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AP Photo East Valley Tribune/Ralph Fresno

Geoff Eaton, owner of Desert Devils Gymnasities sits as one of his students jumps off a skateboarding ramp during class.

By HAYLEY RINGLE
East Valley Tribune

MESA, Ariz. (AP)--Reading, writing and ripping: These three subjects are part of the everyday curriculum for five East Val-

ley children as they learn in a unique Mesa private school where skateboarding training is given as much time as typical school subjects. (Ripping is a term for someone who is skating really well.)

Shredding School

Geoff Eaton started the skateboarding program at his family-owned Desert Devils Gymnasities facility in Mesa for his two sons and skateboarding aficionados, Jett, 11, and Jagger, 9. Both boys have been featured on the Disney Channel and have three skateboarding company sponsors.

Wooden vertical ramps, bowls and various other street-style skating obstacles were built among the trampolines, parallel bars and mats at the 51,000-square-foot facility. One room of the center is basically an indoor skateboard park with pyramids, rails, ledges, stairs, ramps and flat ground for skaters of all ages to learn how to skate.

Eaton wanted to start an after-

school skating program as a safe, positive, drug-free place for kids to skate without the cursing and fighting found at most public, outdoor skateboard parks. The idea turned into an actual daylong skateboard school called Kids That Rip, with math and science taught alongside ollies, McTwists and kickflips.

Within a month of putting in ramps initially for Jett and Jagger at the gymnastics center, parents began asking if this was a new program their kids could enroll in.

The idea grew in popularity as the center added an eight-foot tall wooden bowl in one corner of the facility, and a 13 1/2 foot vertical ramp in another corner.

Both are built by the same

company that builds ramps for the X Games, Eaton said. Eaton hired a certified teacher and local skateboarders who were good with kids, to start teaching, and the school took off on the concrete wave.

Jett and Jagger were moved from Fountain Hills Charter School to start as the first two students in Kids That Rip two years ago.

This school year, the two Eaton boys are joined by Augie Lerma, 10, Aaron Goure, 14, and the lone skater girl, Alana Smith, 9.

The children are in school from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. upstairs at the Mesa center, and then from 2:30 to 8 p.m. the skaters learn the

See **BOARDING on A5**

European bishops want victims to seek help

■ **Sex Abuse:** More information continues to unveil itself

By The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY--European bishops are urging clerical sex abuse victims to go to police and are promising more transparency and cooperation with civil authorities in abuse cases.

The Swiss Bishops Conference said Wednesday that its members underestimated the problem of clerical abuse and are now telling victims to consider criminal complaints. Denmark's Catholic Church said it would launch an investigation next week into claims of clerical abuse dating back several decades. And Italy's bishop's conference has promised to cooperate with civil authorities.

The statements come a week after Pope Benedict XVI excoriated Irish bishops for serious errors in judgment in their handling of abuse and demanded they cooperate with civil authorities.

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Residents continue to relocate as Eastern storms take a turn for the worst



AP Photo/Connecticut Department of Transportation

Flooding on the East Coast destroys major highways after three days of record-breaking rains force residents out of homes.

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

CRANSTON, R.I.--Flooding on a scale rarely seen in New England forced hundreds of residents from their homes Wednesday, overwhelmed sewage systems and snarled traffic as major East Coast routes washed out or transformed into a soaked labyrinth of detours and closures.

As three days of record-breaking rains tapered to a drizzle,

forecasters warned the worst of widespread flooding from Maine to Connecticut was still ahead as rivers and streams had yet to crest, for the second time in a month.

In Rhode Island, which bore the brunt of the storm, residents were experiencing the worst flooding in more than 100 years. Stretches of Interstate 95, the main route linking Boston to New York, were closed and could remain so for

days.

Every resident of Rhode Island, a state of about 1 million, was asked to conserve water and electricity because of flooded sewage systems and electrical substations. Rising waters either stranded hundreds of people or sent them to shelters. Many of those who stayed behind appeared shell-shocked, still recovering from floods two weeks ago caused by as much as 10 inches of rain.



AP Photo/Stew Milne

Local sports fields are being used to provide medical attention on the East Coast. Some residents find themselves out of a place of shelter, while others seek medical attention for injury as the floods on the East Coast show no sign of letting up.

Monica Bourgeois, 45, cried Wednesday morning as she stood outside her home in Cranston, where a sewer pump station gave out and hundreds of residents had evacuated by early Wednesday. The Pawtuxet River had turned her lawn into a lake and flooded her basement with six feet of still-rising water.

"It's over the furnace. We're afraid it's going to hit the

See **WEATHER on A6**

Women's Final Four championship heats up

By DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

A record-breaking team on an unprecedented roll. An impressive freshman with her own remarkable numbers. And that's only half of the women's Final Four.

San Antonio will have a familiar feel with three teams that reached last season's semifinals returning. Leading the way are the dominant Connecticut Huskies, who are two victories away from becoming the first women's team with consecutive undefeated seasons.

The Huskies will have to go through 6-foot-8 freshman phenom Brittney Griner

and Baylor to win their seventh national championship. Griner has carried the Lady Bears to the Final Four, already setting the NCAA tournament record for blocks in only four games.

"She's the most unique player in college basketball today," Connecticut coach Geno Auriemma said. "There isn't any one thing you can do against Brittney Griner. I need a couple days to think about it. Believe me this is probably one of the hardest things any coach has had to do that has had to play them, plan on how to deal with her.

The last part of the season not many have

The other game features Stanford against Oklahoma in a meeting of two teams that lost in the national semis last season.

The Cardinal will be making their third consecutive Final Four appearance when they face the Sooners on Sunday. After routing its first three opponents in the tournament, Stanford needed a buzzer-beating layup by Jeanette Pohlen to top Xavier in the Sacramento Regional final on Monday night.

See **FINAL FOUR on B3**



AP Photo/Mark Humphrey

Baylor's Brittney Griner (42) takes a shot Tuesday in the Final Four leading her team to victory against Duke and knocking them out of the tournament.



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Thursday's weather
 Tonight, breezy, low 62. Thursday, warm and sunny. High 74, low 61. Details on A6