

SOGGY START
Occasional showers today with highs barely reaching 70; showers tonight.
Forecast, B8

The Providence Journal

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THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KRIS CRAIG

Up, up and away — almost



Above, from left, Mark Sand, Mark Lefevre and his brother Gerard labor to prepare a balloon to participate in yesterday's South County Hot Air Balloon Festival at URI's athletic fields in South Kingstown. But strong winds prevented many of the lighter-than-air crafts from going aloft. At left, a few, like Renee Johnson, of Coventry, foreground, and Kiara Proulx, of Warwick, still got a chance to experience the thrill of flight, albeit with their balloon safely tethered to the ground.

U.S. envoy seeks visas for Iraqi employees

Many fear they will be subject to retaliation for having worked with Americans once U.S. forces withdraw.

BY SPENCER S. HSU
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The American ambassador in Baghdad, Ryan Crocker, has asked the Bush administration to take the unusual step of granting immigrant visas to all Iraqis employed by the U.S. government in Iraq because of growing concern that they will quit and flee the country if they cannot be assured eventual safe passage to the United States.

Crocker's request comes as the administration is struggling to respond to the flood of Iraqis who have sought refuge in neighboring countries since sectarian fighting escalated early last year. The United States has admitted only 133 Iraqi refugees since October, despite predicting that it would process 7,000 by the end of September.

"Our [Iraqi staff members] work under extremely difficult conditions, and are targets for violence including murder and kidnapping," Crocker wrote Undersecretary of State Henrietta Fore. "Unless they know that there is some hope of an [immigrant visa] in the future, many will continue to seek asylum, leaving our Mission lacking in one of our most valuable assets."

SEE VISAS, A6

Clinton holds lead in poll over Obama

Democrats say she offers the best chance of the party retaking the White House in the 2008 presidential election.

BY DAN BALZ and JON COHEN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — By a wide margin, Democrats view Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York as the party's candidate best positioned to win the general election, and she holds a double-digit lead over Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois in the race for the nomination, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News Poll.

How competitive the Democratic contest becomes could turn on the question of whether voters are significantly more interested in a fresh face or in a candidate they see as projecting strong leadership.

Clinton enjoys a substantial edge over Obama among the 4 in 10 Democrats who said that in assessing presidential candidates, strength and experience are more important than new ideas or a new direction.

SEE DEMOCRATS, A6

Owners of dangerous dogs feeling law's bite

More than 25 states hold owners liable for injuries and deaths caused by out-of-control animals.

BY IAN URBINA
THE NEW YORK TIMES

RICHMOND, Va. — Bear is a golden retriever-shepherd who attacked a bicyclist. Dee Dee, a pit bull mix, killed a cat. Cody, a Labrador mix, bit the neighbor.

Their mug shots, misdeeds and home addresses went online this

month at the Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry, a new Web page modeled after the state's sex offender registry. It lets residents locate dogs in their county that have attacked a person or an animal, and that a judge has decided could cause injury again.

Created after dogs killed a toddler and an 82-year-old woman in sepa-

rate incidents in the last two years, Virginia's registry is part of a growing effort by states to deal with dogs deemed dangerous. More than 25 states hold owners legally liable if their dogs maim or kill, and in 2006, Ohio became the first state to enact a breed ban, though it was later overturned.

In the last two years, nearly 100 municipalities have taken similar steps — banning pit bulls, Rottweil-

ers, English bull terriers and American Staffordshire terriers, or passing regulations that require owners to use muzzles or short leashes in public, according to the American Kennel Club.

In June, Texas responded to a November 2005 mauling death of a 76-year-old woman by enacting some of the harshest criminal penalties for

SEE ATTACKS, A4

Brown med students pursue scholarship outside textbooks

BY FELICE J. FREYER
JOURNAL MEDICAL WRITER

Juan C. Vasquez wants to learn, but he also wants to act — to fix things.

The 23-year-old medical student is studying why asthma is more prevalent and more severe among Latino children. But not just to know, although knowing is important. He wants to advocate for a better life for those children.

As research assistant to a Brown professor, Vasquez is spending the summer between his first and second years at Brown's medical school documenting the asthma incidence among Latinos and learning about their lives. He's also volunteering at the Rhode Island

SEE BROWN, A5

Raptors find themselves in their element in urban areas

Three juvenile red-tailed hawks get a bird's-eye view of the scene in Pawtucket's Slater Park last week.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / MARY MURPHY



Forced from their natural habitats, peregrines, red-tailed hawks and ospreys — are thriving in Rhode Island cities.

BY KAREN LEE ZINER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

*Our hopes, like towering falcons, aim
At objects in an airy height;
The little pleasure of the game*

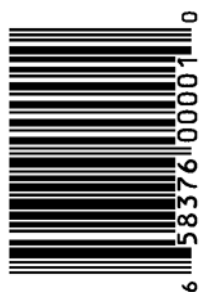
*Is from afar to view the flight.
(Matthew Prior)*

CREATURE CHRONICLES
a summer series

Each spring in recent years, a pair of red-tailed hawks have nested on an old cooling tower at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence, delighting onlookers as they shriek and soar and teach their fledglings to fly.

SEE RAPTORS, A10

projo.com Extra: For more of this series, and to share your creature chronicles, go to www.projo.com



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SOCIETY ON THE MEND

With the imminent launch of an online catalog, the Rhode Island Historical Society is emerging from a difficult chapter in its own history and officials say the future looks bright. **C1**

ISLAMISTS RETURNED IN TURKEY

Voters hand the Islamist-influenced ruling party a decisive victory in parliamentary elections, raising the specter of bitter new quarrels over the feared erosion of Turkey's secular traditions. **A2**



BRITISH OPEN GOES TO HARRINGTON

Sergio Garcia blows a three-shot lead going into the final round, allowing Padraig Harrington, left, of Ireland, to win the 136th British Open on the final hole of a playoff round. **B1**