

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

A beautiful sunny day today with highs in the mid-70s; clear skies tonight.

Forecast, E16

# The Providence Journal

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## For former insider, questions about White House candor

“We are once again facing evil men who despise freedom, and despise America, and aim to subject millions to their violent rule.”



**PRESIDENT BUSH,** addressing the graduating class yesterday at the U.S. Air Force Academy

A book by a former White House press secretary accuses President Bush of failing to be honest with the American public about the war in Iraq.

JOURNAL WIRE REPORTS

Speaking at the Air Force Academy commencement ceremony yesterday, President Bush said the United States is engaged in a battle of wills against “evil men” and compared the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the campaigns against Nazi Germany and Japan during World War II.

In his new book describing his time spent working within the Bush administration, former White House press secretary Scott McClellan calls the war in Iraq “unnecessary” and a “strategic blunder,”

claiming that senior administration officials manipulated public opinion through a “political propaganda campaign” beginning in 2002 to “aggressively sell the war,” even as he and other officials insisted to the public that all options were on the table.

Others, including former national security advisor Richard Clarke, have written books challenging the administration’s decision to go to war in Iraq.

But none have been as close to the center of power



**SCOTT MCCLELLAN,** in *What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington’s Culture of Deception*

The Bush administration conducted a “political propaganda campaign to sell the war to the American people.”

SEE BOOK, A4

Determination, and her parents’ drive, made Juliet Vongphoumy

# A champion



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Juliet Vongphoumy, 14, shot a 77 yesterday at Cranston Country Club, becoming the first girl to win the R.I. Interscholastic League golf championship. Below, a hug and kiss from her mother.

BY JIM DONALDSON  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

CRANSTON

Katie Vongphoumy didn’t hesitate when asked why she came to America from Laos in 1982, when she was 20 years old. “To pursue a new life,” she said. “The culture here gives you more chances.”

What a life Katie’s 14-year-old daughter, Juliet, has in front of her.

Only a freshman at La Salle Academy, Juliet yesterday became the first girl to win the Rhode Island Interscholastic League golf championship.

“I want her to be independent,” said Katie, who walked the last few holes yesterday at sunny but windy Cranston Country Club as Juliet followed the even-par 71 she shot Tuesday with a 77 for a 36-hole total of 148 — two strokes better than anyone else in the field.

“I want her,” Katie said, “to be whoever she wants to be.”



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Extra: Find photo galleries of yesterday’s state golf individual championship and the girls lacrosse playoff between East Greenwich and Barrington at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

Juliet wants to be a professional golfer some day, playing on the LPGA Tour. While that’s a possibility, what is a virtual certainty is that the second of Katie’s and her husband, Sam’s, four daughters will be playing college golf and receiving a scholarship to do so. It will open up opportunities for her that would have been undreamed of in Laos.

In these days of \$4-a-gallon gasoline, falling housing prices, rising foreclosures, soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, all amid a heated presidential campaign, it is easy to become disillusioned with today’s America.

But then you hear about Juliet Vongphoumy and you realize that this truly is the land of opportunity.

“It’s an amazing story,” said her coach at La Salle, Susan Mouchon.

The story has its roots in Laos, where Katie grew up in the capital city of Vientiane, beside the Mekong River, and

SEE CHAMPION, A8

## An author’s life careens from scholarly pursuits to thefts

BY PAUL DAVIS  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

NORTH KINGSTOWN — A brain disorder drove historian Edward Renehan Jr. to record an album with folk legend Pete Seeger, work with New York publishers and write six books, including one on the Kennedys, the author says.

But that same illness — diagnosed last year as bipolar disorder — may have pushed Renehan to



RENEHAN

SEE RENEHAN, A8

steal and sell rare letters written by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, a federal crime that could send him to jail or force him to pay up to \$250,000 in fines.

## Film studio plan pitched to lawmakers

Rhode Island Studios proposes a \$75-million studio in Hopkinton, but wants a tax credit that would save \$15 million on building costs.

BY CYNTHIA NEEDHAM  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — Does Rhode Island have what it takes to compete with Massachusetts and Connecticut for the title of New England’s movie-making king?

Supporters say tax-credit programs now offered in all three states are no longer enough. That honor hinges on a state-of-the-art studio and production facility.

A development consortium, backed by

a California studio company, made a glamorous pitch to lawmakers here last night, promising that a proposed \$75-million studio in Hopkinton would bring jobs and economic stimulus to southern Rhode Island, while offering a sense of credibility to the state’s film industry.

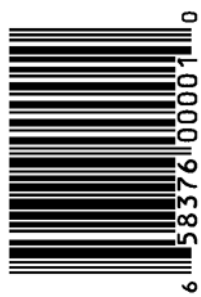
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Extra: To read the text of the bill, go to [projo.com](http://projo.com)

But the show will only go on if lawmakers pass a leadership-backed bill allowing 20-percent tax credits on building costs, offsetting the overall studio construction price tag by about \$15 million.

“One of the things we’ve been striving for is to have infrastructure, to have a home for some of these larger productions” that have come to this state since 2005, when it enacted film and television credits, said Steven Feinberg, director of the Rhode Island Film & Television Office.

SEE MOVIE, A8



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### GETTING OUT OF THE BUSINESS

Gretchen Varkonyi is among the more than 1,500 real-estate salespeople in Rhode Island who have decided to abandon the industry over the past year as housing sales and prices have plummeted. **F1**

### BILL TO BOOST MINIMUM WAGE

A Senate panel approves increasing the minimum wage in Rhode Island from \$7.40 to \$7.53 an hour as of Jan. 1, 2009 and automatically linking future increases to the federal cost-of-living index. **B1**

### DECISION DUE ON DELEGATES

The Democratic National Committee prepares to decide the fate of presidential primary delegates from Florida and Michigan, a source of contention between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama. **A5**

### SEX EDUCATION

With the iconic cable television series set to make its big-screen debut tomorrow, a primer on everything you ever wanted to know about Carrie, Amanda, Charlotte, Miranda and the rest of the characters from *Sex and the City*. **E1**

