

NOT SO BAD
Increasing clouds after a sunny start, with highs in the mid-40s; mild tonight.
Forecast, B6

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CAMPAIGN 2008

Kennedys pass the torch



GETTY IMAGES / CHIP SOMODEVILLA

Rep. Patrick Kennedy, left, Sen. Barack Obama, Caroline Kennedy and Sen. Edward Kennedy greet the audience at American University in Washington, D.C., yesterday after the three Kennedys announced their support of Obama's presidential bid.

Negative campaigning long a hallmark of American politics

BY SCOTT MacKAY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

As is the case with beauty, wit and cuisine, negative politics occurs in the eye of the beholder, or in this case, the voter.

The 2008 presidential campaign has turned rough, which is no surprise in an election where so much is at stake. Yesterday's Exhibit A was Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy's endorsement of Sen. Barack Obama for president over Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Kennedy's move was motivated, at least in part, because he was upset with negative shots at Obama taken by former President Bill Clinton on behalf of his wife's campaign.

Politics, as writer Peter Finley Dunne said, "ain't beanbag."

In the world's greatest democracy, campaigns have a long history of nastiness, character assassination and even violence, most famously in 1804, when Aaron Burr killed Alexander Hamilton in a

SEE **NEGATIVE, A5**



AP PHOTO

Former President Bill Clinton campaigns for his wife, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, in Independence, Mo., on Saturday.

By endorsing Sen. Barack Obama, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and other members of America's most famous political family issue a rebuke to Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

BY JOHN E. MULLIGAN
JOURNAL WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON
Sen. Barack Obama claimed the presidential endorsement of two generations of Kennedys yesterday in a scene that evoked the spirit of political heroes past and rallied a youthful crowd to his call to "change the course" of the nation's future.

"It is time again for a new generation of leadership," Sen. Edward M. Kennedy declared in a speech at American University that echoed the flourishes of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. "It is time now for Barack Obama!"

For his part, Obama said he was too young to remember the late president and was a child when Robert F.

SEE **OBAMA, A4**



Your turn: To react to the Kennedys' backing of Obama, go to projo.com



MCT / CHUCK KENNEDY

President Bush delivers his final State of the Union address to Congress last night.

Economy, Iraq focus of Bush's address

In his final State of the Union presentation to Congress, the president calls for quick passage of the economic stimulus package and patience on Iraq.

BY SHERYL GAY STOLBERG
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — Facing an unstable economy and an unfinished war, President Bush used his final State of the Union address last night to call for quick passage of his tax-rebate package, patience in Iraq and a modest concluding agenda that includes \$300 million in scholarship money for low-income children in struggling schools.

With Senate Democrats already jockeying to amend the stimulus package that the administration negotiated with the House last week, Mr. Bush, in his address, urged lawmakers not to let the delicate deal fall apart.

Like presidents before him, Mr. Bush made the case that the state of the union was strong, but he also conceded that Americans felt unsettled about the future.

"As we meet tonight, our economy is undergoing a period of uncertainty," Mr. Bush said, adding that "at kitchen tables across the country, there is concern about our economic future."

"We can all see that growth is slowing," Mr. Bush said in a blunt acknowledgment of rising food and gas prices, increasing unemployment and turmoil in the housing and financial markets.

On Iraq, Mr. Bush made the case that his troop buildup had "achieved results few of us could have imagined just one year ago."

"Some may deny the surge is working," Mr.

SEE **BUSH, A7**

Exercise may slow aging process from the inside out

Research finds that those who are regularly active appear to have younger looking DNA.

JOURNAL WIRE REPORTS

As if gray hair, brittle bones and wrinkles weren't bad enough, scientists say that as you age, the very DNA in your trillions of cells starts to fray, unravel and disintegrate.

But now, they think there may be something you can do to slow the inevitable aging process — exercise.

A study published yesterday hints that fitness buffs appear to have "younger" DNA than the chronically sedentary. The finding could help scientists understand the effects of exercise and aging at a molecular level.

"These data suggest that the act of exercising may actually protect the body against the aging process," said Tim Spector, a professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College in London who led the study, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

Previous research has shown that being physically active reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer and other diseases, potentially extending longevity. In the hopes of helping explain how, Spector and his colleagues

SEE **AGING, A6**

Ex-Lincoln manager's bribery trial begins



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB THAYER

Jonathan F. Oster, left, at the opening of his trial yesterday in Superior Court in Providence.

Former Town Administrator Jonathan F. Oster's lawyer tells the jury that his client is the victim of a conspiracy by the state police and a former ally.

BY JOHN HILL
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Just about six years after he was arrested on bribery and conspiracy charges, former Lincoln Town Administrator Jonathan F. Oster got his first day in court yesterday, as prosecutors sought to portray the former municipal chief as a man more interested in using his position to make money for himself than to serve his town.

But Oster's lawyer, C. Leonard O'Brien, said the only conspiracy was against his client, one crafted by the state police and ex-Planning Board member and former Oster ally Robert B. Picerno, whom O'Brien described as a "personable scoundrel" and "a flim-flam man" who offered to try to implicate Oster in exchange for leniency in his own bribery case.

Throughout her 40-minute presentation to the jury, Assistant Attorney General Bethany Macktaz referred to Oster as "the defendant" while O'Brien always used his name. Oster is facing

SEE **OSTER, A5**



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AN ICON CHANGES HANDS

An landmark office building in downtown Providence, affectionately known as the Superman building, is sold for \$33.2 million. **E1**

A NEW SCHOOL AT URI

The Board of Governors approves plans by the University of Rhode Island to establish a School of Communication by merging several existing departments and programs. **B1**

MEDICINE AND CHILDREN

Less than two weeks after a government agency warns parents that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines are too dangerous for children younger than 2, a new study finds that those medicines send about 7,000 children to hospital emergency rooms each year. **A2**

LUCKY AND GOOD



It takes a lot of hard work and shrewd decision-making to build a football dynasty but, as the Patriots will attest, it doesn't hurt to have a little luck on your side as well. **C1**