

**A BIG CHILL**  
Sunny but much colder today, with highs in the low 30s; clear and cold tonight.  
**Forecast, F8**

# The Providence Journal

**THURSDAY**  
FEBRUARY 28, 2008

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## Recovered paintings' fate poses \$1-million question

A federal judge will determine whether Patrick T. Conley, of Bristol, can keep the artwork that turned out to be stolen during a 1976 heist in Shrewsbury, Mass.

**BY W. ZACHARY MALINOWSKI**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Three stolen paintings valued at roughly \$1 million have turned up in the home of a prominent Rhode Islander, and a battle is under way in federal court to determine who will get to keep the artwork.

The saga dates back more than three decades and has more twists and turns than a mystery novel. It features a well-planned and terrifying home invasion of a wealthy socialite in central Massachusetts, the heist of the artwork and years of silence. The case was revived when the paintings were used

as collateral on a loan and turned up in the living room of the multimillion-dollar home on Narragansett Bay in Bristol of Patrick T. Conley, a lawyer, developer and historian.

Conley's younger brother, William Lincoln Conley Jr., an antiques dealer who runs Upscale Emporium in Barrington, gave the paintings to Conley as collateral on a \$22,000 loan. Conley, who said he does not have a close relationship with his brother, said he didn't know the paintings were stolen.

"I didn't ask him where he got

SEE **PAINTINGS, B3**



COURTESY OF U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

These recovered paintings — *Lady of Shepherdess*, left, *The Shore of Lake Geneva*, above, and *In the Sun* — are valued at roughly \$1 million.



## Training School cap plan at issue

The governor wants to limit the number of youths held at the state Training School, but Family Court Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr. is among those who oppose the plan.

**BY STEVE PEOPLES**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

The boys and girls of the Rhode Island Training School have more in common than the address of the locked facility they share.

They often come from the same minority neighborhoods of Providence. Most are diagnosed with substance-abuse problems, have little or no high school education, and a family history of abuse or neglect. They have been convicted of crimes ranging from disorderly conduct to rape, but most are considered nonviolent offenders.

And now, the boys and girls of the Rhode Island Training School have entered the state political debate.

Governor Carcieri wants to cap the number of incarcerated youths, a move intended to save millions of dollars by sending dozens of troubled teens back home, or into outpatient programs across the state.

Judges, lawmakers, and other state officials criticize the plan, although most agree that some young offenders are better served outside of the locked juvenile detention center.

"I have no problem with releasing kids early if it's appropriate. But releasing youths based on a number and financial considerations isn't a good idea," said Peter Slom, a unit manager at the Training School, who currently oversees roughly

SEE **CAP, A6**

## Primaries posing new challenges for pollsters this year

While three polls show Hillary Rodham Clinton leading in Rhode Island, record voter turnout and new technology make it more difficult to gauge public opinion.

**BY MARK ARSENAULT and SCOTT MacKAY**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITERS

PROVIDENCE — Pollsters are like weather forecasters. People love to hate them when they're wrong.

"When I meet someone now I tell them I'm a used-car salesman rather than a pollster," jokes Darrell West, Brown University political science professor and longtime pollster. "I seem to get a better response."

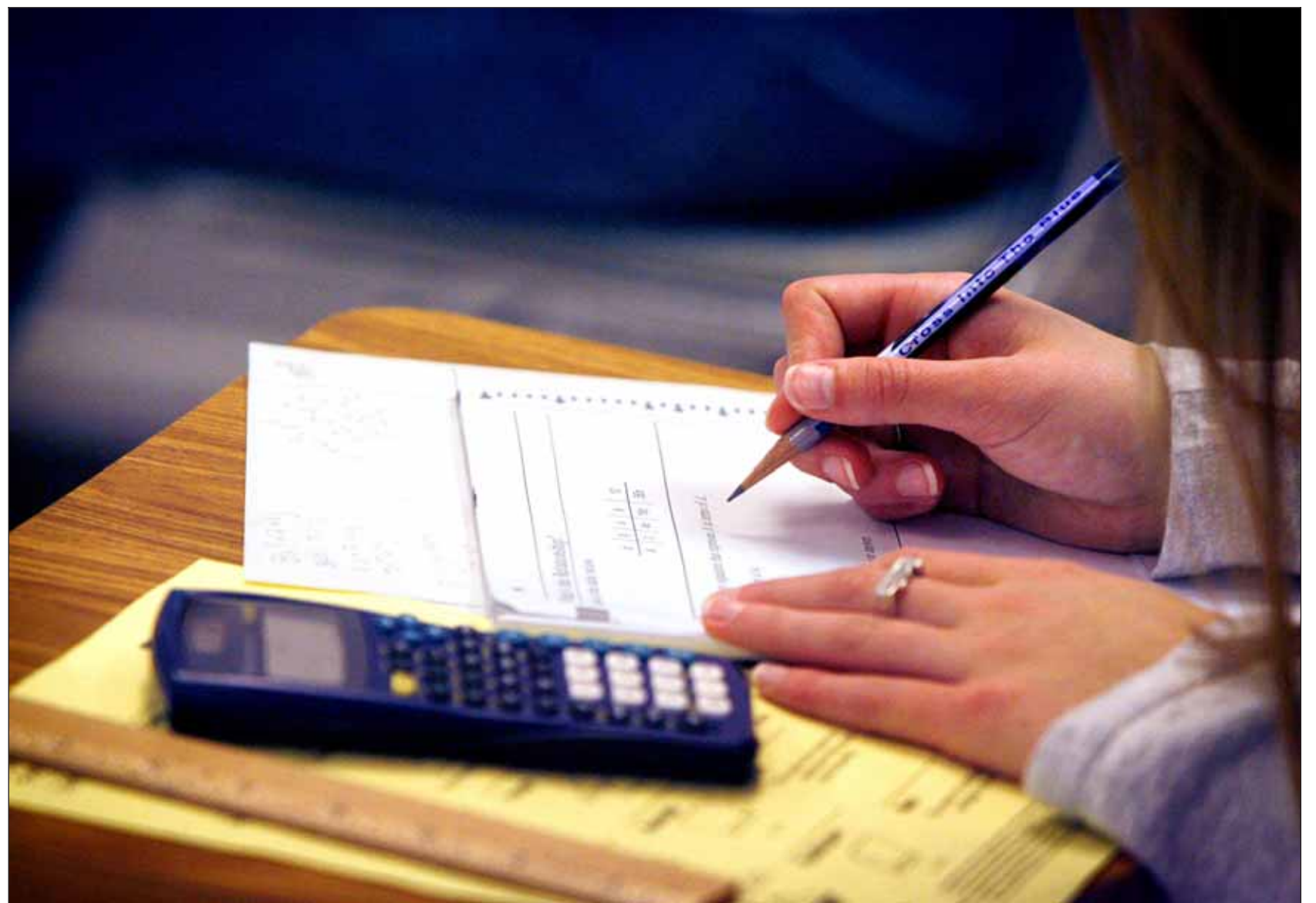
The science of measuring public opinion has taken its lumps this election cycle, especially in the

SEE **POLLING, A9**

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## Results of a new statewide test find that only 22 percent of Rhode Island high school juniors are proficient in math; some schools have rates below 10 percent.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KRIS CRAIG

A North Providence high school junior takes the statewide math exam in October. Just 22 percent of juniors scored in the proficient category.

## Bottom line is bad news

**BY JENNIFER D. JORDAN**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Nearly 80 percent of the state's 11th graders cannot do the math expected of them, a painful fact state officials revealed yesterday at a news conference to release the first year of state test scores under a new system that demands more from students.

Just 22 percent of juniors scored proficient on the math portion of the New England Common Assessment Program, which 11,600 students took in October. Although the math results were dismal, education officials said the new test, which focuses on algebra and geometry skills, provides a far more accurate and honest measure of students' abilities than previous tests.

While the new math scores are substantially lower than previous years, reading and writing scores remain steady. Statewide, 61 percent of students were proficient in reading and 37 percent in writing on the new tests, which Rhode Island developed with educators in New Hampshire and Vermont.

### Do the math

**Proficient with Distinction:**

1 percent, or 123 students

**Proficient:**

21 percent, or 2,340 students

**Partially Proficient:**

27 percent, or 3,032 students

**Significantly Below Proficient:**

51 percent, or 5,679 students

Source: R.I. Department of Education

Math also proved a problem for Vermont and New Hampshire students, with less than 30 percent of students proficient in each state. In New Hampshire, 67 percent of students were proficient in reading, 28 percent in math and 33 percent in writing. Vermont will formally release its scores next month.

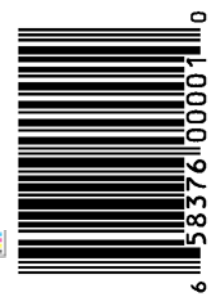
A closer look at the math results in Rhode Island is even more distressing. Fifty-one per-

cent of the students that took the test missed proficiency by a wide margin and were classified as "significantly below proficient," the lowest possible achievement level. Another 27 percent were only "partially proficient." And just 1 percent — 123 students — achieved the highest level, "proficient with distinction."

Some high schools, particularly in urban areas, reported proficiency rates as low as 3, 2, even 1 percent, a troubling indication of the low level of math instruction occurring in those schools and the weak preparation many low-income and minority students receive in elementary and middle school.

"I think we've always known the greatest challenge would be improving our high schools," said Governor Carcieri, who announced the results alongside state education leaders. "Unfortunately, many of the concerns and predictions have been confirmed. These results are disappointing to us, but not surprising."

SEE **MATH, B6**



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### PASSAGES

#### WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.



The well-known editor, columnist, novelist, debater and TV talk show host who marshaled polysyllabic exuberance, famously arched eyebrows and a refined, perspicacious mind to elevate conservatism to the center of American political discourse, dies at 82. **A4**

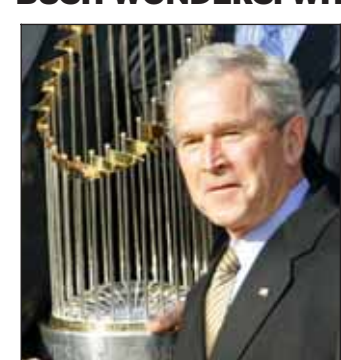
### BATTLING ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke hints at more interest-rate cuts but cautions that rising oil prices are creating inflationary pressures that could handcuff efforts to revive the economy. **F1**

### FLU SHOTS FOR YOUTHS

A federal advisory panel recommends that all children age 6 months to 18 years should receive a flu shot every year, greatly expanding the number of children who the federal government says need seasonal influenza shots. **A2**

### BUSH WONDERS: WHERE'S MANNY?



With a quip that Manny Ramirez was absent because "his grandmother died again," a high-spirited President Bush welcomes the world champion Boston Red Sox to the White House. **C1**