.

(San Jose Mercury News, 7/30/08)

Firebomb Attacks Anger, Worry UC Scientists Who Use Animals in Research

By Richard C. Paddock

Two firebomb attacks last week on UC Santa Cruz scientists who conduct animal research have angered and worried academics throughout the UC system, who said their work has broad public support and that they will not be intimidated by bombers who crossed the line by targeting families. "It is outrageous when people's families are targeted," said UCLA Chancellor Gene Block. "This is incredibly serious because it could have led to loss of life. It's chilling."

But Block, a biologist who uses mice in his research on circadian rhythms, said he expects the violent attacks to deter few scientists from working with animals. "There is deep concern in our community," he said. "People are concerned about their safety, but that is not affecting their work. They are going to continue doing the research."

The incendiary devices that went off in Santa Cruz struck three minutes apart just before 6 a.m. Aug. 2. One destroyed a car outside the home of a researcher who has not been publicly identified. The other exploded on the front porch of researcher David Feldheim's home. As smoke filled the house, he, his wife and their two children fled down an emergency rope ladder. Feldheim injured his feet when he hit the ground.

A sprinkler over the front door helped suppress the blaze and, university officials said, kept it from spreading to other houses in the suburban neighborhood of attached dwellings. "This is the first attack on animal researchers we are aware of where there were children in the home," said Bruce Margon, UC Santa Cruz's vice chancellor for research. "Everyone agrees that this is totally unconscionable."

Investigators said they have collected a large amount of forensic evidence from the two bomb sites and are treating the cases as attempted homicides. The city and university police departments, the FBI, federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the state fire marshal's office are participating in the investigation.

For the last few years, University of California scientists who use laboratory animals in their research have been harassed and threatened by activists who

contend that the researchers are torturing animals. Protesters, sometimes wearing masks or wielding bullhorns, have confronted researchers in public or shouted obscenities outside their homes in the middle of the night. They have set a van ablaze at UC Irvine and flooded a UCLA scientist's home with her garden hose. They have planted bombs outside UCLA researchers' homes that caused minor damage or didn't explode.

In 2006, a UCLA neurobiology professor announced that he was stopping his primate research because of harassment and threats to his family. Scientists and university leaders say the use of laboratory animals in biomedical research has broad public support and is financed in part by taxpayer money. They say the use of animals in such research is essential to develop treatments and cures for many ailments, including cancer, AIDS and Alzheimer's disease.

Virtually all Americans -- and their pets -- have benefited in some way from medical research involving laboratory animals, supporters of such research say. The majority of the animals are bred specifically for that purpose and regulations govern their use and treatment, university officials said. Few of the animals are primates. At UCLA, for example, more than 95% of lab animals are rodents, said campus spokesman Phil Hampton. But some animal rights activists contend that the use of any animals in research is morally wrong, and that aggressive tactics, including violence, are justified in attempting to end the practice.

Jerry Vlasak, a Los Angeles physician and frequent spokesman for the animal rights movement, maintains that researchers bring the violence on themselves and that any harm to humans is minimal compared to the suffering of lab animals. "UC Santa Cruz may consider themselves an institution of higher education, but they are also an institution of animal torture and killing," Vlasak wrote on his website, the North American Animal Liberation Press Office, after the latest attacks. "It's regrettable that certain scientists are willing to put their families at risk by choosing to do wasteful animal experiments in this day and age."

Elias Zerhouni, director of the National Institutes of Health, was among those who condemned the latest bombings. He defended the research being done by Feldheim, who receives funding from the agency. "Terrorism against researchers and institutions as well as their children and other family members is not to be tolerated," Zerhouni said in a joint statement with Norika Ruiz Bravo, the agency's deputy director for extramural research. "Threats to research using animals also threatens the health of the nation."

Feldheim's research focuses on mice brain abnormalities that occur during prenatal development and could lead to knowledge about how to "rewire" the human brain or spinal cord after damage from injury or disease, National Institutes of Health administrators said. They also emphasized that federally supported scientists who use animals in biomedical research must meet rigorous standards governing their treatment and use.

At the University of California, most of the incidents have occurred at three campuses -- UCLA, UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz. The UC system is

sponsoring legislation aimed at reducing the harassment by strengthening trespassing laws and making it easier for police to arrest protesters on a researcher's property.

Assemblyman Gene Mullin (D-San Mateo), who is carrying the bill, said the measure would prohibit trespassing that has "the intent to chill or interfere with academic freedom." He noted that researchers' homes have increasingly become the target of protests as universities have strengthened security at campus labs. "It's going to stop masked people from interfering with children's birthday parties or masked people on someone's lawn with bullhorns," he said. "It's a signal and it gives local authorities a little more oomph."

Nicole Baumgarth, an associate professor at UC Davis, is one of thousands of UC faculty members and graduate students who use animals in their research. Baumgarth said she uses mice to study the basic mechanisms of infectious diseases, and hopes her work will lead to a cure for ailments such as malaria, which kills 1 million children a year. She said she believes the potential benefit of her research outweighs the death of the mice. "We use mice and we kill mice every day," she said. "I haven't done it lightly and it wasn't easy for me to do, but I have made the decision for myself."

Baumgarth said she sympathizes with the animal rights movement, which she believes has improved treatment of lab animals and helped ensure that they are not used needlessly. "I consider myself an animal rights person," she said. "The use of live beings, just because we are bigger and stronger and we can put them in a cage, I don't think it's something anyone likes doing."

But she said she was appalled by the attack against a researcher and his family, especially one who was using mice, not primates, and predicted that the bombings would prove to be a setback for the animal rights movement. "It really crossed a line," Baumgarth said. "I think that everybody who is alive in the West has probably benefited from medical research -- yourself or your kids. They shouldn't see us as horrible people who enjoy killing animals."

(Los Angeles Times, 8/10/08)

Academic Research Bill Passes Senate

By J.M. Brown

A bill designed to shield academic researchers from harassment by animal rights groups and others who oppose their work passed the state Senate. The Researcher Protect Act, authored after a home invasion attempt at the home of a UC Santa Cruz scientist who uses mice in cancer studies, makes it a misdemeanor to publish the personal information or photographs of researchers with the intent to threaten or harm them or their families.

The bill also provides protection against trespassing on residential property with the intent to

thwart the work of researchers. UC sponsored the bill, which was authored by Assemblymember Gene Mullin, D-South San Francisco, whose district includes numerous commercial research laboratories not covered by the bill. "Increasingly, the potential for innovative thought and new medical therapies is jeopardized by threats aimed at researchers and their families," Mullin said in a statement Friday. "We need to send a message that violence or serious threats of violence are never the answer."

The bill passed 29-0, with voting halted once the measure had received the required number of votes. "Naturally, we are very pleased, and we appreciate such strong bipartisan support from the Senate on what we view as a very important public safety issue," said Paul Schwartz, a spokesman for the UC Office of the President.

Mullin said the Internet has provided animal rights activists new ways of gathering and disseminating the personal information of researchers, including their home addresses and home phone numbers. Mullin worked with the American Civil Liberties Union, which took a neutral stand on the bill, to ensure it did not curtail the freedom of expression to allege animal rights abuse - as long as the intent is not to harm workers. Mullin first proposed the bill after masked demonstrators shook the door of a researcher who was hosting a child's birthday party. When the researcher's husband confronted the group, he was hit on the arm, police say.

Three weeks ago, the homes of UCSC scientists were targeted by firebombs. One family escaped the early-morning attack via a second-floor fire escape; another's vehicle was destroyed. Other researchers at UCSC, UC Berkeley and UCLA also have reported a string of vandalism and trespassing incidents for the past year. The bill must pass through Assembly committees and the Assembly floor before moving to the governor's desk.

(Santa Cruz Sentinel, 8/22/08)

The War on Animal Research

By P. Michael Conn

"Excuse me," I said, cutting to the front of the line of passengers at the airport departure gate counter. "I have an emergency and need you to call the police right now!" Two airline agents stopped checking seating charts and looked at me. "I am a medical researcher and some people are protesting my visit to Tampa. They're not passengers," I explained. (This was in 2001, shortly before 9/11, when security measures allowed nonpassengers into boarding areas.)

One desk agent examined my boarding pass, and then looked at my pursuers. I knew what she saw: five people with T-shirts that read: "KEEP PRIMATE TESTER Dr. P.M. CONN OUT OF U.S.F." She let me through. Ten minutes later, when the pilot boarded and asked if I was okay, and I heard the outer doors close, my blood pressure and heart rate slowly began to sink into normal ranges.

I was en route from Tampa where I had been selected as a final candidate for the position of vice president for research at the University of South Florida (USF). The people following me were animal rights activists, who had learned of my visit on an animal rights listserv.

I currently don't use animals in my research, but I am associated with people who do. I was special assistant to the president of Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), and associate director of one of its Institutes, the Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC). I also have a research program that has contributed to the development of treatments for breast and prostate cancer, endometriosis, and problems of infertility. I believe in the value of animal research in basic science. I have spoken and written about the importance of humane animal research and how it benefits both humans and animals.

Because of my position at the OHSU primate center, an animal rights activist had urged subscribers to an animal rights listserv to write letters to the University of South Florida administration and to my academic colleagues, protesting my candidacy. In Tampa, my plane was met by animal extremists who tried to engage and film me. Exercising their rights under a state open-meetings law, they were present at most of my scheduled meetings with university committees. Some stood outside meeting room doors to berate attendees and distribute fliers that made outlandish claims. At the end of the first day, I considered returning home to Portland for my safety, then decided to remain in this stressful situation for one more day. The university assigned an armed police officer to look after me. I received threatening calls at my hotel and knocks on the door in the middle of the night. As the demonstrators hoped, drawing this much media attention suggested that I or my research program would be a liability. Needless to say, I didn't get the job.

What word other than "war" can we employ to describe what is happening to the enterprise of biomedical research? Attack? Assault? How else to describe the posting of pictures of researchers and inaccurate, inflammatory descriptions of their work on the Internet? What do we call the nighttime "visits" to our homes, the mailing of letters to scientists in envelopes armed with razor blades, and Internet postings that reveal an eerie and threatening knowledge of our personal lives and loved ones?

Some argue that animal extremists are a handful, at most. Scientists should ignore them, they say, and concentrate on their research. But consider this: All of the drama surrounding my trip to Tampa was achieved by, at most, 15 poorly informed and inarticulate people who successfully stirred up fear among the search committee, which had been highly supportive of me at first. A small group of extremists are more successful than their moderate colleagues in drawing public attention to their cause, and can exercise an influence wholly disproportionate to their numbers. They are chillingly effective in causing casualties, whether institutional or personal.

The metaphor of war can be self-defeating. We are confident that in any open and civilized public-policy debate, scientists, even though they tend to be poor communicators, would prevail over their challengers. But what will happen if researchers, convinced that they are encircled by belligerents, retreat behind barricades and remain incommunicado? Research and its beneficiaries - that is, all of us - stand to lose.

I never predicted that I would find myself, at age 50, a target of the animal rights community. I have been interested in the biological process of life as long as I can remember. By the time I was 12, I realized that cures for diseases required understanding how the body works when it is healthy. Even before that, I was a biology geek, crawling around on the ground to watch ants, and growing seeds under different colors of plastic.

I had read a little bit about animal rights activities when I was in high school in the late 1960s. It was never front-page news, mostly distant and abstract grumblings from "antivivisection" groups in the UK. When I went to college at the University of Michigan, activism was directed towards ending the Vietnam War. I watched people of conscience, including a roommate, get arrested for demonstrating their views.

I never trained to go into primate research and, frankly, knew little about nonhuman primates until I came to Oregon in 1993. I spent the first part of my career at Duke University, working on rat-derived cell cultures. We used white rats and a handful of mice, all of them raised for the laboratory. We caused them no pain and killed them humanely to study their tissues. Six years later, when I became a department head at the University of Iowa College of Medicine, I made the transition to continuous cell-culture lines.

ONPRC, one of eight federally sponsored primate research centers, is a fully accredited institution that is responsible for the care of more than 3,500 monkeys. This is a serious responsibility that involves frequent, unannounced inspection visits by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We support our animals with a veterinary and animal-care staff of 90 people, along with a separate psychological enrichment program that includes seven more people led by a doctoral level researcher. We participate in a voluntary inspection program by an international professional organization, the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC). We are fully accredited by that program as well.

The envelope blades, armed with rat poison, were placed so that opening the letter would result in a severe cut. But that wasn't enough to satisfy the activists who set out to sabotage my trip to the University of Southern Florida. Several things struck me about this experience. For one, the communication among animal extremists was fast, and effective. I was also shocked by the accusations. These people charged me with "crimes" that I had never committed: torturing marmosets and obtaining huge quantities of monkey sperm by a process that they likened to genital electrocution. When I tried to tell them I didn't use sperm and my studies were all done in cell cultures, they shouted me down.

Some investigators at our center and elsewhere routinely collect monkey sperm by a process called electroejaculation. The USDA and the veterinary community approve this process, which isn't painful (despite its unfortunate name). A similar process is used for human paraplegics, otherwise unable to father children. In terms of torturing marmosets, 16 years ago, I collaborated with a British colleague in measuring hormone levels in some marmosets. For that contribution my name was added (as a middle author) to the scientific publication's author list. I had never seen the animals, since the serum was shipped to me on dry ice from England.

The accusations lacked any basis in fact, and people who should have known better - the search committee, for example - accepted them as truth. The president of the university, who had disclosed to me the ironic detail that she had grown up in a family of meat packers, and who had been gracious and supportive during the interview process, refused to speak with me further afterwards. The extremists, of course, took credit. The university eventually filled the position with an animal researcher who works on a rat model of hypertension, but who isn't associated with a primate center and thus wasn't in the crosshairs.

I moved to Portland in 1993. At the time, I was unaware that the area is an incubator for the animal rights movement, which I considered distant and irrelevant, much as I had in high school. On May 3, 1996, that began to change. That day, I arrived at work early in the morning to find two cars blocking the only entrance to our primate center. The drivers had fastened their necks to the steering column of each car using bicycle locks, and the keys to the cars and the locks were "lost." After firefighters sawed off the steering columns, found the keys, liberated the drivers, and towed the cars, ONPRC officials signed complaints for second-degree criminal trespass against Craig Rosebraugh and his associates, who identified themselves as members of the Liberation Collective.

Ineffective though it was, this event kindled my interest in the animal rights movement. In 1994, the primate center was approaching its 35th year of uninterrupted compliance with federal regulations for animal care. Nevertheless, we were being targeted by activists. I began monitoring animal rights Web sites, following their listservs, and gathering information from a handful of proresearch organizations operating on shoestring budgets, which provided e-mail summaries of animal rights activities.

One morning in October 1999, I saw a startling message on one of the listservs: A group calling itself the Justice Department said it had sent razor blades to about 80 animal researchers. The blades had been fastened near the top of each envelope so that opening them by inserting a thumb under the flap would result in a severe cut. The blades, the letter announced, had been armed with rat poison. The enclosed letter called on scientists to abandon their research within 12 months or "your violence will be turned back upon you." I found four primate center investigators on the list of recipients. Being an early riser, I was able to warn them,

and we recovered all four envelopes, unopened. These were transferred to law enforcement authorities, but to this day we have heard nothing about them. The 12-month deadline to abandon research programs came and went, without incident.

In recent years, I personally got to know some of the movement's most infamous members.

Craig Rosebraugh - I met Craig for the first time when his neck was attached to a steering wheel at the entrance to the primate center. In recent years, Rosebraugh ran the press office of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). He told mainstream media when seemingly random fires or other destructive acts were the result of the movement. He claimed to be uninvolved, and provided no names: Members of the ELF, and its sister group, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), don't carry identification cards or have meetings. No one knows who all the members are.

The FBI, armed with search warrants, had seen fit on two occasions to search Rosebraugh's home. On the first occasion, agents discovered a purple index card, duly reported in the local newspaper, containing my name and home address. Why this card was in his house, or what it might have portended, remains a mystery to this day. You can be assured that when I learned of the discovery, I felt not just the threat of violence, but something more: a violation of my person.

When subpoenaed to testify before Congress in February 2002 as part of an ecoterror investigation led by Senator James Inhofe, Rosebraugh answered only a portion of questions, but some caught my attention. In all, he took the Fifth Amendment more than 50 times.

In October 2003, he announced and promoted his new, self-published manifesto, *The Logic of Political Violence*. The cover features an image of the burning World Trade Center towers, and the book contains this message: "Attack the financial centers of the country ... This can be done in a variety of ways from massive property destruction, to online sabotage, to physical occupation of buildings."

Matt Rossell - Matt Rossell is very good with people. He is clean and well groomed, and seems honest - in all, the kind of person that you might like your daughter to marry. All of this led us to hire him as an animal technician in 1998. Rossell's subterfuge was so effective that when the local chapter of the Animal Legal Defense Fund announced a press conference to expose allegations (including videos) from a whistleblower about animal abuse at the primate center, we had no idea who the whistleblower might be. Even after we learned it was him, we did not realize that he had been working as an informant.

Dealing with the public relations nightmare created by Rossell's video images was extremely difficult, to say the least. One of the videos showed a "hungry and filthy" monkey in an incubator. In reality, the infant had been given human baby food and had, like human babies, played with it and smeared the puree on the incubator window. The video had been made at an opportune moment before daily cleanup. From this same video clip came a still photo, frozen at the instant when the infant face looks anguished. This was puzzling until

we went back to the video and noticed a rubber-gloved finger moving over the window of the incubator and toward the monkey. In expectation of food, the monkey moves toward the finger, pursing its lips and producing, for less than a second, the look that Rossell reduced to a still. The monkey was not upset or in pain, just caught in an unflattering pose.

Other images presented frightened animals living in what looks like crowded conditions and in the midst of feces covering the floor. The images were created before morning cleanup, so some of the material is likely feces, but most is Purina Monkey Chow biscuits photographed from a distance in the dim light of dawn before morning cleanup. The photographer, having entered their enclosure, had likely frightened the monkeys, causing them to huddle together and appear hemmed in.

Another clip showed a room of monkeys banging their cages. But, in this instance, Rossell's cropping wasn't careful enough: At the bottom right of the video image we can see the food cart, and any animal technician will tell you that monkeys bang their cages in excitement when they see food coming.

The center launched an Internet site to explain the truth behind each of Rossell's images. None of his allegations were supported by extensive federal investigations. Five federal investigators, all veterinarians, worked daily for two weeks but found no merit in Rossell's claims and found no signs of animal cruelty or federal noncompliance. Animal abuse would have been impossible to hide in this investigation or in the 10 unannounced inspections that extended our continuous USDA certification to over 40 years in a row. The primate center was cleared of any wrongdoing. But Rossell has used his images to elicit contributions to the California nonprofit In Defense of Animals, and Web sites and brochures continue to display the images.

No one could wish for new plagues to bring home to the public the need for animal research and put animal extremism to rest. Yet, with global warming, jet travel, avian flu, and AIDS, as well as threats of bioterrorism, diseases once unknown or thought to be conquered are arriving on our doorstep. It may be that exotic and resurgent viruses will swing public opinion in favor of animal research. Medical schools, scientific societies, physician organizations, and research institutions must get out and explain the connection between animal research and human and animal health. We cannot afford to keep it a dirty little secret.

(The Scientist, 4/08)

Big Fish on Campus

By Trevor Davis

About a hundred trillion bacteria are living in the pit of a human's stomach. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. With the help of some fish, University researchers found that the body tolerates the bacteria, and they found the bacteria help digest food in the gut.

The research marks another study using zebrafish at the University, which is recognized as the center for zebrafish research in the science community. Scientists say zebrafish could help find treatments for inherited diseases because the fish make for ideal experiment specimens.

University researcher Karen Guillemin found that a common enzyme, called intestinal alkaline phosphatase, in the intestines of all fish and humans plays a role in detoxifying a component of the cell wall of many bacteria that reside in the intestine as symbionts. University graduate student Jennifer Bates, undergraduate researcher Janie Akerlund and research assistant Erika Mittge helped Guillemin in the study. "This finding helps answer a long-standing puzzle, which is why our bodies don't undergo a massive inflammatory response to these symbiotic bacteria," Guillemin said in an e-mail. She is currently at home with a newborn son.

The research also provides a better understanding of interactions with the bacterial symbionts in the gut. These interactions are thought to at least partly cause some diseases, including some inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. "Our studies demonstrate one way in which the body deals with the potential inflammatory nature of these bacteria by detoxifying the bacterial molecule that normally stimulates the inflammatory response," Guillemin said.

This same method could be used to prevent or treat intestinal inflammation in the case of certain inflammatory bowel diseases, Guillemin said. The research was published in the journal *Cell Host & Microbe* and *Science* magazine.

Although Guillemin's work veers slightly from the University's approach of using zebrafish in genomics studies, Guillemin said zebrafish were used because they're similar to humans in the development and physiology of their digestive and immune systems.

Bill Trevarrow, the former director of the University Zebrafish Facility, describes zebrafish as an "aquarium shop fish with horizontal stripes," and he said they're easy to breed and care for. "That alone makes them well-suited for labs," Trevarrow said.

The zebrafish's eggs develop outside the mother's body, and scientists can watch an egg grow under a microscope because the embryo is clear, Trevarrow said. "You can see what all of the cells are doing in the first few days of development," he said.

The zebrafish is ideal for studying vertebrate development, biology professor Monte Westerfield said. "The only other major vertebrate organism for studying genetics is the mouse, and to some extent the rat," Westerfield said. "Compared to mice, fish are much cheaper and easier to maintain in a laboratory setting. They develop rapidly."

The University is regarded as a pioneer in zebrafish research. Millions of zebrafish researchers across the world still look to the University for information and use the University's online zebrafish database systems.

Zebrafish research began with the late George Streisinger more than 30 years ago, Westerfield said,

adding Streisinger wanted to apply the studies of genetics to vertebrates. Streisinger's research has been carried on by the likes of Westerfield, biology professor Charles Kimmel and biology professor Judith Eisen. The University has also showed strong support in zebrafish research - President Dave Frohnmayer even devoted an entire convocation speech to the topic in 2003.

Today, about 5,000 researchers in 450 labs throughout 31 countries study zebrafish, Westerfield said. Many of those labs are staffed with researchers who studied at the University. Westerfield said he's excited about the study of zebrafish because the field is working its way toward treating human diseases. Researchers are able to mutate genes in a fish to mimic a disease, study the response and figure out how to treat it. Zebrafish could be used to treat genetic diseases in humans, Westerfield said.

(Oregon Daily Emerald, 1/11/08)

Protein Power: Researchers Trigger Insulin Production in Diabetic Mice

If the human body were a stage, then proteins would rank among the lead actors in the play we call "Life." These large biological molecules hold many starring roles, and their lines are dictated by information encoded in our genes. They are production powerhouses, regulating the basic processes of living and controlling countless functions. Many are enzymes that produce or use energy. Others regulate genes.

Researchers are increasingly studying proteins as potential therapies for a variety of dread diseases because they can influence cell behavior by fueling or dampening certain molecular signals. Now University of Florida researchers have coaxed liver and pancreatic cells within diabetic mice into churning out insulin by injecting the animals with a naturally occurring protein called Pdx1, opening up a new research avenue that someday could lead to safer treatments for type 1 diabetes. Pdx1 activates the genes controlling the development of the pancreas cells that make and release insulin to maintain safe levels of glucose in the body. The UF research team's novel approach is described online in the journal *Diabetes*. "Pdx1 is so special because it possesses a unique amino acid sequence that acts as a sort of molecular passport, allowing it to pass freely into cells, enter the nucleus and activate insulin production and release," said lead scientist Dr. Li-Jun Yang, an associate professor of pathology, immunology and laboratory medicine at UF's College of Medicine.

Earlier research has shown that inserting the Pdx1 gene into liver or pancreas cells can induce insulin production, but most gene therapy methods use viruses to introduce a piece of genetically engineered DNA into cells. The disadvantage of such approaches is that researchers can never be certain the viruses are entirely harmless, Yang said. The idea with protein therapy is that eventually a person's own cells could be

reprogrammed to naturally produce the hormone, restoring the body's ability to properly regulate blood sugar levels without having to use a potentially hazardous virus to slip corrective genes into the body or having to transplant pancreatic cells from someone else. That could eliminate the adverse effects sometimes associated with gene therapy and eliminate the need for lifelong suppression of the immune system so transplanted cells are not rejected, Yang said.

"We sought to see what happens if we inject highly pure Pdx1 protein into (the abdomens of) diabetic animals," said Yang, who is also a founder and head of the scientific advisory board for Transgeneron Therapeutics Inc., which seeks to develop Pdx1 as a treatment for diabetes. UF holds a provisional patent on Pdx1 protein therapy. "Amazingly, the treated mice did all the rest. Upon daily injection of this protein for 10 days into diabetic animals, their blood glucose levels became normalized within two weeks following the first injection. We repeated the experiment six times, and we got the reproducible result every time. What is remarkable is that the protein also promotes regeneration of insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, allowing the diabetic mice to become normal."

Yang said there is now reason to believe normal blood sugar levels can be maintained for long periods, suggesting that an infrequent Pdx1 injection might someday replace daily insulin injections. Even more importantly, the reprogrammed and regenerated cells should make and release insulin, automatically maintaining safe blood sugar levels, she said. "Right now, promoting beta cell regeneration has become such a hot topic," she added. "The trick is to figure out how to trigger glucose-regulated insulin-producing cells to regenerate."

Still, the approach will have to be tested in studies that assess its safety before scientists could conduct patient trials to determine whether it works in people, studies that are still years away. "What's so innovative about UF's approach is the ability to normalize blood glucose levels in diabetic mice simply by delivering Pdx1 protein in the target cells, thus effectively eliminating the side effects associated with gene therapy," Yang said.

Dr. Joel Habener, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School whose research team was one of three groups that discovered Pdx1 and identified it as an important regulator of pancreas development, said using viruses as vectors for gene therapy in humans can pose problems because of the body's immune reaction to them. He heralded the UF findings and said the idea of using a protein to correct a condition like diabetes is appealing because it is naturally occurring, "not a chemical compound that's been synthesized from the mind of a chemist that's a foreign substance." "What these findings teach is there is promise for a therapeutic approach to the treatment of diabetes," he said. "I think one of the really major breakthroughs here is the demonstration of principle that the naked protein in and of itself can get into cells and cause changes that are remarkable in a mouse model of type 1 diabetes, the

regeneration of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas.”

(Univ of FL, 1/8/08)

Brain Drug Target Discovery in MS

Comparison of 2,538 proteins from MS patients with those from healthy brains showed damage in two proteins not before linked to the disease. In mice blocking the effects of the proteins led to reversal of symptoms, the study in Nature reported.

There are about 85,000 people with MS in the UK. The condition is caused by a defect in the body's immune system, which turns in on itself, attacking the fatty myelin sheath which coats the nerves, leading to symptoms including blurred vision, loss of balance and, in some cases, paralysis.

Study leader Professor Lawrence Steinman said this was the first large-scale study to search for defective proteins in MS lesions in the brain. They found a few proteins peculiar to MS brain lesions. But two in particular - tissue factor and protein C inhibitor - showed signs of damage during the chronic active stage of the disease. These normally participate in the control of blood clotting and in anti-inflammatory pathways. The researchers guessed that the damaged proteins might be helping the progression of MS and, by using inhibitors of the proteins found they could successfully ameliorate the disease in mice.

Professor Steinman, from Stanford University School of Medicine in California, said the finding opened up the way for new treatments. However, using existing drugs which interfere with the control of blood clotting would be dangerous because of increased risk of bleeding. Professor Neil Scolding, from the University of Bristol Institute of Clinical Neurosciences, said: "From the scientific perspective, the exciting thing is that it's pretty much the first time that proteomics has directly yielded a candidate molecule that is both unexpected and novel on the one hand and has therapeutic potential. "From the clinical perspective, showing that treatment approaches predicted by this proteomic interrogation of MS tissue do have a clear impact in experimental models of MS is extremely promising. This points the way to a new area of MS research of considerable interest, and which could well lead in the future to new lines of treatment."

Dr Laura Bell, Research Communications Officer at the MS Society, said she looked forward to seeing how the research progressed. "This is early research but provides an interesting insight into some of the potential players that cause different types of damage to the central nervous system in people with MS. Understanding how MS develops is vital to target therapies for the condition."

(BBC News, 2/17/08)

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