

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXXVI, Number 44, 5 April 2002 — Saving Our Babys [ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

Saving Our Babys

EXPLAINING IT ALL

BY JENNIFER THORPE

There is an enormous amount of money being given to the research for curing or treating human diseases, as well there should be. I plan to do the AIDS walk on May 19, because I believe that diseases such as AIDS

cannot be ignored. However, there are diseases society ignores, and many human diseases perceived as less deadly are given close to no attention. Those diseases, however, at least have somewhat effective treatments, and can be understood by the patients. The greatest victims of our ignorance are those often undervalued beings close to many of us: our animals.

No one who has ever owned and loved an animal will tell you that, as some argue, an animal life is worth any less than a human life. Many groups, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, strive to protect animal rights by preventing product testing from being done on them, a very noble cause.

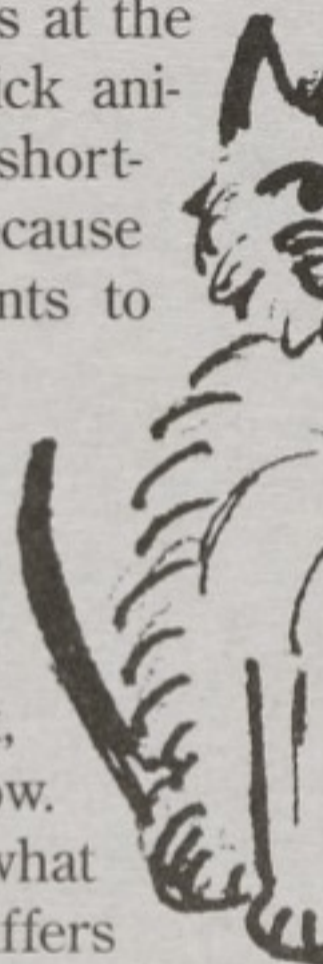
However, no one seems to address the issue of animal diseases. Animals suffer from diseases for which humans at the very least have treatment. A sick animal's already short life span is shortened significantly by disease because there are no effective treatments to help it.

Any efforts to mimic human treatments are either ineffective or cruel. For cancer, an animal in conventional treatment is kept in a hospital five days a week, overnight, for four weeks in a row. The poor creature has no idea what is being done to him or her, suffers emotionally, and, in return, gets very little time added on to its life, if any at all.

There is an insignificant amount of money being put toward finding a cure or more effective treatment for our sick pets. We cannot fool ourselves into believing that animal biology is similar enough to human biology for the same cures to be used. Separate treatments are needed, and therefore separate research is necessary. These animals, whom many of us love like siblings or children, are helpless, but when it comes to curing diseases, no one is helping them. No one is searching for the

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BY JENNI



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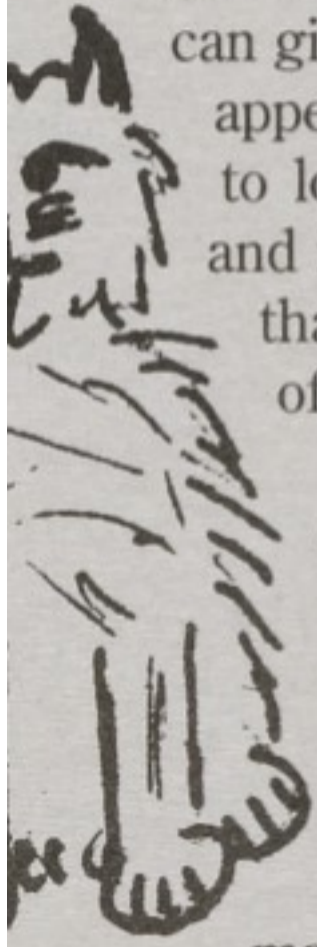
cure to feline leukemia, feline immunodeficiency viruses, or canine autoimmune hemolytic anemia. No one is holding a concert to raise money for animal medical research. No one is wearing a ribbon for the animals, or walking a marathon to save our pets from disease.

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R THORPE

My five-year-old cat Baby was diagnosed with lymphosarcoma, a cancer in the lymph nodes of her neck, in early January. The doctors at the Animal Medical Center said that with radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery, she would live a maximum of a year, if that, and that treatment would include the extended hospital stay as well as additional visits.

In her last days, we want her to be happy, not petrified and feeling unloved. We tried alternative therapies, but nothing worked. The lump has now stretched around her neck and is becoming an ulcer. There is nothing we can give her to help her. She's losing her appetite and interest in things she used to love. It won't be much longer now, and it is the prospect of losing my kitty that has made me realize the severity of the problem.



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Society as a whole degrades animals, and acts as though they are somehow lesser beings because we claim to be the only species with reason, but they are not lesser at all. If anything, animals are superior, because they are not capable of making another being suffer emotionally as humans can and do.

An animal has just as much intrinsic value as a person. It is repulsive that society cares so little for the creatures who bring so much love into our lives that it doesn't even try to save them from the perilous fate of terminal disease.

In working toward achieving what is best for our world, we must never forget the problems closest to us that threaten those we hold dear. It is too late for my Baby, but it is not too late for all the animals who will get a deadly disease in the future. People, at the very least, can speak for themselves. Let us speak for those who cannot.

Jennifer Thorpe is a Columbia College sophomore majoring in psychology.

No one seems to address the issue of animal diseases. Is anyone walking a marathon to save pets from disease?

