

MIXED UP
Mix of sun and clouds today with a chance of showers; partly cloudy tonight.
Forecast, E12

The Providence Journal

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 18, 2008

75¢
Home Delivery 401.277.7600

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BOSTON WINS NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

CELTIC PRIDE



AP / CHARLES KRUPA

Celtics forward Paul Pierce clutches his MVP trophy last night following the team's 131-92 blowout of the Los Angeles Lakers to win Game Six of the NBA Finals and the league championship in Boston. Pierce was named the most valuable player of the series. **Sports, D1**
On projosports.com/celtics: Photos of last night's game and the championship celebration, a late game story and reaction from the locker room, an audio report this afternoon from sports writers Bill Reynolds and Kevin McNamara. Post your tribute to the champions.

Assembly poised to eliminate heating aid

A key lawmaker says the state cannot afford the program intended to help low-income families cope with soaring energy costs.

BY TIMOTHY C. BARMANN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

At a time when Rhode Islanders are facing record-high energy prices, the General Assembly is poised to eliminate a law that was established to help the poorest low-income families pay their utility bills.

The House of Representatives today was scheduled to consider the state budget bill, which contains a provision that repeals the "affordable energy" legislation passed in 2006.

The reason: the state simply cannot afford the program, according to Rep. Steven M. Costantino, chairman of the House Finance Committee, which recommended the action.

"Unfortunately, we could no longer afford this tax credit," he said in a statement, responding to The Journal's request for comment.

"We had to spread the pain throughout the budget and this was one of the many items that we were able to identify for taxpayer savings."

Eliminating the legislation will save millions over the next few years: \$4.2 million in fiscal year 2009; \$8.6 million in 2010; \$13.1 million in 2011;

SEE HEAT, B6

House expected to vote on \$6.89-billion budget

BY STEVE PEOPLES
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — The House of Representatives will gather this afternoon and fight deep into the night to approve a state budget aimed at closing a massive deficit that Governor Carcieri says threatens Rhode Island's economic future.

But yesterday, on the eve of what might be the most important vote the General Assembly will cast this year, some lawmakers complained that they would be asked to vote on key elements of the \$6.89-billion tax-and-spend plan that they had never seen.

Indeed, part of the budget hadn't yet been written, never mind released to rank-and-file members or the public.

Further, tens of millions of dollars in savings hung on labor negotiations that hadn't been finalized. And less than 20 of the House's 74 members attended a budget briefing explaining efforts to close the \$425-million shortfall for the budget year

SEE BUDGET, B6

projo.com

Your turn: To read the budget proposal in its entirety, go to projo.com

Campaign looks to refine image of Michelle Obama

BY MICHAEL POWELL and JODI KANTOR
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Michelle Obama's eyes flicker tentatively even as she offers a trained smile. As her campaign plane arcs over the Flathead Range in Montana, she is asked to consider her complicated public image.



OBAMA

Referring to a character in a 1970s sitcom, she adds: "I mean, 'whitey?' That's something that George Jefferson would say."

Conservative columnists accuse her of being unpatriotic and say she simmers with undigested racial anger. A blogger who supported Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton circulates unfounded claims that Michelle Obama gave an accusatory speech in her church about the sins of "whitey." Obama shakes her head.

"You are amazed sometimes at how deep the lies can be," she says in an interview.

SEE OBAMA, A6

Judge rejects bid for new smoke-shop trial

The lawyer for the Narragansetts says the suggestion of prejudice and possible misconduct among the jurors warranted a new trial over the smoke-shop raid.

BY KATIE MULVANEY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — A Superior Court judge yesterday refused to order a new trial for three Narragansett Indians convicted of assaulting and scuffling with the state police during the smoke-shop raid, rejecting defense lawyers' arguments that the jury was tainted by racial bias.

Judge Susan E. McGuirl denied a request for an inquiry into possible jury misconduct that included an accusation that one juror banged his water bottle like a tom-tom as the jury was about to render its verdict. "There were no clear racist statements that were said," McGuirl said.

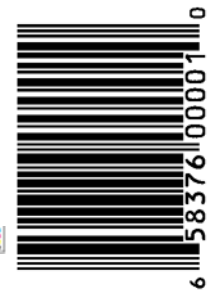
Defense lawyer William P. Devereaux had argued that



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / ANDREW DICKERMAN

Tribal members Randy Noka, Hiawatha Brown and Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas leave Superior Court yesterday.

SEE TRIAL, A9



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FLOODS SPREAD IN MIDWEST

After devastating sections of Iowa, floodwaters break through a levee along the Mississippi River, threatening homes and farmland in Illinois and Missouri. **A2**

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The General Assembly is considering a bill that would allow for the naming rights to the Rhode Island Convention Center to be sold, but some wonder if there would be any takers. **F1**

MORE BRIDGE WOES

For the second time in two days, the state Department of Transportation lowers the weight limit on a deteriorating bridge; this time it's the Pontiac Avenue Bridge in Cranston. **B2**