

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

Legalizing pot

Uruguay has moved closer to becoming the first country to legalize and regulate marijuana at a national level, after the country's House of Representatives approved a controversial bill on 31 July. Backed by President José Mujica and his Broad Front coalition, the measure passed by 50 votes to 46. The bill is also expected to pass the Senate. The United Nations' International Narcotics Control Board criticized the move, saying that such a law, if enacted, would violate international drug-control treaties to which Uruguay is a party.

Redefine cancer

The word 'cancer' should be used to define only tumours or lesions that are likely to become lethal if left untreated, recommends a working group of the US National Cancer Institute. In an editorial published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on 29 July, the authors argue that the use of the term to describe non-life-threatening conditions can lead to needless treatment (L. J. Esserman *et al.* *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* <http://doi.org/nb9>; 2013). The group suggests that physicians should reduce screening frequency and focus on high-risk patients. It also calls for the development of better methods to tell aggressive conditions from non-threatening ones.

UC open access

The University of California (UC) faculty has adopted an open-access policy for research articles authored by its members. The policy was adopted on 24 July and publicly announced on 2 August, and it will be phased in over the



UNIV. LEICESTER

Double coffin found at Grey Friars

Archaeologists at the University of Leicester, UK, last week announced a second major find at the site of Grey Friars Church — a limestone coffin that, when opened, revealed an inner coffin of lead (pictured). A pair of feet visible through a hole in the otherwise mostly intact lead casket probably belongs to one of three prestigious figures known to be buried at the

site, the researchers say. The team unearthed the 2-metre-long stone coffin last September, but was not able to open it until last month. The lead coffin will be opened after researchers can determine the approach least likely to damage its contents. In September 2012, the team discovered the remains of English king Richard III at the site.

next year. The ten-campus UC system is the latest of more than 175 universities to make research freely available. But, as with other institutions, researchers can choose to opt out of the policy — a provision that critics say renders it toothless. See go.nature.com/xydons for more.

Animal restrictions

The Italian parliament on 31 July agreed on extreme restrictions for animal research. The restrictions, which include banning the use of animals in addiction studies, were added as amendments during the implementation of a 2010 European Union (EU) directive that is already

considered to impose some of the strictest regulations on animal research in the world. Critics note that individual EU member states cannot legally add further amendments to the directive, and the law has yet to be finalized by the Italian government. See go.nature.com/nmtb4x for more.

EVENTS

MIT Swartz report

A report commissioned by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge highlights the university's failure to take leadership in the case of Aaron Swartz, a programmer and Internet activist who committed suicide in January

(see go.nature.com/5wmeld). Swartz, 26, was awaiting trial for illegally downloading millions of articles from the JSTOR archive through the university's network. The review, released on 30 July and led by MIT computer scientist Hal Abelson, noted that the university took a 'hands-off' approach to the case and did not wield its expertise and reputation to shape information-policy reform.

Fraud case settled

Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, will pay the US government US\$2.93 million to settle claims that cancer researcher Charles Bennett misused federal research grants from

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the National Institutes of Health to pay for family travel and to employ unqualified relatives as consultants between 2003 and 2010. Northwestern did not admit liability in the settlement, announced on 30 July. Bennett, who now directs the Center for Medication Safety and Efficacy at the South Carolina College of Pharmacy in Columbia, has denied the allegations through his lawyer.

Beefed-up burger

Researchers have served up the first order of lab-grown beef burgers, pan-fried for a 5 August press event in London. Mark Post, a tissue engineer at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, and his colleagues created the synthetic patties from cow muscle cells, which form strands when grown in the lab. About 20,000 strands make up a fatless patty, which costs more than €250,000 (US\$332,000) to make. The event's two tasters, a writer and a researcher, said that the burgers were beefy but not juicy.

PEOPLE

Science writer dies

Science writer David Dickson has died, it was reported on 2 August. Born in 1947, Dickson worked as *Nature's* news correspondent in



Washington DC from 1978 to 1982. He also worked for *Science* and *New Scientist*, and later returned to *Nature* as news editor (pictured in the *Nature* office in the mid-1990s). In 2001, Dickson founded SciDev.Net, a science news service for the developing world, and served as the organization's director and editor. He retired in 2012. The Association of British Science Writers honoured Dickson last year with a lifetime achievement award. Philip Campbell, *Nature's* editor-in-chief, paid tribute to David's "powerful combination of deep knowledge, uncompromising standards and relentless advocacy".

NSF nominee

On 31 July, astrophysicist France Córdova was announced as US President Barack Obama's choice to lead the National Science Foundation (NSF). If

confirmed by the Senate, she would replace Subra Suresh, who left the US\$7-billion agency in March. Córdova, a former chief scientist for NASA, was president of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, from 2007 to 2012. See go.nature.com/ufpoqx for more.

NOAA head

Oceanographer and former astronaut Kathryn Sullivan was nominated on 1 August to lead the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Sullivan, who in 1984 became the first US woman to walk in space, has been the acting administrator at the US\$5-billion agency since February. She now awaits Senate confirmation. See go.nature.com/e371zk for more.

BUSINESS

Antibiotics deal

Cubist Pharmaceuticals announced on 30 July that it would spend US\$1.6 billion to expand its antibiotics pipeline by buying two companies, Trius Therapeutics, based in San Diego, California, and Optimer Pharmaceuticals of Jersey City, New Jersey. The deal will give Cubist, headquartered in Lexington, Massachusetts, a number of

COMING UP

11–16 AUGUST

The Gordon Research Conference on Biology of Aging takes place in Lucca, Italy, highlighting developments in knowledge about the loss of molecular, cellular and organismal stability during ageing. go.nature.com/nsv8c4

14–16 AUGUST

Computer scientists and information experts discuss advances in computer, mobile and network security at the 22nd USENIX Security Symposium in Washington DC. go.nature.com/lqaya8

early-stage antibiotic drug candidates, as well as Dificid (fidaxomicin), Optimer's marketed treatment for *Clostridium difficile*-associated diarrhoea, and tedizolid, Trius's antibiotic against drug-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, which is in late-stage clinical trials.

FUNDING

Grants cancelled

The US National Science Foundation (NSF) has scrapped political-science funding opportunities for the remainder of 2013. The agency, which normally spends about US\$10 million annually on such research, has not stated its reasons for the decision. But political scientists speculate that it is related to a congressional restriction, signed into law by US President Barack Obama on 26 March, that requires NSF-funded political-science research to benefit either national security or economic interests. See go.nature.com/jmlgd for more.

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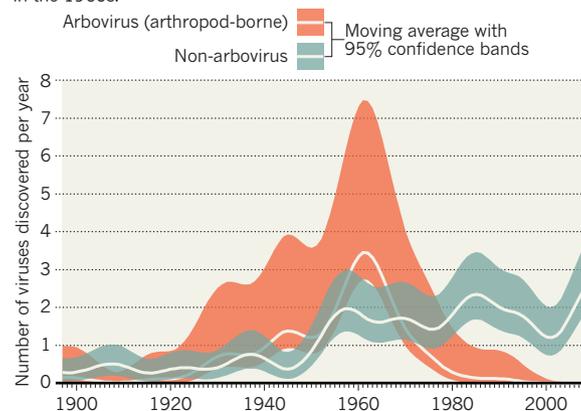
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TREND WATCH

An analysis has revealed the importance of a large programme to find arthropod-borne viruses (arboviruses), sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York. Other pathogenic viruses have been discovered at a constant rate of about 2 per year for 60 years; but the 1951–66 Rockefeller programme coincided with a surge in arbovirus discovery, say researchers (R. Rosenberg *et al. Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1307243110>; 2013).

THE PACE OF HUMAN VIRUS DISCOVERY

The discovery of arthropod-borne viruses has declined since a peak in the 1960s.



SOURCE: M. JOHANSSON