

Pushed second of eight parts to the limit

STORY BY RICHARD SALIT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRIEDA SQUIRES
THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL



Indoctrination candidate Sarah Engemann is late for her haircut. She was also told that she had to remove the highlights.

Officer Candidate School (OCS) recently returned to Naval Station Newport. Those who complete the rigorous 12-week program become commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy. But not all are successful. Reporter Richard Salit and photographer Frieda Squires followed five candidates — Adam Cole, Sarah Engemann, Matthew Gottschalk, Nicole Lobecker and Jason Moehlmann — who joined Class 05-08 last fall.

'Freeze, candidate, freeze!' It's all about taking orders

It's the moment of truth for Class 05-08: the physical fitness assessment. Roused from their rooms well before dawn, the students have been led outside into the darkness on a lawn overlooking the lights of the Claiborne Pell Bridge. If the students fail, they are automatically pulled from their class and placed in Holding Company until they can pass. Their dreams of becoming officers will be in jeopardy. Nicole Lobecker is wearing a baggy Navy-is-

sue sweat suit that hides some of the extra weight she could lose. She sits on the ground, ready to do sit-ups, while a partner grips her ankles. She's been in the Navy for nearly three years and has been working out regularly — running up to 2 miles and doing sets of 25 pushups and 50 sit-ups to get ready for the test. Academics, particularly science, are her strength. Not fitness. "I'm nervous about the physical aspects of it,"

SEE **OCS, A8**

U.S. toll in Iraq reaches 4,000

Four American soldiers are killed by a roadside bomb on the same day the heavily fortified Green Zone in Baghdad comes under sustained attack.

BY ROBERT H. REID
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — A roadside bomb killed four U.S. soldiers in Baghdad yesterday evening, the military said, pushing the overall American death toll in the five-year war to at least 4,000.

The grim milestone came on the same day that rockets and mortars pounded the U.S.-protected Green Zone and a suicide car bomber struck an Iraqi army post in the northern city of Mosul in a surge of attacks that killed at least 57 people nationwide.

Identities of those American killed were withheld pending notification of relatives.

The latest violence underscored the fragile security situation and the resilience of both Sunni

SEE **IRAQ, A7**

Endangered species process in jeopardy

Barriers erected by the Bush administration have slowed the process to such an extent that some animals have already become extinct.

BY JULIET EILPERIN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — With little-noticed procedural and policy moves over several years, Bush administration officials have made it substantially more difficult to designate domestic animals and plants for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Controversies have occasionally flared over Interior Department officials who repeatedly overruled rank-and-file agency scientists' recommendations to list new species, but internal documents also suggest that pervasive bureaucratic obstacles were erected to limit the number of species protected under one of the nation's best-known environmental laws.

SEE **SPECIES, A6**

At new courthouse, public art is a feast for the ears

The Warwick complex's main walkway resonates with the melody of songbirds recorded locally by California artist Bill Fontana.

BY TALIA BUFORD
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

WEST WARWICK — Nestled between the Kent County Courthouse and its parking garage sits a marshy wetland. There, tall grass reaches for the sky and small plants creep toward the concrete. Chirps, squawks and bird calls hang in the air.

But a search for the telltale signs of fowl comes up empty. No baby birds. No nests. Not even an errant feather. That's because the chirps and

songs greeting visitors to the building are really a recording of bird-song wafting from a series of speakers nestled onto pillars along the main walkway to the courthouse.

This isn't nature; this is art. "Art in public buildings is as essential as any other part of a building," said Randall Rosenbaum, executive director of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, "from the way you choose what's on the floors to the windows to the stairs." The new \$60-million cour-

thouse opened in August 2006, dwarfing its previous home. The speakers were installed in December, in compliance with state law that requires 1 percent of construction costs be allocated for artwork in any new public building.



In all, \$392,053 was set aside for art at the courthouse, said Craig N. Berke, spokesman for the Rhode Island judiciary. The birds pecked away \$103,622.55 of that amount; \$266,377.45 will go toward installing seasonally themed glass panels designed by a different artist on each floor of the building, Berke

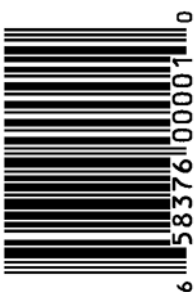
SEE **SONG, A4**

International relations



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia, foreground left, and Yoshinobu Takahashi, an outfielder with the Yomiuri Giants, exchange caps following an exhibition game yesterday at the Tokyo Dome in Japan. The Sox open their regular season tomorrow morning with a game against the Oakland Athletics. **B1**



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UPSETS ABOUND

With favorites like Georgetown and Duke eliminated during the first rounds of the NCAA basketball tournament, chances are most peoples' brackets are already in tatters. Complete coverage of yesterday's games in projo Sports. **B1, B5**

BEHIND BUSH'S WAR

The PBS series *Frontline* tonight broadcasts the first of a two-part documentary offerings a behind-the-scenes look at the decision to go to war in Iraq. **E1**

TO OUR READERS

Newsstand, home delivery prices go up March 31

On Monday, March 31, The Providence Journal retail and home delivery prices increase.

Effective Monday, March 31, the Monday through Saturday newsstand price will increase to 75¢. A 7-day home delivery subscription rate will be \$5 a week.

On April 5 and 6, Weekend (Saturday and Sunday) home delivery will go up to \$2.75 a week.

And, the Sunday Journal will retail for \$2.50.

Current, paid subscription terms will not be impacted until renewal or next billing cycles.

The Journal has not increased the daily newsstand price in 18 years and the daily home delivery price in four years. The Sunday newsstand price and the Sunday home delivery rate have not gone up in 12 years.