

**COLD & CLOUDY**  
Continued cold today with highs in the 30s; increasing clouds and cold tonight.  
**Forecast, D8**

# The Providence Journal

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Investigators sift through the dirt dug up in the search for the body of Joe Onions, which was found yesterday buried deep in the backyard of an East Providence apartment house.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL  
STEVE SZYDLOWSKI

## Remains believed to be mobster

Authorities think they've finally found the body of Joseph P. "Joe Onions" Scanlon

BY W. ZACHARY MALINOWSKI and MIKE STANTON  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITERS

EAST PROVIDENCE — Joe Onions may finally be able to rest in peace. The Rhode Island State Police yesterday unearthed what they believe are the remains of Joseph P. "Joe Onions" Scanlon, the onetime hood, police informant and victim of an infamous Rhode Island gangland slaying. Three decades after mob associate Nicholas S. "Nicky" Pari used a backhoe to

inter Scanlon's remains behind a Riverside apartment complex that was under construction, another backhoe operator uncovered the apparent grave on the third day of digging — an archaeological

dig that has resurrected memories of Rhode Island's bygone Mafia heyday.

Now it will be up to the state medical examiner to positively identify what's left of Joe Onions, who earned his nickname because he used to make the ladies cry.

At 2:18 p.m. yesterday, Peter Williams, a backhoe operator for the state Department of Transportation, lifted the fateful scoop from a 14-foot hole about

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EXTRA: Watch police recover what they believe to be the remains of Joseph "Joe Onions" Scanlon at [projo.com/videos](http://projo.com/videos)

SEE **BODY, A10**

## R.I. firms' fate tied to automakers

The failure of any of Detroit's Big Three would have serious repercussions locally.

BY PAUL EDWARD PARKER  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

As Washington politicians debate whether to bail out the auto industry, Rhode Island business owners connected to the industry predict dire consequences here if even one of the major domestic automakers fails.

"It'd be a disaster," said Maureen Bailey, owner of Paul Bailey's Chrysler Dodge in North Kingstown.

"It's going to become a major national catastrophe," said Cheryl A. Merchant, president and chief executive of Hope Global, a Cumberland textile company that makes auto parts. "I don't think our economy can survive it."

"I think you're looking at GM as a Katrina," Merchant said, referring to the 2005 hurricane that devastated

SEE **AUTOS, A11**

## Court affirms painting was stolen by Nazis

Federal appeals panel, upholding a lower court decision, "rights a historic wrong," says a lawyer for the estate of Jewish art collector Max Stern.

BY KATIE MULVANEY  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A federal appeals panel ruled yesterday that a painting owned by a German baroness that long hung on her walls in Rhode Island had, in effect, been stolen from a Jewish art collector during the Holocaust.

The decision upheld a finding by Chief U.S. District Judge Mary M. Lisi that collector Max Stern was robbed of the artwork when the Nazis forced him to sell it at auction for vastly less than its value.

"A de facto confiscation of a work of art that arose out of a notorious exercise of man's inhumanity to man now ends with the righting of that wrong ...," Senior Circuit Judge Bruce M. Selya wrote in yesterday's decision.

SEE **ART, A10**

## Christmas comes early on airwaves

BY C. EUGENE EMERY JR.  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

For listeners of 105 FM, lite rock has gone dark. At B-101 FM, oldies are a thing of the past. Instead, Christmas has come early.

Very early. When Thanksgiving was still about three weeks away, the two Providence radio stations switched to all-Christmas-music-all-the-time formats.

That's earlier than ever before. WWBB, better known as B-101, became Christmas-101 on Nov. 6. WWLI, which markets itself as Lite Rock 105, made the switch the following Monday, at least a week earlier.

SEE **RADIO, A8**

## Cold punishes homeless



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / JOHN FREIDAH

More than 250 clients, half of them homeless, such as Jeronimo Lucas, above, come to McAuley House in Providence for a free hot lunch. As the state and national economies falter, families, too, take advantage of the offerings.

Local shelters were filled to overflowing last night as winter-like temperatures swept into the area.

BY G. WAYNE MILLER, RICHARD DUJARDIN and KAREN LEE ZINER  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITERS

"It's a cold one," the man said. "If you go by the weather reports, tonight is going to be very cold."

projoVIDEO

EXTRA: Watch how area shelters aid the needy at [projo.com/videos](http://projo.com/videos)

It was nearly 8 p.m. and the man, a volunteer for the Homeless People's Action Committee who goes by the name John, noted that one part of his nightly routine had already been broken.

Typically, when Mathewson Street United Methodist Church has played host to a hypothermia shelter run by the homeless action committee, the doors didn't open until 8 p.m.

But as of 7 o'clock last night, "We already had 20 people standing in line," John said. "Pastor Aida [the Rev. Aida Fernandez, the

SEE **SHELTER, A11**



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / FRIEDA SQUIRES

Timothy Peirson, 3, holds a toy in the room he shares with his brother and sister, and parents, Timothy Peirson and Shannon Barlow, at the Rhode Island Family Shelter.

## Would-be Senate leader faces Health Department inquiry

Sen. Leo Blais, R-Coventry, faces a disciplinary hearing on numerous alleged violations that could cost him his pharmacy license.

BY KATHERINE GREGG  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — As the battle for Senate minority leader heats up behind the scenes, one of the candidates — Sen. Leo Blais, R-Coventry — is facing a Department of Health

disciplinary hearing next month on a dozen alleged violations by his pharmacy.

In an interview last week, Blais was adamant that he had done nothing wrong and said he hoped the hearing would be short-circuited by a court suit he was going to ask his lawyer to file against the department.

As of yesterday, however, the Dec. 18 hearing was still on.

While Blais has declined to talk in any detail about the Department of

Health findings, the agenda says the hearing will center on allegations of "unprofessional conduct," and more specifically, "on the question of whether the Department of Health, Health Services Regulation, Board of Pharmacy should revoke or suspend [Blais'] license to practice pharmacy in the State of Rhode Island."

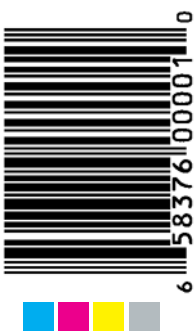
According to the hearing notice, these were some of the findings of a "routine inspection" of the Pawtuxet Valley Prescription Center, in Cov-

entry, owned and operated by Blais, on Oct. 22, 2007.

Misbranded drugs, a failure to segregate "outdated, unusable or mislabeled" medication to make sure none of it was dispensed, questions about technician training and the finding that on the day of the inspection there was "no adequately trained pharmacist for compounding medications."

The agenda also points to ques-

SEE **BLAIS, A6**



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### BOOSTING THE BULLPEN

In trading speedy outfielder Coco Crisp to the Kansas City Royals for right-hander Ramon Ramirez, the Red Sox think they've acquired a pitcher who "can really help our bullpen." **C1**

### FROM BAD TO WORSE

Stocks plunge to their lowest levels since 2003 amid fears that the recession may be longer and more severe than anyone anticipated. **D1**



### BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

Bringing *Jurassic Park* a step closer to reality, scientists say they've deciphered much of the genetic code of the woolly mammoth, a feat that could allow them to re-create the shaggy, prehistoric beast. **A2**