

Wildcat setback: Oregon State edges Arizona for basketball recruit / Sports C1

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SERVING TUCSON SINCE 1877

25 auto insurers seek hikes

By David Wichner

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

If you haven't compared auto insurance premiums lately, it may be time to start shopping.

Filings for auto premium rate increases are up this year after declining in recent years, according to the Arizona Department of Insurance.

As of last week, 38 auto insurers had filed for new premium rates, including 25 who increased average rates overall, 11 who filed overall decreases and two whose average rates remained unchanged, Insurance Department spokesman Don Harris said.

Last year, 56 companies filed for overall auto premium rate decreases and 31 filed for increases, Harris said.

"There seems to be a shift," he said. "It had been a soft market, where the companies had been offering discounts to get market share."

Whether your car insurance bill goes up depends on your individual insurer.

Among the largest auto insurers filing for rate increases recently are American Family Mutual, 2 percent; Geico General, 3.5 percent; and Hartford Fins, 1 percent.

The state's top three auto insurers — State Farm Mutual, Farmers of Arizona and Allstate — have been cutting rates in recent years. The three account for 40 percent of the state market.

State Farm Mutual has filed for 6.7 percent in rate decreases since 1997, including a 2.2 overall decrease filed in September. A sister company, State Farm Fire & Casualty, has filed rate decreases totaling 35.9 percent since 1998.

Allstate Insurance Co. filed for an overall 5.3 percent rate cut in March, after raising rates 12 percent since 1994.

"Our costs went down as a result of people doing better, and we were able to pass those savings on," Allstate spokesman Joe Giacchi said.

SEE INSURANCE / A8

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IN TODAY'S STAR

Accent

DIVORCE

House-switching idea assists one family in coping with breakup

Tucson

The UA's Mirror Lab is gearing up to craft the second refector for the 14.4 meter telescope on Mount Graham.

Business

The wrecking ball may descend on Microsoft. The federal government could seek to dismantle the giant.

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Weather

WEATHER FORECAST
Sunny and warm.
High 94/Low 56

Yesterday: High 90/Low 55

For complete weather information, see the weather forecast page on back of Star.

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Republicans accused of 'wildly inaccurate' statements

White House blasts critics



In Cuba: Teacher Yumilín Morales Delgado shows a picture of Elián and his father to the 6-year-old's former classmates.



In New York: Protesters demonstrate outside a hotel near a fund-raiser attended by President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton and Al Gore.

House Judiciary Committee chairman, Rep. Henry J. Hyde, said he was beginning a "preliminary inquiry" into INS tactics

By Adam Portman

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration fired back yesterday at critics of the raid to take custody of Elián González. The White House blasted prominent Republicans for making "wildly inaccurate" statements about the operation and blamed the boy's relatives for having forced the government's hand.

Attorney General Janet Reno, who was described as having cried after negotia-

tions ended shortly before federal agents seized Elián, said she had "been over back-

wards" to achieve a peaceful resolution to the custody dispute.

Based on NBC's "Today" show if she had any second thoughts about having ordered a military-style incursion before dawn Saturday, Reno replied, "I have no regrets whatsoever."

At the request of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, Reno is also scheduled to discuss the issue this morning with a group of Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill. In addition, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, sent the attorney general a letter asking for the supporting documents the government used Friday afternoon to obtain a search warrant for the INS raid.

The boy spent a third day in seclusion yesterday with his father, Juan Miguel González, his stepmother and 6-year-old stepbrother in guest quarters at Andrews Air Force base in suburban Maryland.

Notwithstanding the activity by Republican leaders, they were far less vocal in their attacks on the administration yesterday, perhaps because the controversy had entered a new phase, or maybe because opinion polls showed Americans clearly in favor of the operation that returned Elián to his father.

SEE INS RAO / A9

The Star's reader advocate explains the decisions behind the photos used on Sunday's front page of the raid seizing Elián. Page D16

TUCSON 'BOOT CAMP'

After-school program wins high praise

U.S. officials list it as one they want to copy

By Hipolito R. Corella

and Jonathan Higgins

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

A military-style boot camp helped land a Tucson after-school program on the federal government's list of projects worth copying.

Operation Leadership Boot Camp — offered at Nayler and Carson middle schools — runs students through a rigorous three-week program with an emphasis on discipline, respect, physical conditioning, teamwork, and social awareness.

"I've only seen it for less than three weeks," said Carson Middle School Principal Roy Baker. "But in that short time, the kids seem to have a greater respect for adults, are quicker to understand directives and seem to be more positive and rewarded in their decision making."

Some are making decisions with their peers they wouldn't have made before.

The boot camp is part of Project Sero y Salvo — Project Safe and



David-Morhan (center) commands the attention of trainees during boot camp exercise at Carson Middle School.

Sound. Sero y Salvo is one of just 10 programs nationwide that are profiled in Safe and Sound II, an after-school program guide published by the U.S. Departments of Education

and Justice.

The guide is supposed to help communities develop their own after-school programs.

"It's so that you don't have to rein-

vent the wheel every time," said Melinda Kitchell-Mallory of the U.S. Department of Education.

SEE 'BOOT CAMP' / A9

Albright defends new missile plan

By Barbara Crossette

THE NEW YORK TIMES

UNITED NATIONS — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tried to convince the world yesterday that the United States was not flinching to undertake a quarter-century of progress on international arms control by developing a new and missile defense system that had drawn criticism from Russia and China.

"If the Clinton administration were bent on sabotaging the ABM treaty and strategic arms control," she said at an international arms control conference, "we have surely gone about it in a wrong way — in the open, with care and in consultation not only with Congress, but after extensive discussions with our allies and other countries, Russia and China emphatically included."

In a speech at the opening of an international conference called to review a treaty banning the spread of nuclear weapons, Albright also argued that the United States had reduced its nuclear arsenal by 40 percent since the end of the Cold War, and had joined in cutting NATO's nuclear stockpile by 60 percent.

She spurned calls for the quicker elimination of nuclear arms.

"Unfortunately, none of us has it within our power to create overnight the conditions in which complete nuclear disarmament is possible," she said.

The speech offered no new initiatives, but was more of an accounting of how the administration wanted to define its record.

Albright walked into an almost solid wall of criticism of the United States inside and outside the General Assembly hall because of what was widely perceived as the slow pace of nuclear disarmament more than a decade after the end of the Cold War and because of the fears that the proposed American system would start a new international arms race.

Study: Poor kids' health-insurance gap lingers

By Karen Gullio

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The percentage of poor children covered by private health insurance is dropping, offsetting government efforts to increase the number of American kids with health benefits, according to a study released yesterday.

As a result, the percentage of poor children with health coverage has remained about the same, even

though the government has signed up more children for a special public insurance program.

Researchers say fewer kids are covered by private insurance because more working poor parents don't get health benefits at their companies or can't afford the premiums. The study showed a significant increase in the percentage of uninsured working parents — from 31 percent in 1987 to 35 percent in 1994.

"The most troubling trend is the increase in (uninsured) low-income parents who, unlike their children, do not have access to public programs," said Peter Cunningham, author of a study on children's health coverage funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a philanthropic organization that advocates better access to health care coverage.

In Arizona, the drop in private

insurance coverage compounds problems the state is having in getting more children enrolled in its new public insurance program, KidsCare. Officials say eligible families aren't getting the word about the program, now in its second year.

Since 1996, the number of low-income Arizona children with health insurance dropped by 6.5 percent, or 20,523 youngsters, according to an earlier study.