

# SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

## Views of the lunar eclipse

BY ALISON ELLWOOD

Awakened by the twang-like ring of the phone, clouds rush past my window attempting to block the light of day from entering my room. The familiar smell of burning toast and coffee seeps through the hallway, the house begins to bustle into its routine and we all fall into place like clockwork.

Off to the gym, class or work, stressing about a lost mitten, an old girlfriend or a midterm exam. Our minds all strategizing the next move and distressed about a previous one.

Not realizing just how much the little things are taking over our lives and just how small those things really are. We are so small in the grand scheme of life on this planet, that we are not even relative to pocket lint. We are the tiny particles that make up the particles of pocket lint.

From here the moon is about one light second or 300,000 km away. Keeping that in mind, envision Betelgeuse, a star that we see on most winter nights straight above Orion's belt. It is 500 light years away. Not seconds, not minutes, not hours or days — years! This is merely one of the millions of stars we can actually see. The vastness

of the amount we can't see is unimaginable. If Betelgeuse itself were somehow put in place of the sun it would encompass the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. That is massive. Now try to imagine yourself standing along side it.

Throughout time, humans have looked to the stars and planets for comfort, wisdom and answers. The lunar eclipse that just occurred last weekend would have been a huge, nerve racking ordeal in China many centuries ago. They believed that an evil dragon was nibbling away at the moon, leaving it blood red. Shouting and ringing gongs, they would all gather to scare away the beast for they knew it must be far away. Luckily, it always seemed to work. I wonder what they would say if they knew they were panicking over the shadow of their own planet and the only reason the moon turns red is due to an effect of sunlight bending around the Earth's atmosphere.

Now, instead of concerning ourselves with dragons eating the moon we worry about bad hair cuts, the mark of a paper or whether or not we'll get to the bar in time for the show. I wonder which to be the stranger.

## Live animal experiments put on hold at U of Illinois

BY AMANDA CRINER

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (U-Wire) — Live animal experiments for first-year veterinary students at the University of Illinois have been cancelled this semester, as administrators explore alternatives to experiments that kill animals to teach students.

The new policy will likely establish procedures where students will learn how normal animals function by using less invasive methods in their basic physiology classes.

They also might watch demonstrations instead of doing their own experiments. But those procedures "change the intensity of studies," said Victor Valli, dean of the University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Students were never forced to participate in the experiments, but were not offered alternatives. More than 25 students

opted out of the experiments last semester.

The policy the school has been developing since last fall will probably make the new alternatives

especially in beginning classes.

"From what I understand, most veterinary schools aren't using live cadavers to teach physiology — it's just not necessary," said

**"From what I understand, most veterinary schools aren't using live cadavers to teach physiology..."**

a formal part of the class, said Gerald Pijanowski, the College's associate dean for academic and student affairs.

"This is not new," he said. "We're trying to be deliberate and work with reasonable speed. It just takes time. It has become a media event."

Currently, veterinary schools across the United States are moving toward using live animals less,

Teri Barnato, national director of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights. "There is a movement to bring respect for non-human animals and vet-schools need to move forward."

Valli agreed that veterinary schools are moving toward a less hands-on approach but said real experience is still the best way to learn.

"There are other ways of

learning, obviously," he said. "There's no doubt that hands-on experience is helpful. I think it's up to our creativity to design new techniques."

A group of university students lobbying for a change in the school's experimentation methods spurred the policy change, while reaction to local media articles brought a flood of mail to the school — both supporting and opposing a change. "It certainly makes it much more difficult to deal with when you're getting a barrage of hate mail," Valli said.

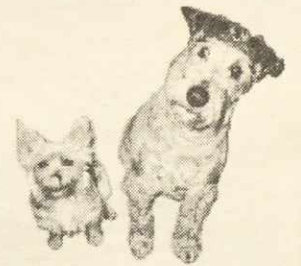
"We really resent the definition of killing and tormentors and other ways of describing our teaching. It was not inhumane. We are not allowed to cause pain."

The school is also changing the source of the animals it uses in experiments. Dogs will be purchased from places that raise them

solely for experiments, not dealers who might steal animals or get them from shelters.

"It means that it costs about five times as much," Valli said, adding that costs could also be kept down because the animals could be put to more use with the possible revised policies.

The college hopes to implement the new policies this semester, but university academic requirements and policies must be met and student concerns addressed before live animals will be in first-year classrooms, Valli said.



Will the real George Munro please stand up?



WHAT is  
**Munro Day?**

Don't know? Click here.

**www.dal.ca/alumni**

Learn more. Enter the contest.

**Win.**