



MARCH is ETHICS AWARENESS MONTH!

All of the following news stories are taken from recent headlines and have interesting ethical aspects.

Please enjoy Week 1.

The Clinical Ethics Center at Memorial Medical Center was established in 1995 in cooperation with the Department of Medical Humanities of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Located in the B145 area, the Center's staff are available for ethics consultations Monday – Saturday and are on-call after hours for emergencies.

The Heart Attack Grill — is a theme restaurant in Arizona whose specialties include the Quadruple Bypass Burger and Flatliner Fries, cooked in pure lard. It is making health-care professionals' blood pressure rise, and not because of the menu. It is because of the waitresses' naughty nurse uniforms. Some nursing organizations say it is an insult to the profession and have complained to the Arizona attorney general's office. The owner of the grill said the complaints have been good for business, "all they've done is ensure there's going to be a gajillion of these all over the country."

Cloneburgers: The FDA announced in February that meat from cloned animals won't come with special labels because government scientists have found no difference between clones and conventional cows, pigs or goats. Although the nation's milk industry worries that people might reject food from clones, so far public opinion appears mixed. In a poll by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, 64 percent said they were uncomfortable with animal cloning, but in a poll by the University of Maryland, the same percentage said they would buy, or consider buying, such food if the government said it was safe.

Smashed: Crushing pills to make them easier to swallow can cause serious and sometimes fatal side-effects, experts warn. Some pills have special coatings that allow a drug to be absorbed over a long period of time, so a patient only has to take a tablet once a day rather than several times a day. If these medications are crushed, the drug is released much quicker than it is designed to be. An estimated 75 million prescriptions a year are associated with adverse drug reactions.

What's Next? Ebay?: A Texas company started producing batches of 'ready-made embryos' that single women and infertile couples can order after reviewing detailed information about the race, education, appearance, personality and other characteristics of the egg and sperm donors. The commercial dealer makes embryos in advance and says the company was founded to make it easier and more affordable for clients to have babies that match their preferences. Critics argue that children should be treated differently, "It's like you're ordering a computer from Dell: You give them the specs, and they put it in the mail."

Face-Off: A United Kingdom team has been given permission to carry out what would be the world's first full face transplant. Peter Butler at London's Royal Free Hospital said he was "delighted" to get the go-ahead from the national ethics board for an operation "within months." The team has been approached by about 30 patients wanting the procedure. In 2005 Isabelle Dinoire from France became the first person to receive a partial face transplant. She had her nose, lips and chin torn off after being mauled by the family dog.

Man's Best Friend? The journal *Cell* reported that scientists discovered a kind of cancer in dogs that is contagious. Scientists said although no human cancer is known to spread from person to person, this new finding is a reminder that DNA will try anything to perpetuate itself. A typical cancer cell is a cell that has broken free of normal growth controls because of exposure to a virus or environmental agent. The dog cancer, called Sticker's sarcoma, is spread by tumor cells getting passed from dog to dog through sex or from animals biting or licking each other.

Stunned Granny: A man who said he used a stun gun on his wife's 79-year-old grandmother was cited with only fourth-degree domestic violence assault and released from a Skamania County, Washington jail. The man said he was arguing with the grandmother, who accused him of abusing his 7-month-old son when he swatted the boy's diapered bottom to stop him from grabbing electrical wires. When she refused to leave, he said he tased her with a 50,000-volt Taser X26 energy weapon on her right shoulder as she sat on the living room couch.

Delta Force: Dolphins and sea lions trained to detect and apprehend waterborne attackers could be sent to patrol a military base in Washington state. The Navy said it needs to bolster security at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, on the Puget Sound close to Seattle. The base is home to submarines, ships and laboratories and is potentially vulnerable to attack by terrorist swimmers and scuba divers. Several options are under consideration, but the preferred plan would be to send 30 California sea lions and Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins from the Navy's Marine Mammal Program, based in San Diego.

I Knew That: The extrasensory perception lab at Princeton University will soon be permanently shuttered. Maybe you already knew that. The Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) laboratory will close after 28 years of studying ESP and telekinesis, research that embarrassed university officials and outraged the scientific community. PEAR's founder, Robert G. Jahn, said the lab, with its aging equipment and dwindling finances, has done what it needed to do.

Look Behind You: Schizophrenics sometimes feel the presence of an unknown person behind them who mimics their movements. Now scientists have produced the same disturbing effect in a nonschizophrenic person by applying electric stimulation to a specific area of her brain. The discovery could help scientists unravel the brain processes behind delusions of paranoia, persecution, and alien control. Doctors unintentionally produced the delusion while evaluating a 22-year-old epileptic woman for possible surgery. During her ordeal, the patient described sensing an unknown person standing just behind her, mimicking her body positions.

Who's Your Daddy? A decade ago, scientists successfully began growing rat, hamster, rabbit, pig, bull and human sperm in mice. However, until now it remained unknown whether any of these sperm were fertile. A reproductive biologist in Kyoto has now successfully fostered fertile animal adults from mouse-grown sperm. The hope is that mice or other lab animals can grow sperm of prize livestock or endangered species while "saving space, food and in general being easier to take care of," the biologist told *LiveScience*.

Take As Directed: Teens increasingly are getting high with legal drugs like painkillers and mood stimulants, and they're turning to cough syrup as well, says a government survey released in December. It found that while fewer teens overall drank alcohol or used illegal drugs in the last year, a growing number were popping prescription painkillers like OxyContin and Vicodin and stimulants like Ritalin. The study found as many as one in every 14 high school seniors said they used cold medicine "fairly recently" to get high and one in 10 have abused Vicodin.

Don't Jump: A bridge over Seattle is becoming hazardous to the mental health of the dot-com employees and other office workers below, who keep seeing people jump to their deaths from the span. 39 people over the past decade have committed suicide off the 155-foot-high Aurora Bridge — eight in 2006 alone — and counselors are regularly brought in to help office workers deal with the shock of seeing the leap or the bloody aftermath. City and state officials, meanwhile, are adding suicide-prevention signs and telephones in hopes of reducing the death toll.

Power of One: Government health officials said the biggest U.S. measles outbreak in a decade - 34 people stricken in Indiana and Illinois last year - was traced back to a 17-year-old girl who had traveled to Romania without first getting vaccinated. The outbreak accounted for more than half of the 66 measles cases in the US in 2005. The Indiana girl became infected after visiting a Romanian orphanage while on a church-mission trip, while the others became infected after they attended a church gathering with her the day after her return.

Magic Mushrooms: A preliminary study of the active ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms has found it is effective in relieving the symptoms of people suffering from severe obsessive compulsive disorder, a University of Arizona psychiatrist reports. In each of nine patients in the study, psilocybin completely removed symptoms of the disorder for a period of about four to 24 hours, with some remaining symptom-free for days. Currently, other drugs take several weeks to ease symptoms of the disorder, but the psilocybin was almost immediate.

Don't Call Me: Heavy use of mobile phones may damage men's fertility, an Ohio study of 364 men has suggested. Researchers found those men who used a phone for four hours or more a day had fewer sperm and those they had moved less well and were of poorer quality. The study was presented to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine in New Orleans. Critics say it was unlikely the phones were to blame and it may be being sedentary was the cause.

Rhyme Time Climb: Dilbert cartoonist Scott Adams recently regained the ability to talk after being stricken with Spasmodic Dysphonia in 2005. Approximately 30,000 Americans are afflicted with the mysterious disease in which parts of the brain controlling speech shut down or go haywire. Persons inexplicably lose their voice during normal conversations, yet they can speak if they employ an exaggerated falsetto or baritone, recite poetry, or speak only in rhyme. Dilbert and his wry pet, Dogbert, are among the few cartoon characters who lack mouths. "It's probably a coincidence," Adams said. "But it's a funny one."

Always meant to complete your own Advance Directive? Now is the time! This year the Clinical Ethics Center and the Human Values and Ethics Committee are encouraging you to stop by the Garden Lobby on Thursday, March 29 from 7a.m. – 7 p.m. where assistance will be available to help you complete your Advance Directives. Every person who completes a directive, or brings evidence of an already completed directive, will be entered into a drawing to win a fantastic gift basket filled with environmentally and socially responsible products to try for yourself including coffee, candles, household products, lightbulbs and more.