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SERVING 1877 · THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2001

SWEET 16 PREVIEW

► An inside look at the remaining teams and 16 reasons why UA can go all the way

► The Star lists the Elite Eight sports bars in Tucson for viewing the NCAA basketball tournament

Systems presents the Cats road!

COMING TOMORROW

Let's give the Cats a hand

► Psychic/astrologer Stephanie St. Claire and palmist Mrs. Mohr predict cheers and tears for the Wildcat basketball team.

Ancient skills MODERN CRIMES

19 American Indians track smugglers for Customs

Shadow Wolves, from left, Gary Ortega, Lambert Cross and Jason Garcia, search for tracks of suspected drug smugglers on the Huachila-Mesa Trail.

By Ignacio Ibarra · ARIZONA DAILY STAR

SELLS marijuana and cocaine off U.S. streets. The Indian trackers accounted for nearly a third of the 100,000 pounds of marijuana seized by Customs throughout Arizona last year, including the border ports of entry.

They use the skills of a lost culture to attack one of the most pressing modern crimes on our borderland.

In doing so, they're preserving a link to a warrior past — even exporting it, as they train forces in the Balkans and Russia to protect borders and to guard arsenals from terrorists.

Rose Andrei, resident agent in charge of the U.S. Customs Office of Investigations in Bells, said the Shadow Wolves are highly efficient in the midst of sub-tech law enforcers.

"We have the new technology,"

SEE TRACKERS / A11

Telltale shoe print

Trackers make note of the differences in shoe prints and look for them and other signs of smugglers: a broader stance, shorter gait, a deeper heel strike.

Threads yield clue

Trackers look for fibers from the sugar sacks or burlap bags favored by smugglers. The fibers signal that someone likely carrying drugs passed by.

SEE TRACKERS / A11

Sonoran Desert salvation unveiled

Plan sets aside large areas surrounding city, mountains

By Tony Davis

Pima County's biological consultant wants to set aside large swaths of desert surrounding the city and most of its mountain ranges for the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

County officials this week released the outline of a proposed biological reserve for the pioneering plan, which is one of the most ambitious of its kind in the country and has been in the works two years.

The reserve would protect 46 vulnerable species and every major habitat in the Tucson area, according to the county's consultant report.

They include ironwood and saguaro forests, riparian areas, piñon-jumper, Douglas fir and oak-pine forests and various desert and grass scrub habitats.

Today, the preliminary reserve plan largely exists on a map, showing large purple areas that the consultants want to preserve and white areas targeted for development. The preservation areas appear to act as a growth boundary.

By December 2002, after a series of public meetings and after planners and public officials refine and perhaps scale back this map, the county Board of Supervisors and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are scheduled to approve the plan.

On the current map, bands of purple wrap around

SEE SONORAN / A10

Senate AIMS vote would delay its use in graduation '04

By Howard Fischer

PHOENIX — Current high school sophomores and juniors may not have to pass the AIMS test to graduate.

The Senate voted 16-7 yesterday to delay the use of the test as a condition for getting a diploma until 2005, Sen. Jay Blanchard, D-Gilbert, said. The additional time will give the state a chance to study the test, fix it and get necessary public support for its use.

The state Board of Education has already postponed the math requirement of Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards until spring 2004. That followed dismal results on the first tests given.

But the board has so far refused to budge from the mandate that students pass the reading and writing portions of the test to get a diploma in 2002.

Yesterday's vote actually fell short of a proposal by Sen. Joe Eddie Lopez, D-Phoenix, to block use of the AIMS test as a graduation requirement unless and

SEE AIMS / A11

CONNECTION Mar 23, 01 A2

Secondhand smoke residues decline sharply in Americans

WASHINGTON — Americans have far less secondhand smoke in their bodies than they did a decade ago, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released yesterday.

The study, the first of its kind, measured the levels of 27 substances that people are exposed to in modern life by sampling the blood and urine of 3,000 Americans. The method is more accurate than estimates of human exposure based on chemical residues in air, water, soil and food.

"For the first time, we've actually profiled what is in people," said Dr. Richard Jackson, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health in Atlanta. Eventually individuals will be able to compare their levels of certain chemicals to this new national average.

In 24 of 27 chemicals, scientists had no data on past levels in Americans. For lead, cadmium and cotinine — a remnant of secondhand tobacco smoke — they

SEE SECONDHAND / A11

IN TODAY'S STAR

Accent
Tucson high schoolers will be wearing "the vintage look" to the prom.

Weather
Slightly cooler; still sunny. High 65 / Low 47. Windy; High 90 / Low 52.

Arizona & the West: AI
BIZ: B2
BUSINESS: B4
COMICS: E1
DEAD: B1
ENTERTAINMENT: B6
HOROSCOPES: E2
LOTTERY: A11
MOVIES: B2
NEWS: B1
PUBLIC RECORDS: B3
PUZZLES / CLASSIFIED: B4
SPORTS: C14
TELEVISION: E3

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