

GETTING WARMER
Partly cloudy and mild today with highs near 50; partly cloudy tonight.
Forecast, A10

The Providence Journal

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Primary primer

Tomorrow's primary election in Rhode Island is for voters to choose their preferred presidential candidate and their party's delegates for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominating conventions.

WHO MAY VOTE: All who have been registered to vote in their current city or town for at least the past 30 days.

The largest slice of Rhode Island voters is made up of independents — dubbed “unaffiliated voters” in state political argot — and they can vote in either the Democratic or Republican primaries tomorrow.

While the independents may choose either primary, enrolled Republicans are eligible only to vote in the GOP primary and registered Democrats can vote only in their party's primary.

An independent who decides to vote in either party primary may retain his or her independent status by asking poll workers for a disaffiliation form and signing it on the way out of the polling place.

The state has 350,752 independent voters, compared with 236,621 Democrats and 75,923 Republicans, according to figures from the secretary of state's office.

POLLING PLACES

The Providence Journal published lists of polling places in the local news sections on Friday and will publish them in tomorrow's local news sections. The lists are also available at: projo.com/elections.

Most of the 177 polling places open at 7 or 8 a.m., and all close at 9 p.m. Any voter who is in line at a polling place by 9 p.m. is eligible to cast a ballot.

Local canvassing boards will be open tomorrow to help guide voters seeking information.

The secretary of state's office will provide voter information at www.state.ri.us/vic. Voters who do not know where they are supposed to vote can locate their polling place by logging in and providing their street address. The office can also be reached at (401) 222-2340.

ELECTION RESULTS

The Journal's Web site, projo.com, will provide continuous news reports and updates of primary results after the polls close at 9 p.m. Results are also available from the Board of Elections at www.ri.gov/election/results/2008/presidential_preference_primary/

CANDIDATES

The active campaigns remaining on the Democratic side are New York Sen. Hillary Clinton and Illinois Sen. Barack Obama. Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards has suspended his campaign. On the Republican side, on the ballot in Rhode Island are Hugh Cort, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Alan Keyes, Arizona Sen. John McCain, and U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, of Texas. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has suspended his campaign.

DELEGATES

Rhode Island Democrats will directly elect 13 pledged delegates tomorrow and allocate 8 others to the Democratic National Convention, which will choose the party's presidential candidate. The 21 delegates are distributed according to proportional representation based on the popular vote in each of the state's two congressional districts. Democrats also have 11 so-called super delegates who are top party officials and can support any candidate of their choosing.

Republicans will elect 17 delegates tomorrow, and they will be awarded on a proportional basis, according to each candidate's share of the popular vote. Four “at-large” GOP delegate slots are reserved for top party officials.

Her WWII love letter inspires a cantata



Marjorie Gaunt still has keepsakes of her late husband, Rowland. They include his Purple Heart, service insignia and her handkerchief, which he kept in his wallet. The photo was taken in 1943.

Heartfelt lyrics

Tomorrow, Marjorie Gaunt will travel to New York City to hear the words she wrote to her Army Air Force husband during World War II performed at Carnegie Hall.

BY CHANNING GRAY
JOURNAL ARTS WRITER

Eighty-eight-year-old Marjorie Gaunt is about to be whisked off to Carnegie Hall in a limousine to hear an unusual piece of music that is sure to rekindle painful memories from more than a half-century ago.

Gaunt, of North Kingstown, will be the guest tomorrow night of the Oratorio Society of New York, which is performing a choral work with a text based in part on a love letter she wrote to her late husband, an Army Air Force second lieutenant

lost while on a World War II mission.

“I didn't really want to go,” Gaunt said of the trip to New York, “because there's a sadness to it. I don't want to cry, even though it has been all these years.”

But Gaunt, an avid writer of poetry and a kayaker, said she could hardly turn down the offer from the choral group, seeing how they're sending a limo to fetch her and treating her “like I was a queen or

SEE **MEMORIES, A6**



“I don't want to cry,” says Marjorie Gaunt, “even though it has been all these years.”

Mental-health coverage issue faces critical test

Even if Rep. Patrick Kennedy's bill wins House approval this week, it faces a challenge from a similar Senate-approved measure championed by his father.

BY JOHN E. MULLIGAN
JOURNAL WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy plans this week to take his signature legislation — a bill to make it easier for mental patients and addicts to get medical coverage — to the floor of the House of Representatives

for debate and likely passage.

A majority vote in the House would set up a compromise conference with the Senate, which has already passed a more restrictive version of the legislation to put mental-health insurance on an equal footing with coverage of physical ailments. If the

two houses strike a deal, the measure would go to President Bush for his signature.

With a large group of allies from both parties, Rhode Island Democrat Kennedy has framed his bill as a civil-rights issue for a segment of the population long stigmatized by outmoded stereotypes. Too many citizens, Kennedy has argued, are denied the access to affordable mental-health care that has helped him

in his own struggle with addiction and manic depression.

But the bipartisan campaign for “mental-health parity,” as it is known in legislative shorthand, is not quite a done deal. The measure's leading Democratic sponsor in the Senate, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, of Massachusetts, said last week, “We've still got a ways to go.” Backers of the Sen-

SEE **PARITY, A7**

Russia elects Putin's pick

Dmitry Medvedev easily wins election to succeed President Vladimir Putin, who is expected to be named prime minister.

BY PETER FINN
THE WASHINGTON POST

MOSCOW — After 24 hours of voting across 11 time zones, Russians handed Dmitry Medvedev an overwhelming victory in the presidential election yesterday despite a lackluster campaign that was more coronation than contest from the moment President Vladimir Putin endorsed him in December.

With nearly two-thirds of the ballots counted early today, Medvedev had 69 percent of the vote, according to the Central Election Commission. That percentage nearly matches Putin's tally in 2004 and infuses Medvedev's victory with the numbers to claim a clear mandate for the next four years.

As expected, Medvedev crushed the anemic challenges of three opponents who never had a chance to debate him and were drowned out by a deafening media drumbeat that Medvedev was “Putin's choice” and that his victory would ensure the continuation of the popular president's policies.

The two appeared at a concert in Red Square late yesterday, and Medvedev pointedly spoke first.

“We can maintain the course proposed by Putin,” Medvedev told the crowd. “I am certain that we have every chance to do this. We will continue to move ahead together. We will win.”

SEE **RUSSIA, A7**

Audit system changing

Companies that work for the Department of Transportation may be hiring their own accountants rather than using state employees.

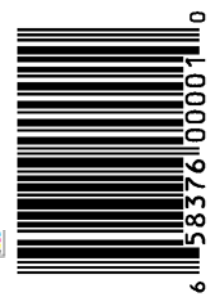
BY KATHERINE GREGG
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — On his way out the door, state Department of Transportation Director Jerome F. Williams has set in motion a process that will allow the consultants who work for DOT to hire the auditors who audit their requests for new — and in most cases — higher reimbursement rates.

As a start, Williams is only providing this opportunity to two of the engineering consultants in the DOT's large stable: Crossman Engineering, of Warwick, and Caputo & Wick, of East Providence, who were paid \$1.295 million and \$251,361 respectively in DOT consulting fees last year.

In an interview in December in which he first acknowledged submitting this hire-your-own-audi-

SEE **AUDIT, A6**



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FOR WHAT HE'S WORTH



Closer Jonathan Papelbon may not have much leverage when it comes to negotiating a raise with the Red Sox but he says he knows exactly what he's worth. **B1**

SPEAKING FOR WOMEN

Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues*, comes to Providence to raise awareness of the oppression of women around the world and to help end violence against women and girls. **C1**

SETBACK IN MIDEAST

The Palestinian president suspends peace talks as Israel brushes off international criticism and vows to press ahead with its Gaza offensive until Hamas militants halt their rocket attacks. **A2**

BORDER TENSIONS

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez orders tanks and thousands of troops to his country's border with Colombia, accusing it of pushing South America to the brink of war by killing a top FARC rebel leader on Ecuadorian soil. **A7**