

# Gene find could bring MS cure closer

**United Press International**  
**SAN FRANCISCO** — Biologists have isolated a gene vital to the nervous system and found that it is defective in mice with a nervous disorder—a discovery that could provide new tools for investigating multiple sclerosis, a majorcrippler of young people.

In a report to appear today in Cell, the world's leading molecular biology journal, scientists from the California Institute of Technology and the University of California, San Francisco,

said they isolated the gene that codes for the major protein of myelin. Myelin is a covering or insulation around nerve cells which aids the travel of impulses along nerves.

The scientists found the gene is defective in a mutant strain of mice which exhibits a nervous disorder. This is the first time a neurological disorder in a mammal has been traced to a specific gene defect, they said.

The findings could prove significant in the treatment and cure of such

human muscle-weakening diseases as multiple sclerosis or Guillain-Barre's syndrome.

"For years people have been trying to find the cause of multiple sclerosis, the major crippling illness of young adults, but everybody has drawn a blank," said Dr. Stanley Prusiner, UCSF associate professor of neurology.

"We wanted to isolate the gene that codes for myelin protein. Then we could take the isolated gene and do

genetic maps on people with MS to see if something in the genetic background is responsible for the development of that disease," he said.

"We've isolated that gene, a very important step which can allow us to apply modern biological tools to study people with MS," Prusiner said.

The researchers isolated and cloned the gene for myelin basic protein (MBP) from rat DNA.

Scientists think some human diseases are caused by defects in the

myelin gene.

Since the rat gene for myelin basic protein is almost identical in structure to the human gene, the researchers expect to be able to use it to isolate the human gene in normal and diseased humans for comparison.

"(Multiple sclerosis) may represent an immune reaction to a defective myelin basic protein," Dr. Leroy Hood, professor of biology at Caltech, said. "If so, we should be able to iden-

tify differences between the normal and abnormal genes."

The scientists studied the nature of the gene in shiverer mice, which appear normal at birth, begin shivering two weeks later, develop paralysis and seizures and, 50 to 100 days later, die.

The scientists found large portions of the myelin gene were missing from the mice's DNA.

## Ships may burn wastes at sea

**United Press International**  
**WASHINGTON** — The Environmental Protection Agency has given a hazardous waste disposal company preliminary approval to burn more than 80 million gallons of toxic wastes at sea.

The action, taken despite protests of environmental groups and many Gulf Coast residents, means the EPA has decided to grant individual permits for incineration ships. However, the EPA has yet to adopt broad regulations for burning chemical-laden wastes on ocean-going vessels.

Rebecca Hamner, acting assistant EPA administrator for water, approved the draft of three three-year permits Monday for incineration of wastes aboard the ships Vulcanus I and Vulcanus II, owned by Chemical Waste Management Inc. of Oakbrook, Ill.

If the permits are approved, the ships will burn a wide range of wastes. Some of these wastes contain cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, and up to two parts per million of dioxin, considered the most toxic chemical made.

The two ships will be allowed to burn up to about 80 million gallons of wastes over 80 to 85 voyages.

The third permit, a six-month research permit, will allow Vulcanus II, the newer of the two ships, to incinerate up to 264,000 gallons of liquid DDT.

Last week more than 20 organizations, including the newly formed Gulf Coast Coalition for Public Health, filed a petition asking that the EPA set criteria for evaluating permit requests before issuing any permits.

Environmentalists also assert the EPA has failed to consider the catastrophic consequences

of a toxic spill.

Alan Rubin, chief of the EPA's water quality criterion section, said the EPA's office of general counsel has concluded that under the agency's current ocean dumping regulations, it can issue permits for ocean incineration ships if environmental studies have been conducted and it has information on the wastes to be burned, the method of incineration, and the equipment and vessels to be used.

He said those conditions have been met, and stressed that the permits will require destruction of 99.99 percent of wastes, while international treaties set a less stringent standard of 99.9 percent efficiency.

Rubin also noted that the draft permits will require the company to monitor the incinerators, and to pay for independent, on-board observers to watch the process round-the-clock.

He said public hearings on the permits are now scheduled for Nov. 21 in Brownsville and Nov. 22 and 23 in Mobile, Ala.

The two cities were chosen because Brownsville is considered the closest city to the burn site far in the Gulf of Mexico, and Mobile is near a Chicksaw, Ala., port where the company hopes to load the ships.



staff photo by John Makely

### A rainbow of colors...

Suzan Bruce a senior history major from Beaumont is painting pipes in Room 211 of the Old State Chemistry Building. Suzan and a

group of friends decided that the room looked boring so they did something about it. The colors are green, yellow and lavender.

## City official resigns after sex incident

**United Press International**  
**SPRINGFIELD, Ohio** — A Springfield city manager who suspended a policewoman for posing nude in Playboy magazine resigned Tuesday after being questioned by police about picking up a prostitute.

Tom Bay, 51, was unavailable for comment Wednesday. Police said Bay told them he had offered the woman \$50 for her services. A police spokesman said it was not immediately clear if Bay was not arrested in the incident.

Bay suspended Barbara Schantz for 37 days last summer after she posed nude for an eight-page pictorial, entitled "Beauty and the Badge," in the May 1982 Playboy.

She was suspended for violation of 10 department regulations including conduct unbecoming a police officer and not receiving prior approval from supervisors to pose, Bay said.

incident. Doughty, a well-known critic, said, "Bay is a very controversial figure in Springfield. I think he was emotionally premature in the action he took. Nobody had legally established (that) he solicited her or she solicited him."

— attorney James Doughty.

Bay's attorney, James Doughty, said he felt Bay's resignation may

have been premature.

"Bay is a very controversial figure in Springfield," Doughty said. "I think he was emotionally premature in the action he took. Nobody had legally established (that) he solicited her or she solicited him."

The suspension of Mrs. Buffington was the subject of a television movie, "Policewoman Centerfold," aired this week.

Mrs. Buffington said she thought the movie was "fairly good" and accurately dealt with the emotions she experienced during the controversial period. Springfield city officials were polled following the movie for their impressions of the film. Bay said he skipped it to watch Monday night football.

Bay suspended Barbara Schantz for 37 days last summer after she posed nude for an eight-page pictorial, entitled "Beauty and the Badge," in the May 1982 Playboy.

After the suspension she returned to the force and married police officer James Buffington. Mrs. Buffington is on maternity leave and refused to comment on Bay's resignation.

Her attorney, James Doughty, said she will not talk about the

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**Rev. John McGarey, Associate Pastor**

**SUNDAY:**  
 Worship at 8:30AM & 11:00AM  
 Church School at 9:30AM  
 College Class at 9:30AM  
 [Bus from TAMU Krueger/Dunn 9:10AM Northgate 9:15AM]  
 Youth Meeting at 5:00PM  
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