

TUESDAY IN THE NEWS

Top stories from state, nation and world

Woman: Gay provoked Wilmington bar brawl

WILMINGTON — A Marine started a fight at a gay bar after a man who said he was proud to be gay made sexual overtures to three Marines, a woman said Monday.

Amanda Lopez was the first witness to testify in the trial of three Marines accused of beating Crae Pridgen outside a gay bar on Jan. 30.

Lopez said she was with the Marines that night. They talked about gays in the military during dinner, and "they didn't feel it was right," she said.

But they weren't looking for trouble with gays, said Lopez, a law enforcement specialist at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

Charged with three counts each of simple assault and one count each of assault on a woman are Lance Cpls. Colin C. Hunt, 20; Patric G. Cordone, 23; and Walter G. Watkins, 26.

Russians say Ukraine kept nuclear weapons

MOSCOW — Russia accused Ukraine on Monday of breaking promises to surrender nuclear weapons left from the Soviet collapse, saying this failure greatly could increase dangers in the region.

Russia's harshest attack yet on Ukraine's arms policy came as talks between the nuclear-armed neighbors appeared to have broken down. It came a day after President Clinton ended a U.S.-Russian summit by endorsing Russia's bid to be sole heir of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Ukraine's government did not respond directly. But its deputy foreign minister, Boris Tarasiuk, told The Associated Press: "Ukraine is not using the issue of nuclear weapons for political games. ... Ukraine cannot agree that weapons on our territory belong to the jurisdiction of another state."

ANC supporters killed in Johannesburg raid

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Ten black ANC supporters were killed early Monday when masked assailants blasted the home they were sleeping in with bullets and a hand grenade.

It was the country's third massacre since Friday, the day after black and white political parties met in Johannesburg to resume talks and seek a negotiated end to apartheid.

President F.W. de Klerk and ANC leader Nelson Mandela met in Cape Town for discussions on the escalating violence and the political talks.

The African National Congress, the country's leading black group, accused police of complicity.

Police spokesman Maj. Jan Botha rejected the ANC charge and said police were doing their "utmost to solve the murders."

Pakistani soldiers halt border demonstration

SEHRI, Pakistan — Giant rolls of barbed wire and thousands of armed soldiers blocked angry demonstrators Monday from marching across Pakistan's disputed border into India.

The 500 protesters had planned to show their support for militants fighting for independence in Jammu-Kashmir, India's only predominantly Muslim state.

In India, foot soldiers backed by artillery units took up positions to prevent the Pakistanis from entering the country.

The protesters were stopped at Sehri, about two miles from the border. A Pakistani army spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said thousands of paramilitary troops were deployed at the border.

—The Associated Press

STATE AND NATIONAL

Preparations for Passover occupy Jews worldwide

By Bonnie Rochman
Special to the DTH

JERUSALEM — Jews in Israel and around the world prepared Monday for the weeklong Passover holiday, purging their houses and shops of any traces of bread and getting ready for the traditional Seder feast that commemorates the biblical exodus from Egypt.

In Jerusalem's downtown open-air market, throngs of shoppers descended on food stalls where merchants had replaced the usual cakes, biscuits and rolls with more modest unleavened products. Bearded rabbis encouraged passers-by to sell their bread symbolically to non-Jews before the onset of the holiday.

"Last day for pita — Passover is coming," shouted one vendor hawking Middle Eastern pita bread to those not observing the dietary restrictions of the holiday.

In contrast to the religious festivities and merry-making, Israeli authorities were enforcing a weeklong closure of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The restriction, implemented in response to a rash of Palestinian violence against Israelis, prohibits more than 130,000 Palestinians from commuting to work in Israel. The closure was expected to last throughout Passover.

Meanwhile, the Israeli organization Victims of Arab Terror held a symbolic Seder Sunday near Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Jerusalem residence.

The table was set with 163 empty chairs, representing Jews killed by terrorists since the 1987 beginning of the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising.

The combination of Passover overlapping with the Easter holiday is expected to bring about 80,000 tourists to Israel within the month of April, a 12-percent increase from 1992, the Ministry of Tourism said. About half of them are Christian pilgrims, including 22,000 Catholics and Protestants and 13,000 Greek Orthodox observers.

For many Israelis, the weeklong holiday provides an opportunity to go away on vacation, with the southern beach resort of Eilat and Egypt's Sinai Desert two of the top destinations.

In Israel, the Seder meal is held only

the first night of the seven-day holiday, while outside the country Jews celebrate for two nights of the eight-day celebration. The difference stems from confusion in ancient times about exactly when the holiday began. To be sure, Diaspora Jews celebrate two complete Seders.

The festival begins at sundown Monday with the Seder, during which time family members and guests gather to read the story and prayers that recount the Jews' enslavement in Egypt and the miracles that the Bible tells led to their arrival 40 years later in the Holy Land.

For seven days, Jews are forbidden to eat bread or other leavened products and instead consume matzah, a flat crisp unleavened bread recalling the Jews' rapid flight from Egypt thousands of

years ago when they didn't have enough time to allow their bread to rise. Jews traditionally do a thorough spring cleaning prior to the onset of Passover, ridding their houses of bread products.

In keeping with the Passover theme of Jewish unity, the quasi-governmental Jewish agency arranged for 12,000 recent Russian and Ethiopian immigrants to celebrate the holiday with Israeli families or in communal Seders. The organization also made preparations for 5,000 Jews in the former Soviet Union to participate in festivities in their home communities.

Bonnie Rochman, a former DTH assistant university editor, is working this year for United Press International's Jerusalem bureau.

UNC researcher develops drug to slow AIDS-related disease

By Adam Bianchi
Staff Writer

A UNC researcher has created a compound that might help slow the disease that kills most AIDS patients, but he maintains that the compound is only a small step toward finding an effective cure for the disease itself.

"It is an important discovery and an interesting discovery. Whether it will be widely used is far down the road. There is still a long way to go," said Dr. Richard Tidwell, a researcher in UNC's pathology department.

Tidwell said he had been in the process of creating the BIBB compound, which halts the spread of pneumonia, for about four years.

"We were working on another compound which did not make it through the clinical testing," he said. "It's possible that this one won't either."

BIBB could stunt the growth of the organism that causes death in about 80 percent of AIDS patients, Tidwell said.

"The compound halts the growth of the microorganism pneumocystis carinii in the laboratory," he said. "This microorganism is the cause of death in the majority of AIDS patients."

Tidwell said BIBB would be an im-

provement over pentamidine, the treatment being used now.

"This compound has shown less toxic side effects in laboratory research than ... the current treatment," he said. "Pentamidine helps to control the microorganism, but it can also kill the patient. We are searching for a cure that won't end up killing the patient in the process."

He also said he thought there was a strong possibility that BIBB would not move to the clinical-testing stage because finding pharmaceutical companies to sponsor the drug during the testing processes was difficult.

"This is a major investment for the pharmaceutical industry," he said. "They have to weigh the need for the compound and the economic impact on the company. Finding a company to manufacture the compound is very difficult."

Expense is the main factor working against the compound's prospects of being sponsored by a pharmaceutical company, Tidwell said.

"It can cost from \$10 million to \$200 million to take the treatment from pre-clinical testing through clinical-testing phase one, phase two and phase three," he said.

"If a company picks it up, my optimism will grow. There are companies who are starting negotiations with the University. Since everything is at such an early stage, I'd rather not say which companies."

Derrick Hodl, treatment issues director for the New York-based AIDS Action Council, said obtaining funds for the testing of new drugs was becoming a national problem, since more and more potential AIDS treatments were being manufactured each year.

"Basic science, that is, understanding of the nature of the disease, has come a tremendous way," he said. "From here on, much is dependent on funding. Many vaccines are in development, but they're in preliminary stages. We have no animal models of the AIDS virus suitable for testing."

Tidwell said that if a company decided to test BIBB, it would be three to five years before the compound could be marketed as a clinically approved treatment.

"Once it reaches phase two — probably in a year to 18 months — clinics can use it on humans," he said. "If a compound could be found that cures or eliminates this microorganism, it would vastly increase the life expectancy and

life quality of AIDS patients."

Hodl said he was unsure how the new treatment would help AIDS patients because there still was much research to be done on the compound.

"We've made some strides in HIV research," Hodl said. "But most of that success has been alleviating the diseases that strike after the virus is active in the body. These are the opportunistic diseases. Advancement against the virus itself has been slim."

Dr. Wayne Bobbett, spokesman for the N.C. Department of Human Resources, said he believed researchers were doing "the very best that they can" in the search for an effective treatment for the AIDS virus.

"But we still have only a limited knowledge," Bobbett said. "Unfortunately we, the general public, expect instant results, which is impossible. Researchers say that a vaccine could be many years away. Hopefully there will be a breakthrough. The Federal Drug Administration has bent over backward to put these possible cures on the fast track."

Bobbett added that a large amount of effort had been put into AIDS research in the United States.

"A lot of money is being spent, and a lot more needs to be put into research," he said. "Government agencies, universities, the Center for Disease Research and the National Institutes for Health

are all working towards relief and a cure. It is the number-one public health problem in America. Until that changes, local and national efforts will not let up."

Tidwell said he thought the media's sensationalized presentation of recent research developments had prevented the public from realizing the severity of the AIDS crisis. "These are little steps working towards the cure. But if the story says that (the compound) is more than it is, there is going to be a better public reception."

Jobs-bill deadlock has Senate GOP crowing

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats and Republicans hunted for a way to end their standoff over President Clinton's jobs bill on Monday as GOP lawmakers crowed that the episode showed that the White House wouldn't be able to ignore them on future issues.

Behind the scenes, the two sides searched for a compromise over the \$16.3 billion package, a central part of Clinton's prescription for economic recovery. Republicans want to trim the measure and pay for it by cutting other programs.

On the Senate floor, Democrats failed for the third time to find enough votes to halt a GOP filibuster that has stalled the bill for more than a week. This time, the vote to halt the delays was 49-29 — 11 votes short of the 60 needed to clear the way for a vote on final passage.

On his way to an Opening Day baseball game in Baltimore, Clinton jabbed at Republicans for the stalemate.

"In a time when no new jobs are being created ... it means that for political purposes, they are willing to deny jobs to places like Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and Cleveland and Seattle," he told reporters. "It's just real sad."

White House budget director Leon Panetta was dispatched to the Capitol and said of the measure, "We don't want it to die here."

That would be the worst strategy of all for the American people."

But as the Senate debated the measure on what was supposed to have been the third day of a two-week Easter recess, Republicans showed no signs of folding. All present voted to keep their delaying tactics going, once again gaining the vote of conservative Sen. Richard Shelby, D-Ala.

"We're prepared to discuss working out some compromise if that's the word," said Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan. "First we're going to cut it, and then we're going to pay for it."

Several Republicans said their success in blocking the bill was transmitting an important message to Clinton about upcoming fights over health care, trade and other big issues.

"The longer we drag this out, the more it's becoming apparent that Republicans will have to be dealt with on everything," said Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind.

"Health care is an extremely significant issue that's going to need Republican support," said Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I. "And you're not going to get Republican support unless you talk with them."

Dole offered Monday to quickly ap-

prove the \$4 billion in the bill for benefits for long-term jobless Americans and to debate the rest of the measure later. But Democrats scoffed at the proposal.

"That's an offer for nothing else" getting approved, Howard Paster, Clinton's chief Capitol Hill lobbyist, told reporters.

With pressures building daily, some of the debate on the Senate floor became unusually personal.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee subcommittee that oversees transportation spending, revealed that before the fight over the bill had become so bitter, he had requests from Dole and Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., to include projects for their states in the measure.

"When the trough is full of swill, the hogs knock each other over getting to it," he said.

Chafee said that Democrats, too, had sought such projects and that Lautenberg's language was "very rough."

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