

Mice genes studied to cure disease

By BECKY DOBSON
Battalion Reporter

The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley (go off the planned line). —Robert Burns
Present research by a geneticist at Texas A&M University continues to validate Burns' earlier observation of the similarities between mice and men.
Dr. Jim Womack is studying genes which cause birth defects in

mice to gain insight into the cause and possible cure of birth defects in humans. The project is one of various studies being conducted by the Institute of Comparative Medicine jointly administered by Texas A&M and Baylor College of Medicine at Houston.
"We are comparing animal functions and disease with the diseases of human beings," says Dr. William McCulloch, director of the

institute. "Many of the diseases that animals have are similar to those in people. Since we obviously cannot experiment on people, we are able to study the natural diseases of animals. By finding the cure and the reasons for their diseases we can also gain insight into the solutions of similar diseases in man."
Womack's study involves genetic mutations in mice which cause lipid storage diseases. The diseases affect muscle and nerve control. Children suffering from some of the most serious of the diseases live only two to three years, Womack says.
"Many diseases in humans have not been solved because we don't

understand the activities of a normal cell," Womack says. His work is aimed at studying the normal processes of the cell, which will aid him in determining exactly what goes wrong in genetic production that causes cell disorders and disease.
The basic problem is lipid storage diseases, Womack says, is the failure of cell enzymes to be made and processed in the cells of individuals.
"One of the most significant dis-

coveries made so far has been that there are more than one class of genes involved in these diseases — the genes that regulate the amount of enzyme produced and the genes responsible for packaging the enzymes. Our future work will be directed toward a better understanding of how the genes can be controlled harmoniously."
Womack says laboratory mice make good models for studying the genetics of enzyme processing. He says mice are so inbred that they may be treated as genetic copies of one another. This condition is not common in other animals.
The National Foundation-March of Dimes has contributed \$26,000 to Womack's research on birth defects.

Navajo Police arrest protestor

United Press International

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Tribal Police Tuesday used clubs to clear a park where a group of Indians had set up camp Monday in a protest of tribal officials and policies.

Initial reports said at least 15 persons were arrested, including the leader of the occupation, Larry Anderson.
Witnesses said at least one protestor suffered a head injury during the arrests.

Navajo Police could not be reached for comment. Sources in Window Rock said the police had turned off the telephone switchboard for all Navajo Tribal offices.

The clash between police and an estimated 50 protestors apparently began after the protestors rejected a request by tribal officials to move to the Tse Bonito Park, just a few miles east of Window Rock in New Mexico.

Witnesses said Navajo Police then sealed off entrances to the park. The witnesses said a group of elderly Navajo women then approached the officers and began taunting them. After about 10 minutes, an officer gave a command for the officers to move forward. The women began resisting but the officers continued their march. At that point, witnesses said several younger men charged the police. The officers began using billy clubs to subdue the men and began arresting them.
Witnesses said persons remaining in the park scattered.
Sources said charges against those arrested had not been specified. They were not expected to be arraigned until today.

The group calling itself the Dine Bii Coalition moved into the park Monday in an apparent continuation of a protest that began with the brief occupation of the tribal headquarters building the day before the Nov. 14 tribal elections. Anderson also led that takeover.
The protestors, originally estimated at about 125 persons, said they would remain in the park until their demands were met.

However, Katherine Ott, a member of the tribal legal staff, said the protestors' demands were not clear. She said the group was preparing earlier Tuesday to send a delegation to meet with tribal officials to discuss their demands.
Tribal officials had urged the protestors to move to the other park because of better sanitary conditions, because of the danger of falling rock and because Window Rock park was "a sacred area."

Anderson said the occupation would not be violent and said none of the protestors carried firearms. He said the demonstrators had enough food to last for two years and said they would be joined by others later.
He said the group's demands included the elimination of the Navajo Supreme Judicial Council and more responsive tribal officials.
Anderson and six other men occupied the headquarters building Nov. 13 for about four hours in a protest against the candidates for tribal office. They surrendered peacefully and were held on several federal charges that later were dismissed. The incident still is under investigation.


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