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For more information on these and other Mentors check out the ATMentors website at: <http://mentors.tamu.edu>

NEWS

McCaffrey visits Colombia Drug czar promotes controversial aid package

TRES ESQUINAS, Colombia (AP) — Rockets, mortars and machine gun fire lit up a patch of Colombia's southern jungles Thursday as White House drug czar Barry McCaffrey witnessed the opening of a new chapter in the war on drugs.

McCaffrey, in Colombia to promote a controversial \$1.6 billion anti-narcotics aid package for the Andes, squinted into a green expanse where troops from a new U.S.-trained anti-drug battalion conducted a live-fire exercise.

As soldiers in foxholes lobbed shells into the trees, a U.S.-donated helicopter slammed a rocket at imaginary guerrilla columns advancing on the remote Amazon outpost.

Following the exercise, McCaffrey, a retired general and Vietnam War hero, gave a stirring send-off to some of the soldiers who will soon be at the front lines in the battle to eradicate drugs at their source.

"You are the ones Colombia has asked to step forward. Good luck, troops," he said to their enthusiastic applause.

Training and equipping new Colombian battalions such as the 950-man unit based at Tres Esquinas, 250 miles south of Bogota, is the centerpiece of Washington's strategy for stemming an explosion of cocaine and heroin production in this Andean nation.

More than half of the aid package now before the U.S. Congress would go toward creating two new battalions like the one already up and running, and providing the army and air force with 63 helicopters.

Critics say the plan could embroil the United States in a brutal, decades-old civil conflict reminiscent of those fought in Central America during the 1980s. Leftist rebels control vast tracts of southern jungle, financing their insurgency by taxing peasants who grow drug crops and protecting drug traffickers.



Rat study yields vaccine

WASHINGTON (AP) — An oral vaccine that protects brain neurons from injury caused by epilepsy seizure or by stroke has been tested successfully in rats, researchers report.

In a study to be published Friday in the journal Science, researchers at the medical school of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia report that a vaccine given to rats caused their immune system to develop antibodies that prevented the action of a protein that causes damage after brain injury.

Dr. Matthew During, professor of neurosurgery at Jefferson and lead author of the study, said the vaccine works against a brain protein, called the NMDA receptor, that has been shown to aggravate brain damage after a stroke and to play a role in epileptic seizures.

Other researchers have tried to block the action of the NMDA receptor using drugs, but these drugs often fail to effectively cross the blood-brain barrier, a natural barrier that protects the brain from most destructive substances in the blood.

By using a vaccine, the researchers prompt the body, in effect, to make its own NMDA blocker by creating antibodies that neutralize the protein after brain injury.

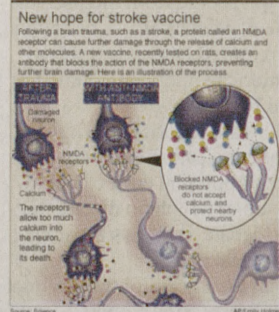
In the study, some rats were immunized with the anti-NMDA antibody while others were not. A month later, the rats were injected with a neurotoxin, kainate, which causes seizures similar to those in epilepsy.

Among the control rats, which were not immunized, there was a seizure rate of 70 percent. Among those with the anti-NMDA antibody, the seizure rate was 20 percent.

In another study, immunized and nonimmunized rats were tested after five months for protection from stroke damage. An artificial stroke was induced in the animals using a drug.

Among the immunized rats, said During, "We found dramatic protection in the rats' brains. ... It doesn't stop the stroke from occurring, but the amount of brain damage is diminished by 70 percent."

None of the studied rats showed abnormal behavior from the vaccine, he said.



Volcano erupts in Philippines

LEGAZPI, Philippines (AP) — A 1 1/2-mile-high volcano erupted Thursday, spewing superheated ash into the air and sending streams of superhot, bright orange lava down its slopes.

The Mayon volcano's eruption began with lava gushing out of the crater, accompanied by loud rumblings that some nearby residents compared to thunder.

Lava with temperatures that reached well above 1,000 degrees cascaded 3 1/2 miles down the mountain's near-perfect conical slopes. Ash rained as far as seven miles away.

The area is most vulnerable to lava, falling rocks and deadly pyroclastic flows — superheated clouds of volcanic ash that travel up to 50 mph and can instantly incinerate anything in their path.

The volcano's repeated explosions indicated that magma is still rising to the dome and volcanic activity could continue for some time, said Juan Cordon, a research specialist at the volcanology institute.

Worship Directory

Assembly of God

Bethel Temple Assembly of God
 2608 Villa Maria, Bryan 776-4835
 Sunday Worship 8:30, 10:45, 6:00 pm
 College & Career Class Sun. 9:30
 Randy Scott, Pastor
www.startel.net/bethel

Baptist

Texas Avenue Baptist Church
 3400 Texas Avenue South, C.S. (at the intersection of Deacon & Texas Ave.) 696-6000
 Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
 Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 4 p.m., Wednesday 7 p.m.
 Pastor Eric Doucet

Try us out!
 Visitors get a free, homemade pie!
 You can expect...
 • Upbeat worship
 • A casual setting
 • Friendly people
 • Practical messages

Living Hope Baptist Church
 Sunday Schedule:
 9:45 AM Bible Study
 11:00 AM Worship
 6:30 PM Worship
 INFO: 690-1911
 We are NOW meeting at Cypress Grove Inter. School on Graham Rd. between Wellborn and the West bypass service Road.

Bible

Grace Bible Church
 700 Anderson, College Station 693-2911
 Services: 9:15 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
 College Sunday School Class 9:15 & 11 a.m.

Catholic

St. Mary's
 603 Church Ave., 846-5717
Pastoral Team
 Rev. Michael J. Sis, Pastor
 Rev. David A. Konderla, Associate Pastor
Campus Ministers
 Deacon Bill Scott • Martha Tonn
 Lillian Smith • Maureen Murray
 Heidi Nicolini
Daily Masses
 Mon.-Fri.: 5:30 p.m.
 Tues, Thurs: 12:05 Noon
 All Faith's Chapel on A&M Campus
 Sat.: 10:30 a.m. (Korean)
Weekend Masses
 Sat. - 5:30 p.m. (English), 7:00 (Spanish)
 Sun. - 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 5:30, 7:00 p.m.

Church of Christ

Bryan / College Station Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Worship 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Class 7:00 p.m. College Station Conference Center (Use access George Bush from TAMU Off-Campus)
 (409) 731-1230
 Email: mark-d@tamu.edu or mwm@tamu.edu

Episcopal

St. Thomas Episcopal
 906 George Bush Dr. • College Station, TX (Across from Duncan Dining Hall)
 Sunday services at 8:00, 9:00 and especially for late rising Aged, 11:15 a.m.
 Next door to Canterbury House, the Episcopal Student Center

Free Will Baptist

Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church
College & Career Class
 You are invited to a Bible study especially for students.
 Sunday mornings at 9:45
 1228 W. Villa Maria 779-2297
 For more information contact Marcus Brewer: 696-6558
mcbrewer@tamu.edu
<http://PersonalWebs.mynad.net/ffwb>

Lutheran

Peace Lutheran Church
 FM 2818 at Rio Grande • College Station
 Worship 8:15 & 10:45
 Aggie Lutherans
 Craig Borchardt - Pastor Debra Grant - Pastor
 2201 Rio Grande Blvd. 693-4403

Non-Denominational

Covenant Family Church
 "Success Begins on Sunday"
 Danny & Janet Green, Pastors
 Sunday 10:30 a.m. Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
 4010 Harvey Rd., (Hwy. 30) E-Mail: greencc@aol.com
 College Station 774-1269 www.covenant-family-church.org

Pentecostal

Bryan United Pentecostal Church
 2206 Hwy. 21 East at Tabor Road, Bryan
 778-1806 778-5687
 Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
 Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

United Methodist

A&M United Methodist
 417 University Dr. (on Northgate) • 846-8731
 Sunday Services: 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.
 College Sunday School 9:45
 Sr. Pastor Charles Anderson
amumc@tca.net

First United Methodist Church
 28th & Houston St., 1 block E. of Texas Ave., in Bryan
 779-1324
 Sunday Worship 8:40 & 10:55 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
 Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
 Rev. Harri Durnam, Senior Pastor Rev. Bob Richers, Associate Pastor

MOCK GRE
Sat., Feb. 26, 9am (arrive at 8:30) Blocker 102

Ever wonder how you'd do on the GRE? Come take a REAL GRE purchased from the testing company. Tickets on sale in the MSC Thursday and Friday, or pay at the door. Plus, find out how to take a FREE computerized Adaptive Test. Questions? Call 696-9099.

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<http://battalion.tamu.edu>

The Memorial Student Center Black Awareness Committee Presents...

THE MEETING

A powerful drama about the lives, philosophies and times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X

RESCHEDULED

Friday
 February 25, 2000
 8:30 p.m.

Texas A&M University
 Rudder Theater

Tickets Available
 MSC Box Office 845-1234
 Lurl's Beauty Salon 778-2073
 Hall's Mini Mall 775-0771

\$3.00 Student
\$5.00 Non-student

Please phone 3 working days in advance to 845-1515 for special assistance needs.