

FRIDAY

Bad day to ditch

34 truants rounded up Metro/Region, 1B



Caliente!

Movielandia: The film version of the Pulitzer Prize-winning 'Angela's Ashes' and the nation's box office champ, 'Next Friday,' are among the movies making their Tucson debuts today.



Visitors prevail

UA men win in L.A.; women lose at home Sports, 1C

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'Ready to mix it up:' Elliott cleared to practice

By Edward de la Fuente

The Arizona Daily Star San Antonio Spurs forward and Tucson native Sean Elliott said yesterday that he has been cleared by his doctors to practice with the team, moving him closer to his goal of playing this season after undergoing a kidney transplant.

"I feel pretty good. I'm in the best shape I've been in since I got out of the hospital. When I came back, I was surprised at how good I was feeling." Earlier this month, Elliott, 31, said he was hoping to return to action by late February. A bout with the flu in late December hospitalized the 10-year NBA veteran for four days, but he resumed light workouts and running after the New Year.

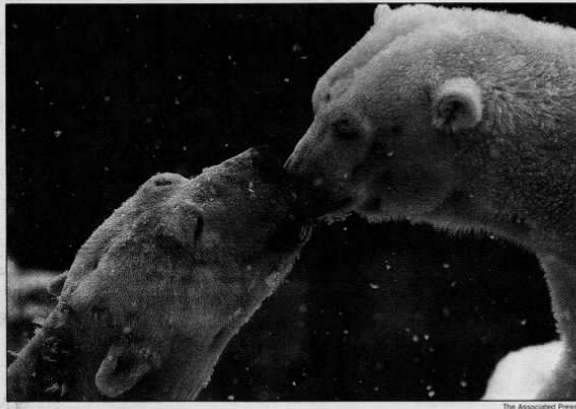
transplant last August. "He's looking at joining workouts with the team. I'm sure getting back to playing shape will be a gradual process, but he can go ahead and do that." From here, it's up to the coaches and team trainers to decide when he plays. As far as we're concerned, he can do whatever he wants." Wright and Elliott's kidney doctor, John Betts, cleared Elliott based on his overall level of fitness. Wright said the donor kidney, which Elliott received last August from his brother

Ned, has functioned normally, even while he was ill. Wright also said he was convinced Elliott would not risk damaging the donor kidney by returning to the court. "I don't think that's of real great importance," Wright said. "He has a lot of muscle in that area, and that serves as a natural padding." The chance of significant injury to his new kidney is very low, to the point where we definitely feel comfortable letting him go out and play." See ELLIOTT, Page 20A



1999 AP photo Elliott's donor kidney won't be at risk on the court, his doctor says.

Almost like home



New York's snowy weather seems right for a session of affectionate play for Gus, left, and Lily. Weather forecasters said yesterday that the Central Park Wildlife Center polar bears could have 4 to 6 inches of snow overnight.

Tucson topped job expansion in '99 at 5.3%

Rate was twice that of Phoenix

By Jonathan J. Figueroa

The Arizona Daily Star After a decade as the state's job-growth leader, Phoenix finally took a back seat to Tucson last year.

Tucson added jobs at nearly twice the rate of Phoenix in 1999, the state Department of Economic Security reported yesterday.

Although Phoenix created more jobs in absolute numbers, Tucson's job growth rate of 5.3 percent topped Phoenix's 2.7 percent rate. "You've had a spectacular year," said Ron Simon, DES' manager of economic analysis in Phoenix. "You're way ahead of Phoenix and the rest of the state."

Tucson gained 17,900 of the 73,500 jobs created statewide last year while Phoenix added 40,800 jobs.

Simon attributed Tucson's growth in part to the manufacturing sector, which added 2,900 jobs for a nearly 10 percent growth rate for 1999.

Local education and business services jobs also boosted the growth rate.

Despite the gains, the local jobless rate rose to 3.4 percent in December, up 1 percentage point from the previous December and a statistically insignificant 0.02 percent from November.

Statewide, unemployment rose to 4.1 percent, statistically insignificant from 3.9 percent a year ago. From November, it rose 0.01 percent.

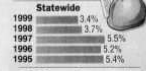
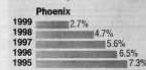
Tucson's gains are even more remarkable considering the layoffs in the mining industry.

Statewide, the number of mining jobs — 9,800 — dropped to its lowest level since 1945.

Hiring by Raytheon, which now has a record-high 10,000

Tucson job growth

After years of lagging job growth, Tucson zoomed past Phoenix in 1999 on the strength of manufacturing and education hires.



1999 unemployment rate

Table with 3 columns: Location, Nov., Dec. Tucson: 3.2%, 3.4%

SOURCE: Arizona Dept. of Economic Security

Warren Heasley, The Arizona Daily Star

Tucson workers, and by Bombardier and Universal Avionics, provided a major boost, said Marshall Vest, a senior economist at the University of Arizona.

"Those are probably the big three adding to payroll last year, but virtually every manufacturer added 100 here and a 100 there," he said.

Vest remained unconvinced the DES figures were completely accurate but agreed that the job growth rate for the state has been nothing

See JOB GROWTH, Page 18A

CDC urges hepatitis-A vaccine for state kids

Polio shots suggested rather than oral dose

By Jane Erikson

The Arizona Daily Star

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending that children in Arizona and 10 other Western states be vaccinated against hepatitis-A.

The CDC also is endorsing the use of polio shots instead of oral polio vaccine, which carries the slight risk of infecting children with the polio virus.

The agency issued its annual recommendations for children's immunizations yesterday, urging for the second year in a row that

children in Arizona be vaccinated against hepatitis-A.

An outbreak started in 1997, when cases of hepatitis-A here and across the state were more than twice the usual number — 53 cases per 100,000 people in Pima and Maricopa counties, compared with the normal 20 per 100,000.

The outbreak here has slowed significantly, health officials said yesterday, but the CDC is continuing to recommend the shots.

Dr. Elizabeth MacNeill of the Pima County Health Department said her staff is conducting

a study to determine the source of the local outbreak.

Maricopa County has already established that its outbreak stemmed from day-care centers — a likely venue, since the virus is often spread by children and adults who fail to wash their hands after going to the bathroom.

Tucson pediatricians have supported the CDC's recommendation to vaccinate children, not only to protect them but their family members as well.

Dr. Eve Shapiro, a pediatrician and past president of the Pima County Medical Society, said now that the outbreak has slowed, doctors are reserving hepatitis-A shots for children

See VACCINES, Page 20A

Regents give public health school to UA

By Jane Erikson

The Arizona Daily Star

The Arizona Board of Regents voted unanimously yesterday to establish a College of Public Health at the University of Arizona, the first public health school in the Southwest.

The regents' vote clears the way for a \$5 million fund-raising campaign, to match \$5 million donated in October 1997 for construction of the school. The money was donated by Mel and Toni Zuckerman, then owners of Canyon Ranch resort in Tucson, along with another \$5 million for public health programs.

Dr. James Dallen, UA vice president for Health Sciences and dean of the College of Medicine, said the

See HEALTH, Page 18A

WEATHER

Just fine, thanks. Today is expected to be partly cloudy, cooler and breezy. Look for a high in the lower to mid-70s, the low in the mid- to upper 40s. Yesterday's high was 77, the low was 49. Details on Page 21A.

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300-plus kids speak out on King's vision

More than 300 children responded when we asked them to write about their dreams as we remember Martin Luther King Jr. this week.

Groups, school violence, drugs, war and poverty were on the minds of many. Others wrote about celebrating differences and valuing individuality.

Here's what 13-year-old ARI El Khadem, who attends Rodriguez Bilingual Middle School at 501 E. Sixth Street, had to say about King's vision.

"I believe that the dream of Martin Luther King Jr. has been fulfilled to the fullest degree possible. His dream cannot be truly realized because if all Americans are truly to be free, they must be allowed to believe freely, and some people

will believe in racism. In a way, America cannot be completely free because if you believe prejudice and violence to be the answer to life's problems you are not going to be treated equally. Both MLK's dream and complete freedom cannot coexist."

His mother, Joanna Peled, said her son always has been a "very thinking child. He thinks about things and then takes a stand."

All may be more sensitive to racial issues because his father is half Egyptian, she said. Many of the family discussions revolve around political and moral issues, "looking at things not so much in their emotion, but in their structure."

Additional excerpts are on Pages 44-45E of Caliente.

— Kimberley Matas



Aaron J. Latham, The Arizona Daily Star ARI El Khadem says MLK Jr.'s dream has been fulfilled