

Shorts in brain?

United Press International
HOUSTON — A University of Texas neurobiologist says many mental illnesses are the brain's reaction to a chemical imbalance which eventually may be found with machines and corrected with drugs.

Dr. Jon DeFrance, associate professor of neurobiology at the UT Medical School, contends specific electrochemical circuits "go wild," causing mental disorders like schizophrenia, withdrawal from reality. With improved medical techniques, DeFrance says, the faulty circuits can be pinpointed and fixed.

"We're a long way from doing that right now, but the information we can gain on the normal and abnormal functions of the electrical pathways of the brain will help us get much closer to developing a drug which can balance the chemical levels and

actually stop psychotic reaction," he says.
DeFrance's research has focused on the area of the brain involved in the expression of emotion, motivation, learning and memory.
"It is this part of the brain which many believe undergoes the most apparent changes through certain types of mental illness," he says.

DeFrance is using computers and new experimental techniques designed by Dr. J.C. Stanley, a post-doctoral fellow at the UT Medical School, to analyze the brain's electrochemical pathways and find specific operations.

He and his associates recently isolated a specific neurochemical mechanism which he says may be involved in long-term memory and learning changes. He says further research could eventually lead to memory enhancement.

Grandmothers Inc. put women to work

United Press International
TULSA, Okla. — A corporation founded four years ago to help older women earn extra money with temporary jobs will expand to a fourth city this month and the founder is beginning to have dreams of worldwide expansion.

The organization is Grandmothers Inc., founded in 1973 in Tulsa by Pauline Black, an accountant who was tired of working. So she decided she would help other women find ways to make some extra money.

Mrs. Black opened the home-based organization Oct. 1, 1973 with one customer and one woman who needed a temporary job. Now Grandmothers Inc. has offices at Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Houston and will open one this month at Indianapolis. Mrs. Black said she has doesn't know how many women work for Grandmothers Inc.

"I would just have to guess at it and I would say between 300 and 400," she said. "But they come and they go."

The women — 35 years old or older — earn money by babysitting, house sitting, serving as companions to the elderly or by doing light housework. Some work one or two days a week, and others work seven days a week on a live-in basis.

Their earnings depend on what tasks are performed and a percentage of it goes to the corporation.
"Nowadays, you can't get

minimum wage," Mrs. Black said.
Mrs. Black planned to expand her organization into Dallas in 1975, but was struck by cancer. She had a laryngectomy, which makes speech painstaking.

But now she is ready to expand business. Publicity from articles appearing in publications such as the National Observer and the Readers Digest has prompted inquiries from around the nation and the world.

"I am getting quite a few calls from Canada and Hawaii," she said. "I had one from the Republic of South Africa and one from France. So, it might turn out to be worldwide."

Mrs. Black, 59 and a grandmother, said it is "suggested" that women wanting temporary domestic employment through Grandmothers Inc. be 35 years old — but they don't have to be grandmothers.

"We'd have no objection to anyone 18 years old," she said. "If she wanted to be a grandmother at 18, then we'll let her."

She said the age 35 was suggested because "that's the average low for a grandmother."

She said she started the organization because many women find themselves divorced or widowed at the age of 50 or 60 with no skills and trying to live off Social Security or inadequate pensions.

"If I had to live off \$120 a month, I'd die," she said. "These people want their pride, too."

San Antonio power investigation ordered

Residents assured blackouts unlikely

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — The one million residents of the metropolitan area would not have to worry about a power blackout like the one experienced by New York City, San Antonio utility officials said in July.

But Monday those same officials ordered an investigation into an electric failure that darkened the nation's 10th largest city Sunday night.

Compared to New York's 25-hour midsummer outage, San Antonio residents suffered only a minor aggravation with very little looting and damage done.

The electricity was restored 90 minutes after the failure at dusk. City officials said the situation would have worsened the longer it lasted as food began to spoil and the threat of crimes and traffic hazards increased.

Jack Spruce, general manager of City Public Service, supplier of electricity and natural gas to the San Antonio area, asked the non-profit Southwest Research Institute to conduct an investigation into what he termed "an unknown failure" and how to prevent any further blackouts.

CPS officials had told the news media last summer at the time of the New York power failure that such a problem in San Antonio was extremely unlikely because of its regional network arrangements and backup system. They said after power was restored Sunday night the blackout was caused by the transmission line difficulties and not by an

overload such as occurred in New York.

Officials said the blackout occurred simultaneously with the burning of power distribution lines at the Calaveras generating plant on the southern edge of the city.

"It looked like everything was on fire," said Diana Montoya, who lives across the road from the power plant. "I could see the wires and the fire flashing in and around them for what looked like a quarter of a mile."

CPS technicians said all they learned was that a "static line," one that carries no electricity, crossed power-laden transmission lines at the plant, causing a short circuit.

But they also were puzzled why relay switches failed to disconnect the affected lines, causing the problem to spread and leaving the city in complete darkness for the first time in 28 years. Reserve generators activated also CPS said.

The blackout began with a dimming of lights, then television sets, radio stations, traffic lights died across the 300-mile diameter of the city.

Power was back on throughout the city by 10:30 p.m.

Mayor Lila Cockrell, who was caught in the dark at a reception of Texas Municipal League officials, said she found the blackout surprising in light of CPS officials' recent statements that San Antonio was blackout-proof because of its inter-facility arrangements with other South Texas power companies.

"It was quite surprising," she said.

"because we were proud that San Antonio had an adequate supply of power."

The Texas Public Utility Commission Monday said it also planned to investigate the power-sharing arrangements between the state's utilities that intended to avert blackouts such as the one Sunday.

Tom Sweetman, chief engineer for the commission, said the Texas Interconnected System, composed of generating utilities linked with San Antonio to provide power in such emergencies, evidently were ready and capable of backing up the San Antonio failure.

But he said the blackout threw San Antonio's dispatching center — which normally would have notified adjoining utilities of the problem —

into darkness, and the dispatching center's backup system failed to operate.

Police Chief Emil E. Peters said the department worked just a little above normal in crime incidents during the outage. We expect to find damages, probably vandalism, during the daylight hours that we may have overlooked during the night. There were reports of some windows smashed, but I don't think this went

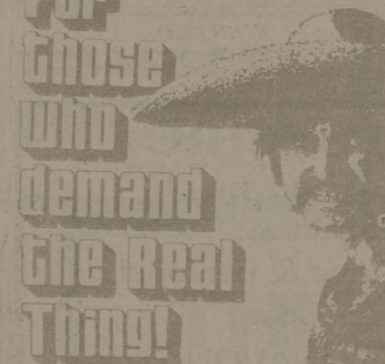
into 'phase two' looting."

No arrests for looting were made. "All emergency personnel, as well as the citizens of San Antonio, are to be congratulated," he said. "They kept cool during an emergency that could have become a calamity."

Emergency generating systems at hospitals and at the San Antonio International Airport prevented any problems with life support systems and air traffic during the outage.

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Bitter fruit chemical blooms into super dietetic sweetener

United Press International
WESLACO, Tex. — Like an ugly duckling which becomes a swan, a bitter chemical in grapefruit may one day be the salvation of dieters forced to do without sweetening saccharin.

The natural chemical is "naringin," which researcher Calvin Lyons says accounts for grapefruit's early season bitterness. Dr. Lyons says, however, that after processing the chemical becomes a super sweetener 1,500 times more powerful than sugar.

A researcher with the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service, Lyons has been studying naringin for several years and says if saccharin eventually is banned by the federal government the fruit substance may make a good substitute for dieters and a profitable one for citrus growers.

He said recently that on the basis

of current prices and yields, the value of naringin has been calculated at about \$40 a ton by Dr. Jim Kesterion, of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida.

Based on South Texas grapefruit production estimates of 138,000 tons, naringin would have added a value of \$5.2 million to the 1975-76 grapefruit crop had it all been recovered, representing a 28 percent addition to the value of the \$18.6 million harvest last year.

Lyons said, however, growers discouraged by depressed juice prices will have to wait a while longer to cash in on the grapefruit peels, where naringin is found. First, the processed chemical hasn't been cleared yet by the Food and Drug Administration and, second, the machinery to extract the substance is not widely available.

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