

## Arrivederci, Winter Olympics



SHERRI LaROSE / St. Paul Pioneer Press  
**Members of the Italian military unit** Truppe Alpini lower the Olympic flag during yesterday's closing ceremonies in Turin. The U.S. team took home 25 medals from the Turin Games, more than any other country except Germany. **Complete coverage in Sports, Section C.**

Don't even think  
of sitting here.

## Cities find new ways to deter loiterers

By Julie Stoiber  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

They're called "loafer rails," and those who try to park their fannies on the planters outside Hahnemann University Hospital will instantly get the point.

The rails — jagged metal strips — were bolted to the tops of 10 stone planters last month when the hospital spruced up its main entrance on Broad Street near Vine, virtually ensuring that people wouldn't sit out front drinking, eating, smoking and littering.

"We were hoping the rails would encourage patients and visitors to use the waiting rooms inside, and cut down on pedestrian congestion," said Coleen Cannon, a hospital spokeswoman. "We also noticed in the warmer months that we have street vendors who sort of use the planters as tables; we wanted to discourage that."

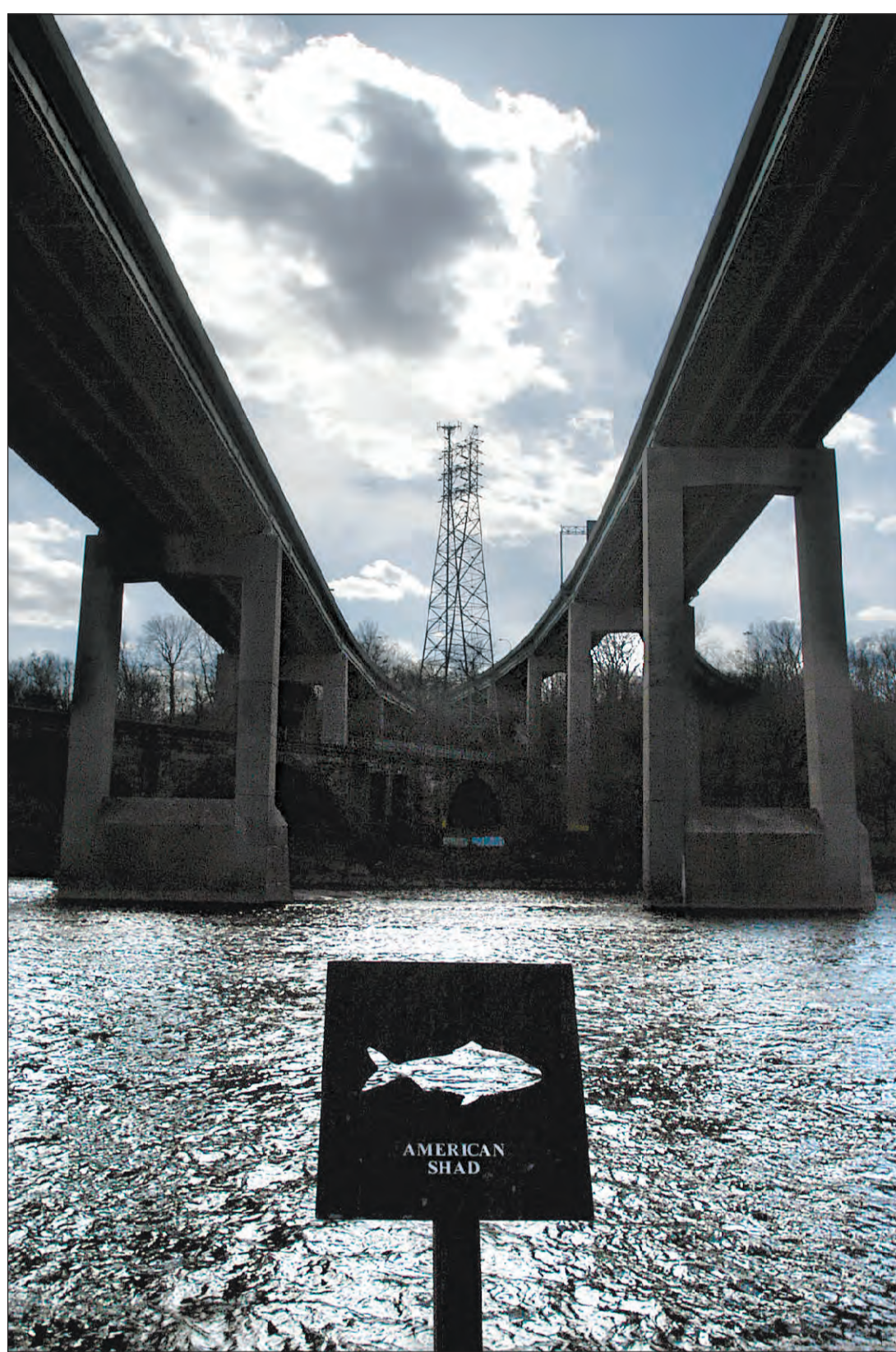
Though loafer rails aren't new — the bronze railings with pointed studs outside 105-year-old City Hall are probably original — the anti-loitering devices are finding fresh uses in the urban environment, along with contraptions that keep people from sleeping on benches, skateboarding on ledges, and sliding down escalator dividers. A British company, Deterapigeon, sells anti-roosting spikes to keep win-

See **RAILS** on A8



CHARLES FOX / Inquirer Staff Photographer  
**The brass loafer rails** on the east side of City Hall are meant to discourage those who just might have been considering leaning or sitting on the railings.

## New techniques have found traces of pharmaceuticals in rivers



TOM GRALISH / Inquirer Staff Photographer  
**A plaque decorates an East Falls fishing spot on the Schuylkill**, which contained traces of 13 common drugs in a 2004 test. The health effects are unknown, but ways to treat the water are being explored.

## Drinking water gets a drug test

By Brian Rademaekers  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Federal scientists surveying fish in the Potomac River continue to find smallmouth bass with a freakish quirk: The males are making eggs and sperm.

Researchers suspect that these "intersex" bass are victims of a newly recognized form of pollution: trace amounts of pharmaceuticals and other chemicals flushed down toilets or flowing from farms' animal waste.

Compounds including antibiotics and caffeine drain through sewage systems largely untouched, collect in rivers and streams, and eventually return in tiny amounts to drinking water.

Until recently, those pollutants had been virtually undetectable because the concentrations are so low. But instruments now can identify substances in parts per trillion — each part equivalent to a grain of sand in an Olympic-size swimming pool —



DAN Z. JOHNSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff

**Rominder Suri**, a scientist at Villanova University's Center for the Environment, with research assistant Uthappa Devaiah (right), is testing the use of ultrasound waves to break down pharmaceutical compounds in water. See illustration, **A12**.

and scientists are finding traces of man-made chemicals in streams in Chester County and drinking-water supplies in Philadelphia and other cities.

The effect on human health is unknown, but the discovery has prompted a flurry of research to measure and remove

See **POLLUTANTS** on A12

# Port deal security will be reviewed

The U.S. accepted a Dubai-based firm's offer to submit to broader evaluation. The company intends to run terminals in Philadelphia and five other ports.

By Ted Bridis  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration said yesterday that it would accept an offer by a United Arab Emirates-based company to submit to a second — and broader — U.S. review of potential security risks in its deal to take over significant operations at Philadelphia and five other major U.S. ports.

The Treasury Department said it would promptly begin the review once the company formally filed a request for one. It said the same government panel that earlier investigated the deal but found no reason for national security concerns would reconsider it.

In six pages of documents sent earlier in the day to the White House, Dubai-based DP World asked for a 45-day investigation of plans to run shipping terminals in Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, New Orleans and Miami.

DP World is now half-owner of the firm that operates the Tioga Marine Terminal in Philadelphia, Delaware River Stevedores. Gov. Rendell said last week that a state agency, the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, would determine whether to continue the firm's lease at the terminal, which expires in May.

Yesterday's announcement means the White

See **PORTS** on A6

## Acknowledging the Taliban

When the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban militia in the 1990s, the Persian Gulf nation became linked to one of the world's most hard-line Islamist regimes. **A6**.

## Bush in a bubble: Is he cut off from political reality?

From Iraq to Katrina to the ports flap, many observers view him as insular.

We have seen this phenomenon before — a cloistered president, fixed in his views and averse to compromise, often at odds with political reality.

Democrat Woodrow Wilson was protected by a first lady who froze out even his closest aides. Democrat Lyndon Johnson raged against his domestic critics, calling them "communists" and "Harvards," and he wound up speaking only at military bases. Republican Richard Nixon was so deep in the bunker during Watergate that his own defense secretary instructed subordinates not to carry out military orders issued by the White House.

It's debatable whether the George W. Bush bubble is equally impervious. But these days, with the President struggling on many fronts, from Iraq to Katrina to the ports flap, even political allies and Republican observers believe Bush is prone to the bunker syndrome; symptoms include tone-deaf pol-

See **POLMAN** on A6

## THE AMERICAN DEBATE



**Dick Polman**  
Political  
Analyst

## INSIDE TODAY'S INQUIRER

### WEATHER



High 29, Low 20

Windy and cold, with a few flurries possible. Full report and exclusive NBC10 EarthWatch forecast, **B11**.

### BUSINESS

#### It pays to get organized

Helping clients cut clutter is a growing field. A look at two challenges. **D1**.

### HEALTH & SCIENCE

#### New guide to fight bulimia

Group launches guide, Web site on recognizing and treating disorder. **E1**.



### OBITUARY

#### Actor Darren McGavin, 83

Star of such classics as TV's "The Night Stalker" and the movie "A Christmas Story," dies of natural causes. **B11**.

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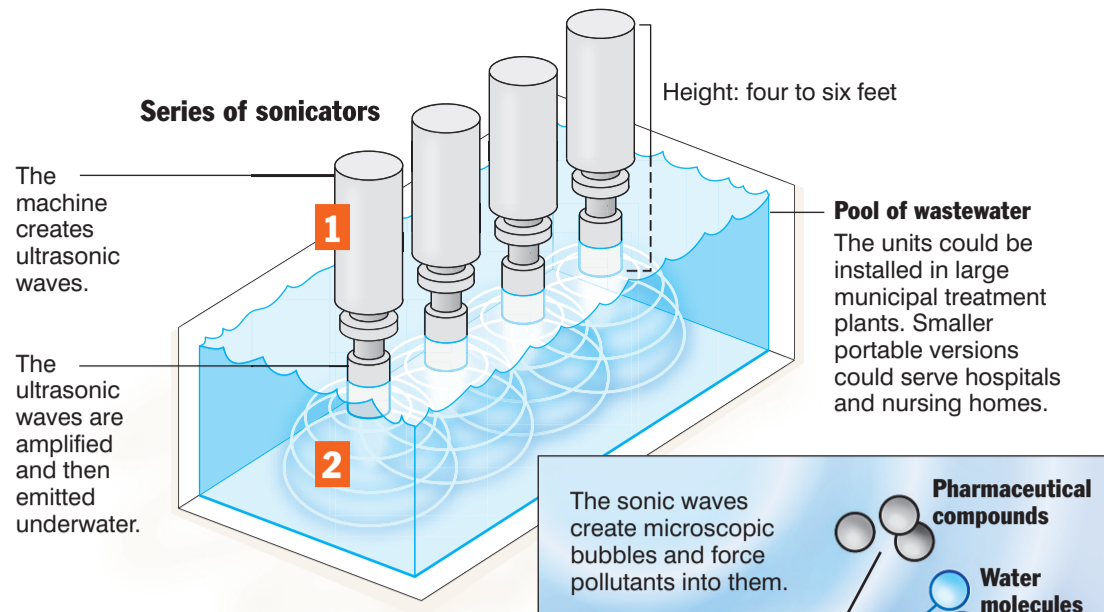
**Christian Thomas of Chestnut Hill walks his dog, Derby, along Wissahickon Creek.** Discharges from five sewage-treatment plants and a Merck pharmaceutical plant empty into the Wissahickon.

# New tests of water find traces of medical drugs

**POLLUTANTS** from A1 the trace chemicals. The Philadelphia Water Department is participating in a \$1 million national study to measure pharmaceuticals and other chemicals in drinking water. Governments in places as diverse as Maine and Ireland are moving to keep the compounds out of the water supply. Even a town as small as Buckingham Township has gotten in the act. The farm-rich Bucks County community plans to require residents to dispose of drugs in special boxes rather than flushing them. And Villanova University scientist Rominder Suri has received a federal grant to use sound waves to break apart trace compounds and render them inert. Some experts fear that traces of antibiotics could worsen bacterial resistance and cause those lifesaving drugs to lose potency. Or that the wide range of compounds could have some unknown cumulative effect on people. No one really knows. Christopher S. Crockett, manager of watershed protection at the Philadelphia Water Depart-

ment, said the concerns must be kept in perspective. "In 1948, the Delaware smelled so bad that you could smell it at Broad Street" — 14 blocks away, said Crockett, whose agency found several parts per trillion of 13 common drugs in the Schuylkill in 2004. "To be able to look for these chemicals at these levels is a luxury," Crockett said, adding "we are ready to take action if necessary." There is no mystery how the compounds get into water. They pass through the sewage system in waste or pill form. They flow from pharmaceutical plants that make drugs and flush away the residue. Or they seep from animal farms that use antibiotics and rarely treat their waste. Fish seem to have borne the brunt of the chemicals' effects so far. The presence of dual-sex bass in the Potomac is likely connected to the widespread use of "endocrine disruptors," substances that mimic hormones and cause male fish to develop female attributes, researchers said. Those chemicals include the

synthetic hormones in birth-control and hormone-replacement therapy and substances in such common products as shampoos and sunscreens. While no one has found intersex fish in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Vicki S. Blazer, a fish pathologist for the U.S. Geological Survey, said she would not be surprised if someone did. Blazer first found the deformed fish in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. Many of the chemicals that cause intersex fish also weaken their immune systems, causing them to die or develop lesions, she said. Fish kills in the last year on Pennsylvania's Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers resembled those that led to the discovery of intersex fish in Maryland and West Virginia, Blazer said. The estrogens that worry Blazer have been found in the Philadelphia area. A survey directed by Villanova's Suri found natural or synthetic estrogens in all 21 streams tested in southern and central Chester County in the fall of 2004. Levels of a potent synthetic estrogen in birth-control treatments — ethinyl estradiol —

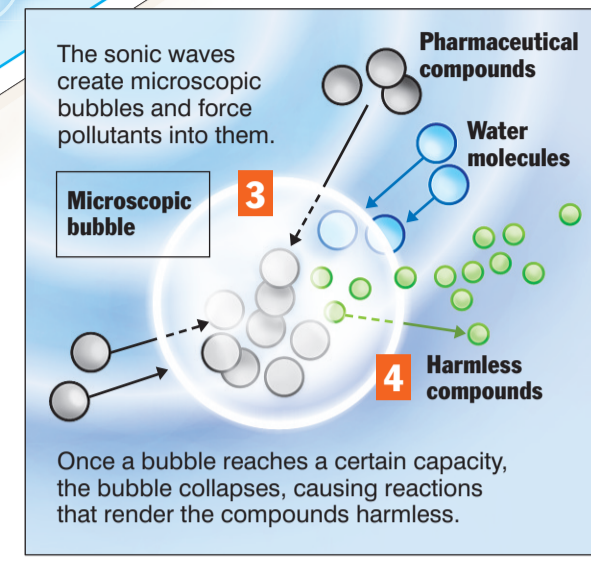


## Destroying Pharmaceutical Chemicals in Wastewater

Environmental Protection Agency officials say wastewater treatment facilities of the future may contain a series of sonicators that blast water with ultrasonic waves. Scientists at Villanova University are experimenting with the technology.

Source: Rominder Suri, Villanova Center for the Environment

were found in 10 streams at levels up to 30 times the amount that, in the lab, had been shown to affect the sexual organs of fish, he said. Suri called the contaminants an "emerging environmental issue" that should change the way sewage is treated. Hospitals and nursing homes may eventually have to install equipment to remove the drugs from waste, he said. The Schuylkill basin, which supplies water to 1.5 million people, could pose a special challenge. Water intake pipes are downstream from the river's confluence with Wissahickon Creek, which carries effluent from five sewage plants and a Merck pharmaceutical factory. City water officials found tiny amounts of 13 drugs in tests of Schuylkill water during the summer of 2004. Among those were over-the-counter painkillers, antibiotics, antidepressants, and the contrasting agents that patients drink to make X-rays work better. The department also tested drinking water and found parts



per trillion of six chemicals, including estrogen, antidepressants, and the insect repellent DEET. "It is a limited snapshot, and that is why we are doing the follow-up work," said Crockett, who thinks the water is safe. Nick DiNardo, coordinator of the Environmental Protection Agency's Innovation Action Council for the Mid-Atlantic region, said the EPA was far from setting acceptable levels of pharmaceuticals in treated waste. Such limits would be established "way after the research is done," he said. Last month, DiNardo's group gave a \$101,000 grant to Villanova's Center for the Environment, which Suri directs, to develop ultrasound technology that can remove the waste. Suri has also gotten support from a Villanova neighbor, the pharmaceutical firm Wyeth, to explore the technology. Wyeth does not make pills in Pennsylvania, a spokesman said. The ultrasound treatment works by blasting wastewater with sound waves, creating heat and chemical reactions that destroy pharmaceuticals. Suri also is looking into low-tech methods, such as collection boxes for drugs at universities and health facilities. But this method could be complicated because of federal guidelines for handling controlled substances. Collection sites require the presence of a law enforcement officer. Last year, Maine arranged its first drug collection in a pharmacy. Fifty-two people turned in 55,000 pills as police looked on. But Maine psychiatrist Stevan Gressitt, a key supporter of the state's drug-collection law, said a more thorough solution was needed. In a few months, Maine will begin allowing residents to mail unused drugs to the state. Gressitt called this "an industrial-sized solution" that could help keep drugs out of drinking water nationally. Contact staff writer Brian Rademaekers at 215-854-5568 or brademaekers@phillynews.com.

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12:12 PM	10:00 AM M
1:09 PM	11:00 AM
2:12 PM	12:00 PM
3:09 PM	1:00 PM
4:09 PM	2:00 PM
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## Upset!

Temple knocks off GW



ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff  
**Temple's Wayne Marshall** is all smiles after a dunk against George Washington in the A-10 tourney.

## Rout city

St. Joe's wins; Owls next



ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff  
**St. Joseph's Chet Stachitas** controls the ball against St. Louis in the A-10 quarterfinals.

## Wipeout

Villanova blasts Rutgers



RON CORTES / Inquirer Staff Photographer  
**Kyle Lowry** is all over Rutgers' Quincy Douby as the Wildcats beat the Scarlet Knights, 87-55.

## Shocker

Syracuse upends UConn



MARY ALTAFFER / Associated Press  
**Celebrating the overtime upset**, Syracuse's Eric Devendorf (top) hugs teammate Arinze Onuaku.

Complete coverage, Sports

## U.S. says Fumo's ex-aide hit 'delete'

Prosecutors probing a charity's spending say she killed e-mails after conferring with a lawyer.

By John Shiffman and Craig R. McCoy  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITERS

Federal prosecutors believe a former aide to State Sen. Vincent J. Fumo destroyed office e-mails in an attempt to thwart an FBI investigation into a Fumo-backed charity.

The disclosure, the first time federal authorities have revealed details of their Fumo probe, came during an unusual hearing in a federal appeals court yesterday.

The aide's name was not publicly disclosed because she is a target of the federal investigation. In court, lawyers and judges referred to her only as "Jane Doe" and "the grand jury target."

But sources confirmed that "Jane Doe" is Ruth Arnao, a longtime employee and close friend of the senator's. Arnao, 49, once Fumo's deputy chief of staff, is now executive director of the Fumo-backed charity Citizens Alliance for Better Neighborhoods — one of the nonprofit. See **FUMO** on A10

## Climate change may be making some wine tastier and more potent.



LINDA JOHNSON / Inquirer Suburban Staff  
**Eric Miller, owner of Chaddsford Winery**, with a bottle of the winery's Barbera variety. Miller has seen a spike in the alcohol content of his wines after the grapes are left on the vine longer.

## Wine-makers raise a glass to global warming

By Brian Rademaekers  
FOR THE INQUIRER

Forget France. In the future, wine buffs may be praising the merits of a fine Canadian pinot noir, the subtleties of English chardonnay, or even the complexity of a world-class Pennsylvania cabernet sauvignon.

The cause: climate change. Some scientists believe that rising temperatures and longer growing seasons are already affecting wine, making vintages sweeter and stronger, and changing where grapes can be grown around the world.

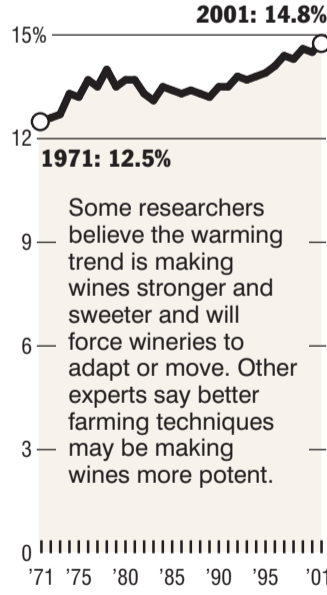
Previously unheralded German wines have gotten surprisingly better in the last two decades. The alcohol in California wine has risen — which can be both a good and bad thing — along with the temperatures. There have even been instances where English bubbly has thumped its French counterparts in blind taste tests conducted by the magazine Which?, the English equivalent of Consumer Reports.

And with global temperatures projected to rise further, See **WINE** on A12

### Napa Valley Grapes

Alcohol and sugar in Napa Valley wines have risen since the 1970s. Temperatures, meanwhile, have risen nearly two degrees in northern California since 1948.

### Average alcohol content



SOURCE: Wine Business Monthly; Climatologist Gregory Jones  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

## Dubai firm backs off on ports

Faced with fierce opposition in Congress, the UAE company said it would transfer its newly acquired U.S. port operations to "a United States entity."

By James Kuhnenn  
INQUIRER WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — With President Bush unable to contain a Republican congressional rebellion, a company owned by the United Arab Emirates vowed yesterday to turn over its just-acquired operations at six major U.S. port terminals to an American entity.

The surprise move came after congressional leaders told Bush yesterday morning that there was no way to stop lawmakers from blocking Dubai Ports World's takeover of terminal operations at the ports, which include Philadelphia's.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers reacted cautiously to the company's move, saying they needed to learn more about the details before abandoning their attempts to block DP World.

DP World obtained the terminals as part of its acquisition of Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co., a British firm. The deal, which the Bush administration approved in January and which was made final yesterday, aroused a public furor that drove Congress into open conflict with the White House.

The announcement was an ex-



TOM GRALISH / Inquirer Staff  
**Unloading in Philadelphia.** "Until somebody figures out what they mean by 'U.S. entity,'" one observer said of the latest step, "it is hard to tell" what's next.

traordinary retreat that signaled a shift in the power relationship between the White House and Congress. Bush has been unused to losing. But this time, the Republican-led House, which has been a rubber stamp for Bush the last five years, was the first to revolt.

Republicans were furious when he vowed last month to See **PORTS** on A16

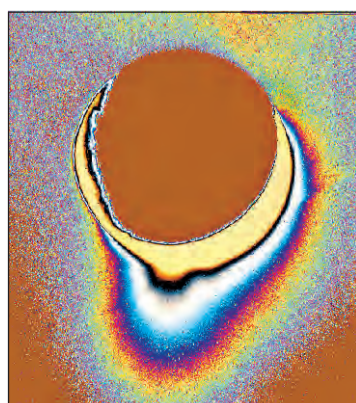
## Geysers? Eureka! On moon of Saturn, evidence of water

By Michael Cabbage  
ORLANDO SENTINEL

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA's Cassini spacecraft may have discovered water geysers on one of Saturn's moons, raising the possibility that conditions favorable for life in our solar system are much more common than once thought possible.

The presence of pockets of liquid water near the surface of tiny Enceladus, a ball of ice where temperatures drop to 330 degrees below zero, could mean the three ingredients for life as we know it — liquid water, heat energy and organic material — all are located there.

"It does not mean by a long shot that we've found life, that we've found evidence for life or anything like that," said Carolyn Porco, Cassini's imaging team leader at the Space Sci-



NASA  
**A combination of photos** shows plumes of icy material from Enceladus' south pole.

ence Institute in Boulder, Colo. "We have significantly broadened the range of the environments in the solar system that See **SATURN MOON** on A17

## INSIDE



### WEEKEND

Confer with furry friends

Pet Expo will be crawling with creatures this weekend. **W1.**

### REGION

Truce in condo war

Rivals reach deal for 2 skyscraper projects to proceed. **C1.**

### WEATHER

High 70, Low 43

A possible early shower, then some sun and very warm. Full report and exclusive NBC10 EarthWatch forecast, **B7.**



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## Out of N.J. — into history

Trenton teacher to lead Liberia's police.



**Beatrice Munah Sieh**, 48, will be the force's first female chief.

By Jennifer Moroz  
INQUIRER TRENTON BUREAU  
TRENTON — Talk about a career change.

Beatrice Munah Sieh is making the leap from schoolteacher in Trenton to central figure in the rebuilding of a war-torn African nation.

Today is Munah Sieh's last day at Grace A. Dunn Middle School, where she has taught special education for six years. In a few weeks, she will start her new job

— as Liberia's first female chief of police.

Huh? "It was shocking," said Jermaine Kamau, a vice principal at Dunn.

It's not as crazy as it sounds. Before she was a teacher, Munah Sieh, 48, was a police officer in her native Liberia. The 18-year veteran had worked her way up to deputy chief of operations for the national force. See **LIBERIA** on A14



**Eric Miller prunes some grapevines** in a trial spot at his vineyard at Chaddsford Winery. Anywhere from 10 to 60 percent of a wine's profile is attributed to climate, one expert says.

# Wines evolving with warming

**WINE** from A1  
Wine-growing regions in Pennsylvania may reap some benefits.

"We oftentimes toast to global warming," said Eric Miller, owner of Chaddsford Winery in Chester County. "The idea of milder winters and longer falls has a certain appeal."

Not everyone swallows the warming theory. Many in the wine industry believe other factors — such as improvements in agriculture and wine-making — have followed consumer demand and given birth to the current generation of potent, full-bodied "trophy" wines.

The influential wine critic Robert M. Parker turns up his nose at the idea of global warming's leading to sweeter and more alcoholic wines.

Parker said that the warming influence was "inconclusive" and that the trend toward more alcoholic wine was a result of vintners worldwide picking grapes later in the season as they aim for more robust flavors.

Researchers studying the world's wine industry are scheduled to meet this month in Barcelona, Spain, at the first global meeting on the impact of climate change.

Climatologist Gregory Jones of Southern Oregon University maintains that global warming is at least in part responsible for recent wine trends. He said that the climate influenced anywhere from 10 to 60 percent of a wine's profile, from sweetness to alcoholic content.

"With growing grapes, climate is the number-one factor," said Jones, who thinks that it would be impossible to ascribe all of the changes that have occurred to new technology and better growing techniques.

Jones, a speaker at the Barcelona summit, said that California's Napa Valley was a clear example of a wine region influenced by the warming trend.

Wine there has increased in strength since the 1970s, when the average alcohol content was 12.5 percent. By 2001, the average had reached 14.8 percent, according to a 2004 study published in the trade publication Wine Business Monthly.

Jones suspects that the increase is due to the region's higher average growing-season temperatures, which Jones found to have jumped by nearly two degrees in Northern California since 1948.

The increased strength of their wine has led many Napa Valley growers to explore methods to remove the alcohol, from watering it down to reverse osmosis.

"Fifty years ago, removing alcohol was not an issue," Jones said, "because the climate of that time ripened fruit in a more balanced way."

Longer periods of sunlight and warm weather allow grapes to stay on the vine longer and produce more sugar, leading to wines with more vivid flavors and the sometimes harsh effect of higher alcohol content, Jones said.

Jones cited numerous examples of how climate change is reshaping the world of wine.

In southern England, temperatures are approaching those of warmer climes, and the total acreage of vineyards has exploded, with some buyers coming from France's far more expensive Champagne region.

In the classic French wine-growing region of Burgundy, vintners traditionally added sugar to their wines to bring up the alcohol. But in the last 10 to 15 years, that has been the exception, he said.

Increased temperatures

could also force some regions to grow new varieties and change growing practices, Jones said.

"If you are in a cool-climate region like the Rhine, and the climate warms, you have to consider warmer varieties of grapes," he said. "But if you are in a climate that is already warm, there aren't any other varieties that can be grown."

Researchers in Australia say that quality growing regions for cabernet sauvignon will continue to creep southward over the next 50 years and that growers will have to adapt.

Some local winemakers welcome the warmth — at least at the moment.

"If the temperature goes up by a degree or two, it certainly would not hurt us," said Jerry Forest, who has operated his 40-plus-acre Buckingham Valley winery in Bucks County since 1966.

But Forest said he had yet to see any clear link between climate change and the quality of his wine.

"Global warming is such a gradual thing that I don't think we can really judge if it has had an impact on the way we grow grapes," Forest said. "It's cyclical. I can point to things that happened here in 1966 that also happened here in 1996."

Chaddsford's Miller said he had taken to leaving his grapes on the vine longer and had seen his popular pinot noir jump from an average of 12 percent alcohol in the early 1980s to last year's 13.5 percent.

"We used to struggle just to get 11 percent," Miller said.

Although he is critical of the climate-change hypothesis, Parker said extremely hot and dry summers like that of 2003 are changing winery practices. European vintners are reconsidering tradition-bound rules against irrigation, a topic likely to be discussed at the Barcelona summit.

"The old practice of not irrigating is going to have to stop if

there are more years like 2003 and these vineyards are drying up," Parker said.

Contact Brian Rademaekers at 215-854-5568 or [brademaekers@phillynews.com](mailto:brademaekers@phillynews.com).

## ONLINE EXTRA

See more on the debate on wine and warming at [http://www.nicks.com.au/Index.aspx?link\\_id=76.962](http://www.nicks.com.au/Index.aspx?link_id=76.962)

# Thalidomide may help elderly who have bone-marrow cancer

By Linda A. Johnson  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the heels of disappointing results for thalidomide as a treatment for bone-marrow cancer, a smaller study suggests the drug may prolong survival of elderly patients, but at a price.

In people over 65 — who are most likely to be diagnosed with the cancer multiple myeloma — thalidomide increased survival when added to milder chemotherapy, the newest research showed. The milder drugs have been standard because most older patients cannot tolerate the bone-marrow transplants and stronger cancer drugs considered more effective.

After three years, 80 percent of the older patients who got thalidomide along with standard treatment were still alive, vs. 64 percent who got traditional treatment alone. However, twice as many patients on thalidomide suffered dangerous side effects.

The study appeared in Saturday's edition of The Lancet, a British medical journal. A larger study that followed patients longer appeared yesterday in the New England Journal of Medicine and indicated thalidomide did not increase survival.

Thalidomide, used a half-century ago in other countries for morning sickness and insomnia, was banned worldwide in 1962 because it caused birth defects. It has been resurrected recently as a promising cancer drug.

Experts said patients in the newest study must be followed longer to see if the drug increased long-term survival, but they think thalidomide will soon be part of standard therapy for older patients.

About two-thirds of people diagnosed with multiple myeloma are older than 65. The disease includes a half-dozen types of incurable cancers of the bone marrow, the body's blood-manufacturing plant.

"Even though this is a relatively mild treatment, the results are actually pretty good," similar to those for grueling regimens that include bone-marrow stem-cell transplants, said Brian Durie, chairman of the International Myeloma Foundation. "This is probably the way to go."

Durie expects the foundation this spring will change the recommended treatment for older patients to thalidomide plus the two standard drugs, partly because of positive findings from other research.

The thalidomide was provided by Pharmion Corp. It licensed rights to sell it in several countries from Celgene Corp. of Summit, N.J., which sells it in the United States as Thalomid.

Shaji Kumar of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., wrote in an editorial that thalidomide should now be the standard treatment along with the other cancer drugs for older patients but that doctors needed to limit thalidomide's side effects.

## SPRING SPECIAL

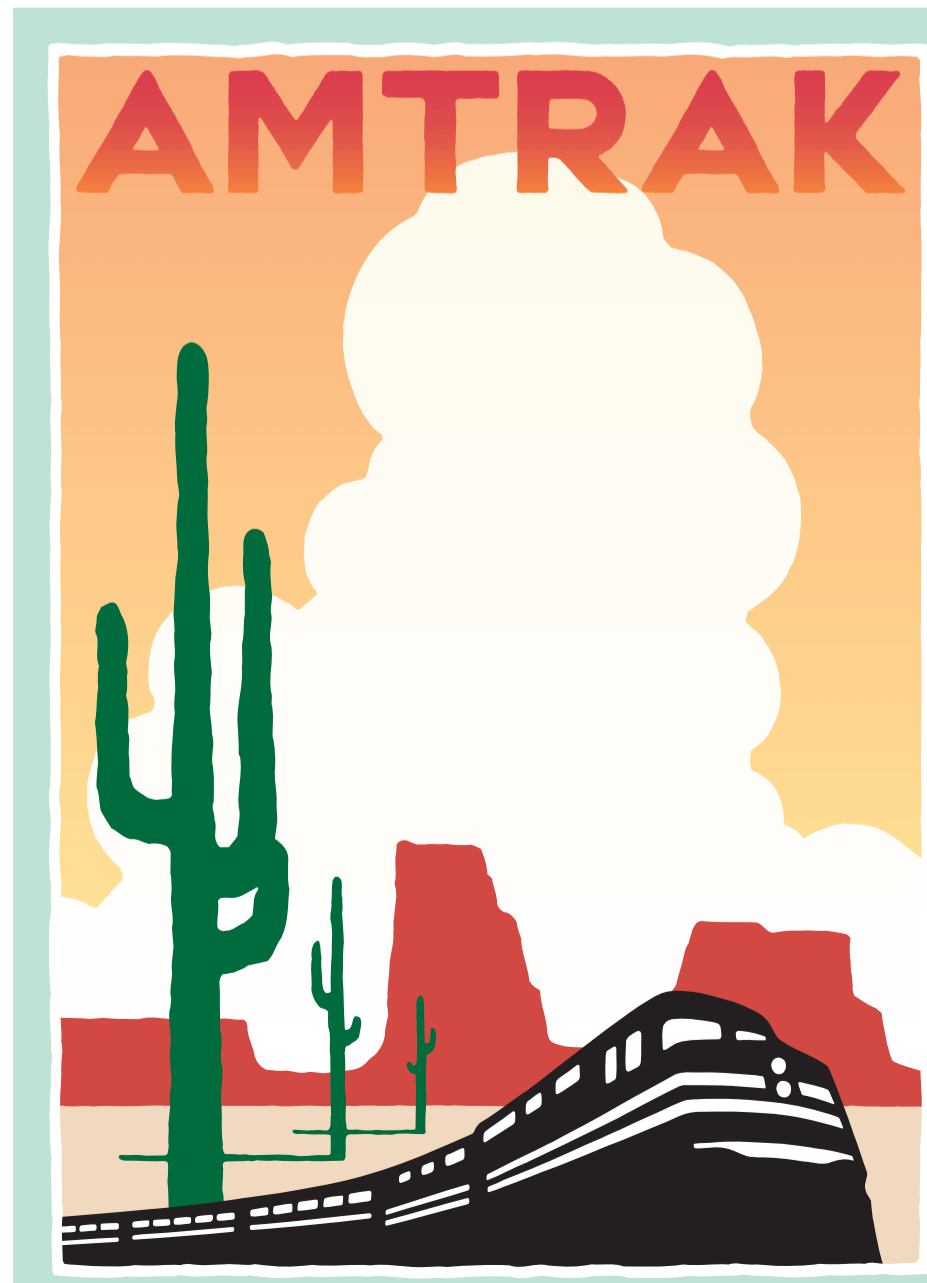
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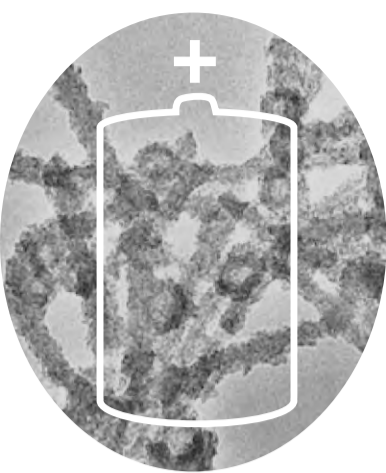


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 STERLING CHEN  
Inquirer Staff Artist

## A better battery?

*A virus, they say, can give you a charge*

**T**alk about using your dark powers for good. Some researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have created a lithium-ion battery that's powered by a virus.

The battery is thin and transparent — kind of like Saran Wrap or tape, says Angela Belcher, an engineering professor and one of the creators of the "biology battery."

Don't worry, though — the virus infects only a kind of bacteria not found in humans or animals, so if you break it, you won't get sick, Belcher says.

Here's how it works: Batteries consist of two opposite electrodes — anode and cathode — connected by an electrolyte, a chemical that goes between the two.

The virus is engineered to create a negative charge, and then is placed between two positively charged molecules. The energy created between the two different charges makes the battery go.

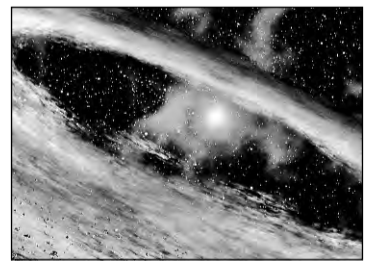
"The virus is engineered to grow inorganic materials that act as electrodes to store energy," Belcher said. "Kind of like how your cell-phone battery is rechargeable."

Although the researchers have only a prototype now, they are developing devices that could use their batteries.

The size is tiny, but researchers think the batteries could store about twice as much power as a typical lithium battery, which can last more than a year.

"It could be something like Scotch Tape, where you just roll it out and stick it on the back of your device and go," Belcher said.

— Dawn Fallik



## Inside

### HEALTH & SCIENCE

**From dust:** Scientists glimpse the formation of a solar system. **E2.**

**Ask Dr. H.:** Concerns about getting too much Vitamin D. **E3.**



### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

**Eccentric genius:** "The Devil and Daniel Johnston" (above), a documentary at the Philadelphia Film Festival. **E10.**

No, he wasn't a doctor. But for his times, he was on the cutting edge of health practices, as a new exhibition shows.

# Ben Franklin,

BARBARA L. JOHNSTON / Inquirer Staff Photographer



# medicine man



BARBARA L. JOHNSTON / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Among the medically related articles on display in the Franklin exhibition are, from left above: A cylinder electrostatic generator; bifocals, which he invented; and restraints used for the mentally ill, with a bottle cupping set used to extract disease. Left below, a wax model of a toe with gout.

By Brian Rademaekers  
FOR THE INQUIRER

**F**ranklin: *Eh! Oh! Eh! What have I done to merit these cruel sufferings?*

**Gout:** *Many things: you have ate and drank too freely, and too much indulged those legs of yours in their indolence.*

**Franklin:** *Who is it that accuses me?*

**Gout:** *It is I, even I, the Gout.*

So begins Benjamin Franklin's dialogue with his "enemy" in a famous essay from 1780.

The words now are plastered beside a grotesque wax model of a gouty foot in "The Medical World of Benjamin Franklin," a new exhibition at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Franklin's musings — from the earthy to the enlightened — could represent a colonial version of Larry David's TV show, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

But Franklin was no mere comic. A leading

Exhibit

### The Medical World of Benjamin Franklin

Now through June 2007, daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 19 S. 22d St. \$12 adults, \$8 children, seniors, students with ID. Call 215-563-3737, Ext. 305.

scientist of his time, Franklin was also an authority on health matters. He was an early proponent of smallpox inoculation and publicized the fact that lead poisoning came from exposure to the metal. He also put Philadelphia on the map as the leading medical city of the New World.

Health tips make up much of the famous Poor Richard's Almanack, the periodical Franklin issued from 1732 to 1757. And while no one today

See **FRANKLIN** on E3

## In the age of science, why be shamed by sex?



Faye Flam  
Carnal Knowledge

**I** confess I don't always understand the readers who call from what must be the other side of our country's culture war. Here's a rough transcript of something an anonymous woman recently shouted into my voice mail:

"I'm so disgusted by the filth ... the filth you provide this paper! It's no wonder it's going down the drain. This is a disgrace. Shame on you! SHAME ON YOU!!"

The call followed a column I wrote on the seemingly innocuous topic of vibrators. The way I see it, the only shameful thing you can do with a vibrator is throw the used batteries into your trash, which allows cadmi-

um, mercury and other toxic metals to leach into the soil.

That is a filthy thing to do. But consensual sex? Homosexuality? Masturbation? Where's the harm?

Luckily, I had saved an e-mail from Sylvia Soble, 84, who had written to tell me of her son, a philosopher of sex at the University of Orleans.

I called Soble at his office and found he was born in Philadelphia and that he turned to philosophy of love and sex partly because he loves sex but also because philosophers have neglected sex for 2,000 years. The philosophy of the field hit a peak with Plato, Soble says, with his

division of love into *eros*, *philia* and the selfless *agape*.

Soble, 59, has written an impressive series of books, including, most recently, *Sex from Plato to Paglia: Philosophical Encyclopedia*, the Paglia being Camille Paglia, a professor at the University of the Arts.

But the book he recommended for me was called *Sexual Investigations*. It covers such meaty topics as masturbation, pornography, health, beauty and the definition of sex. Most importantly, it devotes a long chapter to the ethics of sex.

"It's a very intractable problem," says Soble.

See **PHILOSOPHY** on E2



# Spotlight on Franklin, man of medicine

**FRANKLIN** from E1 would consider Franklin's discourse on gout a medical text — gout is caused by the body's inability to remove waste called uric acid — his work reflects the common belief of the day that the painful arthritic condition arose from too much rich food and too little exercise.

The exhibition begins with a glimpse of medicine in the 1700s, a time when bloodletting was a cure for the common cold and barbers often doubled as surgeons. Franklin, however, was not content with the standard of care. Already well known for his experiments with electricity, he used his connections to close the knowledge gap that existed between Europe and the New World. The contacts that Franklin fostered between men such as famed physicians Benjamin Rush, John Morgan, and William Shippen Jr. led to the creation of the colonies' first medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in 1765.

Franklin also is credited with being the first to pitch the idea of fund-raising in which donations are matched by a sponsoring group. The scheme helped establish Pennsylvania Hospital in 1751, the country's first hospital, now owned by the University of Pennsylvania Health System.

The most pressing medical problem that Franklin tackled



Alex Mitchell of Jacksonville, Fla., reads about Benjamin Franklin's medical accomplishments at the College of Physicians exhibition.

BARBARA L. JOHNSTON / Inquirer Staff Photographer

was the scourge of smallpox, a disease that often struck Philadelphians. One outbreak killed his 4-year-old son, Francis, making personal his desire to eradicate the disease.

Despite much popular criticism, Franklin was well-known for championing the practice of

inoculation. He even went so far as to teach laymen how to perform the procedure, which involved scratching open the skin and rubbing in infected blood.

Much of the debate at the time centered on whether inoculation was "evil" or was a God-

given gift for men. According to curator Lisa Gensel, Franklin stood out because he approached the debate in a scientific way — comparing groups who had received the treatment to those who had not — and then publishing the results.

Later, Franklin's vocal sup-

port for inoculation was credited for achieving greater acceptance of the practice.

Franklin also took a progressive stand on lead poisoning, whose cause was not well established. Convinced that the ailment, known then as "dry-belly-ache," was caused by handling

the metal and the use of lead in rum-making, Franklin wrote on the subject and helped physicians as far away as England to identify the source of the illness.

Franklin did more than just write about health.

Some of the most interesting presentations in the exhibition focus on his medical experiments, including the use of electro-shock therapy. Franklin used hand-cranked generators to deliver voltage to people's paralyzed limbs in an unsuccessful attempt to restore motion.

Another display presents a model of the groundbreaking flexible wire catheter that Franklin designed for his brother to remove urine from his troubled bladder.

The exhibition also showcases Philadelphia as America's first "medical city," said Laurie Grant, the college's marketing director.

"The exhibit is really a call for the national recognition of Philadelphia's role in the history of medicine," said Grant.

And if gouty feet, smallpox-riddled arms, and 18th-century anatomical drawings aren't inspiring, the medical oddities of the Mutter Museum lie just beyond.

Contact Brian Rademaekers at 215-854-5568 or brademaekers@phillynews.com.

Ask Dr. H. By Mitchell Hecht

## How much Vitamin D is safe with osteoporosis treatments?

KNIGHT RIDDER NEWS SERVICE

**Question:** I am a lady who has been taking Fosamax (osteoporosis treatment) for several years with good results, as evidenced by bone density studies. Now that Fosamax weekly is formulated with 2,800 units of Vitamin D, should I be taking plain calcium to avoid an overdose of Vitamin D?

**Answer:** The Food and Nutrition Board has set the tolerable upper limit for Vitamin D at 2,000 units a day for anyone over the age of 1. So you should be fine taking Fosamax 70mg plus 2,800 units of Vitamin D once a week along with a calcium/Vita-

min D supplement. Adult calcium intake daily should be 1,200mg (1,500mg for men over 65 and postmenopausal women).

Current guidelines for supplementation for Vitamin D are: 400 units a day or more between the ages of 50 and 69; 600 units a day or more over 70. But a recent analysis of all Vitamin D trials to date (May 11, 2005, Journal of the American Medical Association) concluded that oral Vitamin D supplementation between 700-800 units a day appears to reduce the risk of fractures by 25 percent in folks 60 years of age and older.

By the way, 8 ounces of milk contains about 300mg of calcium and 100 units of Vitamin D.

Vitamin D not only aids in the absorption of calcium from our digestive tract to keep our bones strong, but it may also help to reduce the risk of breast cancer, colon cancer and ovarian cancer.

One last point: choose a calcium citrate product (e.g., Citracal) if you're regularly taking antacids or an acid blocker like Nexium or Zantac. Calcium carbonate supplements like Caltrate or Oscal require an acidic environment to be most effective.

### Babies' "cafe au lait" marks often benign

**Q:** Is there any significance to babies/children having a cafe au lait mark on their bodies? Both of my grandsons have a small mark on their torsos.

**A:** Cafe au lait (French, for "coffee with milk") spots are irregularly shaped benign pigmented skin lesions that have a color slightly darker than the natural pigment. They're hereditary, but technically not called birthmarks, since they don't usually appear until a child is a few months old.

In light-skinned people, their

color is tan as its name suggests; in dark-skinned people, the mark is slightly darker than the rest of their skin. These skin pigmentations are pretty common, seen in up to 20 percent of people.

In the vast majority of cases, they're completely benign. But if six or more cafe au lait spots are present — especially if they're larger than a quarter — there may be an association between those spots and an inherited internal disease of the nerves called neurofibromatosis. In the case of your grandsons, a single lesion is no cause for concern.

Some who have cafe au lait spots try to bleach them. Since the extra pigment often resides in the deep skin of the dermis as opposed to the outer epidermal skin layer, bleaches and dermabrasion won't work. Should someone (in adulthood only) wish to have mark(s) removed, laser removal is the only good treatment option.

Mitchell Hecht is a physician specializing in internal medicine. Send questions to him at: "Ask Dr. H.," Box 767787, Atlanta, Ga. 30076. Due to the large volume of mail received, personal replies are not possible.



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