

MEDICINE

Shutdown snags hope for cure



Cody Duty / Houston Chronicle

Justin Davis, 12, can no longer climb trees after the onset of Giant Axonal Neuropathy, a rare, nerve-debilitating genetic disease.

Houston family frets as clinical trial for rare genetic disease stalled

By Cindy Horswell

Lagena Clark loved stroking her fingers through the white-blond curls that adorn two of her three children.

Those beloved curls, combined with an unexplained muscle weakness, led doctors two months ago to diagnose her son, Justin, 12, with a rare genetic disorder, Giant Axonal Neuropathy. Only 70 people worldwide are known to be afflicted with this degenerative nerve disease, which is currently incurable and fatal at a young age. Few reach the age of 20.

Justin's 8-year-old sister, Lexi, has those same bountiful curls but otherwise showed none of the other early signs of the illness, such as an awkward gait and muscle weakness. But such curls can be a telltale symptom of the disorder,

"People said the shutdown wasn't affecting things much, but we're talking about kids' lives here."

Lagena Clark, mother of two children diagnosed with rare, incurable disease Giant Axonal Neuropathy

especially if a child's parents, who carry the recessive GAN gene, have straight hair like Lagena and David Clark.

So to be safe, the Bellaire family had Lexi tested, and on Tuesday they learned the devastating news. Their young daughter has the defective gene, too.

Their only other child, Jared, Justin's fraternal twin, has straight hair and was given a clean bill of health.

However, having two children handed death sentences at such tender years has doubled the Clark family's urgency in pushing for human trials of a potential cure, touted by medical experts as the first use in the world of a therapeutic gene injected into the fluid of a spinal cord.

The trial had been on track to take place in

Therapy continues on B5

Green, foe stay focused on job at hand

Controller's only rival keeps race on qualifications

By Jayme Fraser

On paper, City Controller Ron Green would appear to have been ripe for a bevy of challengers in November.

The city's elected financial watchdog owes tens of thousands of dollars to the IRS, was criticized for lavish spending while on trips for city business and has publicized ties to a known felon.

Yet, those issues have hardly been discussed by his sole opponent, Bill Frazer, during Green's campaign for a third and final term.

Instead, the two men have debated qualifications. Frazer, a first-time candidate for any office, argues that despite four years in office, Green does not have the financial background to do the job.

"I don't think it's going to do me any good to drag that up now," Frazer said of Green's previously publicized troubles. "I think it will take focus off the race. I'm more focused in on

Controller continues on B3

View the big picture

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CINDY GEORGE

Houston Advocate column does not appear today.

CITY SERVICES

Expanded recycling coming, just in time for Turkey Day

By Allan Turner

Houston will roll out its biweekly, automated curbside recycling service to 70,000 additional residences throughout the city just in time for Thanksgiving, the Department of Solid Waste Management announced

Friday.

The expansion will bring service to a total 210,000 households — more than half of the residences in the department's service area, spokeswoman Sandra Jackson said. The automated curbside service will be extended to 66,000 more residences in

the spring.

"Residents have let us know loud and clear through their participation and support that this is a program they want," Mayor Annise Parker said in a statement. "This is a significant step in a larger plan to expand recycling citywide."

The program began in 2009 with 10,000 households.

Letters concerning the program will be mailed to new participating residences. Wheeled 96-gallon containers will be delivered beginning the week of Oct. 28. Collection will begin the week of Nov. 25.

Jackson said a list and map of the approximately 145 neighborhoods included in the expansion should be posted at www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste by early next week.

Among areas to gain the new service are Brays Forest and

Recycling continues on B3

COLLEGE STATION

Bad hip no match for tenacity

By Mary Dahdoun

Despite being told by a physician that she would be bedridden, 91-year-old Macille Moore proved Friday she was as tenacious as her husband, known as the "Bull of the Brazos," as she walked to the front of a crowd to accept an honor on behalf of the late state Sen. W.T. "Bill" Moore at a Texas A&M celebration.

Despite a 14-year-old hip implant that was collapsing and pushing through her pelvic wall, Dr. Stephen Incavo was able to perform a complex operation that allowed the Bryan woman to beat the odds against ever walking again. The Houston surgeon's expertise enabled her to meet her goal of standing up for her husband, for whom the Texas A&M University System's

headquarters building has been renamed.

The surgery removed her old implant and reconstructed the pelvic bone to support the new hip replacement, Incavo said. "It's not a very commonly performed surgery, and given her age, it's a very big operation," said Incavo, the division chief of adult reconstructive

Moore's continues on B4



Chancellor John Sharp hugs Macille Moore before Friday's ceremony honoring her late husband, state Sen. W.T. "Bill" Moore, at the main Texas A&M University campus in College Station.

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CITY & STATE

WEATHER

Fall and ball, a classic combo



Cody Duty / Houston Chronicle

Rudy Mesa delivers the ball to the plate Friday at Houston's Stude Park. The 11-year-old's father, David, said his son wanted to do some work on his pitch before a game later in the evening. "We're at the fall temperatures," David said of the day's weather conditions. "It's not too hot, not too cold — almost perfect." **Weather on page B8**

Moore's widow gives her doctor credit

Moore's from page B1

surgery in the department of orthopedic surgery at Houston Methodist Hospital. "At first she was a little nervous, but when she decided she wanted to do it, she was moving full-steam ahead."

Macille Moore said her appearance at Friday's event was made possible only with Incavo's help.

"Without the surgery, I would have been in a wheelchair if I had even gotten there," she declared. "I was able to walk with my walker. That made (it) perfect."

Bill Moore, who graduated from A&M when it was a college, taught there in the early 1940s before joining the U.S. Army during World War II. He went on to author and sponsor more than 50 pieces of legislation for the Texas A&M System during his more than 30 years as a state senator.

"There is no other public servant that has had as much an impact on the success of the A&M System as Bill Moore," said John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System in a news release. "He is

largely responsible for the A&M System's status as a world-class system of higher education. We will continue to build upon his legacy."

Known as the "father of the modern Texas A&M University," the Democratic lawmaker served from the mid-1940s to 1981, and is most celebrated for his efforts to open the school to women students.

His term in office included a time when John B. Connally was governor in the 1960s. The campus administration building was originally named for the former governor,

but now is known as the Moore-Connally Building.

Just as her husband, who died in 1999, tirelessly sought to improve public education in Texas, Macille Moore on Friday showed her own inner strength at the ceremony, which included unveiling a bust of her husband. Even though her physician was unable to attend, Moore credits Incavo with making the celebration "quite an affair."

"I'd say he's the greatest doctor I know," she said. "He gave me my life back."

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FREE SPEECH

Armed backers of gun rights to rally at Alamo

By Scott Huddleston

SAN ANTONIO — At least 1,500 demonstrators with rifles and other firearms are expected to gather Saturday at the Alamo, in the face of forces they feel are at work to undermine their right to bear arms.

"There's never been an event like this before at the Alamo," said Murdoch Pizgatti, an event coordinator who lives in the Dallas area and is co-founder of the gun-rights website dontcomply.com.

The rally is set to open at 10 a.m. with remarks by three political candidates and several gun-rights advocates. Demonstrators, many carrying rifles, shotguns or 19th century pistols, will then walk a few blocks at about 12:30 p.m. to Travis Park for an "open mic" session.

Some demonstrators will have loaded firearms. Safety crews will check to make sure there's not a round in the chamber that could discharge, organizers said.

The group will return to the Alamo and disperse at about 2 p.m., although the event could run later, Pizgatti said.

Violating sacred site

The rally has already generated controversy. It is believed to be the first free-speech demonstration of its kind in front of the mission-era church of the Alamo, site of a famed 1836 siege and battle for Texas independence and later a U.S. Army depot.

Fidel Castillo, a Native American activist and

Yaqui descendant, said the event, held where mission Indians were buried, is an affront to the memory of indigenous people who built the mission that later became a military post.

"This violates the sanctity of the grounds and values indigenous people hold most dear," Castillo said in a release.

Political vs. social issue

He questioned whether the rally is "self-serving" for Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, who oversees the shrine, is running for lieutenant governor and is slated to speak.

Patterson, who wrote the state's 1996 concealed handgun law, has emphasized support for gun rights in his campaign.

State Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, whose district includes the Alamo, said she is worried about the political tone of the event and precedent it sets for allowing demonstrations on the state-owned grounds.

"Very troubling if this is a political rally instead of an issues rally," said Van de Putte, who sponsored a 2011 bill that shifted Alamo custodianship from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to Patterson's agency, the General Land Office.

Patterson has dismissed the criticism as a product of "media hype" of the rally, saying it will "help normalize the sight of an armed citizen."

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