

Study may link breast cancer, chemical exposure

BOSTON (AP) — Seeking clues about the high rate of breast cancer among wealthy women, researchers have come up with some possible leads involving chemical exposure.

Focusing on the Boston suburb of Newton, the researchers found women in areas hit hardest by the disease used professional lawn and dry cleaning services more often than those in less-affected neighborhoods.

"Obviously, neither money nor schooling cause breast cancer," said Dr. Nancy Maxwell, the lead researcher. "With the Newton study we tried to see if there might be environmental factors."

Maxwell cautioned there is no definitive evidence that chemicals or pesticides cause cancer. But she said

the research points to the need for further investigation of possible connections.

The rate of breast cancer in Newton was 13 percent higher than the statewide rate between 1982 and 1992, state health officials said.

The study "has taken us one step further in trying to understand why socioeconomic status is a factor," said Suzanne Condon, director of environmental health assessment at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The department funded the study.

The researchers from Silent Spring Institute, a nonprofit research organization, randomly questioned 1,350 women — not necessarily cancer patients — ages 35 to 75.

Fund-raiser helps cause

From staff reports

Day and night, through Friday, sorority and fraternity members are seesawing in front of the Nebraska Union to raise money for the Laura Cockson Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Gamma Phi Beta Sorority and Alpha Gamma Sigma Fraternity have joined to raise money for the scholarship, which is named after the late Laura Cockson, who was a Gamma Phi Beta member.

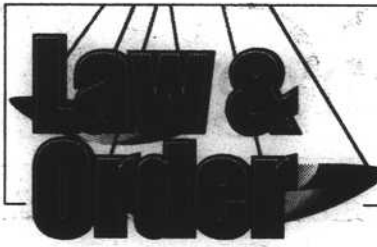
In March 1998, Cockson was killed by a drunken driver. The scholarship fund was created to remember her, as well as NU on

Wheels, a program that pays for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students to take a taxi home on weekend nights.

Any extra money made on the seesaw-a-thon will be donated to NU on Wheels, said Brooke Peterson, Gamma Phi Beta philanthropy chairwoman.

Peterson said she hopes the fund-raiser garners about \$7,000 for the two projects.

Students, faculty and staff can donate money where the sorority and fraternity members are seesawing in front of the union, she said. Members also raised money before the project, which will end at 7 p.m. Friday.



Man pleads not guilty to brother's death

A Lincoln man accused of killing his brother in a fight Sept. 22 pleaded not guilty Wednesday to a charge of second-degree murder in Lancaster County District Court.

Police arrested Joseph Tupper, 31, after finding Tupper's 37-year-old brother, Scott, unresponsive in front of the 31-year-old's home on the 300 block of N.W. 17th Street.

Police said the brothers got into an argument over family matters that grew into a fist fight. Scott Tupper died of blunt force trauma to the head sustained during the fight. Tupper could receive between 20 years and life in prison for the Class I felony.

Teen held at gun point over money owed, police say

An 18-year-old Lincoln man was held at gun point briefly Tuesday by two people he apparently owed money to, officer Katherine Finnell said.

Jared Jirsa, 22, allegedly took the teen-ager from a home on the 300 block of N. 35th Street to a trailer on the 100 block of Gaslight Lane, Finnell said.

Inside the trailer, Jirsa pointed a

loaded shotgun at the teen-ager's head and demanded \$200, Finnell said. A 26-year-old woman, Amanda Vocheck, then also pointed a loaded .357 magnum at the teen-ager and demanded the missing money, Finnell said.

Another 24-year-old who lived with Jirsa then drove the teen and Vocheck back to the teen-ager's house to get the missing money, Finnell said. Once inside, the teen-ager called police.

Both Jirsa and Vocheck were arrested on suspicion of making terroristic threats and using a firearm to commit a felony, Finnell said drugs were probably involved.

Man arrested on suspicion of sexual assault

Police arrested a 39-year-old man Wednesday afternoon after a Lincoln woman accused him of sexually assaulting her Friday, Finnell said.

Thien Nguyen allegedly offered the 44-year-old woman a ride downtown while she was walking near the intersection of 21st and R streets, Finnell said.

After a brief conversation, the woman got into Nguyen's car. Nguyen then showed her a small, black semi-automatic pistol and drove her to his apartment on the 1100 block of E Street where he sexually assaulted her, Finnell said.

Nguyen then brought the woman back out to his car at gun point and drove her downtown, Finnell said, where she called police.

Police arrested Nguyen while searching his apartment and car, Finnell

said. The gun was not found in the search but, Finnell said, police did find "other things of evidentiary value."

20-year-old man pleads guilty to manslaughter

A 20-year-old Lincoln man pleaded no contest to manslaughter Friday in the April 8 shooting death of a 42-year-old Lincoln man.

Kenneth Choma will be sentenced for the charge Nov. 29. The charge could bring a maximum of 20 years in prison.

As part of a plea agreement, the state dropped the charges of third-degree assault, two counts of making terroristic threats and two counts of use of a firearm to commit a felony, Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said.

David Higgins, 42, was shot in the groin while he and Choma were struggling over a gun in front of Choma's home, police said. Higgins died after spending three days hospitalized in critical condition.

Higgins shared an apartment with a woman Choma threatened with a gun the day before the shooting, police said. Higgins apparently confronted Choma about the incident, causing the fight, police said.

Police arrived at Choma's house and found Higgins covered in blood on Choma's porch, court documents said.

Choma was found inside with blood on his shirt, pants and left shoe, court documents said.

Compiled by senior staff writer Jake Bleed.

Statue causes strife in Seattle

SEATTLE (AP) — Pregnant, naked, hair in dreadlocks and sporting a sparkling nose stud, "The Picardo Venus" has spawned a fierce public art debate in the city's oldest and largest community garden.

In the three months since it appeared beside a new children's play area, the 2 1/4-foot bronze figure has been covered repeatedly with garbage bags and a removal campaign has split a once-tranquil gardening group.

Some fear vandalism could be next. The statue squats on oversized haunches, hands crossed over an enormous belly, eyes closed in a beatific expression. Nestled in her dreadlocks are fish, seashells, a dragonfly, a tree frog and symbols representing the sun and moon.

The podium bears ancient symbols of feminine power and fertility.

"It strikes me as ugly. It reminds me more of a frog," said Doug Ward, a garden block leader.

Stephanie Butow, a gardener, said the statue should be removed to a safe place pending a survey of all 281 gardeners.

"No woman looks like that. If it was

going to be a naked, pregnant woman, I wouldn't care — I mean, I'm a mother, it doesn't bother me — just make her look normal," Butow said. "But those huge breasts — why do we need that?"

"She's glorifying fertility a little too much for kids, isn't she?" said Gloria Seborg, another gardener. "I mean, we don't want a bunch of pregnant kids."

The Picardo p-patch was established in 1973 on the last 2 1/2 acres of what once was a 20-acre Italian family truck farm about three miles north of the University of Washington (the p in p-patch honors the family). It is where the city's community gardening program originated. The program was cited as a national model at the American Community Gardening Association convention here in 1987.

Venus was purchased with \$6,300 from a \$10,000 city grant that also provided an 8-inch-high decorated retaining wall, wooden picnic table, sandbox, swing set and cedar lawn swing for the patch.

Proposals, drawings and models were submitted and discussed, artist Steve Anderson's design was selected, and the model was approved at the Picardo annual gardeners' meeting last April.

Soon after the installation on Aug. 8, though, some of the gardeners were grouching. Someone began anonymously covering Venus with garbage sacks several times a week.


A campaign to remove the figure was mounted by Jack Leverage, a block leader and retired family practice doctor who claimed there had been inadequate notice of the project, selection process and design choice.

Anderson, 31, said the design for his first public commission originated with a fist-sized carving he made seven years ago as a tribute to his mother.

"When I was making her, I grabbed every one of my female friends and every woman walking by my shop and asked what they thought of it," Anderson said. "I got such a positive response, I don't really know what the fuss is about."

About two dozen gardeners met beside the statue Saturday to discuss the issue with Rich MacDonald, head of the city p-patch program, and other officials.

After an hour of debate, they formed a task force to survey all 281 p-patch renters and try to decide the statue's fate before the annual gardeners' meeting in April.



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