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Letters

Pathetic

The Public Interest Law Conference held at the law school from March 1 to March 4 is the largest conference of its type in the world. Now in its eighth year, attendance reached an all-time high of over 1,000 people — people from all over the world (Soviet Union, India, South and Central America, Japan, Europe, and more) dedicated to environmental concerns.

Considering the importance and size of this event, the *Emerald's* coverage was absolutely pathetic. Monday's March 5 issue only covered National Wildlife Foundation President Jay Hair's speech, which is rather ironic considering the audience's reaction to him (from mild to strong disapproval), and that there were so many other speeches more representative of the conference.

You also missed the opportunity to picture and discuss Vandana Shiva instead of Hair. She received a standing ovation after a very moving speech. I hope that next year's conference will receive the coverage it deserves.

Jackie Corday
Law student

Weak

I was confused by Gary Malcolm's letter to the editor (*ODE*, March 8). In it, he stated "Poor Stephanie Nelson is so brainwashed by this society that even after a women's studies class she refers to her sex as a race."

The purpose of writing my letter (*ODE*, March 5) was to show support for the women's studies department. Anyone who carefully read my letter would have realized this.

Is his point so weak that he is forced to base his argument on a denotative error?

Malcolm also lumps me with organizations that he claims to be discriminatory. I wonder how I can be linked with these entities since I was voicing support for an organization whose purpose is to, in fact, fight discrimination.

Malcolm calls me brainwashed by a society that encourages "separatism" and discrimination. How can this be if I have publicly praised the work of a department whose stated purpose is to fight the very "separatism" that Malcolm speaks of?

Stephanie Nelson
Art history

Under oath

In their reply to allegations made by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Michael Posner and Daniel Kimble claim that evidence against Richard Marrocco is not fact as "... these allegations come from a pre-trial hearing, since there was not trial." (*ODE*, Feb. 28)

The fact is, however, that while it may have been a pre-trial hearing, Marrocco was still under oath when he admitted that in the 15 years he has been experimenting with monkeys, he could not recall ever seeing a veterinarian come in and check the monkeys after surgery.

Even if they had not distorted the truth, the idea of not-human primates returning to our campus should still be questioned. Do we have the right to treat other living beings as non-sensitive lab equipment? Is our search for knowledge worth causing the pain and death that animal research necessitates?

When will our lust for knowledge be satiated? When every disease is cured and we live in a sterile environment? When human beings are immortal?

Posner and Kimble say "We

know Marrocco to be a careful, humane and conscientious researcher." Yet, how humane can it be to force a fellow primate to live in isolation, to implant skull caps in their heads, and then to forcibly sacrifice their lives for the sake of science?

Pamela Wirch
English

Demonstrate

We believe Nicole Bourcier is misinformed on several issues concerning animal research (*ODE*, Feb. 26). We will address only her statement that thalidomide-deformed babies demonstrate the unreliability of animal models.

Thalidomide was introduced in 1956 by the German pharmaceutical firm Chemi Grunenthal as a mild sedative. Its ability to diminish nausea in early pregnancy led to its use in many countries. Unfortunately, Grunenthal had little evidence, animal or human, supporting its claims of safety. No tests were done on pregnant animals to determine the effect on fetuses.

The first thalidomide baby was born in 1959; thereafter the number increased dramatically. Only when concerned scientists began questioning the extent of thalidomide's effects on humans did Grunenthal withdraw thalidomide from the market. Subsequent tests by Grunenthal and thalidomide's British distributor, Distillers, Inc., clearly demonstrated that thalidomide does cause birth defects in animals which are similar to those in humans.

The United States was largely spared. Concerned with lack of data, animal or human, the FDA never approved thalidomide.

Thus, contrary to Bourcier's assertion, the thalidomide tragedy is an excellent demonstration of the value of animal research. If proper tests in animals had been done before releasing the drug to the public, there wouldn't be thousands of people suffering because of malformed or missing limbs.

The fact that use of thalidomide results in malformed offspring in rabbits, monkeys and humans but not in mice, reinforces the importance of comprehensive animal testing.

Tracie Bork
Secretary-treasurer
Eric Schabtach
Officer

And twelve other members of
Coalition For Animals
and Animal Research

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