

# NEWS

## National and world news in brief

By Patrick Webster and Ashley Bressler

### Iraq insurgents adopt chemical weapons use

BAGHDAD, Iraq: Raids conducted by multinational forces in Iraq this week discovered a troubling trend: indications that Iraqi insurgents are expanding their standard arsenal to include chemical weapons.

U.S. military commanders in Iraq confirmed that coalition troops had discovered "bomb factories" that contained machine and assembly tools used to fabricate car bombs and other explosive devices. The raids became more urgent after three or four bombings in the last week included chlorine gas to harm bystanding civilians and rescue workers after the initial attack.

"The unit discovered numerous artillery rounds, mortar rounds, bombs, rockets, gutted anti-aircraft shells, a pickup truck and three other vehicles that were already in various stages of preparations as car bombs as well as much detonation material," said Lieutenant General Ray Odierno, commander of the Iraq Multinational Corps. "We also found ingredients to be used to devise or enhance explosives, such as fertilizer and chlorine cylinders. We also found the various components of a metal shop, including welders, burner stoves, circular saws, sanders and other items needed to build explosive devices."

Chlorine is a highly toxic gas that was first used as a weapon in World War I. That insurgents in Iraq are now willing to use such weapons is a cause for concern because it can easily cause large numbers of casualties in densely populated civilian areas.

### Half-ton squid caught near New Zealand

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: A professional fishing crew hunting Patagonian toothfish accidentally snared what could be by far the largest colossal squid ever caught.

New Zealand Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton noted that the squid was nearly 40 feet long and weighed at least 990 pounds, over 300 pounds heavier than the previous largest colossal squid to be captured.

"The squid was still eating a hooked toothfish when it was hauled from the deep," said Anderton. "Scientists will be very interested in this amazing creature as it adds immeasurably to our understanding of the marine environment."

Official measurements of the massive squid have not yet been made, but several deep-ocean researchers can't wait to get a look at it.

"I can assure you that this is going to draw phenomenal interest. It is truly amazing," said squid expert Dr. Steve O'Shea of the Auckland University of Technology.

Another expert joked that if the squid was sectioned to make calamari rings for food, the normally bite-sized pieces would be roughly the size of a tractor tire.

The colossal squid, which prefers the cold waters in or near Antarctica, is unrelated to the giant squid, which prefers slightly warmer deep water elsewhere.

## Salmonella contaminated peanut butter sickens almost 300, kills 1

OMHA, NEB. - A recent outbreak of salmonella found in certain brands of peanut butter has caused the Centers for Disease Control to conduct open testing of all the ConAgra brands of peanut butter. Last week the federal health officials made the connection between the 300 sick individuals and the contaminated peanut butter, which then forced ConAgra to recall all of the Peter Pan and Great Value peanut butter that was made at its Sylvester plant in Georgia. Although no deaths have been proven related to the salmonella poisoning, several cases are being investigated. The salmonella is said to have been present in the jars of peanut butter since last August, causing people all across the nation to be affected.

On Thursday Gary Rodkin, chief executive of Omaha-based ConAgra said, "We are truly sorry for any harm that our peanut butter products may have caused." It is still uncertain how the peanut butter got contaminated or how traces of bird and animal feces got into it.

The Barkay family of Pennsylvania claims several members of their family were affected by the poisoning, resulting in the death of Roberta Barkay. The Barkay's are now filing a lawsuit against

ConAgra for the wrongful-death and negligence, which they claim caused the death of Mrs. Barkay. According to the family's lawyer, Rob Peirce, Roberta Barkay, 76, was hospitalized due to extreme gastrointestinal problems, which developed into a bacterial infection. Mrs. Barkay died on January 30. William Barkay was also sick with similar symptoms towards the end of 2006, shortly after the family purchased the contaminated peanut butter. Peirce said while their daughter was home for her mother's funeral, she also ate the peanut butter, which caused her to become sick as well. The family is seeking unspecified damages.

According to Stephanie Childs, ConAgra spokeswoman, there are at least four other lawsuits claiming negligence caused by the salmonella found in their peanut butter.



Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left to right Behrend THON dancers and directors, Daniel Frankel, Erica Zinsser, Mike Mclean, Kathleen Vanderkolk, Vicky Straub, and Erin Kiesel.

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Dancers gathered in the Intramural Building before making their way to the Bryce Jordan Center through the "human tunnel." Students lined the route from the IM Building to the BJC to pump up the dancers. Mclean had never been to BJC before he arrived for THON, but when he stepped onto the floor for the first time, "It was unbelievable. Seeing all the organizations and with matching shirts, it was unbelievable."

Dancing for 46 straight hours can be rough. "At first I didn't want to be a dancer, but over Thanksgiving break, my grandfather died from cancer. That really inspired me and kept me going for the 46 hours," Mclean said.

Penn State President Graham Spanier said that this year's THON is "the best yet." "We have a wonderful amount of space, support service and everyone seems happy to be here," President Spanier said. "It's wonderful, and the families and everyone can be in one space together."

Sophomore Jennifer DiNardo said, "I was afraid that it (the BJC) was going to feel empty, but it wasn't at all. It feels like it belongs there, there was more room so everyone could enjoy it." DiNardo was introduced to THON by her teammates of the Lionettes Dance Team. "They told me it was amazing and it would change my life."

Unlike Mclean, DiNardo was not a dancer but a member of a Morale Committee. Members of these committees are assigned to one or two dancers. They take care of their dancer throughout the two days by bringing them small gifts and keep their spirits up. "We basically keep everything positive," DiNardo said.

A highlight for almost all of the participants is the Line Dance. The Line Dance is done once an hour, therefore 46 times during THON, and it is a dance that incorporates current events and stories as a way to unify all the participants at one time and have some fun.

As the weekend came to a close and the record-breaking total amount of \$5,240,385.17 was announced, the BJC was filled with tears, claps, and chants of "For The Kids!"



Mike Sharkey/THE BEHREND BEACON

Comedian Elliot Chang entertains the crowd Tuesday in McGarvey Commons.

### City Council continued from page 1

Rouch says he believes his team is on the right track with their plans to expand businesses and to bring new businesses to the area. "Our job is to keep companies in other areas aware of the new buildings being built, so they can bring their businesses to Erie. We also help the small businesses already in the area expand and grow," says Rouch. "This will hopefully be just what Erie needs to stay alive."

Erie City Council will continue the discussion of this zoning resolution during the next meeting on Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m.

## Quotes on Civility

"Manners are like the shadows of virtues; they are the momentary display of those qualities which our fellow creatures love and respect."

- Sydney Smith

Janet Neff Sample Center  
for Manners & Civility



Anyone interested in writing for The Behrend Beacon can stop by the news room located on the ground floor of the Reed Union Building, or email [arb271@psu.edu](mailto:arb271@psu.edu).