

# On Research...

Blogging about research issues at Ohio State University



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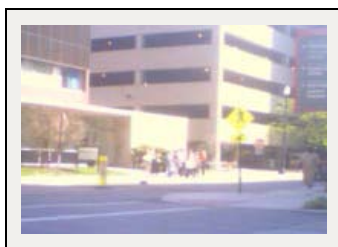
## A WWAIL of a Week . . .

Posted on April 26th, 2009 by earle holland

Last week wasn't that good for animal rights activists. And that's ironic since it was designated nationally as **WWAIL –World Week for Animals In Laboratories** – a time annually when people opposed to the use of animals in research are most vocal.

- Two California activists, Lindy Greene and Kevin Olliff, **were arrested** Monday on felony charges in Santa Monica, CA in connection with alleged actions they took against UCLA researchers, despite a court injunction issued against their interference. Greene's arrest is significant since she served as a so-called "press officer" for the **Animal Liberation Front**, an organization labeled by the FBI as domestic terrorists.
- The acting director of the **National Institutes of Health**, Raynard S. Kington, went on record last week with an **official NIH statement** "deploring" terrorism against scientists involved in research using animals. Such statements of research from the NIH have been infrequent in the past and this might signal a tougher stance on the part of the federal agency most supportive of this kind of science.
- And the FBI also added to its famed "**Most Wanted Terrorists**" list the name of **Daniel Andreas San Diego**, a fugitive for the last six years who is suspected of at least two bombings of biotechnology firms in the San Francisco area. That list also includes Osamabin Laden.
- A protest demonstration at UCLA by activists objecting animal research, attracted only 40 people but a counter-demonstration across the street backing the scientists being attacked drew more than 400 supporters. The 10-to-1 ratio of supporters to opponents **was reported widely** by the national news media.

On the campus of Ohio State University, which national animal rights groups have targeted for decades, a local group of activists staged their own rally in opposition to ongoing research projects. On a day when 95,000 people jammed into the university's stadium for the spring football game, the 15 or so protesters were noted by barely 20 passers-by.



As an apparent lead-up to WWAIL, **PETA, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals**, launched a national campaign aimed at one of Ohio State's researchers, accusing him of doing fruitless studies on questions already understood, and killing hundreds of dogs in the process. The

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simplistic representations of what PETA said the research entailed were designed to infuriate the public and produce a flood of messages objecting to the work.

Sadly, all too many naïve people swallowed PETA's statements without question and fired off cascading complaints. They either refused, or failed, to grasp the significance of studies designed to discover why some people – and dogs – are susceptible to a serious heart condition and why exercise has a protective/preventive effect against this malady. [Information about the study can be found [here](#).]

More distressing, however, is the fact that PETA's opposition to this research was a weakly veiled effort at fund-raising, an effort designed to raise the anger of animal lovers and pick their pockets. PETA had orchestrated a mechanism on their website where folks could simply insert their email addresses and PETA would forward their objections to the university.



But perhaps coincidentally, some of those who used the email machinery received a solicitation message within a couple of days, citing the campaign against university research and asking for money. Accompanying the message was a picture of a sad canine in a small cage.

The dog, however, was not ours.

Organizations such as PETA, the [Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine](#) and the [Humane Society of the United States](#) are on record as opposing all forms of research that might use animals, no matter how humanely. PETA's chief, [Ingrid Newkirk](#), has argued that no human life is worth the loss of a single animal.

No right-minded individual or organization condones animal abuse. We have laws against it and strict regulations to prevent it.

But if scientific progress is to be made now in the biomedical fields, we still need to use live animals in the process.

One day perhaps, science and technology will have reached a point where we have alternatives every bit as informing and valuable as animal use is today. On that day, scientists and animal activists can rejoice together.

But that time isn't now, no matter what PETA and others may say otherwise. *\_\_Earle Holland*



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[Tom Holder](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 8:53 am

The 400 suggested number of Pro-Testers at the UCLA pro-research rally appears to come from an LA Times blog article written (and published) before the end of the rally, and thus seems to reflect the numbers at the very beginning. By the end of the rally the police estimates had the numbers at 700-800 people.

[Paul Browne](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 9:12 am

A small correction; at it's peak the UCLA Pro-Test demonstration in favour of animal research had about 700 people attending, the figure of 400 was from the beginning of the rally.

It's clear that PeTA and similar organizations can still sometimes mobilise a fairly large number of supporters, but this weeks events also show that in the wider society the great majority of people don't support them, despite the many millions they've spent on misleading propoganda over the past couple of decades.

An interesting aspect of the aftermath to the Pro-Test rally was the widespread support for it on ScienceBlogs, an influential online community of scientists and scientific activists. The challenge for the scientific community now is to harness this support and energy and translate it into more effective communication with a wider society.

Oh, and by the way if you'd like to show your support for Pro-Test UCLA you can do so by signing the petition at:

<http://www.raisingvoices.net>

[earleholland](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 9:26 am

Tom and Paul:

Thanks for the clarification on the UCLA Pro-Test rally. It clearly was an overwhelming success and a clear sign that the majority of the public supports this research.

As for PETA's ability to mobilize, their email campaign against us has produced thousands of opposing messages but almost all of them were automated.

Earle

[Jielea](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 11:51 am

Thank you for clarifying this issue. I hope that we can find solution to this matter. I am also looking forward to see scientists and animal activists rejoice together.

[College Football Blogger](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 3:38 pm

The interesting thing here is the lack of solutions from PETA. I bet

anything that their chief has used medicines at some point that were developed by testing animals. Its not bad to use them in tests, its bad to abuse them. If no abuse takes place, then why not use animals to test life saving medicines? Does PETA suggest we stop researching or go about it some other way? I never hear what their alternative is, just that we should stop testing on animals.

[Topics about Animal-lovers » Archive » On Research... » A WWAIL of a Week . . .](#) // Apr 27, 2009 at 4:46 pm

[...] earleholland added an interesting post today on On Researchâ [...]

Patricia Panitz // Apr 29, 2009 at 2:32 am

It's not surprising that animal "research" is supported in this country – people are never given an opportunity to hear the other side's arguments. Despite the fact that many doctors and scientists oppose vivisection, you never see their arguments in the corporate controlled mainstream press. England, which has a much freer press than we do, regularly publishes articles by scientists who oppose vivisection, and as a result, support there for vivisection drops dramatically.

[earleholland](#) // Apr 29, 2009 at 10:08 am

Patricia:

Anyone who knows anything about, or has expertise in, the American "press" — and by that I mean the print news media — understands that the British news media are more sensationalistic, less exacting, and acutely regulated by the government (in some areas of coverage). The fact, if it is one, that the British media publish more commentaries by antivivisectionists only suggests that the publishers are more open to divisive commentaries — not that the press is freer there!

In truth, the American news media has been unbelievably open and receptive to animal rights coverage in the last three decades, giving substantive coverage to protests and demonstrations that only drew a relative handful of participants and yet, garnered ample coverage.

American local TV news has been one of the most welcoming players helping small groups of protesters get more coverage than they deserve, precisely because such events fit the formulaic need to fill time on the air through "he says/she says" stories.

Your argument, therefore, is illogical.

Earle

[Connecticut Mortgage](#) // May 15, 2009 at 10:04 am

I am glad that you clarify this issue. I am just hoping that everything will be alright. I am looking forward to have unity in each one of us. Cheers!

[Cycling Shoes Sale](#) // Aug 13, 2010 at 7:08 pm

“More distressing, however, is the fact that PETA’s opposition to this research was a weakly veiled effort at fund-raising, an effort designed to raise the anger of animal lovers and pick their pockets.”

There’s a lot of truth to that statement.

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