

Genus of Cover Frog Clarified

Dear Editor:

The wonderful cover photo on your Nov/Dec issue by photographers Kevin and Betty Collins has the frog given an incorrect name in the "About the Cover" section. The frog is, and has been for over 50 years, the Pacific Treefrog, *Hyla regilla*. The error of placing this treefrog in the genus *Pseudacris* came from the misreading of the text and diagrams in an early molecular biology paper. In spite of warnings by the author of the paper that he used only one molecular character, that there were too many terminal taxa for analysis at that time, that the trees were all hypothetical, and while there was some indication that *Hyla regilla* was close to *Pseudacris*, it was much too early to make taxonomic changes at that time with only one character! Unfortunately an enthusiastic amphibianologist wanting to be "up to date and modern" jumped at the paper, missed the warnings, and placed *H. regilla* in the genus *Pseudacris*. He published this combination in governmental, gray, and lay literature. Subsequent workers have shown, using molecular and morphological data, that the Pacific Treefrog, *Hyla regilla* is a typical *Hyla* and not immediately related to the Chorus frogs, *Pseudacris*.

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Medical History in Question

Dear Editor:

In their excellent article, "Teaching the Ethics of Biology" (May 2000), Johansen and Harris refer to "popular scientific journals" that "publish articles about ethical controversies in science oriented toward a non-technical audience." The authors rightly argued that for students to "make well-reasoned ethical decisions" about "controversial advances in science," "they must be presented with simple yet factually correct scientific information." I could not agree more.

Unfortunately, one of the articles cited was written by two physicians who contribute to the campaign against biomedical research by animal-rights extremists by distorting medical history to suit their ends (Barnard & Kaufman 1997). A colleague and I, who wrote an opposing article (Botting & Morrison 1997) for a debate regrettably engineered by *Scientific American*, warned that journal of the authors' history to no avail. We were forced to correct the record elsewhere (Botting & Morrison 1998). However, one of the scientists misrepresented by Barnard and Kaufman did write in rebuttal (Salsburg 1997).

In a guest editorial on these pages (Morrison & Botting 1997), we warned that *Scientific American* had confounded the issues by staging a debate between legitimate scientists and animal rightists, harming Science for all time. The flawed article has appeared as a "legitimate" reference in the animal-rights literature and now in this journal. One can, of course, hold to the belief that using animals in research to benefit people is morally wrong, but one cannot ethically misrepresent medical history in support of that belief. My claims can easily be checked: ask *Scientific American* for the references both sets of authors were required to provide. As we said in our editorial, looking more deeply into the arguments of both sides would be an excellent student exercise.

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See You In Montréal - 2001!