

ICED UP
Cold and very windy today,
with highs in the mid-20s;
very cold tonight.
Forecast, C8

The Providence Journal

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MONDAY
DECEMBER 17, 2007

50¢
\$2.40 per week by carrier

Jet slides off runway as R.I. endures its 2nd storm

The accident forces the airport to halt operations for several hours; on highways, the storm's timing helps avert major traffic disruptions.

BY EDWARD FITZPATRICK
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

WARWICK — An airplane slid off a T.F. Green Airport runway yesterday, bringing incoming and outgoing flights to a halt on a day that saw 5.6 inches of snow fall at the airport.

A US Airways Express flight, carrying 31 passengers and 3 crew members from Philadelphia, slid off the runway after landing shortly before 5 p.m., according to Barb Jones, spokeswoman for Air Wisconsin, a regional carrier for US Airways.

No injuries were reported by those aboard Flight 3758, Jones said. She said she assumed the incident was related to the weather, but she said she did not know for sure and had no further information

about what happened. She described the plane as a 50-seat CRJ200, a twin-engine jet manufactured by Bombardier Aerospace, a Canadian company.

After the incident, the airport closed both runways for about 2½ hours, airport spokeswoman Patti Goldstein said. One runway was reopened at about 7:30 p.m., so flights were able to resume then, she said.

"We can handle a good deal" with one runway open, Goldstein said. "But if the winds change [today], it might curtail operations. We encourage people to check with their carriers [this] morning."

Goldstein said the US Airways plane

SEE **PLANE, A10**



Rescue workers are on the scene after a US Airways Express plane slides off a runway at T.F. Green Airport last night in Warwick after arriving from Philadelphia. No injuries were reported as all passengers and crew members were evacuated safely.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL
CONNIE GROSCH

PATRIOTS 20, JETS 10



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Rushing toward perfection

Running back Laurence Maroney, center, provides much of the Patriots' offense yesterday by rushing for 104 yards and a touchdown on 26 carries as New England keeps its unbeaten streak alive by defeating the New York Jets. Complete coverage in Sports, B1, and online at projo.com/patriots/

Toys getting closer look

The Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program, which is accepting donations until Thursday, is working to ensure the toys it distributes are safe.

BY G. WAYNE MILLER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

CRANSTON — Boxes of teddy bears, remote-control cars and board games fill a warehouse run by the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program on this Friday morning. Outside, a trailer filled with more toys awaits unloading. With less than two weeks to go until Christmas, it is the usual busy season for Toys For Tots, established 60 years ago to bring joy to needy children.

But 23 pages of photographs and product descriptions taped to the warehouse wall confirm that this year, it is not business as usual. High levels of lead paint in Chinese-manufactured toys have prompted a new level of vigilance in one of America's most venerable gift-giving programs.

"We can assure people that we are looking at the toys," says Staff Sgt. Manases J. Cabrera, Rhode Island coordinator for the national program.

And the Marines are not satis-

SEE **TOYS, A5**

"Our predecessors could only dream of the kind of data we now have."

NICHOLAS CHRISTAKIS
Harvard sociology professor

Facebook becomes a tool to study the young

With 58 million active users, the Web site provides the ideal setting to examine how people connect to one another.

BY STEPHANIE ROSENBLUM
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Each day about 1,700 juniors at an East Coast college log on to Facebook.com to accumulate "friends," compare movie preferences, share videos and exchange cybercocktails and kisses. Unwittingly, these students have become the subjects of academic research.

To study how personal tastes, habits and values affect the formation of social relationships (and how social relationships affect tastes, habits and values), a team of researchers from Harvard and the University of California, Los Angeles, is monitoring the Facebook profiles of an entire class of students at one college, which they declined to name for privacy reasons.

"One of the holy grails of social science is the degree to which taste determines friendship, or to which friendship determines taste," said Jason Kaufman, an associate professor of sociology at Harvard and a

member of the research team. "Do birds of a feather flock together, or do you become more like your friends?"

In other words, Facebook — where users rate one another as "hot or not," play games like "Pirates vs. Ninjas" and throw virtual sheep at one another — is helping scholars explore fundamental social science questions.

"We're on the cusp of a new way of doing social science," said Nicholas Christakis, a Harvard sociology professor who is also part of the research. "Our predecessors could only dream of the kind of data we now

SEE **FACEBOOK, A10**

Whitehouse voices concerns over Bush's judicial nominee

The Rhode Island Democrat is looking to allay his fears that William E. Smith, nominated for a seat on the federal appeals bench, is "not a stalking horse for Bush ideology."

BY JOHN E. MULLIGAN
JOURNAL WASHINGTON BUREAU

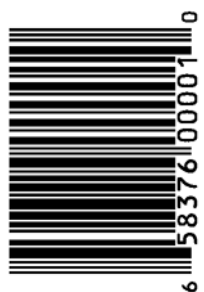
WASHINGTON — Even if U.S. District Judge William E. Smith pledges to follow judicial precedent as a member of a powerful federal appeals court, he could go back on his word once he gets the lifetime job, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse suggested last week.

"You've got to make sure that the guy's not a stalking horse for Bush ideology," Whitehouse said of Smith, whom the president has nominated to a vacancy on the 1st

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. "That's an issue that needs to be put to rest," said Whitehouse, who could play a decisive role in whether Smith is elevated to the Boston-based court.

Supporters of Smith, including the man he would replace, senior Judge Bruce M. Selya, have presented him as a moderate jurist who has built a solid reputation since the Senate confirmed him to Rhode Island's federal court in 2002. Republican

SEE **NOMINEE, A9**



INSIDE TODAY

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5 SECTIONS

Ask Amy	E4	Lifebeat	E1
Bridge	E4	Lotteries	B7
Business	A12	Obituaries	C5
Classified	D1	People	E1
Comics	E5	Rhode Island	C1
Crossword	E4	Sports	B1
Editorial	C6	Television	E6
Kidsbeat	E3	What's Happening	E4



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TARGETING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Two legislators whose effort to curb illegal immigration failed during the last General Assembly session intend to introduce a revamped version of their bill. **C1**

BATTLE OF THE BUDGET

Lawmakers unveil a \$500-billion-plus budget plan that adheres to President Bush's spending limit while still protecting politically sensitive domestic programs from White House cuts. **A2**

A MEMBER OF THE CHOIR



Former Gloucester resident Lindsey Romano will be front and center tonight as she participates in the latest TV reality series, *Choirs*, airing tonight on NBC. **E1**