

Test-tube baby used to save sister's life

For the first time, a couple genetically screens and selects embryo as a tissue-donor match.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS - In the first known case of its kind, a Colorado couple created a test-tube baby who was genetically screened and selected in the hope he could save the life of his 6-year-old sister.

The sister, Molly Nash, has a rare genetic disease, Fanconi anemia, that prevents her body from making bone marrow. But last week, doctors gave her an infusion of umbilical-cord blood from her newborn little brother, Adam, to try to correct the disease.

Doctors should know in a couple of weeks whether the infusion is helping Molly develop healthy marrow cells.

Screening laboratory-created embryos for genetic diseases before implanting them in a woman is not new. But this is the

first known instance in which parents screened and selected an embryo in order to find a suitable tissue donor for an ailing sibling.

"People have babies for lots of reasons: to save a failing marriage, to work the family farm," said Dr. Charles Strom, director of medical genetics at the Reproductive Genetics Institute in Chicago, where Adam was conceived. "I have absolutely no ethical problems with this whatsoever."

Molly was just beginning to show signs of leukemia, which is frequently associated with the disease, when she had the transplant, said Dr. John Wagner, her physician at the University of Minnesota. The infusion procedure between siblings has a 90 percent success rate.

"Molly's doing very well," Wagner said Tuesday, although she had a slight cold. She was playing on a computer, he said.

As part of her disease, Molly was born without thumbs, but surgeons built some from a finger

on each hand. She also had no hip sockets but can now walk thanks to the use of heavy braces.

Her parents, Jack and Lisa Nash of Englewood, Colo., wanted more children but were afraid to conceive because both carry a faulty version of the Fanconi gene, meaning each child would have a 25 percent chance of developing the disease.

The Nashes used a process called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD. Embryos were created from Lisa Nash's eggs and her husband's sperm.

Then the fertilized eggs were analyzed, and when one was found to be disease-free and a tissue match, it was implanted. The couple had to try the procedure several times before she became pregnant.

Lisa Nash, who works as a neonatal nurse, said she and her husband could not knowingly bring another child into the world with the disease.

"We wanted a healthy child,"

"People have babies for lots of reasons: to save a failing marriage, to work the family farm. I have absolutely no ethical problems with this whatsoever."

Dr. Charles Strom

Reproductive Genetics Institute director of medical genetics

she told the Star Tribune newspaper last month.

"And it doesn't hurt him to save her life."

Adam was born Aug. 29. On Sept. 26, umbilical cord blood cells from Adam were given to Molly at the University of Minnesota.

If the transplant doesn't take, the next step could be to repeat the process with Adam's bone marrow.

Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, said he doesn't see anything morally wrong in the Nash case, but it raises interesting questions.

"The first issue is, is it right to design anybody as a tissue source?" he said.

"And sometimes it can be. In this case, there's no harm or danger to a person."

The procedure also raises the question of whether children will be "designed" for specific traits.

"To what extent are doctors and parents going to be free to design whatever they want in their kids?" Caplan asked. "That's not going to happen tomorrow, but this is a baby step down that road."

When Molly is healthy, the Nashes plan to have more children through test tube fertilization, Strom said.

Bill aims to lure foreign workers

U.S. unemployment rate prompts Senate to pass a bill to help software companies ease worker shortages.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - High-tech companies could bring in nearly 600,000 new skilled foreign workers over the next three years and also hire thousands more foreign students from U.S. graduate schools under a bill the Senate passed Tuesday.

With U.S. unemployment rates holding steady near a 30-year low, companies in Silicon Valley and along other burgeoning high-tech corridors say they need the additional workers with six-year H-1B visas to fuel their continuing rapid growth.

"The short-term problem is how to fill the key positions immediately so that we don't lose opportunities to foreign competitors or so that we don't force American businesses to move offshore to where skilled workers might live," said Sen. Spencer Abraham, R-Mich.

Despite the overwhelming Senate vote, obstacles remain in the House, where Republican leaders have differed over measures aimed at assuring that the skilled immigrants don't displace American workers.

A bill from Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, that was approved by the Judiciary Committee would require companies using visas to increase the median pay of their U.S. workers in addition to establishing job projections for them. The industry opposes Smith's bill.

Industry advocates - including Microsoft and Sun Microsystems, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the

National Association of Manufacturers - praised the Senate vote and called for the House to follow suit.

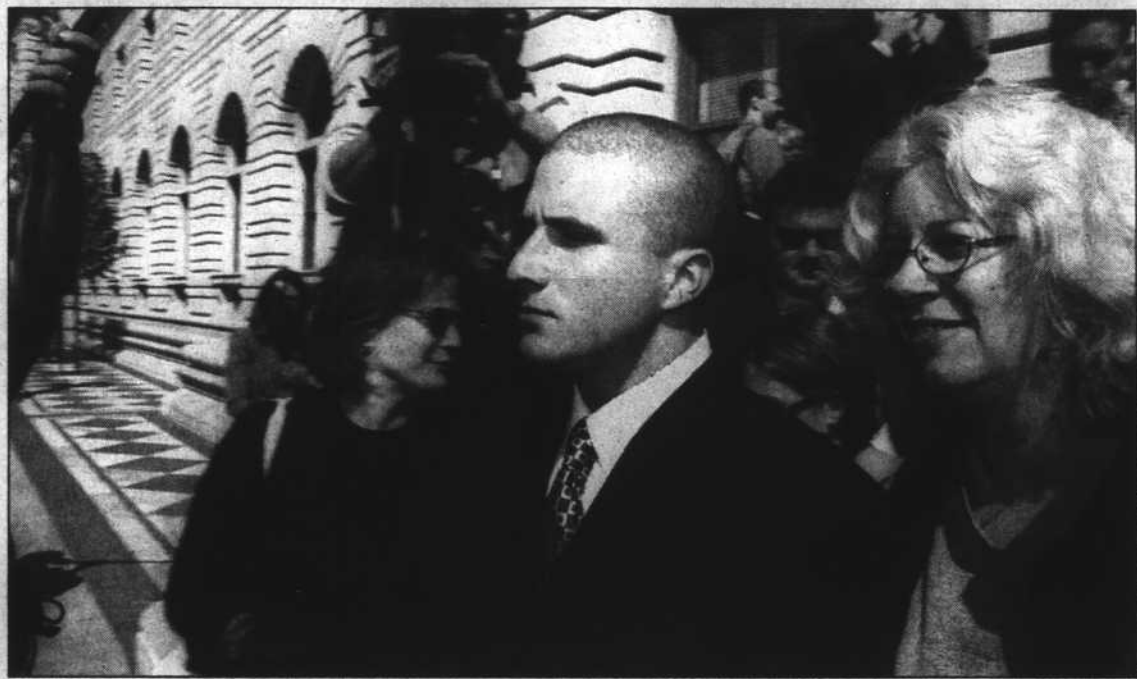
Technology businesses have more than doubled their political contributions during the past two years, according to the independent Center for Responsive Politics. The companies have given candidates \$22.1 million since the start of last year, with Democrats getting a little more than half of that.

Computer software and other high-tech companies contend that 300,000 jobs are going unfilled for a lack of qualified workers. Labor unions, however, argue that the companies want more immigrants to put keep down wages of Americans holding the same jobs.

While lifting the ceiling entirely on the H-1B visas, Smith's bill requires employers to pay the immigrants at least \$40,000 a year and not use them to replace Americans on their payrolls. Companies would also have to document that they have at least \$250,000 in capital to participate in the program.

The Senate bill would allow the Immigration and Naturalization Service to issue up to 195,000 new H-1B visas annually for the next three years to skilled foreign workers. The bill also would exempt from the cap foreign graduates of U.S. master's or doctoral programs or foreign workers at U.S. colleges, providing another source of labor to high-tech companies.

Under present law, the government issued 115,000 H-1B visas during the fiscal year that ended Saturday. With no new legislation the ceiling would fall to 107,500 this year and to 65,000 next year.



Steven Fanning, co-founder of the online music service Napster, leaves the ninth circuit Court of Appeals on Monday in San Francisco.

User fee could be Napster fix

Napster's compromise would allow artists to be compensated over copyrights.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO - With the fate of Napster Inc. awaiting a decision by a federal appeals court, the head of the company has a new idea for saving the Internet music sharing service: Get people to pay for the privilege so the artists can get a cut.

The music industry sued to shut down Napster, claiming it contributes to copyright infringement by allowing its purported 32 million users to download music directly from each others' computers. The recording industry considers the case pivotal in its battle against online piracy.

After arguments Monday before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Napster CEO Hank Barry floated the possibility of setting aside his company's differences with record labels by coming up with a business plan for monthly fees to download music. Artists would be com-

pensated from the proceeds.

"Whether \$4.95 a month or \$1.99, the whole structure of this thing is trying to compensate artists," Barry said. "We're willing to pay very substantial amounts to the artists. With a very conservative estimate, the first-year payments to the artists would be in the neighborhood of a half a billion dollars."

Napster, started in a Northeastern University dorm room last year, pioneered the concept known as peer-to-peer computing, in which people share files from their own computers rather than a central server. In Napster's case, users can download music from each other that is stored in the MP3 format.

Some of Napster's users were online in the company's chat rooms Monday bemoaning the prospect of paying for something they were used to getting for free.

"I might pay. If I had to I probably would," said Jake Becker of St. Clairsville, Ohio, to The Associated Press. "I'm 16, and I don't work yet. I'm looking for a job so I can get my car, and I

don't need to be spending my money on Napster."

During Monday's hearing, Judge Robert Beezer, a member of the three-judge panel examining a lower court judge's preliminary injunction against Napster, told a recording industry lawyer that demands that Napster scale back or shut down might be a tall order considering the nebulous nature of the Internet.

"How are they supposed to have knowledge of what comes off of some kid's computer in Hackensack, N.J., to a user in Guam?" Beezer said.

The lawyer, Russell Frackman, representing the Recording Industry Association of America, said the answer might lie in having Napster redesign its popular service so as not to transmit copyright files.

The appellate judges adjourned without reaching a decision, which could come at any time.

Barry said the company has been in discussion with individual record labels about a possible settlement, but no deals have been reached.

Weather

TODAY

Cloudy
high 62, low 54

TOMORROW

Breezy with rain
high 50, low 29

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DAILY NEBRASKAN

Fight erupts at Gaza Strip

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM - Palestinian gunmen battled Israeli soldiers Tuesday at isolated army posts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that have degenerated into virtual free-fire zones, as both sides defied a cease-fire call on the eve of a U.S. attempt to salvage peacemaking.

Tuesday's death toll of five was the lowest since the fighting began last week. In addition, 206 people were injured, according to the Palestinians. Overall, 56 people have died and at least 1,300 have been wounded, the vast majority Palestinian.

"The results have been very painful," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak said, adding that he had called on Israel's security forces "to make a supreme effort to prevent further casualties."

Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat head to Paris on Wednesday in hopes that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright can help end the fighting and revive peace talks.

Barak also was battling for political survival at home, trying to appease Arab legislators who are threatening to topple his government over the harsh crackdown on rioters in Israel's Arab towns. The internal rebellion, the worst since Israel's founding 52 years ago, has blocked highways and closed

schools, paralyzing large parts of northern Israel.

With the Israelis blasting away with heavy weapons, such as rockets launched from helicopters, and with the Palestinians, routinely firing automatic rifles, the intensity of the fighting sometimes resembles a war and has surpassed levels seen during the 1987-93 Palestinian uprising and three days of firefights in 1996.

The heaviest clashes Tuesday were again in the chaotic West Bank and Gaza Strip, where a hastily arranged cease-fire quickly unraveled at a pair of chronic trouble spots.

Palestinian television's broadcast an appeal in Hebrew to Israeli soldiers not to open fire, and a senior Palestinian official said an international inquiry into Israel's actions would be a condition of reviving the peace talks.

At one point late Tuesday, the Paris talks were almost called off, after Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath reportedly said Arafat had no intention of meeting with Barak in Paris.

Barak informed the Americans that in this case, he would not go to Paris, the prime minister's office said.

The prime minister only relented after he was informed by U.S. mediators that Arafat was ready to see Barak.

World/Nation

The Associated Press

California

Assassination assignment leads to teacher's firing

COVINA - A high school English teacher is out of a job after assigning his students the mock task of picking an assassination victim and planning the killing without getting caught.

School officials on Monday refused to say if Andrew Phillips resigned or was fired after giving the assignment to students reading Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum."

Students said the teacher told them to choose a victim from outside Covina High School, detail why they made that choice and how to keep it secret.

"The first thing that hit me was Columbine, and what if he has a loose end in the classroom that wants to make a name for himself and the teacher is supporting this type of action? It could be (my son) that's shot or bombed or whatever," parent Joyce Jarvis said.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, both high school seniors, killed 12 other students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado before killing themselves April 20, 1999.

Phillips did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

New York

Lennon's killer loses first bid for parole

ATTICA - The man who gunned down John Lennon 20 years ago lost his first bid for parole Tuesday after the ex-Beatle's widow, Yoko Ono, wrote that setting him free would "bring back the nightmare, the chaos and confusion once again."

Mark David Chapman was interviewed for 50 minutes by three parole board members during a closed hearing at Attica prison. Four hours later, he was given a one-page determination that began: "Parole is denied."

"Your most vicious and violent act was apparently fueled by your need to be acknowledged," the board said. "During your parole hearing, this panel noted your continued interest in maintaining your notoriety."

Chapman, 45, is serving 20 years to life at the maximum-security prison in upstate New York. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in 1981 for fatally shooting Lennon as the rock star and Ono, were entering their Manhattan apartment building following a recording session on Dec. 8, 1980.

Yugoslavia

Milosevic orders arrest of strike leaders

BELGRADE - Escalating the Yugoslav crisis, President Slobodan Milosevic's government on Tuesday ordered the arrest of leaders of one of the strikes launched to drive him from power.

The announcement by the Belgrade prosecutor followed a government statement warning of "special measures" against those responsible for the wave of strikes and blockades called to force Milosevic to accept defeat in Sept. 24 elections.

The arrest order raised fears that Milosevic may resort to the army and police to hold on to power, despite calls at home and abroad for him to step down in favor of challenger Vojislav Kostunica.

The opposition showed no signs of backing down and has called on Yugoslavs to come to Belgrade on Thursday for a final push to drive Milosevic from power.

Great Britain

Heroin addict steals defense computer

LONDON - A heroin addict was ordered jailed for eight months after pleading guilty Monday to stealing a laptop computer belonging to the Ministry of Defense.

The prosecution told Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court that David John Stone, 28, stole the computer on May 8 from Navy Capt. Simon Henley as they traveled by train from Didcot, west of London, to Heathrow.

Stone later sold the \$2,000 computer for about \$55 to finance his addiction, prosecutor Grace Ong said. Police eventually recovered it.