

News digest

S.C. Legislature to move flag from Statehouse dome

1 COLUMBIA, S.C. — Ending months of fierce debate, the South Carolina Legislature approved a compromise plan Thursday to take the Confederate flag down from the Statehouse dome and move it to a monument on the grounds.

The bill goes to Democratic Gov. Jim Hodges, who indicated he will sign it. If he approves, the flag will come down July 1.

"I hope this represents the last battle of the Civil War," said Democratic state Sen. Dick Elliott.

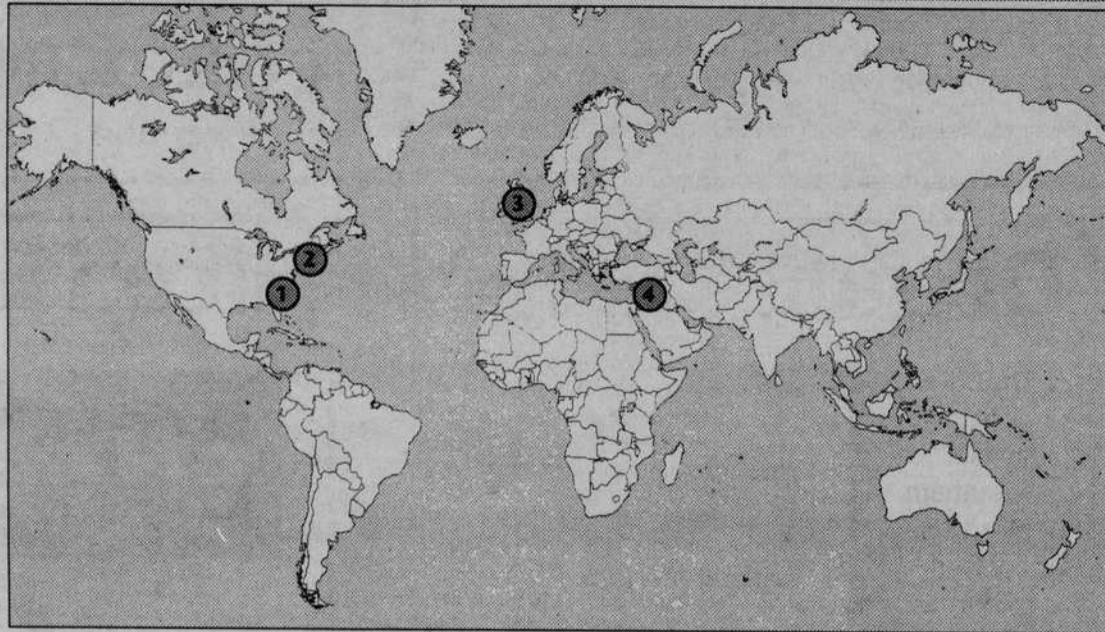
South Carolina is the only state that still flies the flag, with its blue cross with white stars on a red background, above its Statehouse.

It was hoisted in 1962 to commemorate the Civil War centennial, though critics say it was a gesture of defiance toward the civil rights movement. In 1995, the Legislature gave itself sole power to take the flag down.

The agreement that passed Thursday came after months of debate, marches and demonstrations that attracted thousands of flag supporters and opponents to the Statehouse. Supporters say it is an important part of the state's heritage; opponents say it represents slavery and racism.

N.H. Legislature votes to repeal death penalty

2 CONCORD, N.H. — New Hampshire lawmakers ignored a veto threat from the governor and voted to repeal the death penalty Thursday, reflecting



growing doubts about capital punishment around the country.

The move is largely symbolic — no one is on death row in New Hampshire, the state had the lowest murder rate in the nation in 1998 and Democratic Gov. Jeanne Shaheen has said she won't let the repeal stand.

"There are some murders so heinous that the death penalty is an appropriate punishment, and, accordingly, I will veto this legislation," she said after the Senate voted 14-10, endorsing a House vote taken in March.

At the same time, the vote adds to the momentum death penalty opponents have built around the country.

"The vote today is indicative of

what many persons are beginning to realize about the death penalty — that it is unnecessary. There are other ways to ensure safety," said Steven Hawkins, director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty in Washington.

Breast cancer deaths slashed by one quarter

3 LONDON — Better treatment over the last decade has slashed breast cancer death rates by about a quarter in the United States and Britain and will save the lives of 14,000 women this year in the two countries, new research shows.

Most of the credit goes to the drug tamoxifen, taken by about 1 million women worldwide, said

Sir Richard Peto, a professor of epidemiology at Oxford University who headed the study, published this week in *The Lancet* medical journal.

"This is the first time that improvements in the treatment of any type of cancer have ever produced such a rapid fall in national death rates," Peto said. "They really are remarkable trends."

While "a lot of things contribute, I think the key one is tamoxifen," he said, adding that it's much too sudden a drop to be due to changes in the causes of the disease.

Britain and the United States were studied mostly because they had the most current, detailed statistical information and because

they were among the first to use tamoxifen, Peto said.

Israeli forces pound southern Lebanon after attacks

4 BEIRUT, Lebanon — Israeli air and ground forces attacked guerrilla bases in southern Lebanon on Thursday, leaving one militant dead and five people wounded, Lebanese security officials said.

In Jerusalem, a top aide to Prime Minister Ehud Barak acknowledged Thursday that Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, promised by July 7, is being driven by public pressure to end Israeli casualties there.

Hezbollah has stepped up attacks in recent weeks as Israel begins to dismantle its positions in preparation for a complete withdrawal. The attacks have prompted harsh Israeli retaliation.

Israel announced three Israeli soldiers were injured and a soldier of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army was slightly hurt in strikes overnight and early Thursday by Shiite Muslim guerrillas in south Lebanon.

The Shiite Hezbollah group said one of its guerrillas was killed in the fighting near the port of Tyre.

A shell fired by the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army exploded in the village of Mansouri, wounding a 34-year-old woman, her daughter, 8, and son, 6, Lebanese officials said on condition of anonymity.

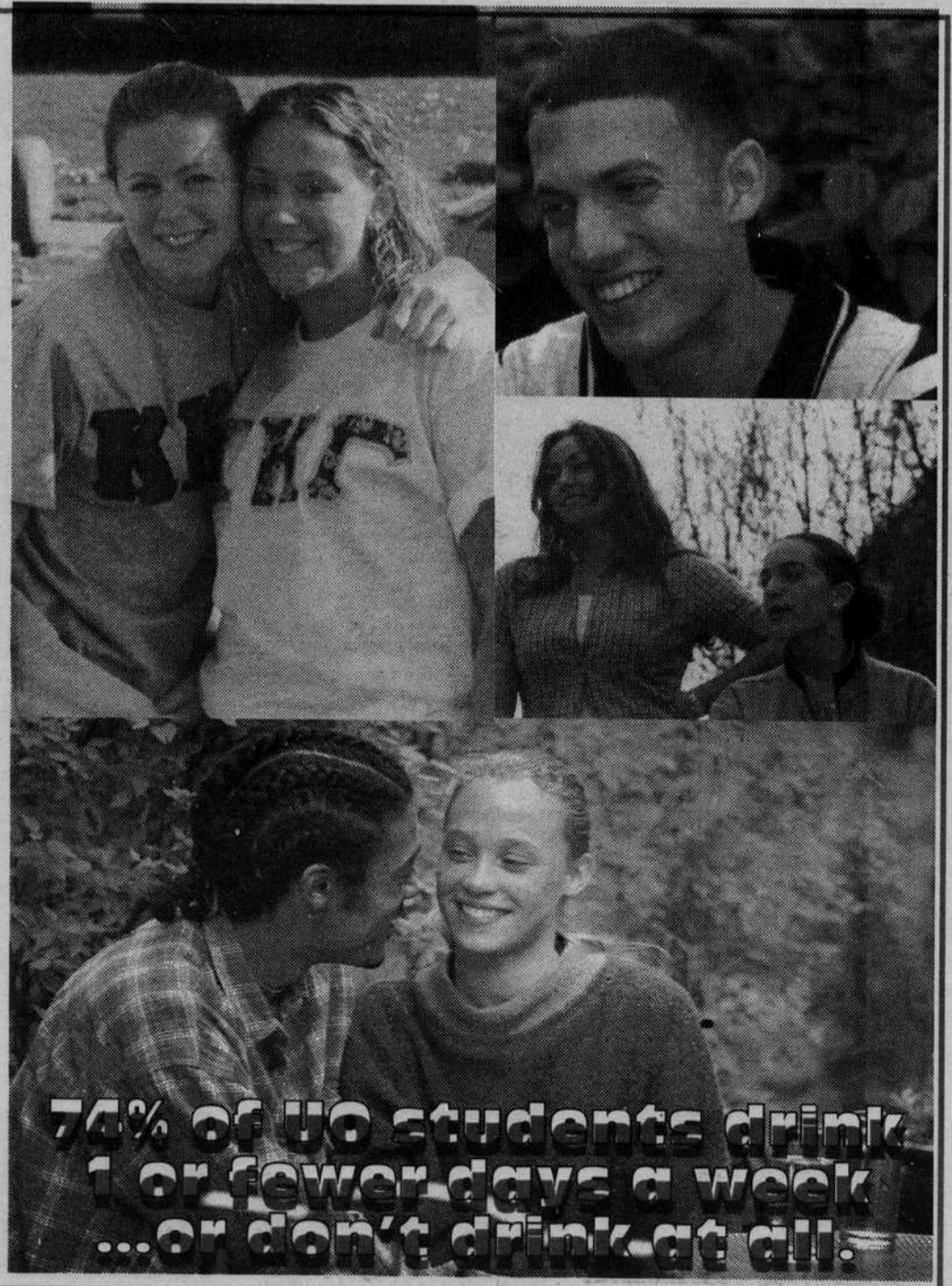
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MOST
UO students
[80%] have
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drinks or fewer
when they party

2000
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74% of UO students drink 1 or fewer days a week ...or don't drink at all!

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