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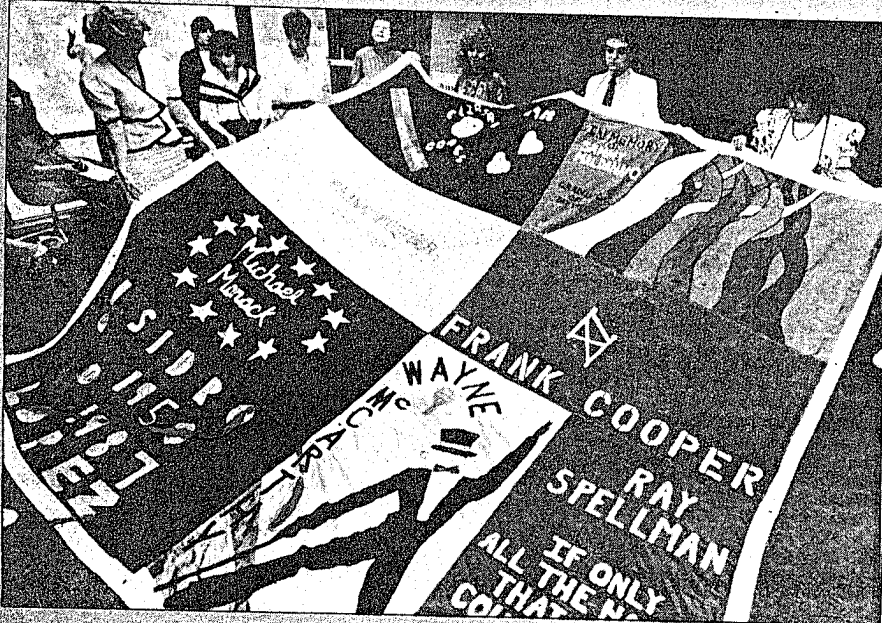
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STAR photo by Tony Pacheco

People who have died from AIDS are remembered in this commemorative patchwork of quilts to go on display at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in August. Holding the quilt at the Red Cross headquarters in Rio Piedras Tuesday are, from left, Marisa Blay, Carmen Acevedo, Camille Carrión, Dr. Ineke Cunningham, Carmita Jiménez, Frank Chaulon and Luz Peterson.

## Aspira begins AIDS campaign

By MANNY SUAREZ  
Of The STAR Staff

Aspira, the volunteer program geared toward helping the disadvantaged get the most out of their lives, announced the start of program Tuesday to alert adolescents to the hazards of AIDS.

In a news conference at El Zipperle Restaurant, Aspira previewed two television commercials that point out the threat of AIDS to teen-agers.

One is aimed at high living young people who like flashy cars, rock music and hard drugs. It shows a young person at a discotheque, behind the wheel of a flashy car, taking a bag of drugs in his hand and finally being lowered into a grave and having earth shoveled on top of him.

The other shows a teen-aged couple on a couch in the early stages of petting with an off-stage voice warning them of the evils of AIDS.

According to Hilda V. Maldonado, the executive director of Aspira, 25 percent of all people with AIDS are between the ages of 13 and 29.

**AIDS 'is a very serious problem among teen-agers and that is one of the reasons we have embarked on this campaign.'**

— Hilda V. Maldonado  
Executive director of Aspira

"It is a very serious problem among teen-agers and that is one of the reasons we have embarked on this education campaign," she said.

But Aspira is also taking a more direct approach, it is sponsoring a program whereby 20 teen-agers work among their peers in school warning them of the danger of AIDS.

It is a realistic, non-lecturing program, Maldonado explained. The Aspira teen-agers don't lecture in favor of abstinence with sexually active students.

Héctor Manuel Colón Lugo, 19, is a high school dropout who ran into problems with the law and

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## Judge orders new trial for Ponce Fed

By LAVONNE LUQUIS  
Of The STAR Staff

In an unusual decision, Ponce Federal Savings Bank got a reprieve Tuesday when a federal court judge set aside a \$2 million jury award against the bank and ordered a new trial.

U.S. District Court Judge José A. Fusté said that while he was reluctant to intervene with a jury award, he found the award so excessive "that to permit it to stand would be a denial of justice."

Sabana Grande developer Amado Vega and his company Capitana Corp. were awarded the amount on March 2 in a breach of contract suit.

"The award so far exceeds fair and reasonable compensation as to compel the conclusion that the verdict reflects a prejudiced rather than a reasoned appraisal of the evidence," Fusté's order said.

In 1978, Vega obtained a \$3.9 million loan from Ponce Federal to develop a 168-unit low-cost housing project called Colinas Villa Rosa in Sabana Grande.

The bank eventually took partial control over the project and Vega claimed to have lost \$910,000 when Ponce Federal withheld payment to one of his contractors.

While Vega blamed the bank for his losses, the bank claimed they were caused by Vega's financial mismanagement.

The trial grew from a \$5.1 million breach of contract suit Vega filed on Feb. 24, 1988.

Ponce Federal was "very satisfied with the court's courage in setting aside a verdict that was clearly unwarranted," lawyer José Axtmayer said in a telephone interview.

Vega's lawyer, however, was confident that the new trial scheduled for Oct. 29 will benefit his client.

"With four months to prepare for trial I expect to get a bigger award," Harry Anduze said. "Any jury will give us at least the same amount or more."

The six-week-long trial was punctuated by the frequent scoldings Fusté gave the lawyers representing both sides.

Vega made "imprecise" claims, and the bank had problems caused by "careless commercial and legal practices," the order said.

Fusté's order warned the lawyers to comply with his instructions regarding the translation of Spanish language documents and court rules regarding the presentation of evidence during the new trial.

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had a drug abuse problem. After getting off drugs in a Casa Crea program for adolescents, he enrolled in a program Aspira runs to enable young dropouts to pass the high school equivalency examination so they can enter college.

As an Aspira peer adviser, Colón Lugo is particularly effective because of his experience with drugs.

The peer advisers are from different schools and work primarily in their own schools, but they also accompany Aspira counselors who visit schools talking to students to alert them to the AIDS danger.

"The students are very open when they come to us, male and female. If we are talking to a sexually active student or group we don't talk abstinence because we know that will not work," said Colón Lugo. "We talk about safe sex and condoms."

Colón Lugo has been accepted into Inter American University for the fall where he expects to major in pre-medicine.

Elena Alvarez, 18, says that as a peer counselor she gets as many inquiries from the males as the females.

"The are not shy about it at all," she said.

Maldonado said the program works well because the students relate well to people their own age. "They can discuss the matter more openly."

In another development involving AIDS, "The Names Project" announced that quilts containing the names of thousands of person who have died of the disease will be exhibited at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum from Aug. 23-26.

In a news conference at the Red Cross, Dr. Ineke Cunningham, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico and entertainer Carmita Jiménez, explained how people can participate in the project, known locally as "Mosaico de Nombres, Inc."

They suggested that quilts be made in honor of the 2,731 persons who died of AIDS in Puerto Rico.

The idea for "The Names Project," they explained, was conceived in San Francisco in 1987. It involved making a commemorative 6 foot by 3 foot quilt in the name of an AIDS victim. The quilt can be embroidered or painted but must be of the same dimension and of a washable material. The quilts are then sewn together to make as large patchwork.

In 1987, all the quilts were put on exhibit on the grounds of the Capitol so as to impress on the Congress to appropriate more funds for AIDS research and treatment. "There were 10,800 quilts put on exhibit then," said Cunningham. "There are now 12,000 quilts and it would be impossible to show them all at the same time."

The exhibitions are also used to raise funds for the fight against AIDS.

Those wanting to make quilts in the name of a friend or relative or who want to make a donation should write to Mosaico de Nombres, Box 22512, UPR Station, Río Piedras, 00931.

In another news conference, Cardinal Luis Aponte Martínez criticized the government for not providing sufficient resources to deal with the AIDS crisis. He said that AIDS is growing as rapidly as the narcotics epidemic grew in the past. Like the narcotics epidemic, the government will not wake up to the problem until it is drowning.

He called on the government to establish homes for AIDS patients throughout the island.

# Spread of AIDS seen soaring

## WHO attributes forecast to rise in infected heterosexuals

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rapid spread of the AIDS virus in developing countries means the disease will be more prevalent in the next century than previously thought, the World Health Organization said Tuesday.

The current projection that up to 20 million people will have been infected by 2000 also is expected to be pushed up by a rise in heterosexual transmission of the disease in industrialized countries, said Michael Merson, director of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS.

"It is very unlikely that the global prevalence of HIV infection will stabilize or level off for at least several decades," he said.

WHO estimates that 6 million to 8 million people worldwide have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, that causes AIDS.

WHO considers its forecast that 15 million to 20 million people will be infected by the turn of the century to be a minimum estimate, and new projections won't be ready until late this year or 1991, Merson said.

"The global balance of HIV infection is rapidly tipping toward the developing countries," Merson said in an interview.

"In 1985, somewhere around 50 percent of the world total infections, we estimated, were in developing countries. But now we estimate that by the year 2000, 75 to 80 percent will be in developing countries and by the year 2010 as much as 90 percent," he said.

"In addition, if HIV infections increase rapidly in Asia and Latin America, as

they did in Africa, then the current projections of 15 to 20 million . . . will need to be revised significantly upward," he said.

Merson declined to estimate how high the projection could go.

The virus is spread mainly by sexual contact, needles or syringes shared by drug abusers, infected blood and blood products, and by pregnant women to their babies.

In the United States, most of the people with AIDS have been homosexual men and intravenous drug users.

However, Merson said that in industrialized countries — such as the United States — with inner city poverty and high rates of intravenous drug use and sexually transmitted diseases, heterosexual transmission is increasing, he said. Spread of the AIDS virus is more likely when a sexually transmitted disease with open sores is present.

About 60 percent of HIV infections worldwide have resulted from heterosexual intercourse, but by the turn of the century, that proportion is expected to rise as high as 80 percent, Merson said.

In black Africa, the virus is being spread primarily through heterosexual intercourse, and as many women are infected as men.

An estimated 3.5 million sub-Saharan Africans have been infected with the virus, accounting for more than half the global total of HIV infection.

Merson predicted that during the final decade of this century the infection rate will continue to increase in Africa, spreading from the urban areas to the

countryside and within countries that haven't been hit as hard by the epidemic.

In Central and East Africa, where as many as 20 percent of young adults are infected, the mortality rate for adults could double or triple over the next decade and the death rate among children could rise 50 percent, according to WHO projections.

Experts also are beginning to see considerable increases in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, he said.

In Thailand, for example, the number of people who have been infected and their cases reported to authorities rose from about 1,000 in 1987 to 50,000 currently, Merson said. However, he said, only about one third of actual cases get reported.

Among prostitutes in Thailand, fewer than 1 percent were reported with HIV infection in 1987. Now, the rate is as high as 40 percent in some cities, he said.

The increases are expected to occur despite prevention efforts because AIDS can take more than 10 years after infection to appear.

Since the first AIDS cases were reported in 1981, more than 250,000 have been reported to WHO from more than 150 countries, but because of under-reporting and delays in reporting, agency officials believe that number is closer to 700,000.

That number is expected to grow to about 5.5 million by the end of the decade.

As of April 30, AIDS had been diagnosed in 132,510 Americans, of whom 61 percent, or 80,798, have died since June 1, 1981, according to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

# U.S. miner's ransom delivery hits snag

PEORIA, Illinois (AP) — Attempts to free a U.S. miner kidnapped by South American guerrillas hit a snag when a go-between brought the ransom in U.S. dollars instead of Colombian pesos, the hostage's father said.

"The intermediary had problems getting up the river [to the kidnappers] because they've had heavy rain and the river is swollen," Roy Heimdal said Tuesday.

"Then the guerrillas got upset because the ransom money came in U.S. dollars instead of pesos. When they tried to exchange it, they had trouble finding enough pesos," Heimdal said. "So things aren't going so smoothly."

Heimdal said he and his wife, Marge, had believed the kidnappers wanted 60,000 dollars in U.S. currency in exchange for the freedom of their 27-year-old son, Scott.

The Heimdals traveled to Chicago on Tuesday with their daughters, Linda and Angela, to obtain passports so they can travel to Quito, Ecuador, when their son is released.

Roy Heimdal said the kidnappers also were upset after seeing coverage on Cable News Network of the family's effort last week to raise the ransom.

"They saw pictures of our house," Heimdal said of the family's modest, wood-frame bungalow in a middle-class Peoria neighborhood.

"Our house is no mansion. But by their standards it is. I guess they figure anyone who eats three square meals a day has 60,000 dollars laying around."

Heimdal said the unidentified intermediary was trying to convince the kidnappers the working-class family really is financially strapped. The family's life savings were wiped out by medical bills after Mrs. Heimdal was seriously injured in a 1983 wreck with an uninsured drunk-driver.

There were no reports Tuesday from Ecuador.

Heimdal said a Florida travel agent has stepped forward to guarantee them passage to Quito.

Last week, Midway Airlines donated two plane tickets to get the Heimdals to Miami, but they did not have tickets to South America.

"A woman who wants to remain anonymous called and offered us tickets the rest of the way," Heimdal said. "She said her daughter was kidnapped and mur-

dered a few years ago and she wants to help us out. She is arranging a flight to Quito from Miami."

Heimdal said the family will stay in Illinois until they receive word their son is free before leaving for Ecuador.

The Colombian guerrilla group believed to have kidnapped Scott Heimdal on April 28 has a long history of kidnappings and violence, State Department records show.

John Reap of the State Department's counterterrorism bureau said that while there is no proof the group Popular Liberation Army, known as EPL, was involved in the abduction, it seems likely.

"We feel it's a strong possibility, since kidnappings strictly for money, with no political factors involved, have been part of their past conduct," he said.

# Cuba jails American for drugs

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A Cuban court sentenced a 43-year-old American man to seven years in prison for smuggling 625 pounds of marijuana, the official Cuban news agency reported Tuesday.

The dispatch, monitored in Mexico City, said a provincial court in Guantánamo gave William Roger Cooper the minimum sentence for drug smuggling.

Cooper was arrested after his yacht ran aground on the eastern coast of Cuba on Feb. 4, the Prensa Latina news agency said. Cuban officials seized the vessel

after discovering more than a quarter-ton of marijuana on board.

Cooper was convicted of drug smuggling on May 25, Prensa Latina said.

Prensa Latina said Cooper was represented by a Cuban lawyer and a U.S. official was present at his trial and sentencing.

The maximum sentence in Cuba for drug smuggling is 15 years in prison, the report said.

The dispatch did not give Cooper's hometown or further details on the case.