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FOCUS: MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Scientists grow key cells of life

UW researcher's work the basis for medicine of future

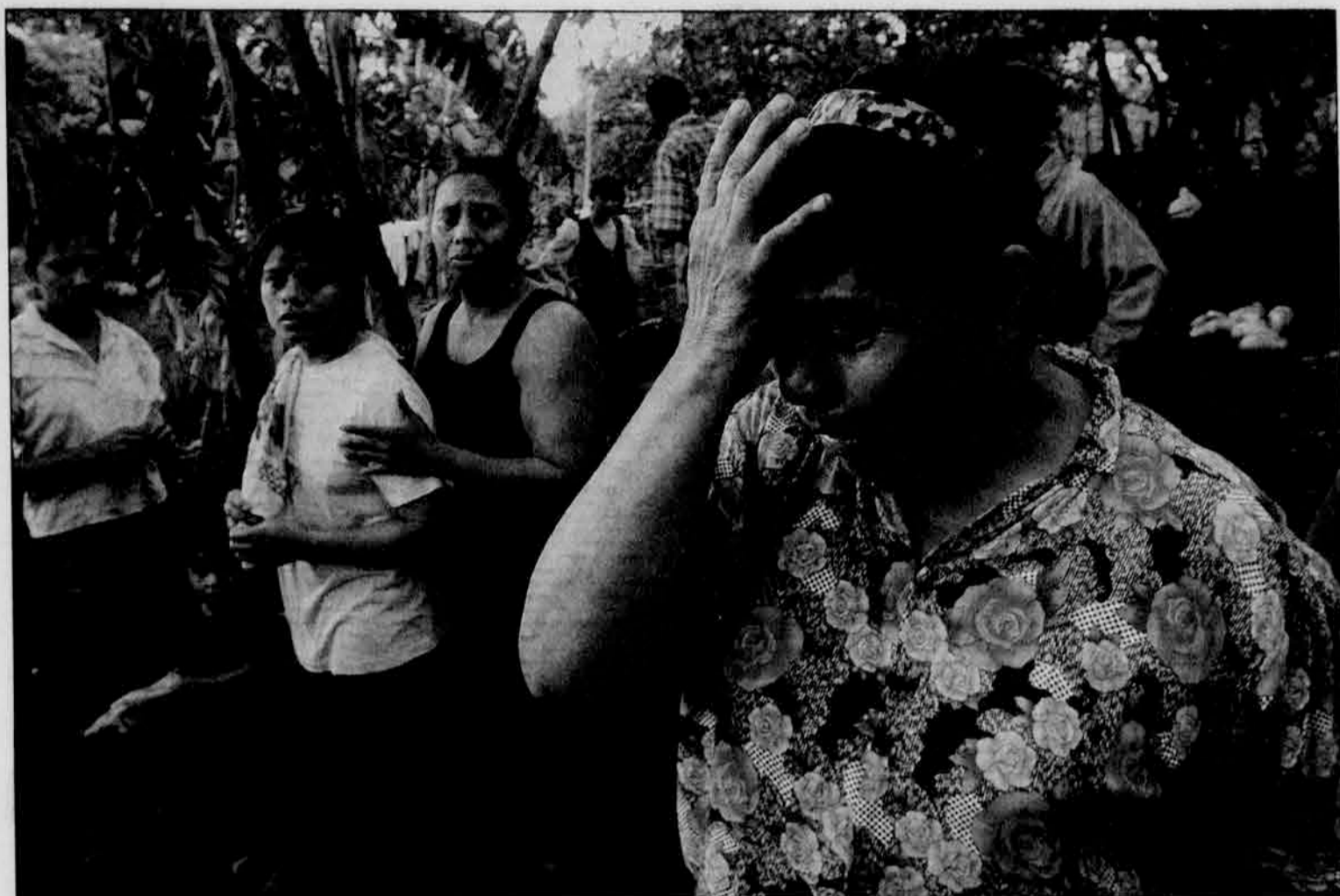
By Ron Seely
Science reporter

What if doctors were able to repair a damaged heart by simply replacing dead cells with new ones? What if juvenile-onset diabetes, caused by one or a few cells going haywire, could be treated by injecting healthy cells? Such treatments, talked about wistfully for years but thought to be mostly wishful thinking, sud-

denly appear to be possible. A breakthrough in cellular research at the UW-Madison makes it likely that in a decade or so doctors will be using such techniques to treat everything from Parkinson's disease to spinal cord injuries. The optimism is fueled by the news that a team of researchers led by James A. Thomson, a developmental biologist at UW-Madison, has for the first time grown human embryonic stem cells in the laboratory. These embryonic stem cells are parent to the cells that eventually form all the components of the human body including bone, muscle, liver and blood. The hope is

Please see CELLS, Page 3A

'It hurt me to my soul'



Associated Press photos

Mariana Centeno, foreground, is one of the only survivors of the Nicaraguan village Rolando Rodriguez after Friday's devastating mudslide.

Mudslide sucks life from villages, leaving grim remains

By Niko Price
Associated Press

ROLANDO RODRIGUEZ, Nicaragua — Two days after the mountain slid away, when the sea of mud had firmed enough to no longer swallow people up to their necks, Marcelo Narvaez Gonzalez and his neighbors waded into a peanut field, hoping to find his brother alive.

They tried to ignore the bloated, blanched corpses twisted in fallen branches. They recognized each one as a friend or relative.

Narvaez, 27, spotted a child lying on the top of the muck and saw her chest move. It was 11-year-old Marta Pantaleon, a distant cousin.

One neighbor slogged into the chest-high mud and dragged Marta to firmer soil. In still pouring rain, he placed her frail body on a plank of wood. Her right arm drooped limply on the ground.

From the search group, Marta's older brother, Manuel, ran to her side. "Martita, Martita," he sobbed repeatedly. Her eyes slowly fixed on his, but she couldn't respond.

Narvaez and the others struggled on, pulling four more people from the mud before returning for Marta. Manuel was still at her side, but her chest wasn't moving anymore.

They left her where she lay so they could carry the living to safety.

On Thursday, with a light drizzle falling,



Lorenzo Alvarado, a Doctors Without Borders worker, steps over debris at the former village of Rolando Rodriguez, Nicaragua, on Thursday.

she was still there, her frilly, pink dress pulled over her face and flies buzzing around her stomach.

The stench was almost unbearable.

Hundreds of bodies still rot in the tropical heat. The mud remains too deep — 6

- Florida feels Mitch's punch/2A
- Honduras suffers setback/5A
- Madison scuba divers survive hurricane/1C

feet to 18 feet in places — to reach many of them, and there isn't anyone to bury the rest. Rescue workers have given up trying.

In a devoutly religious nation that traditionally honors its dead with elaborate funeral rites, Health Ministry crews roam the mountainside with fuel tanks strapped to their backs, squirting dribbles of diesel onto the corpses and lighting them to try to prevent an epidemic. But diesel — the only fuel available and quickly running out — burns poorly, and some of the oozing corpses are only partly charred.

A week ago, after seven straight days of rain from Hurricane Mitch, stalled off the Honduran coast north of here, the downpour relented.

Corn, sugar and peanut fields were flooded, and creeks that tumble down the mountain from the beautiful crater lake at the top of the 4,600-foot-high Casitas volcano were running wild and brown.

But on Friday morning, villagers in Rolando Rodriguez, El Porvenir and El Ojochal thought the storm was over. Then they heard the boom above them.

The swollen lake had soaked through its

Please see MUDSLIDE, Page 3A

ECTODERM

Nervous system

Hair
Eyes

MESODERM

Striated Muscle
Blood Cells
Skeleton

ENDODERM

Gut Endothelium
Lungs
Liver

■ Many diseases such as Parkinson's and juvenile diabetes are the result of the death

or dysfunction of just one cell type. These cells could be replaced by healthy cells developed in the laboratory.

■ Heart disease could possibly be treated by injecting the newly created cells directly to shore up failing heart tissue.

SOURCE: UW-Madison

WSJ graphic/JASON KLEIN

Proposed pay raises don't please professors

By Anita Clark
Wisconsin State Journal

Two groups of University of Wisconsin System professors said Thursday that proposed pay raises of 5.2 percent a year are inadequate.

"We need a comprehensive approach to the salary problem, not a quick fix," Ray Spoto told the Board of Regents on behalf of The Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals (TAUWP).

UW System President Katharine Lyall asked the Regents to recommend pay raises of 5.2 percent for each of the next two years.

Faculty and staff salaries are more than 5 percent lower than those at peer institutions, she told the Regents' business and finance committee.

She warned that other Midwestern states are investing heavily in their universities and said Wisconsin must be competitive.

With little discussion, the committee — with most Regents present — adopted Lyall's proposed resolution by unanimous voice vote. A full board vote follows today.

Spoto, who chairs the humanities department at UW-Platteville, made "a modest proposal" of pay raises of 6 percent in the first year and 8 percent the next year.

Full professors are falling especially far behind, he said, describing "the loyalty tax: The longer one remains in the UW System, the greater the loyalty tax."

In a memo to the Regents, UW-



UW System President Katharine Lyall warned that other Midwestern states are

investing heavily in their universities and said Wisconsin must be competitive.

Madison professors called for pay raises of 7.7 percent a year. The statement came from PROFS Inc., the Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate.

"Keep in mind, we are talking about getting our faculty salaries back to the median of our peers," the memo said.

The Regents' recommendation goes to the state Department of Employment Relations, which makes a final recommendation next spring to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Employment Relations.

The Regents convene this morning to consider, among other items, their next step in the student fees case. Federal courts have ruled that students cannot be compelled to pay fees for groups they oppose.

A student rally is planned for 8:30 a.m. in front of Van Hise Hall, where the Regents will meet.

Wisconsin milk prices hit all-time high

By Rick Barrett
Agriculture reporter

Wisconsin's farm milk price rocketed upward in October to the highest level ever, driven by a tight national milk supply and robust demand for cheese.

For the state's 23,000 dairy farmers, this could be one of the most profitable years in decades, as milk prices have climbed steadily since June.

"It's really been a solid year," said Don Storhoff, chief executive officer of Foremost Farms USA, one of the state's biggest dairy farm cooperatives.

previous record of \$15.37 in September 1996.

Monthly changes in the Basic Formula Price don't tell the whole story for dairy farmers' paychecks. There are other factors including milk quality, various milk components and volume produced.

But the Basic Formula Price will remain high at least through December, according to industry experts.

"There will be a downside, but we won't see it until early next year," Storhoff said.

Wholesale cheese prices have been climbing for weeks, and 98 percent of the monthly change in the Basic Formula Price is based on cheese.

Next month's price could be another record breaker, said Bob Cropp, a UW-Madison dairy economist.

October's price jump of 94 cents "was a pretty substantial raise on top of already good prices," he said.

Dairy experts are worried that record prices will encourage farmers to produce too much milk, flooding the market and driving down prices.

Dairy-rich California is coming out of a slump and is expected to increase production about 8 percent by early next year.

Also, rising cheese and butter prices could have a chilling effect on consumer demand. The resulting reduced sales would hurt farm milk prices.

Butter is selling for more than \$4 a pound in some Madison grocery stores and averages \$3.89 a pound statewide — up from 21 cents per pound from last month, a Wisconsin Farm Bureau survey released Wednesday noted.

INDEX

- Bridge7D
- Classifieds5C
- Comics8D
- Crossword7D
- Daybreak1D
- Landers2D
- Local news1C
- Lotteries2C
- Money10B
- Movies4D
- Mutuals9B
- Nation2A
- Obituaries8A
- Opinion11A
- Records2C
- Scoreboard6B
- Sports1B
- State legals2C
- Stocks9-9B
- TV/Radio9D
- Wisconsin3C
- World5A



Today: Sun and clouds. High 38. Winds: N 6-12 mph.
Tonight: Cold. Low 24.
Details/back page

