

KEEPING RHODE ISLAND GREEN



Kevin Essington, of The Nature Conservancy, strolls the 970-acre Glen Avon Farms, in West Greenwich. Half the property, long owned by the Shepard family, was willed to the organization and it has purchased the balance.

This wild land stays wild

The Nature Conservancy's acquisition of a West Greenwich farm will help preserve 2.6 square miles of woodland.

BY MICHELLE J. LEE
JOURNAL ENVIRONMENT WRITER

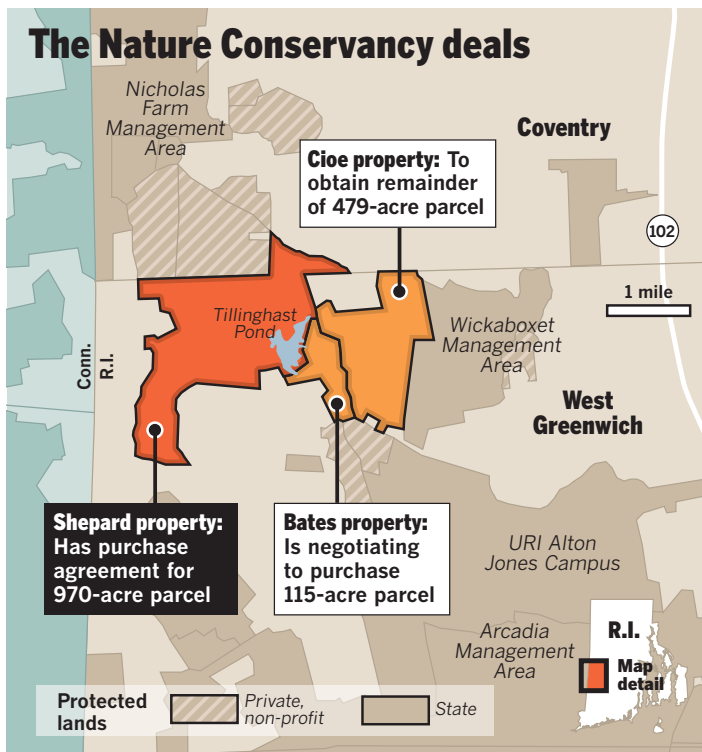
WEST GREENWICH — On Plain Road, a quiet street bordered by tall pines and oaks, sits Glen Avon Farms, a home-stead surrounded by a pond and open fields overlooking a dense forest teeming with wildlife.

As a child, George W. Shepard used to camp, fish and hike on the 970-acre family property. Now 55, the retired insurance salesman walks the land daily with his dogs.

Tillinghast Pond, a former cranberry bog, hosts eel and colonies of beavers, otters and waterfowl, he said. Deer, turkeys and even moose have been spotted in the surrounding woods.

Shepard loves the solitude and said it can feel like "some totally different world, a place miles and miles away from anywhere."

In the future, the public will be able to have similar experi-



ences there, thanks to The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island, an environmental group that protects more than 27,000 acres in the state.

Last month, the Shepard family sold half of Glen Avon Farms for \$11.5 million to the conservancy. The other half of the property had been donated

to the conservancy through the estate of Shepard's mother, Phebe M. Shepard, whose husband owned Shepard's Department Store, in Providence. The conservancy will announce the deal at a news conference this morning. "It's a real achievement and conservation success," said Kathleen

Wainwright, the organization's director of conservation programs.

Ultimately, The Nature Conservancy hopes to open the property for boating, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and hunting. Wainwright said the group will work closely with town officials and the state Department of Environmental Management to manage the property.

Glen Avon Farms will eventually be combined with three adjacent properties to protect a total of 1,642 acres, or 2.6 square miles of forest. The other parcels in transition include 479 acres owned by Arizona-based developer Cioe Cos.; 115 acres owned by Alexander Bates, 89, a retired Naval architect and marine engineer; and 78 acres bought from the Shepard family in July 2005.

The acquisition of these properties will be the final link in creating a green necklace with protected land near the Connecticut border, including Arcadia state park, Wickaboxet State Forest and parcels managed by the Audubon Society and University of Rhode Island.

Once completed, the four deals will represent the largest

Government seeks savings on Medicaid

The administration wants to cut payments to pharmacies in hopes of reducing drug costs in the health program for the poor.

BY ROBERT PEAR
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration today will propose sweeping reductions in payments to pharmacies as a way to save money for Medicaid, the health program for more than 50 million low-income people.

The goal is to ensure that Medicaid can get drug discounts similar to those provided to large customers in the private market, including companies such as Caremark Rx and Medco Health Solutions that manage drug benefits for people who have health insurance through an employer. Congressional investigators have found that Medicaid pays 35 percent more than the lowest price available in the private market for some commonly used brand-name drugs.

States, which share the cost of Medicaid with the federal government, make the final decision on what pharmacies are paid,

subject to federal limits. The proposed rule would provide new data for states to use in their calculations, redefining the "average manufacturer price" for brand-name and generic drugs.

Consumers would not be directly affected by the proposed changes. But federal officials said they hoped consumers would press for lower drug prices after checking the price list, which will be posted on a Web site.

S. Lawrence Kocot, a senior adviser to the administrator at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said the proposed rule would carry out provisions of a law, the Deficit Reduction Act, signed by President Bush on Feb. 8.

The law, and the proposed rule, would also limit payments to state Medicaid agencies for the aggregate costs of prescription drugs when a generic substitute

SEE MEDICAID, A11

Powell against sending more troops to Iraq

The former secretary of state warns that "the active Army is about broken."

BY KAREN DEYOUNG
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said yesterday that the United States is losing what he described as a "civil war" in Iraq and that he is not convinced that an increase in U.S. troops there would reverse the situation. Instead, he called for a new strategy that would relinquish responsibility for Iraqi security to the government in Baghdad sooner rather than later, with a U.S. drawdown to begin by the middle of next year.

Powell's comments broke his

SEE IRAQ, A8



REUTERS PHOTO VIA AP / EDDIE KEOGH

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, during a visit to Iraq yesterday, pledges to support the current embattled government. Story, A8

Critics question if Bush is willing to alter course

Where some see a pragmatic politician capable of changing his Iraq policy, others see a hard-headed ideology.

BY PETER BAKER
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — In the late 19th century, the queen of England sent the president of the United States a desk made from the timbers of a decommissioned ship, the HMS Resolute.

ANALYSIS | Almost every occupant of the White House since then has made the Resolute his desk. Perhaps more than most, President Bush has taken its name to heart.

But now, as Mr. Bush reth-

inks his strategy in Iraq and approaches one of the most fateful moments of his presidency, he confronts difficult questions: At what point does determination to a cause become self-defeating folly? Can he change direction in a meaningful way without sacrificing principle?

For Mr. Bush, this is a tension that goes to the heart of his political identity and governing style. He captured and retained the presidency in part by portraying two successive Democratic oppo-

SEE BUSH, A6

A R.I. trailblazer takes on her most influential post yet

"We are taking our place in leadership roles, whether in corporate America, academia, medicine or the judiciary," says Mary M. Lisi, the first woman to head the U.S. District Court in Rhode Island.

BY EDWARD FITZPATRICK
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Mary M. Lisi this month succeeded Ernest C. Torres as chief judge of the U.S. District Court of Rhode Island, becoming the first woman to hold that position.

Lisi also broke ground when she was appointed to the federal bench in 1994, becoming the first woman to serve as a U.S. District judge

in this state. Drucilla S. Ramey, executive director of the National Association of Women Judges, said, "Rhode Island is an odd mixture: On one hand, it's very forward-looking, but it's very New England conservative, as well. So having a woman in that kind of position is going to have an impact."

For instance, Ramey said, "It will make the younger women in that state say, 'If she can do it, I can do it.' Not necessarily as a judge, but as a leader." Also, she said female judges bring to bear different life experiences and can influence the way other judges view issues.

According to the Federal Judicial Center, 24.8 percent of active federal judges are wom-

SEE LISI, A10



Judge Mary M. Lisi says she is only the second woman to head a major court in Rhode Island.

SEE LAND, A9

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IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS
Despite the pressure to spend a lot, many people find that giving and receiving inexpensive presents can bring the greatest joy. **A12**

A GRIM DISCOVERY
Rescuers looking for three missing climbers on Mount Hood in Washington find a body in a snow cave in the area where one of the climbers made a distress call a week ago. **A2**



TAKING IT OUT ON THE TEXANS
After suffering a shutout at the hands of the Miami Dolphins, Richard Seymour and the rest of the New England Patriots pummel the Houston Texans to come away with a 40-7 win at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. **B1**