



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KRIS CRAIG

Steve Patterson, in foreground, coordinator of the oyster seeding project, and Roger Williams University freshman Todd Massari, check on the "oyster gardens" lashed to a pier at the university, in Bristol, under a seeding program begun this summer.

The seeds of a cleaner Bay

A cultivation project aims to bring back oysters in enough numbers to filter the water clean.

BY MICHELLE J. LEE
JOURNAL ENVIRONMENT WRITER

BRISTOL — From a distance, the floating cages look like misshapen buoys or lobster pots. Each cage contains six wire bags with 5,000 tiny juvenile oysters, the seeds that could clean up the waters of Bristol Harbor and Narragansett Bay.

In an attempt to turn the tide against the dwindling oyster population, 18 volunteers throughout the state grew oysters off their boats and moorings this summer and fall for the Rhode Island Oyster Gardening for Restoration and Enhancement program.

Steve Patterson, the program coordinator, helped build the cages and monitored the oyster growth. For the past two weeks, Patterson collected 13 of these "floating gardens" and brought them back for sorting at Roger Williams University.

RI-OGRE started in June to re-



Patterson removes one of the bags of immature oysters from a cage where the shellfish have been grown to thumbnail size for dispersal in several locations of the Bay.

talize the native Eastern or Atlantic oyster. During the summer, oyster seed was cultivated at the university's shellfish hatchery. The juvenile oysters, or spat, were attached to shells in wire bags, and distributed to 18 volunteers throughout the

bed made of 2½ tons of clam shells. Ideally, these thumb-size oysters will attach there, grow to adulthood and remain there to improve the water quality.

A single adult oyster can filter 50 gallons of water a day and live up to 25 to 35 years if undisturbed, said Dale Leavitt, an assistant biology professor at Roger Williams University and the RI-ORGE founder and technical assistant.

"Fifty gallons of water a day, 365 days a year, thousands of oysters, they're moving a lot of water," Leavitt said.

The program is funded with \$35,000 from the Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative.

Historically, oysters thrived in Narragansett Bay and supported a significant amount of the Rhode Island shellfish industry.

In 1864, the state adopted laws that opened up sections of Narragansett Bay to oyster cultivation. After the Civil War, production grew and eventually produced 8.7 million pounds during its peak, in

state in August to grow in Bristol Harbor, the Sakonnet and Potowomut rivers and Point Judith and Quonochontaug ponds.

On Saturday, about 100,000 juvenile oysters will be released in Bristol Harbor onto a large "culch" — a

SEE OYSTERS, A6

Clinton seen as gearing for run

The New York senator has begun reaching out to state lawmakers to better assess her chances of a bid for the White House.

BY BETH FOUHY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK — Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton met yesterday with New York's Democratic governor-elect to solicit his support for her likely White House bid, the latest indication she is stepping up plans to join a growing field of potential contenders for 2008.

One rival, Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh, announced yesterday that he was establishing an exploratory committee to raise money for a possible presidential run. He expects to decide over the Christmas holidays whether to seek his party's nomination.

A top aide to Clinton said he did not know when the former first lady would decide about pursuing the presidency or set up an exploratory committee. Clinton aides, however, have begun interviewing possible campaign staffers in recent weeks, Howard Wolfson said.

Clinton, who long has topped national polls of Democratic hopefuls, spent two hours with Gov.-elect Eliot Spitzer at his Manhattan home.

"We just had a great, wide-ranging meeting on so many issues that affect the city, the state and the country," Clinton said as she left the meeting.

Last week, she contacted leading state lawmakers, including Democratic Representatives Charles Rangel and Nita Lowey, and the state party chairman, Denny Farrell, to assess her prospects and seek their support.



CLINTON

SEE CLINTON, A7

Cholesterol drug's loss is termed a major blow

Work on the experimental drug was halted by its producer, Pfizer, after tests showed it increased the risk of dying.

BY ROB STEIN
THE WASHINGTON POST

The discovery that an experimental cholesterol drug is dangerous is a major setback for what has been considered one of the most promising new approaches to fighting the nation's leading killer, experts said yesterday.

Pfizer Inc. abruptly announced late Saturday that it was terminating all work on the drug torcetrapid after an outside panel determined that patients taking the compound in a large international experiment appeared to have an increased risk of dying.

The decision was a major blow for the world's biggest drug company, which had already been struggling. The company had invested at least \$800 million in the drug, which was expected to be a blockbuster if approved, as

SEE DRUG, A4

Costly overpass finally ready to span Route 95

It has taken more than 4½ years to complete and is expected to cost slightly more than \$17 million, more than \$7 million over the bid price.

BY BRUCE LANDIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The Department of Transportation hopes to open the new Point Street overpass over Route 95 this week after engineering problems that caused delays and cost overruns and at one point threatened to sink the contractor's equipment in the mud.

The replacement of the overpass has suffered delays longer than it was supposed to take to build, and its cost has grown by more than 75 percent. It is also the subject of a

SEE OVERPASS, A6

As the world watches, a skivvy is passed



AP / CHRISTOPHER PLEDGER

While Anthony Field (blue), Murray Cook (red), and Jeff Fatt (purple) plan to continue on as the Wiggles, Greg Page, (yellow) has announced he is leaving the popular children's group due to illness. He will be replaced by Sam Moran.

While youngsters seems to have accepted the departure of one of the founding members of the Wiggles, the same cannot be said for their mothers.

BY JACQUES STEINBERG
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The millions of families with preschool-age children around the world who have bought CDs and DVDs featuring the Wiggles, the Australian foursome known as much for their cheery color-coded shirts as their catchy tunes, have long treated the band with an ardor reminiscent of the screams that greeted the British pop invasion in the 1960s.

So when Greg Page, 34, the band's lead singer since its inception

SEE WIGGLES, A4

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SEX-ED PROGRAM APPROVED
A federally financed abstinence-only sex education program that was banned from use in public schools last spring has now been approved by the state. C1

THE EXPERTS ON TOYS
Still wondering what to get your child this holiday season? Find out how youngsters in grades 2 through 6 rate what are supposed to be this year's hottest toys. D3

CHAVEZ WINS IN VENEZUELA
Voters in Venezuela return President Hugo Chavez, a harsh critic of the United States, to another six-year term in office. A2



PATRIOTS FINALLY TAME LIONS
The heavily favored Patriots manage to pull out a 28-21 victory over the Lions but New England needed Detroit to turn the ball over on its last three possessions to lock up a victory. B1