

**GLOOMY**  
Fog and clouds remain for most the day, followed by drizzle and rain tonight.  
**Forecast, F12**  
**50¢**  
\$2.40 per week by carrier

# The Providence Journal

**WEDNESDAY**  
NOVEMBER 15, 2006

**SOUTH COUNTY EDITION**

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2006 New England Newspaper of the Year

## Duplicate voter registrations found

Flaws in the system mean that as many as 10,000 people could have voted more than once.

**BY PAUL EDWARD PARKER**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

When Theresa M. Al-Hallak got divorced in 1994, she moved from Cranston to North Providence, where she registered to

vote under what had been her married name.

By 1998, though, she wanted to change back to her maiden name, Theresa M. Lawrence. She went to Town Hall, to Probate Court, and made the change legal. Then, she went to the Registry of Motor Vehicles to change her driver's license. The clerk at the Registry asked if she wanted to register to vote under her

"new" name. She said yes, figuring officials would just change the name on her voting record.

Instead, they basically cloned her. Theresa Al-Hallak and Theresa Lawrence were both registered to vote from the same address on Fruit Hill Avenue.

She called Town Hall, pointed out the error and figured it was fixed.

But she kept getting voter cards

for both incarnations of herself.

She called Town Hall again and again. She went to visit in person. It went on for eight years.

It wasn't until this year, when the secretary of state sent a comprehensive mailing to all registered voters, that Theresa Lawrence was finally able to consign Theresa Al-Hallak to history.

SEE **VOTERS, A6**



Amy Goggin, of Cumberland, registered to vote when she turned 18 and registered again when she married. She is listed under both names in Cumberland's voting rolls.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

## Kidnapped in Iraq

As many as 150 people are abducted by gunmen wearing police uniforms in a daring daylight raid in downtown Baghdad.

**BY JOHN F. BURNS AND MICHAEL LUO**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Gunmen dressed in Iraqi police commando uniforms and driving vehicles with Interior Ministry markings rounded up dozens of people inside a government building in the heart of Baghdad yesterday and drove off with them in one of the most brazen mass kidnappings since a wave of sectarian abductions and killings became a feature of the war.

Although some Iraqi officials said as many as 150 people had been taken, the U.S. military command put the total at 55.

The last high-profile mass kidnapping occurred in July, when gunmen seized more than 30 people from an Iraqi Olympics Committee meeting. Six were later released, but the fate of the rest is unknown.

Witnesses said as many as 50 gunmen arrived at the Ministry of Higher Education compound at midmorning, forced their way past a handful of guards and stormed through a four-story building, herding office workers, visitors and even a delivery boy outside at rifle point. After women were separated, the men were loaded aboard a fleet of more than 30 pickup trucks and 2 larger trucks, then driven through heavy traffic toward mainly Shiite neighborhoods on the city's eastern edge, officials and witnesses said.

A spokesman for the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for the police, announced on state television several hours after the abductions that orders had been issued for the arrest of six police commanders from the Karada area in eastern Baghdad, the site of the Higher Education Ministry.

SEE **IRAQ, A2**



AP / KARIM KADIM

Iraqi security officials inspect the reception area at the Ministry of Higher Education in Baghdad after yesterday's mass kidnapping.

## Elections Board halts all recounts

The postponement comes as the board appeals a judge's ruling ordering that disputed ballots be photocopied and saved for possible review later.

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

PROVIDENCE — A Superior Court judge yesterday ordered the state Board of Elections to set aside photocopies of any ballot that does not register a vote during machine recounts, raising the possibility that candidates will be permitted to scrutinize those ballots to determine whether a voter's intent can be determined.

The board strongly opposed the ruling by Judge Stephen J. Fortunato Jr., arguing that manual reviews would dramatically slow recounts and under-

mine the objectivity of the election process.

Following the ruling, the board swiftly delayed all eight scheduled recounts from the general election on Nov. 7, including a recount in an at-large City Council race in East Providence set to begin this morning. Raymond A. Marcaccio, the board's attorney, vowed to appeal the decision to the state Supreme Court today.

"You are throwing the objective electronic system down the tubes," Marcaccio said. "If we allow every candidate to review the ballots, it would interfere with the counting process."

The issue was brought to court by lawyer Angel Taveras, who filed suit on behalf of Cranston Republican mayoral candidate Allan W. Fung and Republican

SEE **RECOUNTS, A8**

## First-ever survey gauges satisfaction at nursing homes

Overall, independently owned and operated facilities scored highest in resident satisfaction in the survey of the state's 92 nursing homes.

**BY FELICE J. FREYER**  
JOURNAL MEDICAL WRITER

For the first time, the state Department of Health today will answer a crucial question: In which Rhode Island nursing homes are the residents most happy?

The department is releasing, and posting online, the results of surveys of nursing home residents and their relatives about

such matters as whether the food is tasty, the staff respectful and the activities interesting.

These satisfaction surveys, paid for by the nursing homes and mandated by state law, add a new dimension to the wealth of comparative data about nursing homes.

Consumers have long been able to learn how well every nursing home performs on state health inspections and on managing clinical issues such as infections, pain and bed sores. But until now, there has been no public information on whether

SEE **SURVEY, A2**

## Nobel author: My words can speak for themselves

**BY ELIZABETH GUDRAIS**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — Speaking at Brown University last night, the novelist who brought Turkey its first Nobel Prize sought to turn attention to his writing, rather than his actions.

Even during a panel discussion on censorship and freedom of expression, Orhan Pamuk spoke of broad trends, rather than the situation in his

home country.

Pamuk, 54, won the 2006 Nobel Prize in literature, and the Swedish Academy, which confers the prizes, gave only literary reasons in its announcement. Still, there was a political subtext to giving the award to Pamuk. He was charged last year with insulting Turkish identity by denouncing, in an interview with a Swiss maga-

SEE **AUTHOR, A2**



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / CONNIE GROSCH

Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk waits in the wings at Brown.

## Reed awarded seat on key Senate panel

The state's senior senator is named to the Appropriations Committee while Senator-elect Sheldon Whitehouse will join the environmental panel.

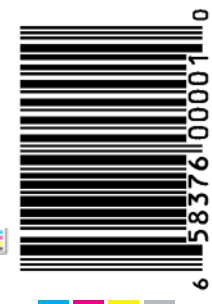
**BY JOHN E. MULLIGAN**  
JOURNAL WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Sen. Jack Reed was assigned yesterday to the Senate Appropriations Committee, winning a seat at the table where money is distributed for many government programs.

Reed will also keep his high-profile seat on the Armed Services Committee, plus his slots on the panels with jurisdiction over health care and banking.

Senator-elect Sheldon White-

SEE **SENATE, A8**



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C M Y K

### GRIM OUTLOOK FOR REGION'S ECONOMY

An economic study group predicts that New England will lag the rest of the nation in economic growth through 2010, with Rhode Island having the slowest growth in the region. **G1**

### TREATMENT CHALLENGED

A large international study finds that opening blocked arteries does not help heart attack patients, and may even be harmful, unless it's done right away. **A3**

### GAY MARRIAGE APPROVED

South Africa becomes the first country in all of Africa and the fifth nation in the world to legalize same-sex marriages. **A7**



### SOX PLACE WINNING BID

With a bid reported to be between \$38 million and \$45 million, the Boston Red Sox win the right to negotiate with Japanese pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, considered the best free agent on the market. **C1**