

Event to raise TB awareness

BY NORA WARREN
STAFF WRITER

University researchers want to raise student awareness about a global epidemic that kills more than 2 million people each year and infects more than 8 million others: tuberculosis.

The UNC Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Public Health are sponsoring an event from 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesday in the Pit in honor of World Tuberculosis Day, which commemorates the discovery in 1882 of the bacteria that cause the disease.

Officials planning the event said they will put up posters to inform students about the disease and will be on hand to answer questions.

Researchers said they hope to teach students about the worldwide threat the disease poses and about research at UNC that is trying to eradicate it.

Tuberculosis bacteria, which attack the lungs, are spread through the air. The disease is fairly uncommon in the United States, but researchers said it is a serious problem in Russia, India and

throughout Africa.

"If TB in other parts of the world is not controlled, we will never get rid of TB in the U.S.," said Annelies Van Rie, a professor in the School of Public Health.

Van Rie said 90 percent of people infected with the disease show no symptoms and will never know they have it. But it is among the leading causes of death in AIDS patients, whose immune systems are not strong enough to suppress it.

While vaccines and drugs do exist to combat the disease, infected people often do not complete the medicinal regimens required to cure it. Researchers said patients start to feel better and stop taking medications before the bacteria are fully destroyed.

"Tuberculosis is a treatable disease," said Anthony Hickey, professor of drug delivery and disposition in the School of Pharmacy. "It's just that people need to comply with the medication."

But failure to complete the treatment is creating a larger problem that could extend the threat of the disease despite medication.

A mutated form of the bacteria that is less responsive to medication can develop in patients who stop treatment.

"If those bacteria strains start spreading in the U.S., it would be a really big problem for us," said Miriam Braunstein, a professor in the School of Medicine.

UNC researchers are exploring inhalation methods to encourage patients to finish their medication regimen. "We've been working on aerosol-delivery systems to deliver the drug to the lungs," Hickey said.

He said aerosol drugs would allow a smaller dose of medication, reducing side effects.

Researchers also emphasize that even though tuberculosis is not prominent in the U.S. now, it is important to recognize it as a threat to the world population.

"We don't live in an isolated society," Van Rie said. "If we want a better life in the U.S., we have to improve the living situations of other people in the world."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Merit-based program could boost Pell Grants

Rewards students in tough courses

BY TRISTAN SHOOK
STAFF WRITER

Some college-bound students could see more financial aid money under a program that would increase the amount of funds in federal Pell Grants given to students who take more difficult courses in high school.

President Bush's 2004 budget includes \$45 million for expanding the Texas-based State Scholars Program, which now operates in 14 states, to provide aid to 36,000 students nationwide.

Participants who graduate from the program would get an extra \$1,000 annually from Pell Grants. Currently, the maximum award is \$4,050.

"We like to call it a preparation-based system," said Adrienne Lallo, director of marketing and communications for the Center of State Scholars. "We try to provide students with the tools to succeed."

The business-led initiative

encourages career preparation by requiring students to take high-level math courses and two years of a foreign language, among other courses.

The program relies on volunteers from businesses in local communities to speak with students about the importance of challenging coursework. Businesses also cooperate with the program to lead education initiatives and lobby state governments.

Bush intends to retain the program's voluntary participation model, which means that states and school districts would not be required to participate if they see a need to opt out. Only Texas has implemented fully a pilot version.

Steve Brooks, executive director of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority, said he's not necessarily opposed to the merit-based program, although he does not think it would help the segment of North Carolina's college-going population that needs financial aid most.

"If you think about someone who never planned to attend college in the first place, it's pretty

clear that that person has never taken those (advanced) courses," he said.

He said the program would benefit those already receiving Pell Grants but doesn't necessarily reach out to other groups.

"To the extent that it would not benefit that Pillowtex worker that got laid off, I think it's a bad idea."

If the program comes to North Carolina, it will be a decision made by the state government and individual school districts.

That decision could raise issues of fairness if the program is chosen by some districts but not others.

Two students with identical grades and course selections in high school could receive different Pell Grant awards based solely on their school's participation in the State Scholars Program.

Brooks said it's important that the Pell Grant program resolve its problems as well. "I'd like to get the Pell Grant program to live up to its promise of giving money to needy students before we have an add-on."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

THE Daily Crossword

By Janet R. Bender

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ACROSS

- 1 Hill crest
- 5 Medieval toiler
- 9 Out of kilter
- 14 Stanton film, "___ Man"
- 15 Spoken
- 16 Vacation vessel
- 17 Latin & others
- 18 Laertes or Ophelia, e.g.
- 19 Mongolian range
- 20 Union mutinies
- 23 U.S. retirement act
- 24 Sleeve card
- 25 Divested
- 27 Stimp's pal
- 28 Mineral ore of uranium
- 33 Belgian battle site
- 35 Nat. with Seoul
- 36 Desert stops
- 37 Barbara or Sir Anthony
- 39 Greek letters
- 41 Teatime treat
- 44 ___-jongg
- 45 Labels
- 49 Payload's heaviness
- 53 Packed-house letters
- 54 Shift dirt
- 55 TV add-on
- 56 Like some kitchens
- 58 Fancy dress event
- 63 Religious principle
- 64 Alone
- 65 Digestive juice

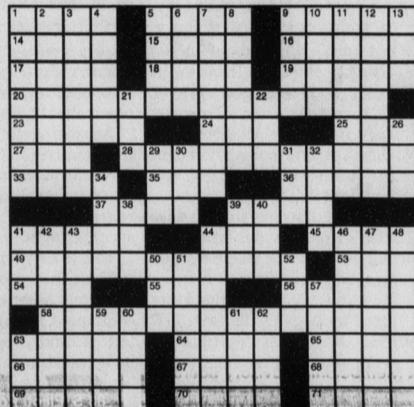
- 66 Disney's mermaid
- 67 Press
- 68 Mined products
- 69 Harebrained
- 70 Mach-2 breakers
- 71 Hardy lass

DOWN

- 1 Beer plant
- 2 Goes to bed
- 3 Like a translucent gemstone
- 4 Chalk hills along the Humber
- 5 Soft drink
- 6 Part of Q.E.D.
- 7 Pillage
- 8 Chase movie
- 9 Jai ___
- 10 Dairy product
- 11 Practical trainees
- 12 City near Fort Ord
- 13 ___ Lanka
- 21 Price ceiling

- 22 CSA soldier
- 26 Some French
- 29 Cholera
- 30 Heavy weight
- 31 Old card game
- 32 ___ of Eden
- 34 Las Vegas rival
- 38 Lawn moisture
- 39 Old cloth
- 40 LBJ's VP
- 41 Universal meas.
- 42 Barth novel
- 43 Naturally grown
- 44 Reflects

- 46 "Top Hat" star
- 47 Car front decorations
- 48 Like a family of girls
- 50 Morgantown sch.
- 51 Successful transplantation
- 52 Driving spot
- 57 Superior of a monastery
- 59 Search for
- 60 4 times per yr.
- 61 Scads
- 62 Puts on
- 63 Game of marbles



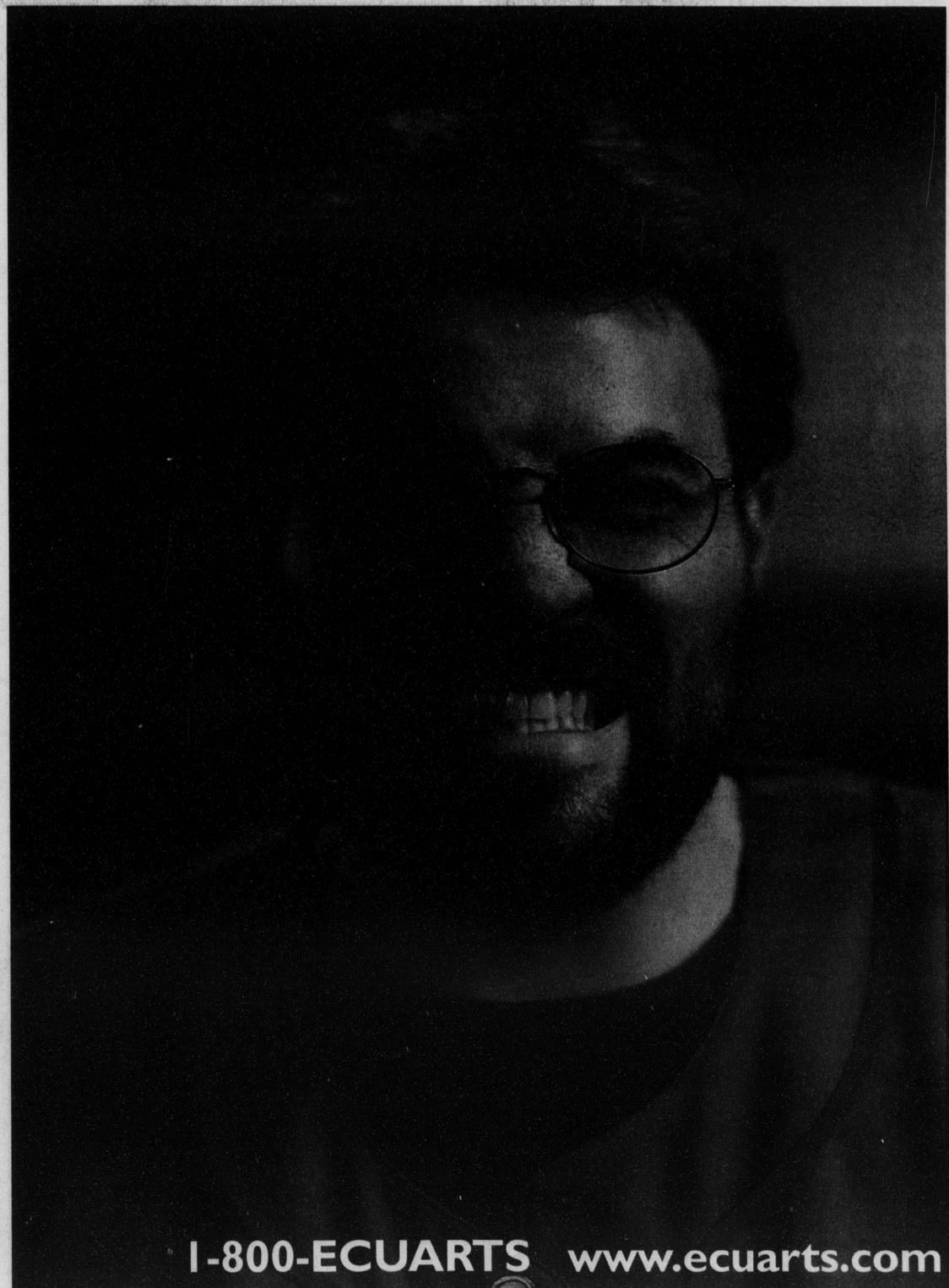
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