

# National

## Demos avoid harsh plan jabs

WASHINGTON — Democrats in Congress — mindful of President Reagan's election mandate — were careful to avoid a flat rejection of his economic recovery plan, but some strong objections quickly emerged.

House Democratic Leader Jim Wright, D-Texas, said "a substantial part" of Reagan's package "will be accommodated," but he called the tax-cut proposal "sort of a blunderbuss approach" that would lead to higher deficits and higher inflation.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said there are major budget cuts he can and will support. "But I am not prepared to see the social progress of a generation swept aside in a few short weeks."

Senate Democratic Leader Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., said Democrats would support a tax cut, but not the 10 percent per

year across-the-board plan Reagan proposed.

"We feel it is an inflationary tax cut," Byrd said. "We don't think it is equitable and fair across the board. It favors the rich."

Most Republicans enthusiastically embraced the plan Reagan outlined Wednesday night.

"As a matter of fact, I would be willing to support more expenditure cuts than he is asking for," said Senate Banking Committee Chairman Jake Garn, R-Utah.

Speaker Thomas O'Neill, the top ranking Democrat in Washington, said the House would act on Reagan's proposals "expeditiously" but also "as cautiously and as fairly as we possibly can."

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker stressed the need to treat Reagan's proposed budget cuts as a single package, saying the plan could be in "real trouble" otherwise.

But even Baker said it would be "foolish" to assume Reagan's tax-cut proposals would get quick congressional approval. He said there is broad support for the cut, but passage might be delayed until next year.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, described Reagan's plan as "probably the most dramatic redirection of the fiscal policy of the federal government since 1932."

Assistant Senate Democratic

Leader Alan Cranston, D-Calif., said Reagan, "with the apparent blessing of the electorate, is about to launch an experiment with the nation's economy — and with the well-being of millions of Americans."

"The experiment may work. It may not," Cranston said, adding, Congress "has the constitutional responsibility, however, to analyze carefully each of the specifics in the president's program."

## Shrink can't be sued for 'allowing' killing

DES MOINES, Iowa — A psychiatrist cannot be sued because he failed to prevent a woman from murdering her ex-husband, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled.

The justices Wednesday overturned a lower court ruling that had allowed Mary Kathleen Cole and her current husband to sue psychiatrist Michael Taylor.

Cole was convicted of first-degree murder four years ago for the 1977 shooting death of her ex-

husband, Alan Tyler, a Des Moines physician.

But Cole sued Taylor, saying she went to him in May 1977 — four months before her husband's murder — for treatment of a mental disorder. She said she told him she had "violent inclinations and was considering killing her former husband."

The suit charged Taylor, as a psychiatrist, should have prevented the murder by committing Cole or warning her husband of impending danger.

## Mt. St. Helens eruption brings 'ash baby' boom

SPOKANE, Wash. — They're calling them "ash babies," and some hospitals in the Northwest are having trouble finding room for all of the expectant moms.

It just so happens Wednesday marked the nine-month anniversary of the massive May 18, 1980, eruption of Mount St. Helens.

When the mountain blew its top that sunny morning, it covered parts of three states with volcanic ash, so much so, in some places, people virtually were "ash-bound" for days, unable to get out of their homes.

Now people are starting to talk about the eruption again, but for a different reason.

"I remember we were commenting to each other after the ash fell we would have to keep track of the period nine months later," said Joe Morris, administrator of Kootenai Memorial Hospital in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

"At the current rate, we'll be up to 107 babies — our biggest month ever — and it would be a February with only 28 days," said Morris.

Nurses in the hospital's maternity ward began noticing an increasing number of births last week, and it became apparent something was up when 19 babies were delivered the same day.

Morris said the hospital's nursery unit can only accommodate 12 new moms and babies, so nurses

began chasing all over the hospital looking for rooms for the other seven.

"We had 4 inches of ash, so we were forced to stay inside," said Cheryl Sieveke, a Tekoa, Wash., mother who came to Coeur d'Alene to have her baby.

"We weren't planning on getting pregnant; it just happened that way," she said, but adding, "We're happy about it."

Morris said so far this month, there have been 65 births, and his prediction of 107 for the month will easily surpass the 92 babies born during February of 1980.

In Spokane, Tom Heafey, a maternity ward supervisor at Deaconess Hospital, said the babies delivered so far this month surpasses the 127 total for the entire month of February a year ago.

"We have been busy in the labor and delivery departments, for whatever you can attribute that to," Heafey said with a chuckle.

At Samaritan Hospital in Moses Lake, Wash., which was among the hardest hit areas by the volcanic ash, an administrator said there had been any deliveries for a few days.

"We seem to have quite a few pre-natal cases," she added. "It's just that none of them have given birth yet."

## Pot fungus can be deadly

BOSTON — Marijuana smokers risk developing allergies or potentially deadly lung infections from a common fungus found in the weed, doctors said in a report published today.

A research group at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee said a study of 26 marijuana users found that better than 50 percent of the smokers were infected by fungi of the aspergillus family.

Although the fungus is commonly found in dark, damp basement corners, people who smoke marijuana inhale large amounts of fungal spores into their lungs, chief investigator Dr. Steven Kagen reported in a letter to the New England Journal of Medicine.

"We have yet to find a sample of marijuana that doesn't have fungal organisms in it," he said.

Aspergillus fungi produce spores that remain viable even in a burning marijuana cigarette. Once inhaled, Kagen said, the organisms grow inside the body and can cause a number of lung diseases that range from asthma to life-threatening infections.

"Lit and unlit marijuana

cigarettes were able to pass aspergillus organisms right through unimpeded," he said.

A healthy individual is able to battle the fungus after it enters the lungs, Kagen said, but the spores may be a cough or fever, which might be mistaken for a flu.

However, in people with weak immune defenses, such as those undergoing treatment with cancer drugs, the same infection could be fatal.

Since cancer patients also smoke marijuana to lessen nausea associated with their therapy, Kagen said they are exposing themselves to fungal spores at a time they are unable to fight the infection.

"The use of marijuana as an anti-emetic (anti-nausea drug) ought to be vigorously discouraged," Kagen said.

He said he is aware there are a number of lung diseases that can be caused by using that illegal product.

Kagen acknowledged, however, people taking marijuana's active ingredient, THC, in chemically pure tablets do not risk infection. At present, 25 states have laws recognizing THC's positive effect, but only eight have programs allowing cancer patients to obtain the drug.

Kagen and three fellow doctors studied 26 marijuana users of marijuana obtained from each other. Of 21 smokers given sputum blood tests, 11 — or 52 percent — showed aspergillus infections.

One patient had the microscopic fungus growing in his lung, nose and kidneys, but had no external signs of infection. "It was a walking fungus ball and he had no symptoms," Kagen said.

Severe aspergillus infections can be treated with a drug called amphotericin, but Kagen says its effects are so strong, many clinicians refer to the drug as "amphotericin."

The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates up to 20 million Americans are daily marijuana users.

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## Bullet nicks his zipper, misses man

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — An Idaho woman was charged with firing a bullet that deflected off a man's pants zipper and cut through his pants pocket without wounding him.

Edna Winn, 47, Bayview, Idaho, was charged Wednesday in District Court with three counts of assault for allegedly firing a .38-caliber revolver at Allen Lamb, 41, on Valentine's Day.