

Breaking through the bubble

India, Pakistan agree to hold peace talks

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Indian and Pakistani diplomats have agreed to meet to discuss peace, according to the Pakistani Foreign Ministry.

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry also said the two countries have reached a "broad understanding" on the framework of the talks, according to CNN. Representatives from the longtime nuclear rivals will meet to discuss the Kashmir controversy, terrorism and economic and trade issues. Foreign ministry officials met Tuesday to pave the way for a meeting between the countries' foreign secretaries, who will set the agenda and structure of the peace talks.

The countries have been at odds for more than half a century, coming close to war in 2001. The countries' history is marred by bloody insurgencies and fighting over the area of Kashmir, a mountainous territory with a Muslim majority. Both nations claim control of the region. Pakistani Prime Minister Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee agreed to restart the peace process after a meeting in January, which followed a two-month cease-fire between the two armies. The last peace talks between the two nations were held in July 2001.

Same-sex marriage licensing hits legal snare

SAN FRANCISCO — A challenge to California's same-sex marriage licenses was postponed Tuesday until Friday. Family values groups in the state have been vocal in their disapproval of issuing gay couples marriage licenses.

A San Francisco Superior Court judge ruled there was confusion over the timeliness of the filing of the challenge by Campaign for California Families and over two different versions of the complaint. He postponed Tuesday's hearing until Friday so the city and the conservative group could work together to present the correct documents to the court. However, a different

judge was to hear the same matter in a different court Tuesday from another family values group.

Because so many couples getting married in California are from other states, the case could end up in federal court. According to CNN, judges in each of this week's hearings could void the licenses, stop granting them or declare the practice legal.

Nearly 2,500 gay couples have been married in San Francisco since Feb. 12, and the city's mayor, Gavin Newsom, said the marriages would continue until a court order stops them. A bill proposed in New Hampshire, where gay marriage is already illegal, would allow that state to disregard gay marriages performed in other states.

Antibiotics linked to risk of breast cancer

SEATTLE — According to a study on the connection between antibiotics and breast cancer in women, women who took antibiotics for more than 500 days or who had more than 25 prescriptions over a 17-year period more than doubled their risk of breast cancer compared to women who had never taken antibiotics, according to CNN.

The study, conducted by members of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Group Health Cooperative, the University of Washington and the National Cancer Institute, suggested health problems that require antibiotics may put women at a greater risk for breast cancer, as might the way antibiotics affect bacteria in the intestine, disabling the cancer-fighting properties of some foods.

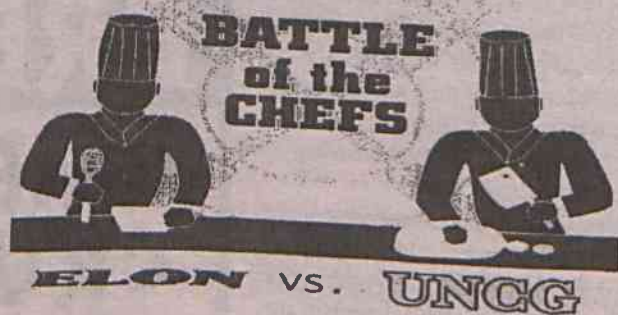
However, the researchers were quick to point out that their findings do not mean antibiotics cause breast cancer.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, antibiotics use has exploded over the past 10 years, with patients mistakenly taking the drugs to treat viruses, which cannot be helped with antibiotics. Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections.

Compiled by Ellis Harman

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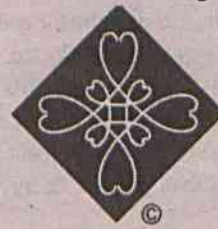
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