

The public is bombarded with half truths and untruths regarding our profession: an old tactic long identified with extremist groups. It may be of interest to note that when Sir Victor Horsley of University College, London, was running for a seat to represent his College in Parliament, he was viciously attacked by antivivisectionists. His election committee was obliged to write in *The London Times* of December 8, 1910, "They (antivivisectionists) have issued a circular to the electors saying that he has performed over 3,000 experiments on animals, but they expressly omit any reference to the anesthetics employed, thereby imputing cruelty to him." Sir Horsley lost 2,579 to 1,857. Today, the tactics are similar. Photos of animals are presented to imply terrible cruelty. Reference to anesthetics are still omitted.

But why concern? It is because of the hidden agenda. If pound laws are repealed, the next step will be to limit animal experimentation in some other manner, perhaps to prohibit use of primates or dogs or cats. If successful, efforts will move on to other limitations. Despite the animal rightists' claims, this issue is not about humane treatment; it is about animal use. Pound laws have nothing to do with humaneness.

Unfortunately, laws are passed not because the majority of the electorate favors them but because a vocal group is heard. Every poll has shown that less than 10% of the United States population is in favor of severely restricting animal research, but legislators hear resoundingly from this mi-

nority. At local, state, and national levels, they receive a barrage of antivivisectionist letters. This issue has generated more letters to the Congress than any other issue. Yet, the response of the scientific community has been silence. We seem to believe a series of myths:

"Pound laws don't affect me, so why get excited?"

"Our national societies will take care of the issue."

"No one believes the antivivisectionists anyway."

Such responses are wrong. Dead wrong. Regulations that make research prohibitively costly are an assault on all research. Not only does it stop much needed work, it drains the research budgets of granting agencies, thus making it more difficult for all to obtain funds.

The American Physiological Society and others do testify before Congress; however, they cannot testify at state and local levels. But even at a national level, it is imperative for researchers to write or phone their congressional representative. Why should your representatives in the Congress support your view if she or he receives no word from you? Their thinking is "If investigators don't care enough to spend 10 minutes to write me, why should I believe they care about the issue?"

Finally, it is incorrect to assume no one believes the horror tales told. The same inaccurate charges have been leveled against the scientific community for decades. Little rebuttal has appeared, so that even those who support animal research believe we are inhumane. The public is

not aware of the regulations by which we must abide.

Scientists must become active before restrictive laws are passed. Once passed, they are very difficult to repeal. It means we must speak to lay groups when possible and to the media when the opportunity arises. My experiences have shown they are interested and fair. We must write, not only to our representatives but to our newspapers, when the issue is raised. We must also become active members of those organizations that devote themselves to informing the public on the nature of animal research. They exist in many states—California Biomedical Research Association, Massachusetts Society for Medical Research, Michigan Society for Medical Research,—and nationally—Foundation for Biomedical Research and National Association for Biomedical Research.

I firmly believe the scientific community must tithe itself in time and money to protect the institutions that we serve. When biomedical research is slowed unnecessarily, human suffering is increased. Disease will not be conquered by political change, only by progress in knowledge.

Ingrid Newkirk, national director of PETA, claims that "a rat is a pig, is a dog, is a boy." A boy is not equivalent to a rat, and deception is not compatible with care and concern for human life.

I submit that the answer to the question posed in the title is "No. Animal activists are not humane."

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## News From Senior Physiologists

### Letters to Roy O. Greep:

Donald Whedon writes, "So wonderful of you to keep remembering my July 4 birthday. This year I was in San Francisco, and by observation from the Top of the Mark I can report that they observed it there with the proper fireworks display I have come to expect wherever I go!" Last June at his fiftieth reunion at Hobart College he was awarded one of three alumni citations for career accomplishments as well as for "unusual activities including arranging Hobart's first intercollegiate golf match." He is on the Calcium Science Working Group planning studies for the planned NASA Space Station in 1997 and is also still managing the research programs for the Shriners Hospitals.

S. Howard Bartley reports that although he does not have much chance for laboratory research, he remains busy with scientific writing. Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Psychology at Memphis State University since 1974, he is continuing to apply what he has learned in biology laboratories to build a "scientific psychology." "What I am trying to do is state some problems which I'd be happy to see my colleagues take seriously enough to get together in groups and discuss." He is proud to have a group of 40 graduate students who have shown him many warm expressions of regard. He writes, "I call this group my Gems . . . To me they are like a family."

## NIH Regional Workshops on Implementation of the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office for Protection from Research Risks is continuing to sponsor a series of workshops in implementing the Public Health Service Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the workshops are open to institutional administrators, members of animal care and use committees, laboratory animal veterinarians, investigators, and other institutional staff who have responsibility for high-quality management of sound institutional animal care and use programs. *Information:* Rynda Gibbs, University of New Mexico School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education, 815 Vassar N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87131. Phone: (505) 277-3942. Other workshops will be announced in future issues of the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts. *Information:* Roberta Garfinkle, Executive Assistant for Animal Welfare Education, National Institutes of Health, Office of Protection from Research Risks, Bldg 31, Rm 4B09, Bethesda, MD 20892.