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The Texas A&M Battalion

Serving the University community

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Major earthquake strikes Aleutian Islands

PALMER, Alaska (AP) — A major Pacific earthquake shook the Aleutian Islands on Wednesday, producing a sea wave that struck the island chain and prompting officials as far south as Oregon and Hawaii to urge evacuations for fear a tremendous wave might hit.

The quake, measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale, generated a series of waves that washed ashore along the 1,000-mile Aleutian chain, with the highest reported to be 5.8 feet at Adak, the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center said.

Minor damage was reported at the Naval Air Station in Adak, an island near the end of the chain, but it was not immediately clear whether the cause was the wave or the earthquake. No casualties were immediately reported.

Tsunami warnings were posted for the entire West Coast and Hawaii after the temblor, the largest of a flurry of quakes to strike near the far western Aleutians on Wednesday. Two quakes came before the powerful one, which was followed by at least three more strong tremors, measuring 5 to 6 on the Richter scale, said the Warning Center.

Tsunamis, popularly but inaccurately called tidal waves, travel across seas at speeds up to 500 mph and gain size rapidly upon nearing land. Their height upon striking shore cannot be accurately predicted.

Residents of the Aleutians, a chain with 16 scattered villages that have a total population of about 8,500 people, were urged by the Warning Center to evacuate low-lying areas.

A series of waves washed ashore within two hours of the quake, including one measuring about 3 feet at Shemya, about 400 miles east of Adak, the Warning Center said.

The wave size in Alaska did not rule out the possibility that a tremendous wave could hit the West Coast, said Carol Horne, an earthquake program coordinator for the California Office of Emergency Services.

"It could get bigger. It just depends," she said. "It may not generate anything further."

"It is hard to say what the effect will be in coastal areas in state," said Hawaii Civil Defense spokeswoman Barbara Henry.

Officials in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and Hawaii recommended evacuation of all low-lying coastal areas and urged residents to stay tuned to their radios.

The most powerful earthquake struck at 2:47 p.m. and was centered about 100 miles southeast of Adak in the North Pacific, said the Warning Center. The U.S. Geological Survey

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Deep Fried

This fast-tanning display was constructed by students in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design for the college's annual "Day on the Lawn" celebration of projects.

Photo by John Tate

A&M student, 22, loses his battle against AIDS

By Mike Sullivan
Staff Writer

AIDS claimed the life of a Texas A&M student when a junior computer science major died of the disease April 26 after battling it for three months.

The 22-year-old victim was admitted to Scott and White Hospital in Temple on Jan. 13, 1986, and was originally diagnosed as having pneumonia, according to hospital authorities.

A cousin of the victim said acquired immune deficiency syndrome was diagnosed shortly after the student was admitted to the hospital.

The cousin, who requested anonymity, said the student was homosexual. She said he attended A&M through the fall semester and was working to pay for his education.

The student developed a cough during Christmas break and was hospitalized with pneumonia in January, his cousin said.

"One thing led to another, and he was in the hospital in intensive care from the middle of January until he died," she said.

Dr. Claude Goswick, director of the A.P. Beutel Health Center, said he treated the student and one other person at A&M for AIDS.

Goswick said the student who died had had sexual relationships with other students at A&M, but told Goswick he had informed his sexual partners when he found out he had the disease.

"When (the student) was here and when he was completely conscious and totally aware of the situation, he made those contacts himself, so there was no problem," Goswick said.

The student's cousin said she thinks the student may have had relationships with bisexuals.

"There are a lot of other people who could be involved in this besides homosexuals," she said.

Goswick said that at A&M, to his knowledge, AIDS has not spread to heterosexuals.

"We have seen no impact on the

heterosexual community at all," Goswick said. "I don't say that we won't, but we haven't so far, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

Goswick said he thinks people have overreacted to the threat of AIDS.

"I think people are borderline hysterical about it," he said.

Goswick said the potential for the disease to spread is slim.

Marco Roberts, president of Gay Student Services, said he thinks that of all the communities to be affected by AIDS, A&M's student community will be one of the last.

"A lot of the students here didn't come out of the closet until they came to school, so it's very unlikely that they would be affected by it unless they went to the major cities and brought it back with them," Roberts said.

Roberts said he knew the student who died April 26 and he said he was shocked at how quickly the disease killed him.

Roberts said he knows one other former A&M student who died of AIDS.

He also said he knows of other people who died of AIDS in the College Station area.

The Center for Disease Control, in Atlanta, said 1,112 cases of AIDS had been reported in Texas, and fewer than ten cases had been reported in the Bryan-College Station area as of April 28.

Goswick said many students have tested positively for the AIDS antibody, but haven't developed any symptoms.

Simply testing positively for the antibody doesn't mean a person has AIDS, it just means they have been exposed to the virus that causes it and have the potential to contract AIDS, Goswick said.

Roberts said, "The percentage of people (at A&M) who have shown positive on the test is not as high as it is in the cities, but it seems to be pretty high."

The Public Health Service AIDS Hotline recommends medical evaluations for people who have tested positively for the antibody.

Chances of dying of cancer on rise

BOSTON (AP) — Americans are losing the war against cancer, with the odds of dying from the disease increasing in the last three decades, a new report concludes.

The study recommends that scientists concentrate on finding ways to prevent cancer, not new means to treat it.

"We see no reason for optimism about overall progress in recent years," the researchers wrote. "There is no reason to think that, on the whole, cancer is becoming any less common."

In fact, their statistics suggest just the opposite. In 1950, 170 of every 100,000 Americans died of cancer. In 1982, after the figures were adjusted to reflect the aging population, there were 185 deaths per 100,000, an 8 percent increase.

The National Cancer Institute has set a goal of cutting cancer mortality in half by the year 2000. The researchers said this won't happen unless there is "a precipitous and unprecedented decline" in the cancer death rate in the next 14 years.

Responding to the report, a federal cancer official said steady progress is being made against the disease, and he said the institute's goals are realistic.

The report was written by Drs. John C. Bailar III of the Harvard School of Public Health and Elaine M. Smith of the University of Iowa Medical Center. It was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, where Bailar serves as statistical consultant.

"We're not saying treatment is no good," Bailar said in an interview. "We're convinced that every cancer patient should get a diagnosis as early as possible and the best possible treatment. What we're saying is that cancer treatment is not getting a whole lot better."

Some experts disagreed with the researchers' contention.

At the American Cancer Society,

Dr. Lawrence Garfinkel said, "There's no doubt that the reason the overall death rate continues to go up is because of lung cancer. If you take away lung cancer, instead of having an 8 percent increase, you have a 13 percent decrease."

Dr. Peter Greenwald, head of the cancer institute's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, said, "We have had a lot of progress."

He said it takes many years for improvements in cancer treatment and prevention to show up in better cancer survival, and "the mortality figures through 1982 really reflect the past decade, not this decade."

Bailar said he would like to see more effort to understand the causes of cancer, especially the role of diet and environmental factors.

While it once made sense to search for cancer cures, Bailar said, "those efforts have not paid off. I'm not convinced they ever will, and I think it's time to start getting serious about prevention."

Garfinkel noted that several potential therapies, including interleukin-2 and interferon, have shown promise in early studies. "I think it would be shame to withdraw money from that kind of treatment research," he said.

Bailar said that while doctors have made considerable progress in curing a few rare kinds of cancer, such as childhood leukemia, these account for only a tiny proportion of the cancer problem.

Interpreting cancer figures can be tricky. The National Cancer Institute contends that nearly half of all cancer victims now survive for at least five years after their disease is spotted, whereas in the 1950s, only a third of them lived that long.

But Bailar and a Harvard colleague, John Cairns, contend this is misleading because cancers are being diagnosed sooner. So people are followed longer until they die, but they don't really live any longer.

Reagan returns home from Tokyo, says allies will be tough on terrorists

WASHINGTON (AP) — A buoyant President Reagan returned home Wednesday after a 13-day Far East trip, saying U.S. talks with Western allies in Tokyo brought understandings which will make it "tougher from now on" for terrorists.

"It certainly is good to be back in the good old U.S.A.," Reagan told supporters and administration officials who greeted him and his wife Nancy on the White House South Lawn.

Reagan and his wife arrived shortly before 2 p.m. EDT following a 15-minute Marine One helicopter ride from Andrews Air Force Base in nearby Maryland.

The president said in his formal remarks, "We agreed that the time

has come to move beyond words and rhetoric. Terrorism, as expected, was high on the agenda. I am more than pleased by the commitments made in Tokyo by our summit partners in this regard. . . . We agreed that the time has come to move beyond words and rhetoric.

The president told a large crowd of White House aides, Cabinet members and other supporters, "Terrorists and those who support them — especially governments — have been put on notice."

Turning to the economic issues of the summit, Reagan said the seven participating nations arrived at "a new framework for strengthening effective coordination of international economic policy."

Reagan also said he was pleased

with the outcome of meetings last week with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, saying the sessions just prior to the opening of the economic summit "gave me a chance to bring their concerns to Tokyo. It also gave me a chance to confirm our ties with the industrious people of the Pacific rim."

Aides traveling with Reagan on the 14½-hour flight home from the seven-nation economic summit sought to emphasize the president's successes in Tokyo.

Presidential spokesman Larry Speakes said, "I don't think we avoided any issues. The controversies weren't there. Everybody was in agreement."

Amendments to assist terminally ill

Death act provides options

Editor's note: This is the first installment of a two-part series on amendments to the Texas Natural Death Act.

By Mona Palmer
Staff Writer

In 1985 the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Natural Death Act to give terminally ill patients, their doctors and families more legal options to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining procedures. The new act, sponsored by Rep. Bob Bush and Sen. Ray Farabee, became effective last Sept. 1.

The amendments eliminated three major restrictions in the 1977 act, which also was sponsored by Bush and Farabee.

In the original act, patients had to

write treatment directives 14 or more days after diagnosis of a terminal illness. A directive written before 14 days was not binding on the physician.

Patients also had to follow the directive form given in the statute or their directive could be declared invalid, and all directives were invalid after five years.

Cathy Seltzer, Bush's administrative assistant, said that Bush has been examining the death acts in other states for the past two years looking for ways to amend these restrictions.

Alice Mehling, executive director of the Society for the Right to Die, said the Legislature did an excellent job of amending the act and making it more useful and comprehensive.

Texas added two very worthwhile protections, Mehling said. The new act allows a patient to appoint a proxy to make a treatment decision and also protects the comatose patient who hasn't issued a directive, she said.

A proxy, in addition to a written directive, helps the doctor if something unexpected happens, she said.

"We see that double protection as a useful thing," Mehling said. "It's a good idea to have people you trust and know your wishes to discuss things with doctors and discuss differences with family members."

"You (a patient) can't be all that specific in advance of a situation so it's good to have someone who knows your wishes."

Mehling also commended the act's

provision for comatose patients which gives guardians and family members the legal authority to withhold or withdraw treatment.

She recalled a Texas case that involved the society.

The case centered around an elderly woman who suffered a stroke that destroyed 80 percent of her brain, Mehling said.

"She was not brain dead but the respirator was simply prolonging her life in a permanently unconscious state," she explained.

The family contacted the society for help and was able to make a decision for the woman under the new act, she said.

Mehling said that only three other

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