

# State

## Scientists find new aid for chronic pain

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Cancer researchers say they have developed a procedure to block chronic pain by channeling pain relievers to the brain's pain center from a reservoir implanted in patient's head.

The procedure involves implanting a plastic cup known as an Ommaya reservoir beneath the patient's scalp. Tubes channel drugs from the reservoir to the portions of the brain that detect pain, and the drugs block stimuli the brain would interpret as painful, said Dr. C. Stratton Hill of M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute.

But Hill warned the procedure, under testing for the past year, is

for patients who do not respond to less drastic procedures to control chronic pain, such as pills or injections.

Hill, organizer of a three-day conference on the latest developments in cancer research, said the procedure for inserting the Ommaya reservoir in the head is "relatively simple" and requires only a local anesthetic.

Once the reservoir is implanted, a procedure that costs about \$1,000, the patient's family is taught how to safely refill the reservoir as the drug is channeled out, he said.

One advantage of administering painkillers through the reservoir, Hill said, is that since the drug is delivered to the brain full strength, smaller doses are needed to control chronic pain.

Strong doses delivered directly to the brain also mean the patient would require fewer doses and delays the patient's dependency on the drug or tolerance to it, Hill said.



Beauty and the beast

Sammy, a boa constrictor, was seen sightseeing on campus Thursday from around the neck of junior finance major Gretchen Goetz.

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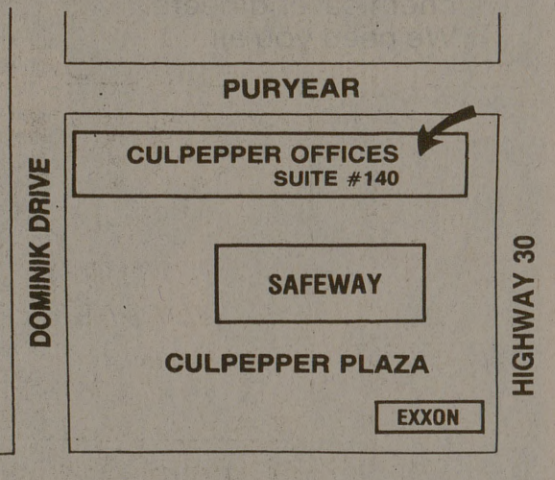
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## Counties want gay suit to remain in federal court

United Press International  
HOUSTON — County attorneys across the state do not want Harris County to appeal to the

U.S. Supreme Court possible violation of the civil rights of a gay activist county employee fired for advocating his alternate lifestyle

to county officials.

Harris County Attorney Mark Driscoll said Wednesday he was to take the case brought by former Assistant County Treasurer Greg Van Ooteghem, fired in July 1979 to the Supreme Court.

Fifteen other counties, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, and the Texas Association of Counties would rather take the case to federal court than to the high court. Jeff Boggess, former general counsel for the Texas Association of Counties, who is coordinating the counties' efforts, said the case could set a precedent on whether Texas counties are liable for civil rights violations of elected county officials.

If the county decides to appeal to the Supreme Court, Boggess said he was "going to ask the Supreme Court to disqualify the Harris County attorney's office from the case. I will not let them score this case up any more than they already have."

"I'm not prepared to let Harris County take the rest of the sovereign state of Texas with it," Boggess said.

Driscoll said the high court could elect not to hear the case but he intends to present the case to the panel of justices.

"Ours is a very carefully considered position. We're sensitive to these other counties. Jess (Boggess) is leading them down some rabbit trail," Driscoll said.

Van Ooteghem was fired when he told then-county Treasurer Hartsell Gray that he planned to address commissioner's court concerning gay rights.

Gray told him he could not appear before the commission during working hours and ordered him to remain in his office. Van Ooteghem disobeyed and was fired.

The case has already gone to the Supreme Court once, but was remanded to the district level.

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