

Warped

by Scott McCullar



49 new cases of AIDS reported in Houston area

HOUSTON (AP) — Two women and two children are among 49 new AIDS cases reported by the city Health and Human Services Department.

The number of new cases contained in the department's July report was down from the 79 cases reported in June, indicating last month's totals may not be the beginning of a trend, said Dr. Gordon Reeve, chief of epidemiology for the city.

"It was more a function of reporting than the progress of the disease," Reeve said about the June report. "Some days a large number of cases come in that need a lot of work and it takes time to get them through the pipeline."

In the newest report, one of the victims was identified as the wife of an intravenous drug user who tested positive for antibodies to the acquired immune deficiency syndrome virus. AIDS is a fatal disease that destroys the body's disease-fighting mechanism.

The other woman was identified as a Haitian immigrant. Both women were diagnosed as having the illness in the past three months and both have since died, the report said.

The two children, both under 2 years of age and both still alive, were believed to have contracted the disease through birth from parents who were intravenous drug users.

The report brought Houston's known total of AIDS cases to 1,300. Of those, 803, or 62 percent, have died. Houston ranks fourth among U.S. cities for the incidence of the incurable — and usually fatal — disease.

In Houston, 12 cases so far have been attributed to heterosexual contact, while about 84 percent of the confirmed cases have involved homosexual or bisexual men.

No weather index is perfect, Texas A&M professor says

By Jade Boyd Reporter

The only way a weather index could be perfect is if it were individually tailored and continuously updated, says Dr. Dennis Driscoll, a Texas A&M meteorology professor.

There are hundreds of weather indexes, including the wind chill factor and summer simmer indexes.

"They all describe energy exchange between man and his atmospheric environment," Driscoll says. "They try to summarize to one single number the degree of comfort or discomfort he feels as a result of conditions that make him uncomfortable."

Driscoll says people's perception of the weather is influenced by things that have nothing at all to do with the weather.

"All sorts of things get in the way of our perception of comfort," he says. "Physical health, state of mind, nutrition, physical condition — these are all things that tend to influence the way we perceive our environment."

"There's a great big leap of faith involved in saying everyone will feel uncomfortable at this given temperature because people differ remarkably in their reactions to weather," Driscoll says.

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— Dr. Dennis Driscoll, Texas A&M meteorology professor

Driscoll says many people are confused by weather indexes and tend to associate the index numbers with temperatures.

Weather indexes are arbitrary, he says. Where the reference points for

the index are chosen play a part in this.

The new summer simmer index was developed in Arizona. It combines temperature and humidity readings into one figure. Brazos Valley's high humidity makes College Station appear much more uncomfortable than Arizona when the summer simmer index is used, Driscoll says.

"Since the public often doesn't understand the basic physics that underlie the indexes, they can be misleading," he says.

He advocates getting away from numbers altogether.

For example, a system could be devised with alpha, beta and gamma days. Alpha days would be uncomfortable for most people. Beta days would be less uncomfortable and gamma days would be the nicest.

"It would still be quantitatively based, as it should be," Driscoll says.

But people would not be tempted to confuse the temperature with the index figures if such a system were used.

Energy department delays deadline for offering supercollider proposals

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Energy on Wednesday gave states more time to submit proposals for the supercollider atom smasher. Proposals to house the \$4.4 billion installation, a major scientific plum, are now due Sept. 2 instead of Aug. 3.

The department gave states time to revise their submissions in the light of a provision of the recently approved 1987 supplemental appropriations law that bars it from considering direct financial aid from a state in evaluating sites.

At least 20 states are believed certain to submit proposals, some perhaps in cooperation with others. Senators from small states, led by Pete Domenici, R-N.M., added the ban out of fear their states would have little chance when matched against generous offers from large states.

There had been some speculation the provision would apply only through the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, but a department letter to interested states made clear that interpretation would not be followed.

The letter gave notice that the department had

added a new section to its invitation for site proposals to say, "Any financial or other incentives offered by the proposer will not be considered in the evaluation of proposals."

A state still may offer such aid, and to do so the offer "should be stated on a single copy and submitted in a sealed envelope and clearly marked" to be opened only if that state's site is chosen.

Congress has not barred states from improving a site by building roads and laying sewer lines and the department still is counting on receiving the needed land — about 11,000 acres plus easements for a 52-mile-around tunnel — as a gift.

Forty House members wrote Energy Secretary John Herrington late last month asking for a 60-day delay on the grounds that many states did not have enough time to complete action. But officials said he is unlikely to grant further postponements.

Roger Strickland, an aide to one of the organizers of the letter, Rep. Tim Valentine, D-N.C., said of the 30-day delay, "We are fairly satisfied with it. It is a help."

Mike Bushman, press aide to Rep. Terry L. Bruce, D-Ill., said of the delay "It is not going to hurt Illinois, certainly... a proposal is not going to live or die on another 30 days."

The ban on considering aid offers means "Illinois has a definite advantage — we have Fermilab." Fermilab, near Batavia west of Chicago, is currently the largest particle accelerator and state officials plan to propose the site for the new supercollider.

A committee of the National Academy of Sciences will have 90 days to winnow the sites to an unspecified number of finalists. The department will try to compress its subsequent review to meet its original deadline of a preliminary selection in July 1988 and confirmation in January 1989.

The supercollider would smash beams of protons into each other at 20 times the energy of the Fermilab accelerator to probe exotic theories of matter and its origin. It will have 3,000 scientific jobs, little pollution and an annual operating budget of \$270 million when it begins operation in 1996.

Presidential candidate pushes Bork for court

DALLAS (AP) — The Senate will be committing a travesty if it turns down Robert H. Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court, Republican presidential contender Paul Laxalt said Wednesday on his first campaign swing through Texas.

"This fall, it's really going to hit the congressional fan when it comes to Bork," Laxalt told the Dallas Rotary Club. He predicted a tough confirmation fight for the conservative U.S. appeals court judge in Washington.

"He'll be hit with all the pressure, with all the diatribe — that he's anti-civil rights, anti-women, anti-gay rights," said Laxalt, a former senator and Nevada governor and close friend of President Reagan.

The Senate's failure to approve the nomination "would be an absolute

travesty in terms of his (Bork's) situation, in terms of the president, in terms of the people of this country," Laxalt said.

Laxalt, who has not formally declared his candidacy, told a news conference he would be campaigning aggressively in Texas, the largest of the "Super Tuesday" states, and believed his base of support in the state was among Reagan's traditional supporters.

But should the Iran-contra scandal "come down badly against the president, and I can't conceive it will... it's going to hurt to some degree those closest to the president," he said. "Those first in line are the vice president and Paul Laxalt."

Vice President George Bush is also a presidential candidate and like Laxalt has not formally declared his

candidacy. Both, however, have formed committees to raise money for their campaigns.

Laxalt said the men's ambitions would be awkward for the president, because Reagan is placed "in a position between the vice president, who has served him so loyally for so many years, and myself."

Laxalt, who was Reagan's national chairman during the 1980 and 1984 campaigns, said he has raised \$1 million for his own campaign in six weeks. He has said he must raise \$2 million by Oct. 1 to be a viable candidate.

Despite the possibility of fallout for himself and Bush should the Iran-contra investigations further taint Reagan, Laxalt said he believes his association with the president is "a positive rather than a negative."

When the president told the American people he did not know about the diversion of profits from arms sales to Iran to the contras in Nicaragua, Laxalt said Reagan was telling the truth.

"I've never run into a more honest guy than Ronald Reagan," said Laxalt, predicting the president's integrity would be fully restored in the course of the investigations.

"In the interest of the country, the president should have been notified, and I suspect a lot of these activities would not have occurred," he said.

Laxalt said he favored the creation of a small, joint committee of senior members of Congress who would be apprised of covert activities.

Teen-age tycoon gets early start in business

DALLAS (AP) — With \$700 in personal savings, 19-year-old William Cunningham set out last year to set up a Dallas telemarketing operation. He quickly found an office and furnished it. There was only one problem — he had no telephones.

"I had a telemarketing firm with no telephones," he recalls.

But with a little ingenuity and some help from his friends — in this case an advance payment from his first client, Ellen Terry Realtors — he was able to get Dial USA off the ground.

Today, Cunningham's company is doing a booming business. The company raked in first-year revenues of \$374,000.

"I have grown since then, and haven't borrowed any money," he says, adding that Dial USA now employs 40 people.

Cunningham is one of Dallas' teen tycoons, a small cadre of young entrepreneurs who get the bug to go into business for themselves barely

"Sometimes it takes a lot of discipline to get up and go to the office day after day. I guess it does stifle your youthfulness, but I feel like it's a trade-off."

— William Cunningham, 19-year-old owner of Dial USA

before graduating from adolescence.

Dial USA's Cunningham is well on his way to a successful career. The company has expanded into marketing activities, such as lead generation, research and direct sales, Cunningham says.

Dial USA also is considering pur-

chasing an advertising firm, and is planning to move its headquarters in August. The firm also does fund-raisers for non-profit groups, he

says, and receives commission and flat fees.

Cunningham, who was recently honored as the "Teen Entrepreneur of the Year" by the accounting firm of Arthur Young & Co. and Venture Magazine, says being a business executive is not as easy as it may seem, especially in the summer.

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