

MVP Scrappy second-baseman Dustin Pedroia becomes the 10th Red Sox player to be named the American League's Most Valuable Player. **C1**



COLD SNAP
Sunny but cold today with highs in the mid-30s; clear and very cold tonight.
Forecast, B8

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No body? No problem in nearly 300 murder prosecutions

Trying two men for killing Joseph P. "Joe Onions" Scanlon without the victim's body was unique in Rhode Island but not elsewhere.

BY TRACY BRETON
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — When Andrew F. Merola and Nicholas S. Pari were charged with assassinating Joseph P. "Joe Onions" Scanlon 30 years ago, their lawyers cried foul. In arguments before and during their trial, and again after a jury convicted the men of first-degree murder, the defense attorneys tried to derail the prosecution.

"The state has no body, no weapon, no

bloodstains, no scientific evidence, no physical evidence," Merola's lawyer argued to the jurors.

But even though the state could not produce a body to prove that Scanlon was dead, prosecutors had a live witness — Scanlon's girlfriend — who testified that she had watched Merola fire a handgun into the back of her lover's head while Pari diverted his attention by punching him in the face.

They also had another witness, who

said he helped Merola wrap Scanlon's body in plastic garbage bags and place it in the trunk of Merola's car. Then there was the FBI informant from Brooklyn, N.Y., who told the jury that Merola came to his home and told him he had killed Scanlon because he was a "stool pigeon."

Jurors interviewed after the trial said they found the testimony convincing. After nearly six hours of deliberation, they pronounced

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Extra: Read Tad DiBiase's latest count of "no body" cases in the United States, watch video on the arrests, and get the latest on Operation Mobbed Up at projo.com

both defendants guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt."

Years later, after their convictions were overturned based on errors made by the trial judge, Merola and Pari admitted killing Scanlon. As part of a plea agreement, the now-deceased Merola pleaded no contest to second-degree

murder and was sentenced to serve 10 years of a 25-year term. Pari was ordered to serve 7 years of a 20-year sentence for manslaughter.

While the Joe Onions case was the first murder prosecution in Rhode Island where no body had been recovered, there have been nearly 300 of them in the United States dating to the 1800s. And most of the prosecutions have resulted in convictions.

Washington, D.C., lawyer Thomas A. "Tad" DiBiase — who spent more than 12

SEE **BODY, A6**

Gaining 'partial justice'



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KATHY BORCHERS

Digna Mendoza, right, a former employee of Michael Bianco Inc., is congratulated yesterday by Isabel Lopez, center, and others following the announcement in Boston yesterday that the workers will share in a \$613,000 settlement.

More than 700 former employees of Michael Bianco Inc., raided by immigration officials last year, will share the \$613,000 settlement.

BY KAREN LEE ZINER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

BOSTON — Hundreds of former workers at a New Bedford company that was raided by immigration agents last year will share \$613,000 in unpaid wages and overtime pay through a settlement agreement announced yesterday. Lawyers for the workers called it "partial justice."

The agreement applies to 764 former employees of Michael Bianco Inc., many of whom

were detained and deported after the controversial raid, and others who worked at the company before and after the raid. Workers alleged that Bianco president Francesco Insolia maintained a sham company — Front Line Defense — to avoid paying overtime and skirt other wage-and-hour laws.

The company, Insolia and Suzanne Thompson (his wife, who is listed as president of Front Line Defense), have agreed to pay a total of \$850,000, lawyers said at a news conference. Money will be allocated to several New Bedford immigrant advocacy groups; attorneys and other legal services organizations will receive partial fees and costs.

Each of the six named plaintiffs will re-

SEE **WAGES, B4**

projoVIDEO

Video: Greater Boston Legal Services lead attorney Audrey Richardson says the settlement paying more than 700 former Michael Bianco employees unpaid wages and overtime is only "partial justice." Watch the video at projo.com

Holder seen as Obama's pick for Justice job

The president-elect's transition team has been asking if the advice offered by the former Clinton administration official on a controversial pardon would be an obstacle.

JOURNAL WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — President-elect Barack Obama's top choice for attorney general is Eric Holder, a former number-two Justice Department official in the Clinton administration and Obama campaign aide who would become the first African-American to serve as the nation's chief lawyer.

The Obama transition team has gone so far as to ask senators whether they would confirm Holder, who reviewed President Bill Clinton's controversial pardon of fugitive Marc Rich just before leaving office, an Obama official



HOLDER

and people close to the matter said yesterday.

But the Obama official said the decision has not been finalized, and transition spokesmen

said no decision has been made. Holder, 57, was offered the job late last week and accepted it on the condition that he receive at least moderate support from Re-

SEE **HOLDER, A4**

Lower costs prompt utility to seek 13.7% cut in electric rates

The request comes during a year that saw rates soar 21.7 percent.

BY TIMOTHY C. BARMANN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Rhode Islanders will finally get some relief on their electricity bills.

National Grid has proposed reducing rates by about 13.7 percent as of Jan. 1, trimming almost \$13 a month from the bill of a typical customer.

The proposal, which was part of a 255-page filing with the Public Utilities Commission on Fri-

day, reflects the steep decline in the cost of crude oil and natural gas that has occurred over the past four months.

Crude oil futures are down 62 percent from the record high set in July, and are at the lowest price in almost two years; natural gas futures have fallen about 53 percent during the same period.

Though very little electricity is produced from oil in New England, many of National Grid's long-term contracts with suppliers require it to pay extra for power if the market prices of nat-

SEE **ELECTRICITY, A4**

Experienced pilots died doing what they loved

Robert A. Zoglio Jr., of Richmond, and Ronald Tetreault, of Glocester, were practicing instrument landings when their plane crashed.

BY AMANDA MILKOVITS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

It was an ordinary practice flight, like ones they'd conducted nearly every week together as friends with a mutual passion for the skies. What brought their small plane down in a fiery crash a half-mile from their destination, North Central State Airport in Smithfield, on Monday afternoon is a mystery that may not be solved for months.

Yesterday, air-safety investigators examined the wreckage of the Piper Tomahawk, which had soared over an electric cable and

SEE **PILOTS, A7**



Investigators continue to work at the scene of a fatal plane crash Monday near North Central State Airport in Smithfield.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL
BOB BREIDENBACH

Carcieri agrees to pay \$2,500 for ethics violation

The governor insists, however, that he had no intention of violating the Code of Ethics when he hired his niece for a state job.

BY BRUCE LANDIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

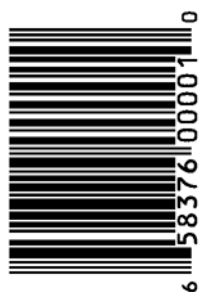
PROVIDENCE — When Governor Carcieri took office in 2003, his first executive order dealt with "ethics and integrity" and directed the thousands of state and local officials governed by the state Code of Ethics to obey it, something they were already supposed to be doing.

When the governor settled his

first ethics violation case two years later, he was apparently the first Rhode Island governor to do so.

Yesterday, Governor Carcieri broke new ground again by admitting to his fourth ethics violation and paying a \$2,500 fine for hiring his niece, Stephanie Accaputo, in 2003.

SEE **CARCIERI, A4**



INSIDE TODAY

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GROWTH INDUSTRY

While many retailers are shrinking, the nation's three major drugstore chains are adding new stores around the nation, including Rhode Island. **D1**

AUTOMAKERS MAKE THEIR CASE

Despite warning that the U.S. economy could face a "catastrophic collapse" if any of them fail, the leaders of America's three major automakers receive a cool reception when they appear before a Senate committee asking for \$25 billion in federal assistance. **A5**



REINVENTING THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to try some new ideas to enliven the most traditional meal of the year. **E1**