

# Court says breweries can put alcohol content on beer cans

Previously only ten states were required to include alcohol content on their labels.

WASHINGTON (AP) — How much alcohol is in that bottle of beer? Breweries won the right to put alcohol content on their beer labels Wednesday when the Supreme Court said it was a matter of free speech — and none of the government's business. The unanimous decision was a victory for the Coors Brewing Co., which challenged the law in 1987. Coors said there was no evidence to support the government's fears that the disclosure of alcohol content would set off beer strength wars. The court rejected a Clinton administration attempt to reinstate a 1935 law that banned alcohol-content labels except where state law required such a listing. Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for the court, said the government's interest in "combating strength wars" is valid, but he called the post-Prohibi-

tion law an irrational effort to thwart such wars and promote sobriety among beer drinkers.

The unanimous ruling means brewers now are free to put such information on labels in the 40 states where there has been no requirement to do so.

The 10 states that require alcohol-content labels are

**"We are pleased with the elimination of this hurdle to providing truthful, factual information to consumers."**

— Coors Brewing Co.

Arkansas, California, Colorado, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma and Oregon.

Coors succeeded in its challenge of the federal law that banned the alcohol-content information from labels but not from advertisements.

"There is little chance that ... (the law) can directly and mate-

rially advance its aim, while other provisions of the same act directly undermine and counteract its effect," Thomas said.

In a concurring opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens criticized the law as "nothing more than an attempt to blindfold the public."

Coors' lawyers said most of today's beer drinkers prefer lower-alcohol beers because they taste better and have fewer calories.

It is common knowledge that malt liquor has more alcohol than regular beer, and malt liquor sales make up less than 3 percent of the overall market, Coors' lawyers noted.

But Coors wants to put such information of its labels to combat what a company spokesman said was "industry gossip" that its beer is watered down.

"We are pleased with the elimination of this hurdle to providing truthful, factual information to consumers," Coors said.

# Scientists claim superconducting breakthrough

The new material can carry 100 times more current than existing conductors.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Scientists have developed a superconducting material that could lead to better electric motors, medical diagnostic devices and bullet trains that hover above tracks in the grip of magnetic fields. The material, a flexible tape less than an

inch wide and resembling foil in a chewing gum wrapper, was described at the Materials Research Society meeting in San Francisco on Wednesday.

Government researchers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico developed the metal-and-ceramic tape, which can be fashioned into electrical cables carrying 100 times more current than existing superconducting materials.

"We're ahead of anybody else we know of" in the race to make

more powerful superconductors that carry electric current without any energy-sapping resistance, said Dean Peterson, head of the lab's Superconductivity Technology Center.

Unlike other superconducting materials, the material developed at Los Alamos continues to carry a large amount of current through the coils.

Conventional power lines can lose up to 15 percent of their energy from resistance.

Peterson said the tape carries a record

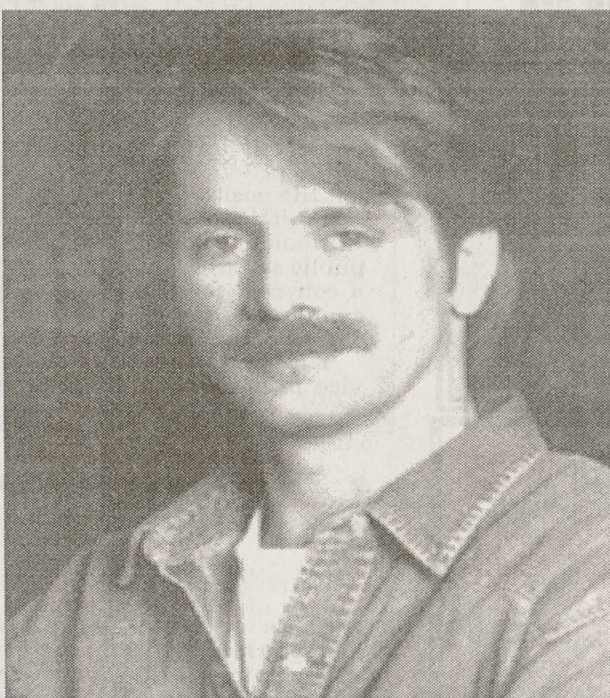
amount of power — "over 1 million amperes for every little square centimeter of superconductor." That compares with less than 800 amps per square centimeter of conventional No. 12 copper wire.

With the new material, Peterson said, cities could be spared the expense of building new power stations or running new lines.

"We're offering them the chance to transmit the power more efficiently," he said Wednesday after outlining the findings.

# Jeff Foxworthy

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