

**GLUM & GLUMMER**  
Cloudy, with occasional showers today; rain arrives tonight.  
**Forecast, F10**

**50¢**  
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# The Providence Journal

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**THURSDAY**  
NOVEMBER 16, 2006

**METRO CITY EDITION**

2006 New England Newspaper of the Year

## Autopsy uncovers a 42-year-old murder

Found floating in Narragansett Bay in 1964, a Cranston businessman was determined to have committed suicide — but the rumors persisted.

**BY BENJAMIN N. GEDAN**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The stubborn mystery fed a long-running debate among veteran police officers in Warwick, and it haunted members of the DeFusco

family for the past 42 years.

Yesterday, there finally came an answer: Louis J. DeFusco, a Cranston businessman, did not kill himself in the summer of 1964, when he disappeared for 12 days and was discovered floating in Narragansett Bay, near Prudence Island, a 30-pound ship's anchor fastened to his legs and a .38-caliber bullet lodged in his mouth.

A report released yesterday by the state's chief medical examiner said an examination of DeFusco's ex-

humed corpse contradicted the findings of a 1964 autopsy that had described the bullet wound as nonfatal, and perhaps self-inflicted, and declared drowning by suicide the cause of death.

DeFusco, the new report said, was murdered.

"It was a very hard road, but he's vindicated," DeFusco's daughter, Roberta DeMarco, 53, said yesterday. "He's at peace now."

DeFusco's wife, Lucy, and his three children — Roberta, William

and Robert — had long disputed the original autopsy report, insisting that Louis DeFusco was in high spirits in the days before his death, at age 38.

Their suspicions of foul play were shared by many in law enforcement, including one detective, Robert C. Nelson, who fruitlessly searched for clues and never fully accepted the suicide explanation.

In May, as the family prepared to

SEE **MURDER, A12**



In a photo taken shortly before he died in 1964, provided by the DeFusco family, Louis DeFusco departs on an airplane for a family vacation.

AP / DEFUSCO FAMILY PHOTO

## TURBULENCE IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY



AP / ELISE AMENDOLA

US Airways has made an \$8-billion cash and stock offer for bankrupt Delta Air Lines. The acquisition, if it goes through, could affect T.F. Green Airport if flights are cut and fewer gates are occupied by a combined US Airways-Delta.

## Major merger eyed

T.F. Green Airport could be the loser if US Airways and Delta Air Lines combine.

**BY DAVID MCPHERSON**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Reinvigorated by its merger last year with a low-cost rival, US Airways Group Inc. yesterday announced an \$8-billion offer for bankrupt Delta Air Lines Inc. that would create the largest carrier on the East Coast and bring together the second- and sixth-largest airlines at T.F.

Green Airport in Warwick.

Delta, which rebuffed an earlier overture from US Airways, said it would review the bid but highlighted its original plan to emerge from bankruptcy as an independent airline.

Citing lower fares following its merger last year with America West, US Airways said customers would benefit from its offer, but at least one industry observer believes fewer flights and higher prices could be the end result for travelers who use T.F. Green Airport if the deal occurs.

And for T.F. Green, it could mean a dent in revenues if flights are cut and fewer gates are occupied by a combined US Airways-Delta.

Even without a merger, Green is searching for ways to reverse a slide in passenger traffic that saw the total number of travelers using the Warwick airport in September down nearly 12 percent over the previous year.

A Rhode Island Airport Corporation official said it is too early to know what

SEE **AIRLINES, A10**

## Battle lines drawn over Iraq policy

The top U.S. commander in the region voices his opposition to calls in Congress for a phased pullout.

**BY THOMAS E. RICKS AND ANN SCOTT TYSON**  
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. commander for Iraq told Congress yesterday that a phased withdrawal of American troops would unleash more sectarian strife, and instead he advocated a "major change" in strategy that would beef up U.S. military teams training Iraqi forces.

Gen. John Abizaid, chief of U.S. Central Command, said bolstering the training effort could require a further increase in the

SEE **IRAQ, A11**



NEW YORK TIMES / DOUG MILLS

Gen. John Abizaid tells a Senate panel yesterday that Iraq needs more time.

## He's keeping count of U.S. war fatalities

**BY RICHARD FAUSSET**  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

STONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. — No one asked Michael White to count the dead soldiers in Iraq.

He is not a military man, and he has no friends or relatives who serve. He is a guy with a Honda Civic, a mortgage, and a job in a suburban office park. A guy with a wife and a 7-year-old daughter who has soccer games to go to.

But for more than 3 years — for no pay and no glory — White has kept a meticulous tally of every U.S. and coalition military fatality, posting the names and the numbers on his

Web site, www.icasualties.org.

It started as a hobby — the work of a war critic who wanted to help keep the facts straight. Today, The Providence Journal, the Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, and The New York Times use White's numbers to show the extent of the nation's collective sacrifice. Bloggers use his numbers to quell conspiracy theories, and soldiers' parents call up the site to make sure their children are not listed on it. Job seekers have sent him resumes, unaware that the operation is little more than

SEE **COUNT, A11**

## McCain due to join crowded field with presidential bid

**BY JANET HOOK**  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON — Striding through the wreckage of the midterm elections, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., will take a major step today toward a 2008 presidential bid by establishing a committee to explore formally a campaign and making two major speeches laying out his vision for the future of the GOP.

McCain has been considered the front-runner for the Republican nomination in a field that changed rapidly in the wake of the tumultuous

SEE **MCCAIN, A6**



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, briefly meets with President Bush yesterday during a refueling stop at Vnukovo International Airport in Moscow. The president is traveling to an economic summit in Singapore. **Story, Page A2.**

AP / CHARLES DHARA-PAK

## Ex-students admit guilt in fatal Seton Hall fire

The two will go to prison in connection with the 2000 fire that killed three freshmen at the New Jersey school.

**BY RONALD SMOTHERS**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

NEWARK, N.J. — Nearly seven years after a late-night dormitory fire that killed three freshmen at Seton Hall University and triggered nationwide changes in fire safety codes on college campuses, two former students on trial for murder pleaded guilty yesterday to arson and witness tampering, charges that carry five-year prison terms.

Prosecutors said they abandoned the murder charges to accept the pleas for fear that the jury could be confused and unconvinced by a circumstantial case relying on complex scientific evidence.

Under the agreement, which was announced as opening arguments in the long-awaited trial were scheduled to begin,

SEE **FIRE, A8**



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### FINAL BATTLE OVER BELCOURT CASTLE?

For the third time, the state Supreme Court denies a claim by a former plumber to the art and antiques collection housed in Belcourt Castle on fabled Bellevue Avenue. **B1**

### HOUSING PRICES TUMBLE

Prices of single-family houses sold by real estate agents in Rhode Island fall by as much as 7.5 percent during the third quarter in some communities. **F1**

### EXAMINING AN ANCIENT RELATIVE

Using a 38,000-year-old bone fragment found in a Croatian cave, scientists are decoding a section of DNA belonging to the long-extinct Neanderthal. **A7**



### THE RETURN OF TRENT LOTT

Four years after racially impolitic remarks cost him the Senate's top post, Republican senators return Trent Lott of Mississippi to Congress' leadership ranks. **A2**

C M Y K