

# National

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## Weekend sailor wants privateering license

United Press International  
KEY WEST, Fla. — Randy Ludacer, a bearded weekend sailor with a few hard-eyed men behind him, wants to resurrect the days of Jean Laffite to aid in the war on drug smugglers.

Ludacer, an attorney, has petitioned Congress to grant him the first "Letter of Marque and Reprisal," a commission given to a private ship by a government to make reprisals on ships of other states. If issued, it will be the first since the War of 1812.

Thus he and his men, commissioned privateers, would patrol the Caribbean — where centuries ago the Jolly Roger flew at the maintop of Blackbeard's or Morgan's corsairs — in search of drug-laden smugglers' sailing vessels.

He says such a force would be more effective than overburdened Coast Guard and Drug Enforcement Agency patrols.

"We could do it more efficiently for less money," he said Monday. "Don't you think the war on drugs would be more efficient if it were motivated by profits rather than pensions?"

"Sometimes the obvious solutions are overlooked because they haven't been used for a long time.

It (privateering) seemed to be a viable alternative when the Constitution was written."

The Korean War veteran and handgun hobbyist said he doesn't envision himself at the helm of a pirate ship.

"I don't propose to be running around with a .45 and a cutlass," he said. "But I could put the components together."

Ludacer, 51, indicated he has the nucleus of his privateer force — a buddy who participated in the 1960's Congo liberation movement, a few French Foreign Legion veterans, a former Green Beret and other "cloak-and dagger" types, intelligence experts — people who rather enjoy risk-taking.

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power "to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal and make rules concerning captures on land and water."

Among the last privateers commissioned by Congress was Laffite, who plundered British merchant vessels during the War of 1812.

Ludacer hasn't yet heard from Congress, he said.

He proposes to operate private boats equipped with electronic devices. He said he would informers "a few more dollars than the government pays to have them plant tiny transmitters in bales of marijuana to enable privateers to pick out a drug-laden boat from a fleet of other fishing craft.

"There are three choke points in the Caribbean that could be off rather easily," he said. "They are the Yucatan Straits, the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti and the Mona Passage between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico."

Those could be patrolled rather efficiently at small cost.

Ludacer said a large problem with his scheme, which would require more action from Congress than the granting of a letter of marque: The booty his privateers would seize would not be in doubloons. He couldn't legally sell his treasure without becoming a drug smuggler himself.

He's convinced, however, that government can be persuaded that rewarding a privateer for seizing drugs would be money well spent.

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## Major breakthrough with gene transfers

United Press International  
ATHENS, Ohio — Ohio University researchers Tuesday announced the successful transfer of genes from rabbits to mice to their offspring. This was a history-making first that may soon result in better livestock and someday help man.

The five-member research team had transferred genes from rabbits to mice, which were in turn passed to two generations of mice, Dr. Thomas E. Wagner, a molecular geneticist, said.

The technique, he said, could be used either to transfer a desired trait within the same animal species or to transfer a gene from a different species to create genetically unique animals.

The research could have major implications for the agriculture animal industry in the next decade, Wagner said. "Application of this technique to animal breeding could dramatically shorten the time necessary to selectively breed species of animals with improved food-producing characteristics," he said.

Genetic Engineering Inc. of

Denver already holds a license agreement with the university for commercial use of the patent on such research.

The Washington Post Tuesday reported the university and Genetic Engineering are already working to produce what Wagner calls "three-parent cattle." These would be cattle with genes from an otherwise unrelated bull or cow to confer some valued quality, such as faster growth or better milk production.

The new method may someday help humans by allowing the transfer of genes to prevent a disease or correct a genetic defect, Wagner said.

During their research, scientists said they "micro-injected" 20,000 copies of a rabbit-blood protein gene into the male pronuclei of one-celled, fertilized mouse eggs.

(Pronuclei are sperm cells that

have swollen in preparation of combining with female genetic material in eggs they had received.)

Rabbit genes were also injected into the 312 mice embryos in the way, and the mice embryos were cultured in test tubes in the laboratory. Of those, 211 survived and were transferred to female mice, the scientists said.

These mothers produced offspring, including five mice that contained the rabbit hemoglobin protein in their red blood cells.

These offspring were also mated and their offspring contained the rabbit protein, suggesting the artificially introduced rabbit gene had been inherited by the mice, researchers said.

The findings of the research, funded by Ohio University, will be published in the October issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

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**HEALTH NEWS**

**Nervous?**  
By Dr. Stephenson

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- Recurring headaches and nervousness
- Lower back and leg pain
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