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Cancer center swamped with anxious callers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — News of a promising new cancer treatment at the National Cancer Institute prompted a flood of calls to the federal center Thursday from people desperate for a cure.

"What they're saying is, our mother, our brother, our sister is dying at this very moment," said Carol Case, the institute's chief of public inquiries. "We have nothing to lose. We want to be a candidate."

Paul Van Nevel, the institute's associate director for communications, said, "Our 800 (telephone) numbers are jammed this morning."

The callers want information about a new treatment, called adoptive immunotherapy, that turns ordinary white blood cells into "killer cells" that attack malignant tumors. The treatment was announced Wednesday in an article in the New England Journal of Medicine.

In 11 of 25 patients with advanced cancer, doctors were able to shrink tumors by at least 50 percent and, in one case, apparently eradicate the disease.

Officials cautioned that the treatment is still highly experimental, carries toxic side effects and is also very expensive. It is available only at the cancer institute in Bethesda, Md., a Washington suburb.

"This is really the first step," said Dr. Steven Rosenberg, director of the research project. "But it demonstrates that it is possible to manipulate the immune system and make a variety of cancers in a variety of locations disappear."

Rosenberg also cautioned that the experimental program "can only treat about eight patients a month. We get several hundred inquiries a day."

Just as previous "breakthroughs" in the search for a cancer cure have spawned a huge public response, so has this one.

"What we're looking at are people searching for every possible cure for their loved ones," Case said. "People are willing to go anywhere. They say, 'I have money. I'll do anything to buy my way into this.'"

The procedure uses interleukin-2, a natural hormone of the immune system, to transform ordinary white blood cells into cancer warriors. These cells are treated outside the body and then injected into the patient, where they attack cancerous tumors throughout the body.

To some of the 462,000 people that the American Cancer Society says will die of cancer this year, the therapy signals hope, however slim.

"We're encouraged by any new breakthrough, any new treatment that looks promising. But we don't want to give people false hope," the cancer society's Lehmann said. "It may get their hopes up unrealistically."

"See how much you can afford to spend, and then decide on how much you want to spend," she says.

Smith says that if people can charge less than 20 percent of their monthly take-home pay, they can stay out of danger with consumer credit.

"People tend to look at one purchase independently and say 'I can afford that,' and they run over the 20 percent," she adds.

Another hint Smith gives consumers is to establish an emergency fund.

"The emergency fund should be equal to three months living expenses," Smith says.

"This is an easy safeguard people can do to protect themselves," she says.

Smith also suggests that consumers watch their large purchases made on credit.

"With most cards you can pay a minimum balance," she says. "If you have a large total, you end up paying interest for awhile before you pay off the major part of the principal."

Smith says she thinks credit is helpful and convenient, but adds that it's easy to get in debt or other



Keep Brazos County Beautiful

St. Joseph 4-H members Jason Bienski, 15, (left) and Billy Bonifazi, 12, combine efforts to beautify Brazos County by planting wildflower seeds along

Highway 6 north of Bryan Thursday. The 4-Hers joined with Brazos Beautiful and the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Texaco Inc.

Arguments continue in Getty Oil Co. dispute

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Texaco Inc., trying to invalidate a record \$10.53 billion judgment, argued Thursday that Pennzoil Co. was not entitled to a penny but should get no more than \$500 million in its failed attempt to take over Getty Oil Co.

Visiting State District Judge Solomon Casseb Jr. must decide whether to accept, reverse or reduce the award, the highest civil judgment in U.S. history. The hearing was to continue Friday, and it was unclear whether Casseb would rule from the bench immediately upon conclusion or take the matter under advisement.

A jury ruled Nov. 19 that Texaco illegally persuaded Getty Oil to break a previous merger agreement with Pennzoil. Texaco purchased Getty Oil for \$10.1 billion early last year.

Jurors recommended Texaco pay Pennzoil \$7.53 billion in actual damages and \$3 billion in punitive damages.

Pennzoil attorney Joe Jamail, referring to recent comments by Texaco that the award threatens its existence, asked that the Houston-based company be given the entire amount "based on the evidence and not propaganda."

"They didn't like what the jury did, so now they've launched a media blitz, a propaganda campaign to try to strike fear in the nation's judicial system," Jamail said.

"If justice depends on the amount of damages, then we're doomed," Jamail said.

But Texaco attorneys argued that the "astronomical" judgment, if upheld, would hamper American free enterprise and destroy the nation's third-largest oil company.

"When you have big, public companies being sold, you should have as much competition as possible," Texaco attorney David Boies said.

"But some may not want to compete because some jury may conclude that despite all the evidence, all the research, the assurances, will find a

contract and impose a heavy judgment."

"Whatever size Texaco is or is not, an amount like that is not just large, it is not just massive," added Texaco attorney Richard Keaton. "It is dangerous and irrational and not supported by the law."

Texaco argued Pennzoil is entitled to "damages of zero" but insisted the maximum award should be about \$500 million, the difference between the \$112.50 a share price Pennzoil offered for Getty stock and the \$128 a share Texaco paid.

If the judge upholds the \$10.53 billion award, Texaco can seek another jury trial and appeal the verdict.

But Texas law requires that if defendants appeal a damage judgment, they must post a bond in cash or liquid assets equal to an award, plus attorneys' fees and interest.

Texaco's appeal bond would total

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Opposition may support widow Aquino

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The long-divided political opposition appeared Thursday to be uniting behind the presidential candidacy of Corazon Aquino, the widow of assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court agreed to hear nine separate petitions appealing for cancellation of the Feb. 7 special election called by President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

Marcos indicated he might agree to participate in a nationally televised debate requested by Mrs. Aquino: "My conversations with ladies have always been pleasant, and I presume I will survive this encounter," he said.

Aquino blames Marcos for the Aug. 21, 1983, assassination of her husband and for the acquittal Monday of 26 men accused of complicity in the killing.

Until Aquino was gunned down at Manila airport when he returned from three years of self-exile in the United States, many thought he might be able to defeat Marcos in an election.

Most observers said if more than one opposition candidate split the anti-Marcos vote in the election scheduled for February, Marcos' victory would be assured.

Presidential aspirant Salvador H.

Laurel said he and Aquino will jointly announce the name of the single opposition candidate Sunday.

"We will make a very important announcement as to who will be the official candidate of the united opposition . . . to topple this unwanted and repugnant regime," Laurel said.

Aquino, expressing surprise at Laurel's statement, declined to say if she would join him. "Let's wait until Sunday," she said.

But Aquino said she would only run for the presidency. She said earlier she had offered the vice presidency to Laurel.

"I have been perceived as the unifier, and many have indicated they would only give way to me," she said, referring to other presidential aspirants who now support her. "I don't think it would solve anything in this country for me to run as (a candidate for) vice president."

Aquino said Wednesday she did not expect it would be easy to oppose Marcos in an election. She also said that she would try to solve a growing communist insurgency by negotiation "so that all of this fighting and killing will stop." The government says an average of 10 people are killed each day from fighting.

Aquino said she eventually wants to remove U.S. bases from the Philippines, but she said no other foreign power should be allowed to have bases in the islands.

NASA's Beggs claims he'd do it all again

Associated Press

SPACE CENTER — NASA Administrator James M. Beggs, on the first day of a leave of absence, told agency employees Thursday that federal fraud charges against him "are baseless" and that he expects to be cleared.

"There is nothing that I did in the case involved that I would not do again if I had to do it over again," Beggs said in a closed-circuit television appearance beamed to all centers of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Beggs, who was executive vice president of General Dynamics Corp. before he took the top post at NASA, was indicted Monday with the company and three of its officials on charges they defrauded the government in a weapons contract.

The indictment alleges that General Dynamics tried to hide cost overruns on the Army's Sgt. York anti-aircraft gun project by shifting expenses from a non-reimbursable category to one in which the government would have to pay.

"These charges relate to things that happened in General Dynamics six and seven years ago," Beggs said on the closed-circuit appearance. He said he has reviewed the charges and believes "we acted in an entirely ethical,

legal and moral sense."

"The charges, therefore, are baseless," he added. "They are outrageous, ridiculous and I feel confident that once this is brought to trial that I'll be completely exonerated of the charges."

Beggs contended that suits against defense contractors are creating a climate that will blight the work of NASA and of the defense community.

"The very adversarial relationship that is being created by the suits against the contractors, the very bad kind of statements that are being made in the press, and elsewhere, is going to make our job in the future much more difficult," he said. "Not just here, but in the Defense Department as well."

In what he called "a message for the press," Beggs said, "I surely hope that when I am exonerated, they will pay the same attention to that story that they have paid to this story."

Beggs said he has full confidence in William R. Graham, who will be acting administrator while Beggs takes a leave of absence.

He said Philip E. Culbertson, an associate administrator in charge of the space station development, will assume the additional title of general manager to assist Graham.

Clayton Act revisions proposed

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's Cabinet has recommended an overhaul of one of the nation's basic antitrust laws — the Clayton Act — to ease standards on corporate mergers, particularly for import-injured industries, administration officials said Thursday.

Under the proposal, firms able to demonstrate heavy losses from overseas competition could apply for an exemption of up to five years from merger-restricting provisions of the 71-year-old act, the officials said.

The package of proposed amendments, initiated by Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, also would relax standards on mergers in general, as well as sharply scale back penalties for some antitrust violations.

Baldrige claimed the current law — which bans certain proposed mergers in advance — hinders U.S. firms in foreign competition.

He said the thrust of the proposed changes would be to allow mergers that would increase an industry's competitiveness.

Baldrige said that under current law, the government has only two options for dealing with an industry that pleads injury from imports: give it assistance in the form of tariffs or quotas, or turn down its petition.

The package before the president is a slightly toned down version of an earlier Baldrige proposal which would have flatly repealed the section of the Clayton Act — section seven — requiring advance Justice Department review and approval of mergers.

The final version, endorsed by Attorney General Edwin Meese III, will be submitted to Congress as a legislative package with the Justice Department's blessings if approved by the president, said Mark Sheehan, a Justice Department spokesman.

The proposed revisions would not exempt industries from price-fixing provisions of antitrust law, according to B.J. Cooper, a Baldrige aide.

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