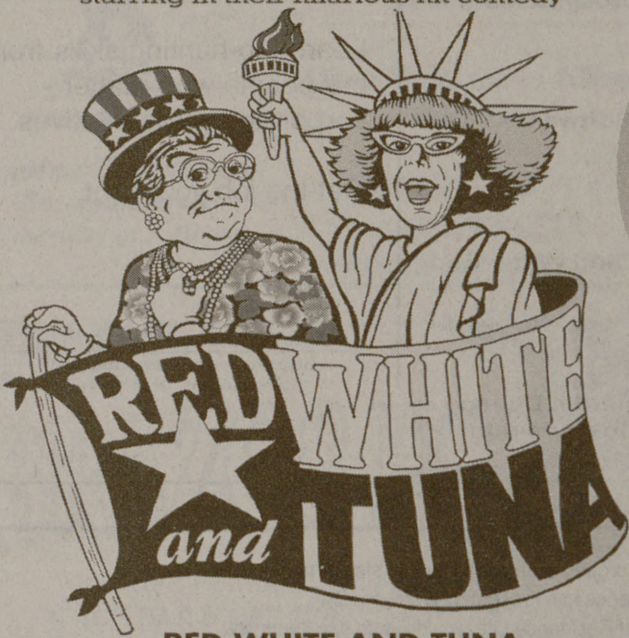


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News

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, September 6, 2001

Parents object to drug test

BEAUMONT (AP) — Some parents in the Newton Independent School District are upset with a school drug-testing policy that requires students to agree to random drug tests in order to receive a parking permit or to play school sports.

About half of the 375 students at Newton High School have submitted the forms. The school adopted a policy in April for random drug tests for students in grades six through 12 who drive to school or who participate in school sports.

Each month, the names of 10 students to undergo testing will be drawn randomly from the pool of those who submitted forms to undergo testing.

"I don't have a problem with drug testing," James Hughes, a school board member, said in a story in Thursday's *The Beaumont Enterprise*. "I have a problem with stomping on the Constitution."

The forms require the signature of student and parent. Hughes said he would not sign his high school daughter's form.

Amie Simmons, a Newton High honor roll student, has refused to sign up and her father, Mack Simmons, agrees with her decision.

"I think it's unfair because it's like we're getting punished for something we didn't do," Amie Simmons said.

Stem cell line not ready yet

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fewer than half the embryonic stem cell lines approved for federal funding are ready for research, the Bush administration admitted Wednesday as it defended the president's restrictions to skeptics in Capitol Hill.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said he expects more of the existing cell lines to be fully developed by the time federal grants are issued next year. Even if they are not, he said, two dozen cell lines are enough to get the science moving.

Thompson also announced the administration had reached its first — and most important — agreement on patent issues that will allow research to go forward. Under the agreement, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, which holds patents on the method of isolating cells, will allow widespread use for research. The foundation still stands to make money on any treatments that someday result from the research.

"Our challenge now is to move beyond the halls of debate and into the labs of science," Thompson told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in the most extensive public debate since President Bush said he would allow limited federal funding for research using stem cells from human embryos.

Thompson faced clear skepticism from senators who argued the Bush policy will hamper researchers and delay treatments for millions of Americans who suffer from Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Scientists hope they can stem cells, which can be used into any sort of human tissue into new cells to treat disease.

"It would be unacceptable to offer these patients an alternative to stem cell research but deny the reality of it," said Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., committee's chairman. Kennedy called the restrictions "very troubling" but it remained unclear whether research proponents had sufficient support to overturn Bush plan.

"It would be unacceptable to offer these patients and their families the promise of an effective stem cell research but deny them the reality of it,"

— Sen. Edward Kennedy

The research is controversial because the stem cells are derived from days-old embryos, many of those leftover from fertility treatments that would be destroyed. Despite that, people believe it's wrong to use them for research. Last month, Bush made a deal, saying federal support this research but stem cell colonies in existence Aug. 9, the date of his Embryos already had been destroyed in such cell line.



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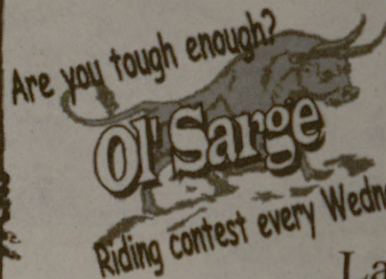
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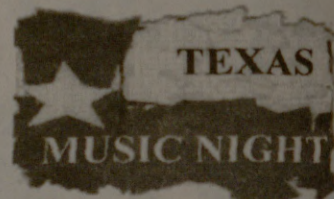
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