

THURSDAY

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Star Outdoors

The Arizona Daily Star

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Cross-exam fails to wilt McVeigh's accuser

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DENVER — Lori Fortier, a principal witness for the prosecution in the Oklahoma City bombing trial, stood her ground yesterday during four hours of cross-examination by the lead defense lawyer for Timothy McVeigh.

Through his questions, attorney Stephen Jones sought to portray Fortier, 24, as a drug user and a liar who once hoped she and her husband could make big money by selling book and movie rights to their version of the bombing.

In her answers yesterday, Fortier admitted taking drugs. She admitted lying about McVeigh soon after the attack, out of fear she said, that she and her husband would be implicated. But, "I never had any interest in selling my story," she said.

Fortier is testifying under a grant of immunity in the trial of McVeigh, who is charged with murder and conspiracy in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, that killed 168 people. His co-defendant, Terry Nichols, will be tried later.

Fortier's husband, Michael, was an Army buddy of McVeigh's and one of his closest friends. Starting at the end of 1993, McVeigh was a guest in the spare room in the Fortiers' trailer in Kingman, Ariz., for weeks at a time.

Police lose evidence in '96 drive-by fatal to boy

By Tim Steiler
The Arizona Daily Star
Police have lost key evidence in the cases against two people accused of murdering 11-year-old Oscar Gastellan Jr. last July.

Eleven shell casings and a bullet fragment disappeared during transfer from the South Tucson Police Department to the Tucson Police Department Crime Laboratory, according to an April 9 letter from Deputy County Attorney Ken Pesley to defense attorneys.

In response, defense attorneys are seeking to have the case against Eddie Orlando Santa Cruz, 25, thrown out of court.

"The loss of the evidence in this case substantially prejudices the defendant, and the police acted in bad faith in losing or destroying the shell casings and the fragments," attorney Leslie A. Bowman wrote in a motion to dismiss the case.

Judge Gordon Alley of Pima County Superior Court didn't rule on the motion during a hearing Tuesday.

On July 25, Oscar's birthday, a group of young people ran past his family's West 30th Street home, followed by a car. Someone fired a gun from the car and struck Oscar, who was running toward his front door. A 14-year-old boy was also hit.

Oscar collapsed and died on his front porch. The older boy survived.

See EVIDENCE, Page 13A

His aim is true



Joshua Crockett, 5, one of the better handgun shooters at Harriet Johnson Primary School, and his classmates get the afternoon off to enjoy the Dia de los Niños, celebrated throughout the world in honor of kids. Story, Page 1B.

Desert Museum director Hancocks out as 'mix' sours

By Keith Bagwell
The Arizona Daily Star

David Hancocks, executive director of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum for more than seven years, resigned yesterday amid souring board relations.

"The board did not enjoy working with me as much as it used to, and I did not enjoy working with it as much as I used to," Hancocks said yesterday.

"It's like getting a divorce — we'll (part) amicably and without rancor," he said.

Hancocks' resignation is effective May 30. Associate Director Nancy R. Laney, a four-year museum employee, will be acting director. Laney said she has not decided if she will seek the permanent position.

"The Board of Trustees is extremely grateful for the inspired service of Mr. Hancocks," board President Billie Hardy said. "But little things between boards and directors sometimes don't mix."

"This is one of those kinds of situations, and this probably will be the best for everyone."

Hardy said the 21-member board intends to carry out Hancocks' long-range plan, which focuses on an environmental and ecological approach to museum exhibits.

"The interaction of environmental systems is the most important interpretive concept for people to understand," she said. "We'll continue to try to get that across to museum visitors."

Hancocks, 54, a native of England, practiced architecture for four years before coming to the museum in January 1990.

He came to the United States in 1972 to work on plans for Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. In 1975 he

See HANCOCKS, Page 12A

Creating super mouse

New strain a result of deleting anti-growth gene

The Associated Press
With a single genetic switch, scientists have created a strain of super mice two to three times more muscular than usual, with big, broad shoulders and massive hips.

Their creators believe the genetically altered giants could spur a revolution in the treatment of muscular dystrophy and similar diseases, and perhaps even transform the livestock industry, where bigger muscles would mean more meat.

The super mice were made by Be-lin Lee, Alexandra McPherron and Ann Lawler, molecular biologists at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.

The researchers created the mice by deleting a single gene that appears to limit muscle growth.

"They do look a little strange," McPherron said. She and her colleagues describe the mice in today's issue of Nature, a British scientific journal.

"Though they seem stronger than their peers, the super mice are gentle giants. 'When I poke them they don't run away as fast as a normal mouse,'" McPherron said Tuesday. "They don't seem to be bothered by it."

Aside from their musculature, the mice are physically identical to their screamer kin.

The Hopkins scientists created the burly rodents by knocking out the gene for a growth factor they discovered. Growth factors are proteins that either stimulate or suppress the growth and division of certain cell types, such as bone or nerve — or muscle.

It turns out the growth factor the Hopkins researchers found, myostatin, inhibits muscle growth. The researchers found that out as soon as they saw the mice they had bred without the gene.

The result offers promise.



Molecular biologists at Johns Hopkins University have created a super mouse, left, by deleting a single gene that appears to limit muscle growth.

Drugs could be developed that block the action of myostatin, for example. These drugs might counteract some of the muscle wasting that occurs in diseases such as muscular dystrophy.

See MICE, Page 13A

Prosecution witness will testify

Leckie gave Yeoman list of bids

By Alexa Hessler
The Arizona Daily Star

PHOENIX — Accountant John Yeoman returned from a breakfast meeting in 1991 with a slip of paper he had no business having.

It was a list of competitors' bids for a state contract. It was confidential. And he got it from George Leckie.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Coderberg said that's what jurors will hear from a key witness in the fraud trial against Leckie, a former top aide and close confidant to Gov. Fife Symington.

Attorneys presented opening statements yesterday.

A federal judge bars prosecutors from using a key piece of evidence in their case against George Leckie. Page 12A.

Leckie abused his public power to help a friend get a leg up, Coderberg told jurors.

He said Leckie revealed competitors' bids to Yeoman's accounting firm, Coopers & Lybrand, could land a \$1.5 million consulting contract for the government.

See LECKIE, Page 12A

WEATHER

Sunny, breezy. Today is expected to be mostly sunny and breezy with northeast winds of 15 to 25 mph by this afternoon. Look for a high of about 90, a low in the mid-60s. Yesterday's high was 89. Details on Page 13A.

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Tomorrow in The Arizona Daily Star

Read the book
New Tucsonan Angela Bowie, left, will chat and gossip about almost anything — except her ex-husband, David Bowie.

Spy spoof
"Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" is a satire with Mike Myers playing both the British secret agent and Dr. Evil.

Hot grills
M. Scot Skinner lifts the lid on what's available for those who want to spend up to \$300 for a backyard grill.