



From Fur to Faces, Part 2: **FLIPPING THE SWITCH**

by Mallory Christine
Features writer

You'd never expect to come in contact with an animal's dead body when reaching for an item on a store shelf, but you may be more involved with inhumane animal testing than you think.

In part one, we learned Lemont High School students' initial feelings towards animal testing, but would anyone's opinion change after they knew the truths our Tom-Tom Editorials staff has uncovered?

Even after the truth comes out, it may be difficult to know where you stand on such a teeter-tottered topic. What animal testing is necessary? Should the line be drawn at cosmetic testing, or medical testing? When there are natural and equally as effective materials available, should we be using chemicals that need testing? Whether you believe in animal testing, don't, or just don't know enough about it, is there even anything to do?

Yes. And you can start with what possibly affects you most—cosmetic animal testing. Having a favorite shampoo doesn't make you a first-handed murderer, right? If you're interested in learning more about your connection to cosmetic animal testing or even looking to make a difference, here's what to do:

Get educated. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) offers information on animal testing based on various research projects and investigations.

Start a boycott. If you disagree with animal testing, start by banning the cosmetics in your household whose companies do test on animals. To find out what companies fall under this category, go to <http://www.mediapeta.com/peta/PDF/companiesdotest.pdf>. To search for ones that don't, visit <http://www.peta.org/living/beauty-and-personal-care/companies/default.aspx>.

Want to reach out, or just learn more? For information on other kinds of animal testing, go to <http://www.peta.org/>.

Sometimes, the most valuable truths are the ones kept hidden. Bringing such a controversial subject to light may be difficult, but it's often worth it. What we don't know can't hurt us, but it's hurting others.

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ANIMAL TESTING: The Hairy Truth

by Maribeth Van Hecke
Editorials Editor

You couldn't be contributing to animal testing... Could you? You're a normal kid. You brush your teeth. You wash your hair. Maybe you wear make-up. Clean your house sometimes? Yeah, that's the problem.

Most people don't realize how prominent animal testing is in every day products like toothpaste, shampoo, make-up or cleaning supplies. They also don't realize that there are new, better ways to research. Without action, companies are going to continue research the same way—killing, harming and torturing millions of animals.

Animal Testing Overview

100 million animals are victims to animal testing every year, according to R. Ryder's "Victims of Science." These animals include: primates, cats, dogs, bunnies, pigs, sheep, birds, rats and mice.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is the largest animal rights organization in the world. Their scientists and researchers have been scouting out companies that use animal testing and pressuring organizations like the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) to stop animal testing.

Many tests today aren't even required. Yes, we want to know the things we buy are safe to use, but we should also be thinking about ethics.

Why Should We Care?

Even if you don't look at a rat the same way you would a child, you should still be able to respect it. No one is asking you to love them, but respecting life is the animal testing activists' cause.

"Monkeys are addicted to drugs and have holes drilled into their skulls, sheep and pigs have their skin burned off and rats have their spinal cords crushed. Tiny mice grow tumors as large as their own bodies, kittens are purposely blinded, and rats are made to suffer seizures," PETA reports. PETA also says that many times these tests "are often funded by U.S. taxpayers' money."

We should care because what we are doing "for science" is disgusting.

Unnecessary and Faulty Testing

Not only do the tests make you squirm, but tests done on animals are often wrong and unhelpful. Many times, tests are not only unethical, they are just for curious scientists.

Thankfully, PETA researchers and scientists have already found ways to find the same answers without hurting innocent animals. "The non-animal tests available today are cheaper, faster, and more accurate at predicting human reactions to a product than the old animal tests ever were," says PETA. These tests would include testing on human skin cultures, instead of rubbing chemicals to bunnies in a full body restraint.

So... why aren't we using them?

Animal Testing Has Saved Lives

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Photos courtesy of Google

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There is no doubt that tests on animals have saved many lives. Animal testing has led to helpful research for diseases like polio, tuberculosis, kidney disease and cystic fibrosis. One can argue that the best way to research without harming humans is always to test on animals. But this isn't true anymore. This is the 21st century. If we have the means, shouldn't we work toward a more ethical way of research? Especially if it is more reliable?

Easy Fixes to a Difficult Problem

If you want to take a stand against animal testing you can stop buying products that use animal testing, or write to companies and demand government agencies and corporations to force companies to use the new, non-animal techniques of research.

If you're like me, you might have a lot of trouble finding a new cruelty-free shampoo (seriously, my hair depended on Herbal Essences). If you need as much help as I do, check out Part Two of "From Fur to Faces" to learn more about cruelty-free products.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much," were the wise words of Helen Keller. Without taking action, companies will continue using the same unethical research strategies.

Britain is one of the few places that made a law against types of animal testing. The law only allows animal testing when justified for scientific research (not for stuff like cosmetics). Now, there is a step in the right direction.



Photo courtesy of Google

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haiku can do, you can too!

by Michael Gaytan
Guest editorials writer

How many times have you used the old, "I didn't know what my homework was" excuse? Because of recent changes in student-teacher communication, it is now *virtually* impossible to not be aware of your assignments.

Haiku Learning Management System is new this year at LHS. Haiku is a web based resource for both teachers and students to use as communication for all assignments. This allows for ease in retrieving missing assignments, communicating with your teacher or fellow classmates on different activities and allows for a greener LHS.

Because of this change in communication, the excuses of not having time come talk to or even e-mail a teacher become obsolete.

The LRC Director, Cathy Mayer, told us that it "appealed" to staff because it is "beneficial and cost-effective." Ms. Mayer admitted that "many teachers did not know about it," but the reason for this is simple: "There was a committee appointed with a teacher representing each department," she said.

After researching many companies, the group all agreed that the abilities and price of Haiku meet the needs of most teachers and students here at LHS.

Numerous teachers prefaced it at the beginning of the year, but have yet to give specific instructions, or even use it themselves. According to one student, their own teacher told them that they would not be using the system. "[She]* told us on the first day that they don't understand Haiku and we shouldn't expect to be seeing our work on the website."

There are many teachers that do use the system regularly. German teacher Roy Nees says he "loves it." He calls it a "one-stop shop" for students and teachers. "I used to use a blog and a website... This makes things easier for students" because it is all there on one site.

Being in charge of drama club, he goes on to say that it is easier communications to everyone in the club. "Instead of me sending little love notes to them, I can just post it on Haiku and every member can see it."

His favorite part of the resource is the ability to upload documents. "Now, if I hand something out and a student loses it, it isn't lost and they can get it again from the site."

As of now, teachers are only required to have their syllabus on their Haiku page. How do staff members expect students to use this resource if teachers themselves aren't even using it? We ask Ms. Mayer.

She tells us it's "not fair" to force these teachers that have only had a "few hours of training" to use a system if "they aren't comfortable with it." She goes on to say that "teachers are using and tweaking the system" to fit whichever classes they use it for.

Many students are confused with the web source. During a lunch table discussion, several students did not know much about the learning system at all. When asked about using Haiku, a majority responded that they had been told about the system, but did not have much knowledge of how to actually use it. **

"I really don't understand the point of it," said senior Kendall Kowal. "It's a month



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Photo by Mike Gaytan

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into the school year and I have barely even looked at it." She continued to say that she has "done well without it" for the past 3 years, so why implicate it now.

Though some students feel this way, there are many others, like myself, who believe it is very useful when the teachers are actually actively using it, that is.

LHS Alum, Kristina Moravecek, believes that it is a very useful tool for students. She believes, "It is great because once you're in college, teachers aren't going to be telling you what your assignments are." She continues to say that she is on her school's own learning management system every day.

She has used many different systems of communication through her studies. "It shows that you are responsible by making the effort to look up your assignments and actually do them" if a teacher fails to directly address homework.

I know from experience that this type of resource is very helpful. Being a frequently absent student, I find it very difficult to manage through multiple teachers' lessons, notes, assignments and activities, all on my own. It is especially challenging when you miss the same classes over and over again, and do not get to see those teachers for a few days. Haiku has now made it possible to access all of this without leaving your prescribed bed rest.

So, though it may take some getting used to, this method of communication is definitely valuable for teachers and students alike. As the year goes on, teachers will find more ways to utilize this system in order to have the greatest connection with their students even when not at school.

Check back in next week's issue of the Tom-Tom for more information on this new resource.

***Staff member's name omitted for personal privacy/protection.**
****Computer lab staff members and the LRC Director have made it possible for students to learn more about Haiku by providing assistance to anyone that requires it. If you need help, you can stop by the LRC, N221 or N211 before or after school.**

*****The Tom-Tom respects the choice of anonymity of each individual interviewed. Names not stated in the article are the sole choice of the people interviewed. *****

Rise Against BULLYING

by Maddy George
Features writer

Rise Against has been making political and social statements through their music since 1999.

Recently, the band has teamed up with the It Gets Better Project to send a message to their fans and people around the world that bullying is not acceptable.

The It Gets Better Project is an ongoing, positive outreach campaign in support of members of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Community. The project includes self-disclosing YouTube videos created by teens that have faced bullying because of their sexual orientation. The videos share a theme of courage that life does, in fact, get better. The music video for Rise Against's single "Make it Stop" features clips of the videos created by young people who have walked in these shoes and lived to tell their tale with hope.

The music video focuses on three teens and their bullying experiences in high school. While the music is intense, the message the video sends is so much more powerful than any lyrics could ever portray. The video does an amazing job of making the challenges, pain and angst of being different from most of society real. You see these three individuals at their weakest moments, one on the edge of a bridge, another with a rope around his neck and the third with a gun to her head.

While many organizations, such as To Write Love on Her Arms and Out of the Darkness, speak against these terrible incidents of suicide, this video compels the viewer to feel the despair of being alone, different and disrespected. This is what high schoolers need to be shown: just how powerful our words are and how they affect other people.

Rise Against and the It Gets Better Project do an impeccable job of both spreading the message of hope to young people struggling with bullying and honoring the young people who have taken their lives as a result of bullying. But not only are these organizations helping those who need help, conversely, they are sending a warning to those that do the hurting.



Lemont Girls Volleyball

Faces Evergreen Park

by Ian Stratta
Sports editor

Who would have thought that this year's varsity girls volleyball team would have as much success as they have had this season?

The starting line-up this year for Lemont is staggeringly different with only two returning starters in senior Emily Brown and junior Megan Litoborski. The team has lost six important members from last year's graduating class, including four who are competing in collegiate volleyball this year.

Last year's graduating seniors included captains Vicki Wrobel and Courtney Keefe who committed to Loyola University and Bradley University respectively, Melissa Bograd (Robert Morris), Becca Brabec (Clarkson), Danielle Susz, and Jessica Kaminsky.

Head coach Chris Zogota stated, "I think the underclassmen were ready to fill in for the girls that graduated. This leaves us a little inexperienced, but we're playing, working hard, and improving every day."

The team has enjoyed just as much success as last year's team so far with a 3-0 home and 1-0 away record. However, the team has had mixed results in neutral contests with a 2-3 record. This seems to be eerily similar to last year's record of 8-0 at home, 7-1 in away games, and 12-9 in neutral games.

Considering the similar records, one would think that this year's team is set for another solid season under coach Zogota. However, considering the fact that three of this year's four captains, comprised of seniors Lauren Donar, Gabbi Alveraz, Katie Pelligrine, and Brown, have not collectively had much starting experience, leadership could take a hit. Zogota commented, "[The captains] have been very good leaders. Those four girls really work well together and have such different personalities that they're able to connect with everyone."

Last Thursday Lemont competed against Evergreen Park, a team that Lemont has had much success against in previous years. Last year's varsity squad swept their two games against Evergreen Park winning 25-19 and 25-13. Susz led the team in kills with eight, and Wrobel led the team with 22 assists and seven digs. Brown served well with two aces on 17 attempts while accumulating 13 points.

This year against Evergreen Park, the captains impressed as Lemont swept again by the scores of 25-6 and 25-13. Brown and Alvarez proved to be very efficient in the contest as Brown had nine kills in 12 attempts and Alvarez had 4 aces in just 5 attempts. Furthermore, Donar (6) and Pellegrine (5) led the team in points. Litoborski was also impressive with 16 assists in the match.

The win brings Lemont to a 7-3 record this season. Brown said, "The challenge was not to play down to their level, which I think we did very well. We kept our focus and got the job done. Everyone kept their serves in, the passers got the ball to the setters, and the hitters put it away."

This Thursday, Lemont will look to improve on its record in its next match at Reavis.

If you are interested in finding out about any of the team's statistics or previous and future matches, simply go to <http://www.maxpreps.com/high-schools/thliDdFAsUGF-TroeHRIqg/lemont-indians/volleyball/home.htm>. Coach Zogota updates the page daily.

Photo courtesy of Google