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Doreen Holmes, volunteer coordinator at St. Patrick Church, gives Peter a hug after giving him a Christmas gift after the Monday meal.

Peter's Gifts

A man with very little finds ways to touch those around him

PROVIDENCE
Peter's gift is a fragile Dutch girl doll with corn silk pigtailed and a cotton kerchief. He found the doll for sale at The Salvation Army. He was in line to pay for it when a stranger appeared like an angel and bought the doll for Peter, for Christmas.

"The way it transpired," Peter said softly, "it could not have been more magical."
He has dark brown eyes, smooth skin and long fine hair of perfect black. Over a black T-shirt and a wool sports coat, Peter wears a disintegrating leather trench coat, slit at the seams and repaired with electrician's tape. The people who have served him for at least the past five years at St. Patrick's meal kitchen know little about Peter, beyond that they love him. He claims to be 33, which looks about right. He is clean-shaven, and says he is not among the many at St. Pat's who are homeless, on the streets or in the woods, though Peter hints he once was.

STORY BY MARK ARSENAULT / PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB BREIDENBACH
THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL



Doreen Holmes keeps the small gifts that Peter has given her throughout the years they have known each other in a special box. Peter donates whatever he can at St. Patrick Church.

His walk is unforgettable. Peter limps like a man dragging his feet through the tangles of a swamp. Lucky things happen to him all the time, he says, like the stranger buying him the doll. "I have been incredibly blessed in all aspects of my life. You can call me Lucky Peter."

The doll is for Peter's friend Mary, whom he met five years ago on a RIPTA bus. They had shared life recipes for getting by in hard times, and sometimes ate at soup kitchens together. There's a soup kitchen meal someplace every night around Rhode Island. They fight loneliness as much as hunger. To Peter, meal kitchens are mysteries and miracles. He believes in angels. He believes people come into your life at the right time, as angels do. "My view is, when you pray for a place, any place in the world, angels go down there and help that place."

At St. Patrick's last Monday, Mary held her Christmas doll gently, as she might hold some-

SEE GIFTS, A9

Sanctions against Iran approved

The United Nations Security Council resolution addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions restricts punishment to non-military measures.

BY ELISSA GOOTMAN
THE NEW YORK TIMES

UNITED NATIONS — The Security Council yesterday unanimously agreed to sanctions intended to curb Iran's nuclear program, capping months of negotiations over how severe and sweeping the restrictions should be.

The resolution, prepared by Germany and the Security Council's five permanent members, the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China, bans the import and export of materials and technology used in uranium enrichment, reprocessing and ballistic missiles.

Alejandro D. Wolff, the acting U.S. ambassador, hailed the resolution as an "unambiguous message that there are serious repercussions" for Iran's pursuit of its nuclear ambitions. He added, however, that the resolution was "only a first step," saying, "If necessary, we will not hesitate to return to this body for further action if Iran fails to take steps to comply."

The resolution, which mandates compliance but restricts punishment to non-military measures, has been in the works since Iran flouted the Security Council's call for a "full and sustained suspension" of nuclear activities by Aug. 31. It is weaker than proposals in earlier drafts, which started circulat-

SEE IRAN, A7

Generals now willing to add troops

A possible increase in U.S. forces in Iraq could range from fewer than 10,000 troops to as many as 30,000.

BY MICHAEL R. GORDON AND DAVID E. SANGER
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The American military command in Iraq is now willing to back a temporary increase in American troops in Baghdad as part of a broader Iraqi and U.S. effort to stem the slide toward chaos, senior American officials said yesterday. President Bush and his advisers were told yesterday of the new position when Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates met with them at Camp David, an administration official said.

Until recently, the top ground commander in Iraq, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., has argued that sending more American forces into Baghdad and Anbar province, the two most violent regions of Iraq, would increase the Iraqi dependency on Washington and in the words of one senior official, "make this feel more like an occupation."

But Casey and Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, who has day-to-day command of American forces

SEE TROOPS, A6

The dangerous art of selling Christmas trees in Baghdad

On a street in the Karrada district, Nouri Dawoud calls his public presence a "fidai," or suicide mission.

BY NANCY TREJOS
THE WASHINGTON POST

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Nouri Dawoud has one of the most dangerous jobs in Baghdad. He sells Christmas trees.

For seven hours a day, he stands on the same street corner in a neighborhood where drive-by shootings and snipers are not uncommon. He caters to Christians, who are among the most targeted people in the city. On a good day, he attracts a crowd, a draw to any would-be suicide

bomber.

Dawoud has been selling trees at the same corner in the Karrada district every Christmas season for the past 10 years. At 77, he is not ready to abandon his spot.

He may have no choice. Christmas was once a holiday that Christians and a few Muslims in Iraq enjoyed. Now, they fear celebrating it. These days in Baghdad, even buying a Christmas tree can lead to getting killed.

SEE TREE, A8

Last-minute shoppers hit the pavement

For those who have delayed their gift buying, yesterday was a good day to put "power shopping" to work at the malls and other retail outlets.

BY PAUL GRIMALDI
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

People from Southeastern New England headed out to the malls early yesterday morning to finish off their holiday shopping on what was expected to be the busiest shopping day of the year.

Shoppers arrived at the malls before most stores opened, taking advantage of sparsely trafficked department store aisles to shop quickly or taking up posts in concourses as they checked over dog-eared shopping lists and sipped takeout coffee.

SEE SHOPPERS, A2



Shoppers search for bargains at Providence Place mall.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / JOHN FREIDAH



WEATHER
Still mild.
High 51. Forecast, C10.

LOCAL NEWS
A crèche at PC
with 175 figurines.

LIFEBEAT
Setting rules and curfews
when college kids come home.

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