

Tofu-eaters get hepatitis treatments

By PAUL WALDSCHMIDT
Of the Emerald

So far more than 200 persons have received treatment for possible exposure to hepatitis-infected soybean cakes served by eight restaurants frequented by University students and staff.

Laboratory tests confirmed Tuesday two employees of the Surata Soy Foods Co. of Eugene are infected with the disease and may have contaminated some 3,100 pounds of the bean cakes, called "tofu."

The suspected food was produced and distributed from Dec. 9 to Dec. 31. The company stopped production after Dec. 31 and the carriers were isolated.

Dr. David White, of the Lane County Health Division, urges anyone who may have eaten bean cakes at the Bamboo Pavilion, Homefried Truckstop, China Blue Restaurant, Gertrude's Restaurant, the Golden Temple, Honey's Cafe, Zoo Zoo's Restaurant, or a food booth at the Saturday Market during the December dates to contact their doctor, the Student Health Center or the Lane County Health Department.

Persons suspecting they have eaten the cakes will be given gamma globulin shots to reduce the severity of the disease if hepatitis occurs.

Dr. White said the timing of the hepatitis outbreak may have been fortunate. He pointed out that a

large number of students who might have otherwise eaten at the restaurants were out of town during the Christmas break.

"It's really almost a case of we have some good news and we have some bad news," he said.

Dr. Avar Long, Student Health Center director, agreed that the timing may have reduced the number of hepatitis cases. He said the center has gamma globulin shots available and urged people who suspect they have been exposed to come to the center.

Dr. White emphasized that the restaurants themselves are not infected and the hepatitis risk was checked when the contaminated cakes were removed.

He said the 200 cases of suspected hepatitis exposure reflect

only those people who have received treatment at the county health department. He said others may have received treatment from private doctors or the campus health center.

Meanwhile efforts to control the spread of the disease are being coordinated by the Oregon State Health Division in Portland.

Dr. Larry Foster, state epidemiologist, said, "If you think you have been exposed, you should get a gamma globulin shot this week. The treatment is more effective if it is given as soon as possible."

Foster said so far the only place out of state known to receive a shipment of the contaminated food is Redding, California. He

said local health officials in Redding have been notified.

Foster said one group of people meeting in Eugene "shared a meal in common that included the tofu." He said the group, Western Young Friends Gathering, a Quaker group from Washington, Oregon, California and Canada, had a tofu dinner Dec. 30.

He said group members are being traced and notified of the possible hepatitis exposure.

Foster said hepatitis is spread by eating food that has been exposed to the virus. The virus grows in a person's digestive tract and infected foodhandlers may transfer the virus to food products they touch.

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Arizona Project implicates R-G in \$60-million suit

By CHRIS NORMAN
Of the Emerald

A \$60-million libel suit was filed Wednesday by an Arizona and Alaskan pilot and landowner who claimed he was falsely identified in an article by the Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. (IRE) as being "the mystery man of the Arizona drug corridor."

Alfred Gay filed the suit in Maricopa County Superior Court against IRE and 23 news organizations — including the Eugene Register-Guard — which published or broadcast the investigative team's story about him in April.

The Register-Guard was the only news organization in Oregon and one of 27 in the nation to participate in Project Arizona, an in-

vestigation of land fraud and organized crime spawned by the assassination of investigative reporter Don Bolles.

Barrie Hartman, the Register-Guard's managing editor, said he doesn't regret the decision to join the IRE and will stand by the stories it printed.

"We got into this thing and we knew the possibility of lawsuits," he said. "We asked ourselves about the (Register-Guard's) commitment, knowing that it might lead to libel suits...and said 'yes.'"

Soon after the Register-Guard printed the IRE articles, it began receiving several demand retractions, including one representing Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater.

Not one retraction was printed, he added.

The Gay suit is the second filed against the Register-Guard in connection with the IRE series.

Peter Licavoli Jr. of Arizona is suing the Register-Guard for \$8 million because he alleges defamation by parts of four articles he contends painted him as "unscrupulous and dishonest."

The IRE story claimed Gay frequently crossed the Arizona-Mexico border without being searched. The IRE story also alleges Gay told reporters that a U.S. customs agent "think I'm a crook, so let them believe it. I don't care."

Gay denied he ever made the statement and claimed he has lost business as a result of the article.

John Flynn of Phoenix, Gay's attorney, claimed in the suit the IRE was a "vigilante task force or defamatory squad."

He said the reporters who participated in the IRE Arizona Project wanted to avenge "the death of fellow reporter Don Bolles."

Bolles was killed when a bomb exploded under his car in a midtown Phoenix hotel parking lot.

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