

STAYING POWER
Snow ending by midday,
then resuming later tonight
and continuing tomorrow.
Forecast, A10

The Providence Journal

projo.com

MONDAY
FEBRUARY 26, 2007

50¢
\$2.40 per week by carrier

2006 New England Newspaper of the Year

AL GORE, MOVIE STAR

How the former vice president has suddenly become geek-chic cool.

BY WILLIAM BOOTH
THE WASHINGTON POST
LOS ANGELES — In the annals of vice presidential history, last night was something different. In his black tux, the man known to his most fervent fans as "The Goracle" arrived by hybrid eco-limo and, surrounded by fellow Hollywood greenies Cameron Diaz and Leonardo DiCaprio, strolled down the red carpet at the Academy Awards to answer the immortal question: "Al, who are you wearing?"
What a year it has been for Al Gore and his little indie film.

An Inconvenient Truth, the 100-minute movie that is essentially Gore giving a slide show about global warming, is the third highest grossing documentary ever, with a worldwide box office of \$45 million, right behind blockbusters *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *March of the Penguins*.
As expected, the film won an Oscar in the documentary feature category.
In the year since his film premiered at the

SEE **GORE, A3**



Actor Alan Arkin, winner of the best supporting actor award for his performance in *Little Miss Sunshine* at last night's Academy Awards presentation, wasn't taking any chances as he delivers his acceptance speech from prepared notes. Jennifer Hudson won the best supporting actress Oscar for her role in *Dreamgirls*.

More on last night's awards on A2

AP / MARK J. TERRILL

STUDENT DRINKING AT ISSUE



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

Drinks are served at McPhail's, a bar in the lower level of Slavin Center on the PC campus.

PC faces its problem

Excessive drinking is pervasive at the college and causes many other problems, according to a report by the school.

BY JENNIFER D. JORDAN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER
PROVIDENCE — Providence College, acknowledging that it has a serious problem with binge drinking, is developing a campaign to curtail alcohol abuse — an initiative that aims to transform the culture of the small Dominican college known for its strong academics and athletics.

While alcohol abuse by college students is a national issue, a report released last week by PC found that excessive

drinking pervades the college and causes myriad other problems including accidents, physical attacks and sexual assault.

PC's president, the Rev. Brian J. Shanley, commissioned the report last year and posted it on the college Web site last week. He said that while he was aware it would stir controversy, he felt the problem was so far-reaching it needed to be discussed and dealt with publicly.

The report used data from a survey conducted last year that was answered by

1,079 freshmen and sophomores at PC. The survey found that 76 percent of respondents got drunk at least once in the previous month. Half the students reported they "binge drink" three or more times within a two-week period. Binge drinking is defined as consuming four drinks by women and five drinks by men. Sixty-three percent said that when they consume alcohol, they usually have more than five drinks. More than half the respondents said they had used fake identification to obtain alcohol.

Since the fall semester, 51 students

SEE **DRINKING, A4**

Cleric vows to thwart new plan to secure Iraq

A message from radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr urges his followers to avoid working with U.S. forces.

BY DAMIEN CAVE and WISAM A. HABEED
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq's most powerful Shiite militant cleric publicly repudiated the new Baghdad security plan for the first time yesterday, according to a statement distributed by his aides that said the push to quell violence was doomed to fail as long as it was directed by the U.S. military.

The cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, controls the Mahdi Army, the largest Shiite militia in Iraq, and without his support for the stepped-up security effort, the prospects for continued sectarian violence and a direct conflict with U.S. troops could increase.

His precise whereabouts have remained unknown since Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki announced the start of the plan two weeks ago. Until now, al-Sadr has appeared to cooperate, allowing his most unruly commanders to be arrested and ordering his organization to focus on political rather than military resistance.

It was unclear why he would turn against the plan, but many of his followers have been losing patience with the security push to eliminate violence against Shiites. Yesterday, that violence included an attack by a suicide bomber that killed 40

SEE **IRAQ, A7**

U.S. troops lack proper mental care, study finds

A task force report cites an overburdened mental-health system, with a 40-percent vacancy rate for clinical psychologists in the Army and Navy.

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Many Iraq war soldiers, veterans and their families are not getting needed psychological help because a stressed military's mental-health system is overwhelmed and understaffed, a task force of psychologists found.

The panel's 67-page report calls for the immediate strengthening of the military mental-health system. It cites a 40-percent vacancy rate in active-duty psychologists in the Army and Navy, resources diverted from family counselors and a weak transition for veterans leaving the military.

The findings were released yesterday by the American Psychological Association.

More than 3 out of 10 soldiers met the criteria for a "mental disorder," but far less than half of those in need sought help, the report found. Sometimes that occurs because of the stigma of having mental-health problems; other times, the help simply isn't available, according to the task force. And there are

SEE **MILITARY, A7**

In Ocean State, food stamp program goes begging

Nearly half those eligible do not sign up for the federally financed monthly food allowances, placing Rhode Island among the five lowest states for participation.

BY SCOTT MAYEROWITZ
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU
Thousands of Rhode Islanders who qualify for food stamps don't sign up for the program, and some advocates say the state isn't doing enough to encourage them to enroll.
About 140,000 residents qualify for the program, which gives individ-

uals and families monthly food allowances. However, only 52 percent of those eligible actually receive the benefits. Only four states have lower participation rates, according to a federal study.

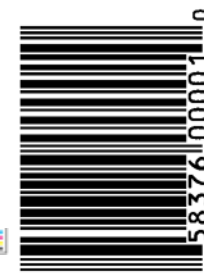
Many eligible Rhode Islanders don't think they qualify, think the application process is too cumbersome

or simply can't make it to state offices to enroll because the hours conflict with their jobs.

"The state doesn't seem to be creative about getting those participation numbers up," said Henry Shelton, one of the state's most relentless activists for the poor. "We're leaving millions of dollars in Washington."

The food stamp program is paid for by the federal government. Last year, the government gave out nearly \$81 million in food stamps to Rhode Islanders.

SEE **FOOD STAMPS, A4**



INSIDE TODAY

© 2007 Published daily since 1829

5 SECTIONS

Ask Army	D4	Lifebeat	D1
Bridge	D4	Lotteries	B4
Business	A8	Obituaries	C2
Classified	E1	People	D1
Comics	D5	Rhode Island	C1
Crossword	D4	Sports	B1
Editorial	C4	Television	D6
Kidsbeat	D3	What's Happening	D4
Legal ads	E6		

FEW SEEKING GOP POST

Given the party's performance in last November's election, maybe it's no surprise that, so far, there's only one person seeking to become the next chairman of the state's Republican Party. **C1**

AN UPHILL ROAD FOR PC

The final week of the Big East season is set to begin and the Providence College Friars are still in the running to make the NCAA Tournament — barely. **B1**

HONORS FOR URI COACH

Jim Baron learns that he is a finalist for this year's prestigious Jim Phelan National Coach-of-the-Year Award. **C1**



A TOUCH OF ART

The Black Donnellys, which premieres tonight at 10, has some artful touches befitting its creator, Paul Haggis, who directed *Crash*, last year's Oscar-winning best picture. **D1**

C M Y K