

Researchers develop better burn treatment

By The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A researcher says a treatment using a combination of synthetic skin and a new anti-bacterial sulfa solution has proved a major step forward in dealing with severe burns. University of New Mexico Hospital is the first center in the nation to try the new approach, said the director of the hospital's burn unit, Dr. John Kucan. The combination seems to do a reasonably good job of keeping bacteria out and moisture and heat in, two skin functions which become critical when a large amount of the body covering is lost, he said. At least 12,000 of the 80,000 Americans hospitalized for severe burns each year die. But the university's analyses suggest patients with burns over 40 percent or more of their bodies who are treated with the synthetic skin and the sulfa solution have a survival rate 50 percent above national averages, Kucan said. Kucan says he began using the synthetic skin-sulfa combination in the fall of 1982, and "our results have been absolutely superb." He said the 50 patients who have received the treatment so far range from a 9-month-old baby to people in their 80s. They suffered burns ranging from 2 percent of the body to as much as 90 percent, he said. The artificial skin, made of proteins derived from pig hide and cartilage bonded to a nylon and silicone fabric, is used to tempo-

rarily close wounds and has been available commercially under the name Biobrane since 1979. The solution was developed in the early 1970s by Winthrop Laboratories but never submitted to the Food and Drug Administration for approval. However, officials at the University of New Mexico burn center have conducted independent, FDA-sanctioned research with it for more than eight years. "It became a habit to have this stuff here," Kucan said. The synthetic skin can remain in place up to three weeks while the doctor evaluates the progress of healing and what kind of skin graft might be necessary. Covering the wound with a conventional antibiotic cream causes a dry scab which must be removed before grafting and blocks the wound from view, Kucan said. In addition, the cream causes tremendous pain upon application. "It was almost like burning them again," Kucan said. Using the sulfa solution with the artificial skin causes no pain and the doctor can see through the skin substitute and watch the wound as it heals, he said. Winthrop spokesman Terry Kelly said the company is examining the university's results, but noted the nature of burns makes it difficult to conduct controlled, scientific studies of burn preparations and to measure their effects consistently. Kucan said about 5 percent of the patients suffer side effects, primarily a rash, but "in no way has this treatment harmed the patient."

Jackson plans trip to Nicaragua

Democratic candidates make final bid for today's primary

By EVANS WITT AP Political Writer

The Rev. Jesse Jackson said yesterday that he would lead a peace delegation to Nicaragua, as Vice President George Bush accused him and the other Democratic presidential hopefuls of failing to take a strong stand against the "disgusting disease" of anti-Semitism. Jackson, Walter F. Mondale and Gary Hart criticized Pennsylvania making last-minute pleas for votes in today's primary, in which 172 delegates will be at stake. Jackson, Mondale and Hart said they expected to come out ahead in the delegate count. Bush gave the Democratic hopefuls a preview of the upcoming general election campaign yesterday by condemning them for not speaking out more forcefully against comments made by one of Jackson's key supporters — Louis Farrakhan, a Black Muslim leader. Mondale responded that the Republican vice president ought to pick up the morning paper because the former vice president said he had strongly condemned Farrakhan's statements. And Hart said he spoke out on the issue last week, and called Bush's speech a continuation of the politics of distraction. Amid that furor, Jackson announced he is going to lead a peace delegation to Nicaragua late this month or early in May, because he said Americans must support the government there against the CIA-financed efforts to overthrow it. "The situation in Central America is deteriorating," Jackson said in Pittsburgh. "We must support the government in Nicaragua. We have no right to mine the harbors there. It is provocative and dangerous." —Presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson

tion to visit the country, saying the time was not right for such a trip, but promising to go later this year. The Rev. Jesse Jackson said yesterday that he would lead a peace delegation to Nicaragua, as Vice President George Bush accused him and the other Democratic presidential hopefuls of failing to take a strong stand against the "disgusting disease" of anti-Semitism. Jackson, Walter F. Mondale and Gary Hart criticized Pennsylvania making last-minute pleas for votes in today's primary, in which 172 delegates will be at stake. Jackson, Mondale and Hart said they expected to come out ahead in the delegate count. Bush gave the Democratic hopefuls a preview of the upcoming general election campaign yesterday by condemning them for not speaking out more forcefully against comments made by one of Jackson's key supporters — Louis Farrakhan, a Black Muslim leader. Mondale responded that the Republican vice president ought to pick up the morning paper because the former vice president said he had strongly condemned Farrakhan's statements. And Hart said he spoke out on the issue last week, and called Bush's speech a continuation of the politics of distraction. Amid that furor, Jackson announced he is going to lead a peace delegation to Nicaragua late this month or early in May, because he said Americans must support the government there against the CIA-financed efforts to overthrow it. "The situation in Central America is deteriorating," Jackson said in Pittsburgh. "We must support the government in Nicaragua. We have no right to mine the harbors there. It is provocative and dangerous." —Presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson

Educators cry for higher-quality texts

By LEE MITGANG AP Education Writer

NEW YORK — In 1914, Ginn & Co. published a fourth grade primer, "The Young and Field Literary Classics," by E.B. White. The primer was small, the pictures few and selections included classics by Emerson and Victor Hugo. By the 1950s, the use of color in children's texts was big, the print was bigger and classic readings had virtually disappeared. Youngsters got their first exposure to literature through the stilted, inane language contained in what educators call "basal readers." "Look! Look! Run, run!" Dick, Jane, Sally, Spot and Puff had arrived. Now, after a year of reports decrying the rising tide of mediocrity in U.S. education, the secretary of education and other leaders say "dumbed-down" children's textbooks are another piece in the puzzle of what went wrong in the American classroom. "Textbooks, these critics charge, have become easier — and duller. "The nationwide effort to attain reform and renewal of our schools will fail and fail if we do not improve our textbooks," Education Secretary T.H. Bell told a gathering of school administrators in Las Vegas recently. "Basal readers are not part of the solution. They're part of the problem," said professor Tom Obe, director of reading at Furman University's department of education. "The calls for education reform this past year led some state officials, most notably in California and Florida, to campaign for tougher texts. Last month, education officials from 22 states met in Florida to try to demand tougher children's texts from publishers. But a multistate coalition proposal failed, an indication of how formidable the task is. William Honig, head of California's Department of Public Instruction and a critic of "dumbed-down texts," said reading texts up to third grade level were effective in teaching basic skills. But from fourth grade on, he said, texts do a poor job of developing reading and thinking skills, mainly because the stories neither plumb the real world nor teach comprehension. "I made this pitch to publishers last November," Honig said, "and they said, our editors would love to write that kind of text. But will they sell?" "Well, I told them they're the only kind of books they'll sell in California from now on if we have our way."



Pittsburgh's Pilot House restaurant lies partially sunken along the Monongahela River yesterday afternoon after being punctured by a log on the rail-swollen river. No one was aboard the \$1 million floating diner when it sank. The restaurant recently reopened part-time following a six-week shutdown.

Jailed grandmas freed without telling secret

By The Associated Press

SHERMAN, Texas — Two grandmothers, standing firm about keeping their secret, were freed from jail yesterday after serving five days for contempt of court because they refused to divulge where a friend had hidden an estimated \$45,000. Evelyn Hertzog and Dorothy Pauline Lindsay, both 85, were ordered jailed Wednesday because they refused to tell a county judge where Mary Ellen Bader, 55, had hidden the money. Bader's children are seeking control of their mother's estate, contending she is mentally incompetent. "I feel my sister has not been justly treated. I'm sorry but they got up against someone that does what is right. I am not stubborn. I stand for the law of God." Lindsay said. "I feel great. It's good to get out." U.S. District Judge William Steger in Tyler ordered the release of the women yesterday morning. A lawyer for Bader had challenged the jurisdiction of the county judge who jailed them. The women were released on \$500 personal recognizance bond. An April 27 hearing was set to consider their lawyer's arguments. Until their release, a jail spokesman said, the women, both of nearby Denison, were being held in a standard cell with a couple of beds, a toilet, a shower and a table. County Judge Lloyd Perkins said he had to order the jailing. "I begged them to reconsider what they were doing," he said. "I let them consult with their attorney before I cited them for contempt. I didn't feel I had any other choice." But Stephen Hefer, an attorney for the women, disagreed. "That is not the way you handle a court hearing — maybe you did in the Spanish Inquisition but not in the 20th century," said Hefer. Bader's son, Walter, was appointed a temporary guardian of his mother's estate in January after he convinced Perkins she was mentally incompetent to manage her own affairs. Bader has been attempting to gather his mother's assets for safekeeping. Bader, of Sherman, says she is not mentally incompetent and is resisting her son in court. She

has refused to turn over \$45,000 in cash she received when her husband died four years ago. "I'm not hiding it. I just say that it belongs to me and he has no right to have guardianship over me," she said Sunday. "I don't honor that." During the Wednesday hearing, Bader refused to tell the judge where the money was. Since she had been declared incompetent, she could not be held in contempt of court. Bader's lawyer, Scott Pelley, said he then decided to put Hertzog and Lindsay on the witness stand, a move he called "a stab in the dark." "They indicated they knew where the assets were and refused to tell us," Pelley said. Pelley said Perkins was very patient with the ladies. Bader said she is troubled that her sister and friend were jailed on her behalf. But she said she had no intention of revealing where the money is. "We're standing for what is right," Bader said. "They are trying to take over ownership of my property. We're standing for truth and justice."

state news briefs

Waste dumps may be tainting water HARRISBURG (AP) — Five more hazardous waste dumps have been discovered at the Harrisburg International Airport, state and federal officials announced yesterday. The discovery is in addition to one landfill found last year underneath an airport runway. The U.S. Air Force dumped the material at the former Olmstead Air Force Base before the base was turned over to the state in 1967, said Nicholas DeBenedictis, secretary of the state Department of Environmental Resources. According to DER, the deposited material ranged from solvents, oils, paint, sludges and degreasers to airplane parts, lumber and paper. The dumps may be responsible for the contamination of seven water wells that have been shut down since last year, said DER spokesman Bruce Dallas.

Pittsburgh charge passenger with rape

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A Pittsburgh man got more than he bargained for when two policemen agreed to give him a ride, then arrested him based on a rape report they heard on their police radio during the trip. Ernest Howard, 28, of Pittsburgh's Homewood section was jailed in lieu of \$20,000 bond after being charged with rape, indecent assault and involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, police said. A woman reported around 4 a.m. Saturday that she had been raped in bed while staying overnight at a friend's Southside residence. A short time later, Howard entered a downtown police station and asked if anyone could give him a ride to Hazelwood, police said. Officers Thomas Pobicki and John Mykytyuk agreed to help and put Howard in the back of their patrol van. Along the way, the police radio broadcast the rape report and described the suspect, including his T-shirt bearing the word "Hollywood." The officers, remembering Howard's identical T-shirt, delivered their passenger to the city lockup.

nation news briefs

Jackson charity asked to return aid WASHINGTON (AP) — A social service group once headed by Democratic presidential candidate Rev. Jesse Jackson should return more than \$700,000 to the government for federal aid improperly spent by the organization, the Department of Education said yesterday. The funds were used by PUSH for Excellence Inc., a program aimed at encouraging young blacks to stay in school and prepare for job training. The group's parent organization is the Chicago-based Operation PUSH founded by Jackson. Jackson once served as chairman of PUSH-Excel and made speeches to promote it but he did not run the organization on a day-to-day basis. Charles Hansen, director of the management support division of the Education Department, said most of the \$708,431 it wants returned was spent without proper documentation or justification for its use.

Four more escape from Tenn. prison

FORT FILLOW, Tenn. (AP) — Four inmates dropped into a culvert and escaped from a Fort Fallow State Prison work detail yesterday, less than two months after five prisoners broke out and led police on a chase that left three people dead, authorities said. One of the four was recaptured shortly after the escape at 2:30 p.m., authorities said. The inmates remaining at large were serving sentences for murder or rape. The recaptured inmate was identified as Gregory Smith, sentenced to 20 years for murder and robbery with a deadly weapon, said John Parish, Gov. Lamar Alexander's press secretary. Parish, who said the four dropped into a culvert to freedom, said authorities did not know if the remaining escapes were armed. Five inmates escaped from a Fort Fallow work detail Feb. 18.

world news briefs

Lebanese heads approve agreement BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Representatives of Lebanon's warring factions agreed on a military disengagement plan yesterday that a government spokesman called a first step toward ending the nine-year civil conflict. Spiraling sniper fire continued along Beirut's mid-city "Green Line" last night. Artillery crews had traded fire earlier in the day. President Amin Gemayel was chairman of the higher security-policy committee that took up the pullback proposals developed over the weekend by a military subcommittee. After the 2½-hour meeting, committee spokesman Mounif Oweidat told reporters the combatants' representatives had agreed on the plan for separating the contending factions, and other committees were working to implement it. Oweidat said the comprehensive plan covered the entire Moslem-Christian confrontation line from Beirut's second harbor to the foot of the Lebanese mountains, and the government's embattled stronghold at Souk el-Gharb in the mountains. He gave no timetable for implementation.

Soviet ships depart Gulf of Mexico

WASHINGTON (AP) — Three Soviet warships conducted exercises in the Gulf of Mexico last weekend, about 130 miles south of New Orleans, before steaming south toward Mexico, Defense Department officials said yesterday. The three ships included the 17,000-ton helicopter carrier Leningrad, the largest Soviet warship ever to operate in the Caribbean Sea. The other two were the 8,000-ton destroyer Udaloy and an oiler, said defense officials. The carrier was accompanied by a Cuban Koni-class frigate, officials said, adding that it was the first time a Cuban warship had conducted joint exercises with the Soviet fleet. A U.S. frigate, the Flatley, shadowed the Soviet ships during the exercises Saturday, the officials said. The Leningrad exercises apparently were unrelated to the large-scale Soviet naval exercises last week in the northern Atlantic Ocean.

stock report

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