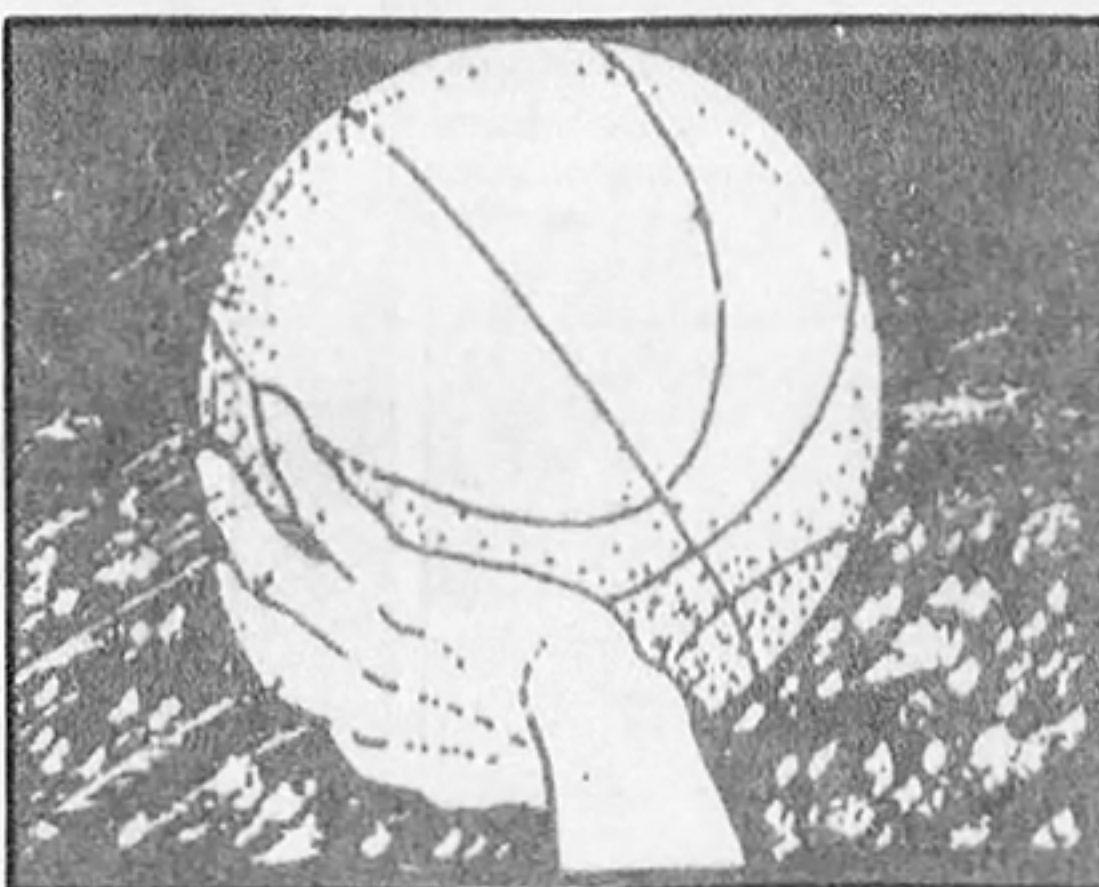




Irresistible

SALOC's 'Big River' is charming
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As Gila River rises, so do nation's iceberg lettuce prices

PHOENIX (AP) — A flood in the Arizona desert is driving up the price of lettuce across the country.

Flooding that began this week along the lower Gila River is hitting the state's most productive farm belt — and the nation's leading winter supplier of iceberg lettuce. Farmers rushed this week to salvage what they could of their crops, and that means consumers will see immature, baseball-sized heads of lettuce.

"You're going to see a lot of product on the market that's not up to standard," said Gary Pasquinelli, whose family has run Pasquinelli Produce Co. since 1945.

"There's going to be high prices for an inferior product."

The flood couldn't come at a worse time for the lettuce growers in the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District, 65,000 acres that straddle the Gila for 70 miles.

Winter lettuce is grown in California and to a much lesser extent in Florida. But because of production schedules, 75 percent of the nation's iceberg lettuce this time of year is from the Yuma area, said Gary Lucier, an agricultural economist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington.

The Gila is just beginning what may be a

★ Flooding in Yuma County may last a month or longer. **Page 1B.**

monthlong flood, but the impact already is being felt in supermarkets across the country.

At the Grand Union in Bergenfield, N.J., lettuce was going for 99 cents a head this week, up a dime from last week. The story was the same at an Indianapolis Safeway and a Vons market in Los Angeles.

The wholesale price spike was even more dramatic: \$24 for a 24-head carton in Arizona, up from \$6 last week, Lucier said.

Wholesale price jumps of that size often are absorbed by retailers who hit consumer resistance, Lucier said.

"You just talk about a disaster and the price triples," he said.

Even for stores with lettuce sources outside Arizona, the flood is driving up prices by pinching the nationwide supply.

The Food Lion chain, based in Salisbury, N.C., buys its lettuce from Florida but is paying the price of the desert disaster, said spokesman Mike Mozingo. Iceberg lettuce was priced at \$1.29 a head this week, up from just 49 cents a few weeks ago, he said.

Consumers should get some relief soon, as lettuce matures in California's central San Joaquin valley in April, said Steve Skuba, an Agriculture Department market analyst in Phoenix.

But for the farmers, the trouble is just beginning.

The flood is expected to raise the water table, bringing up salts that could render the land temporarily useless for a year, said Keith Kelly, director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Once the water has receded, fields will have to be re-leveled and irrigation canals repaired.

Blast rocks World Trade Center, killing 5



Police help injured woman; nearby, an office worker looked "to see if New Jersey had disappeared"



AP photos

Workers peer through some of the broken windows of the World Trade Center in New York City

600 are injured in apparent car bombing; thousands in 2 towers flee fires, smoke

By Robert D. McFadden
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NEW YORK — An explosion apparently caused by a car bomb in an underground garage shook the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan with the force of a small earthquake shortly after noon yesterday, collapsing walls and floors, igniting fires and plunging the city's largest building complex into a maelstrom of smoke, darkness and fearful chaos.

Police said the blast killed at least five people and injured at least 600 others. Most suffered smoke inhalation or minor burns, but dozens had cuts, bruises, broken bones or seri-

★ The explosion disrupts trading at New York City's financial markets. **Page 8C.**

ous burns. Police said about 275 victims were treated at hospitals and the rest by rescue and medical crews at the scene.

(One source told The Associated Press that one group, claiming to represent Croatian militants, called 15 minutes before the blast. A second source, a police officer at the scene who like the first spoke on condition of anonymity, said a "massive bomb" was responsible.)

The explosion trapped hundreds

of people in debris or in smoke-filled stairwells of the two towers overhead and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of workers from a trade center bereft of power for lights and elevators.

"It felt like a big boom," said Lisa Hoffman, who works at the nearby World Financial Center. "The building shook. I looked out the window to see if New Jersey had disappeared."

The blast, which was felt throughout the Wall Street area and a mile away on Ellis and Liberty islands in New York Harbor, also knocked out the police command and operations

See **EXPLOSION**, Page 2A

Moore predicts lower property taxes based on still-secret 'Blue Sky' plan

By Chris Limberis
The Arizona Daily Star

Ed Moore, the Republican chairman of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, is meeting secretly with attorneys to devise a tax-cutting plan he calls "Operation Blue Sky."

"We had a meeting two nights ago with representatives of three major law firms locally," Moore said yesterday to a packed breakfast

meeting of the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce at Hotel Park Tucson.

"We have what we call 'Operation Blue Sky.' That's a creative brain trust trying to figure out how we can do some creative things that have never been done before in regard to the potential of a significant lowering of property taxes in Pima County. We have some interesting con-

See **'BLUE SKY'**, Page 4A

Fired Kino managers seek \$162,283

By Chris Limberis
The Arizona Daily Star

Schaller Anderson Inc., fired as managers of Kino Community Hospital by the GOP majority on the Board of Supervisors last month, has filed a claim against Pima County for at least \$162,283.

The Phoenix-based company, which had managed Kino since 1989, said Supervisors Mike Boyd, Paul Marsh and Ed Moore improperly terminated the contract during the board's first meeting on Jan. 4.

The claim also accuses the three Republicans of violating the state Open Meetings Law by meeting secretly before Boyd and Marsh were sworn in. It said the three should each be required to pay \$500 to the county's general fund for the violation.

And the claim accuses Boyd and Marsh of "tortious interference" with Schaller's contract before being sworn in. Tortious interference is an action that subjects someone to civil liability.

The claim also states that the two freshmen supervisors have no elected official immunity. All three supervisors shrugged off the claim, a necessary prelude to a lawsuit.

"We get sued twice a day, every day of the year," said Moore, board chairman. "If they want to go to court, I'm sure that's quite fine."

Moore and David Dingeldine, chief of the county attorney's civil division, met with Schaller officials and Schaller lawyer Jack LaSota last month. Company officials rejected Moore's offer of pay for 1½ months.

Boyd said he "scanned" the claim before

See **KINO**, Page 4A

U.S. economy grows at fastest pace in 5 years

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WASHINGTON — The economy expanded at a robust pace of 4.8 percent in the final three months of 1992, the best quarterly performance in five years, the Commerce Department reported yesterday.

The revised estimate of the gross domestic product — the total output of goods and services within American borders — was a full percentage point higher than the initial estimate published a month ago.

The growth rate for the full year was 2.1 percent, compared with a 1.2 percent contraction in 1991, which included the final three months of a seven-month recession that began in July 1990.

The strong fourth-quarter showing was seen by economists as conclusive evidence of an economic surge during the second half of 1992, when the economy grew at a 4.1 percent annual rate, up from 2.2 percent for the first half.

But because the jump in output was mainly the result of greater efficiency, which implied little employment growth, it was scant help to the re-election campaign of then-President George Bush, who was unable to persuade voters that the economy was sufficiently on the mend.

Even now, analysts said, it is unlikely that President Clinton will be dissuaded from pursuing

See **ECONOMY**, Page 6A

WEATHER

Possible showers. Today is expected to be breezy and cloudy, with a 30 percent chance of showers. Southwest winds of 15 to 25 mph are forecast. Look for a high in the lower 60s and an overnight low in the upper 40s. Yesterday's high was 72, the low 38. Details on **Page 19A.**

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Tribes fight back

Ads oppose casino ban. Tribal leaders purchase television and newspaper ads to put pressure on legislators not to pass Gov. Fife Symington's legislation banning casino-style gambling. **Page 1B.**

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Group gets OK to bar gays from St. Pat's parade

NEW YORK (AP) — The largely Roman Catholic group that sponsors the St. Patrick's Day parade has a right to exclude a gay group from marching and the city can't interfere, a federal judge ruled yesterday.

The issue of whether excluding the group was discriminatory had threatened to sideline the nation's largest and oldest parade, which each year attracts crowds of up to 2 million people.

U.S. District Judge Kevin T. Duffy said in a written decision that the Ancient Order of Hibernians was protected by the right to free speech from being forced to include a group whose beliefs conflict with those of its members.

"It is the American way for political leaders to seek to convince citizens of the correctness of some view by persuasion and not by fiat," the judge wrote. "A parade is, by its nature, a pristine form of speech."

The judge granted a permanent injunction against the city, prohibiting it from obstructing or interfering with the Hibernians' right to conduct the parade, which is held on Fifth

See **PARADE**, Page 4A