

Man-made protein molecule blocks spread of AIDS virus in test tubes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have developed a synthetic protein molecule that will attach itself tightly to the AIDS virus in a test tube and prevent the virus from spreading to uninfected cells.

In a study to be published today in the journal *Science*, the researchers report that the man-made molecule, called CPF, is able to block a molecule on the surface of the AIDS virus from sticking to healthy immune cells in the blood.

"The CPF very effectively prevents the AIDS virus from binding (sticking to a target cell) and this inhibits the spread of the virus," said Steven J. Burakoff, a researcher at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, an affiliate of Harvard University.

CPF, he said, "is also very inexpensive and very simple to synthesize."

Burakoff said his group found CPF while researching the chemistry of how the AIDS virus, called human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is able to attach itself to T-lymphocytes, blood cells that are part of the immune system and a principal target of the AIDS virus.

When HIV attacks T cells, it attaches a gp120 surface molecule to a molecule called CD4 on the

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outside wall of a T cell. In effect, the gp120 acts as a key to open the lock on the surface of the T cell. The virus can then move inside.

A molecule that sticks to the gp120, said Burakoff, would in effect prevent the key from fitting in the lock on the T cell surface. This, he said, would keep healthy cells from becoming infected.

In laboratory experiments, Burakoff said, the Harvard group exposed AIDS virus to CPF and found that the man-made molecule stuck so firmly to gp120 that it could not be washed off.

Burakoff said the group then exposed an

AIDS virus bound with the CPF to healthy T cells. The AIDS virus, which would normally attack the T cells with ease, was unable to cause an infection.

Next, Burakoff said, AIDS-infected T cells were put in a test tube with both healthy T cells and CPF. The synthetic molecule, he said, prevented the virus from spreading from the infected T cells to the uninfected cells.

"We found it to be very, very effective," said Burakoff. "In the test tube, anyway, the CPF molecules look very interesting."

The researcher said that tests of the molecule in laboratory animals are just beginning and that there are "many hurdles to go over" before the compound could be tested in human patients.

Another AIDS researcher, Dr. Allen Goldstein of the George Washington School of Medicine in Washington, said the research was "very solid" but noted, "There's a long way to go before you could translate that into a clinical application."

Goldstein said that CPF joins "a whole bunch of potential antivirals" that need to be tested further.

The power of electricity

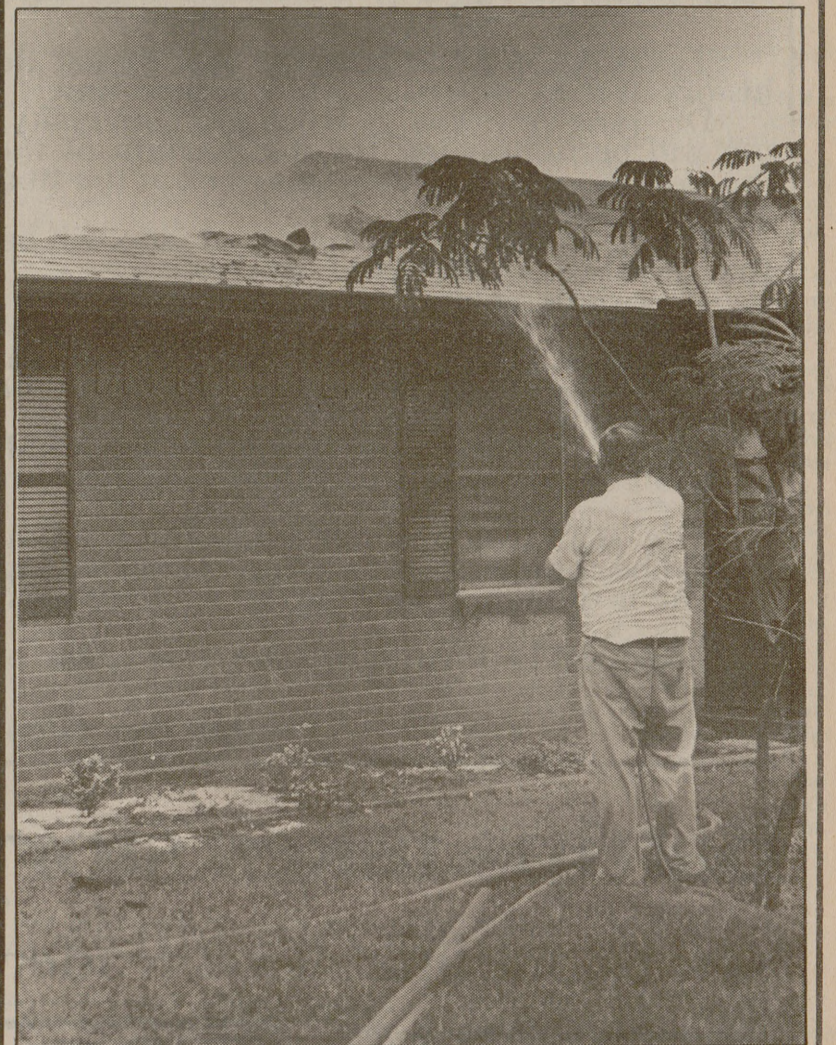


Photo by Thomas J. Lavin

Albert Kermer of Smetana uses a garden hose in an attempt to extinguish a fire that destroyed his Brazos Valley home after a bolt of lightning struck the roof. Volunteer fire fighters from Smetana and the Bryan Fire Department answered calls for help at the household. Lightning from Thursday's thunderstorms also damaged another home in Bryan.

Cambodian guerrillas make military gains

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration's abrupt change in policy toward Cambodia came after U.S. intelligence reported that the feared Khmer Rouge guerrillas were making military gains shockingly similar to those that led them into power 15 years ago, say sources familiar with the reports.

American intelligence analysts also have found, contrary to public assurances by the Bush administration, that supplies bought by the United States for non-communist rebels battling the Cambodian government often flow through supply lines controlled by the Khmer

Rouge.

The analysis has been offered in briefings by the Central Intelligence Agency and by the Defense Intelligence Agency for congressional oversight committees and interested executive branch officials, according to the sources who requested anonymity.

The Khmer Rouge presided over a massive social experiment in Cambodia during its 3½-year rule that resulted in the deaths of more than 1 million of their countrymen from execution, starvation and disease.

Apparently fearing the resurgence of the communist guerrillas, the Bush administration announced

Wednesday it was withdrawing support for a U.N. seat for the three-party resistance that includes the Khmer Rouge and open talks with the Cambodian government's Vietnamese sponsors.

The sources said U.S. intelligence sees the events in 1974 and 1975 that led to the takeover of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge as a virtual "model" for events occurring now.

Events happening now include attacks on provincial capitals and other significant targets, a near-permanent presence in the northern part of the country and deeper penetration since Vietnamese occupation forces withdrew last year.

The stepped-up attacks by the Khmer Rouge, which has a troop strength of 30,000 to 40,000, now threaten the Vietnam-installed regime of Hun Sen, and there are reports that in some instances the government's soldiers have stopped fighting, according to the analysis.

Soviet and Vietnamese aid to the Cambodian government has declined, and while Phnom Penh remains a bustling capital with a robust economy, the economy in government-controlled parts of the countryside is fragile and inflation is rising, the analysts concluded. Some government workers and military personnel are not being paid, the analysts said.

Explosion rips through chemical plant, kills two

CINCINNATI (AP) — An explosion ripped through a chemical plant Thursday, killing two people, injuring at least 45 others and shattering windows in nearby houses and businesses, authorities said.

At least one person was missing, said Fire Chief Bill Miller. Four of the injured were listed in critical condition.

The explosion, which shook buildings more than a mile away, ignited a fire that took 2½ hours to contain enough so that firefighters could enter the four-story brick building where the explosion occurred.

Miller said officials of the BASF plant told him about 50 chemicals were used inside the building, but none were believed to be toxic.

Federal and state officials sampled the air in the north-side neighborhood "to get a better handle on the chemicals involved," said Reuben Carlyle, a spokesman for Gov. Richard Celeste.

Windows in homes and storefronts as much as a quarter mile from the plant were blown out.

A second blast occurred about 2:50 p.m., and it was that blast that did most of the apparent damage, Diederhofer said.

Diederhofer said about 200 people work at the plant, which makes linings for cans.

The names of the two who were killed were not immediately available, Miller said.

Most of the injured, including an 8-year-old boy, sustained minor injuries, hospital officials said.

Census considered successful for B-CS

By ELIZABETH TISCH
Of The Battalion Staff

The 1990 census in Bryan-College Station went well despite criticism of the official count of America's population as a whole, said Bill Donaldson, manager of the local Bureau of the Census office.

The 1990 Census Bureau's master list reports 99.5 percent of all U.S. households have been counted.

A few congressmen at a Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, however, complained this year's count was full of inaccuracies and omissions.

Rep. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said the 1990 census was "the worst national head count in U.S. history."

Donaldson, however, applauded Bryan-College Station residents for a successful count. He gave most of the credit to his staff for continuously reminding residents to fill out their census forms.

Donaldson said he realized the 1990 census fell on Texas A&M's spring final exam schedule. Because students make up a large number of the population of B-CS, his staff called students and let them complete forms over the phone.

He said he is confident that 100 percent of A&M's students have been counted.

But he said the 1990 census is not quite complete for the cities of Bryan and College Station.

"We are still pulling quality checks, which is when we send a new group to make sure every vacant house is really vacant and to double check places that may have been overlooked," he said.

The local Census Bureau should be completed with its quality checks and last-minute searches by the beginning of September, he said.

Donaldson stressed the importance of completing the forms correctly because the cities rely on the results when it comes time for planning purposes.

"The city officials need to know the population

of an area, so for example, they know how much water is needed," he said. "They need to see the trend in the population so they know if new roads should be built."

Although Donaldson was satisfied with the local results, some members of Congress and city officials from around the country still are arguing whether this year's census was the worst yet.

New York City and several other large urban centers have gone to court to force the U.S. Department of Commerce to statistically adjust the census for an expected undercount.

However, Rep. Tom Sawyer, D-Ohio, who chairs the House Post Office subcommittee on census and population, said the 1990 census was not a failure.

"I don't believe the Census Bureau has failed to execute the best census it could," Sawyer said in an Associated Press story. "What I am prepared to say at this juncture is that the design of the census appears inadequate to measure a society as diverse and complex as ours."

Ganter transforms Old Campus Theater into nightclub

By KATHY COX
Of The Battalion Staff

It was built at Northgate in 1939, showed X-rated movies in the late 70s and early 80s and soon will be a rock 'n' roll night club.

The Old Campus Theater, on the corner of University Drive and Boyett, is a College Station landmark being transformed into a nightclub by its owner, Don Ganter.

Speculation arose when Ganter, who also owns The Dixie Chicken, Alfred T. Hornback's, Chicken Oil Co. and Sticky Chins Ice Cream Parlor, bought the theater from Bill Schulman in March 1987.

Ganter bought it when one-screen cinemas were being pushed out by multi-screen theaters.

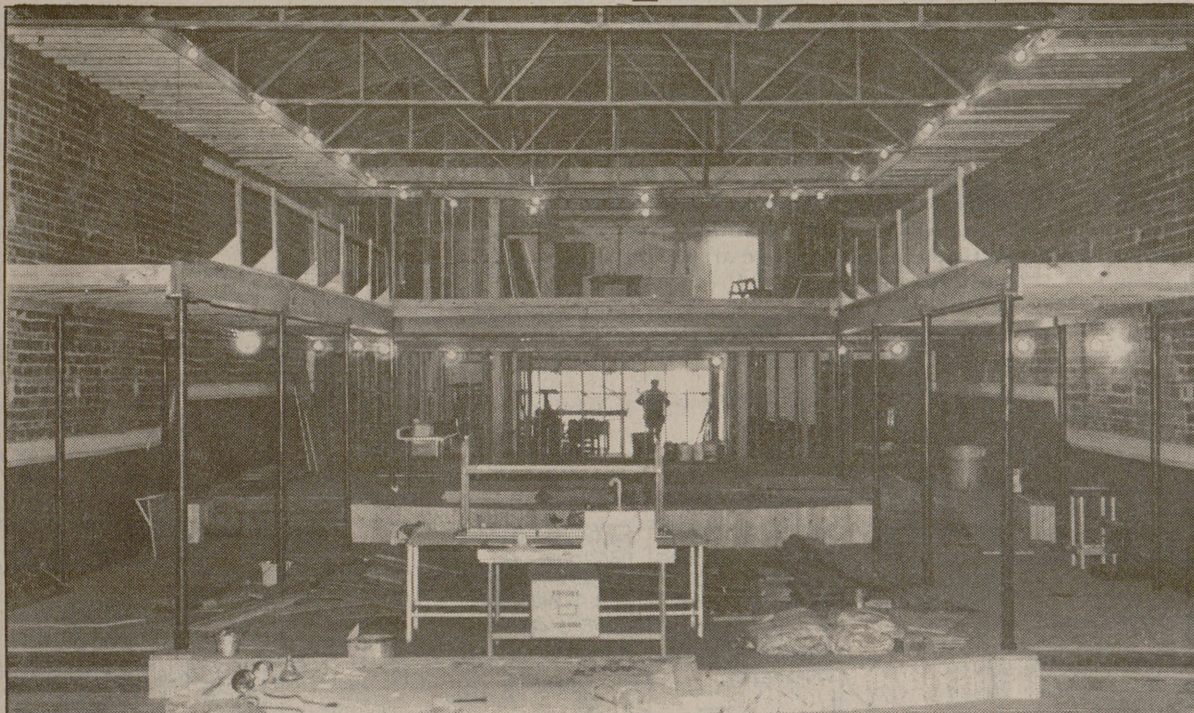
Schulman refused an offer to turn the theater into a five-tier parking garage before selling the theater to Ganter.

"We want to see something good go in there ... We're interested in seeing the (theater) and Northgate survive so Aggies can go back years from now and say, 'Yeah, that used to be The Old Campus Theater,'" Schulman said in a February 15, 1987, article in *The Eagle*.

Schulman got his wish, right down to the name.

Ganter will call the nightclub The Old Campus Theater.

"We're not trying to cover up the fact that it was a theater," Ganter said. "A tourist driving by



will probably think there's a movie playing."

Ganter announced plans to build the club in April 1987, but completion dates kept getting pushed back. The idea of the theater being turned into a club faded from the limelight.

Part of the reason for the slow completion is the expense, Ganter said. He is paying for the renovations himself, instead of taking out a loan.

The theater needed new electrical wiring, air conditioning and a sprinkler system, among other things, he said.

"We hope to be done by Christmas," Ganter said. "But we've been saying that for years."

Ganter plans to refurbish the outside of the building and use movie posters to add to the cinema effect.

The movie house nostalgia also is felt inside the building.

Inside, Ganter knocked down the dropped ceiling, revealing a huge, arched, wooden roof. Chandeliers Ganter bought from an old opera house in Fort Worth will loom from the arches.

Three wooden tiers are built over the sloped movie-theater floor. The lowest tier will be the dance floor.

Tables and chairs cover the other two tiers, and the bar is on the top tier. The bar will not serve



Photos by Thomas J. Lavin

(Left) Renovations are underway for the inside of The Old Campus Theater in Northgate. (Above) The theater's exterior still holds the old-fashioned look of when it was first built in 1939.

hard liquor, Ganter said.

Upstairs is another bar and a horseshoe-shaped balcony that hangs over the club. Ganter plans to put more tables and chairs on the balcony.

The club will feature rock 'n' roll music from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, Ganter said, with live band performances six to eight times a year.

"We want every Aggie to come in here at least once every six months," he said.

Double-decker bus overturns with Americans

OXFORD, England (AP) — A double-decker bus carrying 58 American teen-agers at Oxford University, including five Texans, overturned on a highway Thursday, killing at least one person and seriously injuring 32, police said.

Twenty-four others suffered lesser injuries, they said.

"I saw a lot of people running about. There were bodies everywhere and I went to help," said one witness, John Welch. "I got one chap out and saw another girl badly cut about her head and I helped to get her out."

The American students, all about 16 years old, were taking a summer school course at the university's Magdalen College, said Thames Valley Police spokeswoman Anne Jackson. None of the victims was immediately named.

The Oxford Advanced Studies Program in New York organized the summer school course for gifted students from all over the United States, U.S. Coordinator Paul Beresford-Hill said by telephone from New York. He said most were between their junior and senior years in high school.

Beresford-Hill would not release the names of the students but said the five Texans were from Odessa; Houston; Dallas; Bellaire, a suburb of Houston; and Edgewood, 50 miles east of Dallas.

"They're all okay. It looks as if most of them required treatment for minor cuts and bruises, but none of them are seriously injured," he said.