

St. Anthony's celebrates festival, 50th anniversary

■ Because of the heat, the procession at St. Anthony's Church was shortened.

By **HERBERT WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NORTH PROVIDENCE — Under a blazing sun and high humidity, thousands of parishioners of St. Anthony's Church and their friends and neighbors gathered yesterday to celebrate the 17th annual four-day feast of St. Anthony and to reaffirm their faith as a Christian community.

This year's event took on an even more festive tone because parishioners are celebrating the church's 50th anniversary.

Many parishioners will look back at this year's festival as one of the hottest in memory. The unusually hot weather forced organizers to shorten the processional route to

NORTH PROVIDENCE

just under four blocks.

After 11 a.m. Mass in the church on Gibbs Street, more than 400 parishioners began the procession, walking to the strains of John Philip Sousa marches played by the Arthur Medeiros Marching Band and to traditional church hymns sung by the 25-member choir.

Gabriella Corci, 5, and Anthony Vergeau, 7, cast red, white and pink rose petals in the path of the 300-pound statue of St. Anthony carried by six parishioners. Crowds standing in the shade cheered and clapped and the church bells rang out as the block-long procession, including Little League players, cheerleaders, Knights of Columbus members,



Journal-Bulletin/STEVE SZYDLOWSKI

TOO HOT: Anthony DeSano wipes his head as he helps carry a statue of St. Anthony.

Festival

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clergy and members of various church groups, passed the church toward Lexington Avenue.

At the end of the procession, acting Mayor Ralph Mollis marched with his youngest son Angello, 5, on his shoulders. His oldest son Michael, 8, walked alongside.

Following the procession and benediction of the blessed sacrament, parishioners moved quickly to take shelter and buy cold refreshments under the 162-foot-long blue-and-white tent in the church's parking lot.

According to church spokesman Jack McGurn, 43, of North Providence, more than 250 volunteers worked to make the event a success. "A lot of people think the clouds just opened up and this tent fell into

place," he said. "I met people here from the parish that I never met before at morning or evening Mass. Everybody works very closely in putting this event together."

The Rev. Edward S. Cardente, pastor, was delighted with the turnout. "We are celebrating a new beginning as a parish after 50 years of existence. We look back in thanksgiving and look forward in hope."

CLEANING UP

Volunteers pitch in for a cleaner neighborhood

■ Fifty-five people spend five hours tidying up in Woodlawn.

By **HERBERT WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — Even a hazy, humid day with a high temperature in the 90s did not keep 55 volunteers away from the Capeverdean American Community Development organization's neighborhood cleanup

PAWTUCKET

on Saturday.

Mayor Robert E. Metivier and his wife Carol stopped by the group's headquarters at 902 Main St. to thank the volunteers, who carried rakes, shovels, and brooms, for their

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■ Residents of Sylvian Street turn out for a church-sponsored cleanup.

By **PAT KENNY**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

CENTRAL FALLS — The Sylvian Street neighborhood joined together Saturday to clean up their streets, sidewalks and yards.

"We need to work together to solve the problems in our community," said Angel Co-

CENTRAL FALLS

lon of nearby Hedley Avenue. "We want a community free of violence and crime. We live here. We have to take care of our neighborhood, and cleaning it up is a first step."

A small group of organizers walked
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Sylvian

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down the streets urging their neighbors in Spanish and English to join the cleanup, which was sponsored by Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Notre Dame Church and Hispanic Evangelical Church.

The cleanup was the first part of a program coordinated by the Rhode Island Organizing Project, a group of 20 churches statewide, said Duane Clinker, its director.

Reuben Hincapie, who has lived at 141 Sylvian St. for 10 years, led the way with his two sons, Andres, 7, and David, 4.

The other volunteers followed towing brooms and trash bags.

"Come on. Let's go," yelled the Rev. Robert Beirne of Holy Trinity Catholic Church. "It's too late to sleep. Let's clean up the neighborhood."

Faces appeared at tenement windows and people watched from the porches.

Soon residents brought out their brooms, grabbed trash bags and joined the effort, picking up broken glass, paper and bottles.

Byron Sicaju, 14, moved to 60 Sylvian St. from Guatemala three years ago. He and Julia Ramires, 26, cleared the trash from their side-



Journal-Bulletin/JAMES J. MOLLOY

TAKING CARE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD: Residents of the Sylvian Street neighborhood sweep the sidewalk during Saturday's church-sponsored cleanup.

walk and began sweeping it as a truck pulled up to clear away an old sofa, a moldy mattress and two broken bikes.

"I saw people and said, 'Why not?'" said Sicaju, a ninth-grader at Central Falls High School. "It's good for the community."

By noon, they were finished.

"It's a good sign," said the Rev. Julio Filomeno of the Hispanic Evangelical Church. "We hope that by cleaning it up, the neighbors will continue to work together to keep it clean."

Clinker said anyone interested in organizing a neighborhood cleanup should contact the three churches.

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Festival tops history with berries and cream

■ With 300 cakes, 160 pounds of strawberries and 4 gallons of heavy cream, the Historical Society celebrates history with just desserts.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

SMITHFIELD — A beautiful summer day yesterday attracted scores of visitors to tour the Smith-Appleby House, stroll its serene seven acres and eat delicious old-fashioned strawberry shortcake.

The parking lot for the old house off Stillwater Road began to fill up shortly before 1 p.m., the starting time for the Historical Soci-

SMITHFIELD

ety of Smithfield's 1994 Strawberry Festival. Parents with children, young couples and elderly people waited in their cars until a society volunteer gave the signal to approach the old carriage house to buy the homemade desserts and cool drinks.

To serve the expected 300 people, society volunteers picked 160 pounds of strawberries at Jaswell's Farm in Smithfield. They also baked 300 cakes and beat 4 gallons of heavy cream into whipped cream.

Lines formed as women volunteers, costumed in long dresses and bonnets, scooped the freshly picked strawberries onto the cakes and smothered them in the whipped cream. Three dollars bought a dish piled high with strawberries and cream and an iced drink. For a dollar, visitors could tour the restored 12-room farm house built in 1696.

"Our volunteers are dressed in historical costumes to give people a flavor of the period when the house was built," said Helen Gaudreau, chairwoman of the society's ways and means committee.

The original structure was built by Elisha Smith. It was a one-room stone-ender with a

loft above. The living room still has the floor that was "marbleized" in the early 1700s, and the walls of one bedroom still bear the original stenciling done in 1830. The house has been expanded to 12 rooms over the years and was extensively restored about 10 years ago.

Among the house's treasures are a large china chest holding vintage crockery, period furniture and items appropriate to the time of its Colonial occupants, Gaudreau said. It also has nine working fireplaces, she added.

Gaudreau expects the festival will raise

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\$700 for maintenance of the Smith-Appleby House, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The event's appeal is no secret, she says: "We expect that our Strawberry

Social will be a success because everyone likes to eat homemade food for a reasonable price."

"It's so serene and peaceful here," said Whet Stone, a retired dental laboratory technician who has attended the event for the last several years. "You can't even hear the cars traveling on nearby Route 295," he said.

Whet and Marjorie Stone of Lin-

coln, three children and six grandchildren were among the 70 visitors the society had welcomed about an hour into the event.

The society includes more than 100 members, but only about 10 people work each function, Gaudreau said. The house is open from May to December and hosts eight fund-raising events, including a harvest supper in November.

Carrousel figures back for another go-round

■ Five horses, a large dog and a gargoyle-shaped chariot return to their former glory on the Loeff Carrousel.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — Forecasts of heavy showers and thunderstorms kept attendance down at a Saturday celebration at the Loeff Carrousel at Slater Park to welcome back seven wooden figures removed in April for restoration.

But despite an overcast sky, scores of families came to ride on the carrousel, mingle and enjoy the festivities. Children with painted faces, teenagers in jogging shorts and parents dressed casually roamed the grounds surrounding the carrousel building, eating hot dogs and hamburgers, drinking Del's lemonade and sodas and listening to music. Others sat on the ground and watched Jay Brunelle, a

PAWTUCKET

clown from Pawtucket, quickly twist colored balloons into animal shapes. And, they bought more than 2,000 tickets to ride the carrousel.

With the return of five horses, a large dog and a chariot carved in the shape of a gargoyle, the first phase of the restoration is over, said a very happy Ed Quinlan, carrousel manager for the Parks and Recreation Department.

R and F Designs, a nationally known carrousel restorer in Bristol, Conn., was paid \$10,000 to strip the figures down to bare wood, fill cracks and smooth bumps, replace broken body parts, coat with a sealer, paint in historically correct colors and add a final coat of varnish.

Quinlan said the money to refurbish the seven figures came out of a \$63,000 fund raised from private donations and the sale of popcorn,

soda and rides

After stripping paint, the restorers discovered that details carved into several of the horses were covered by layers of old paint, Quinlan noted. They even found some of the figures damaged by incorrect restoration in years past.

Riders will notice that the newly restored horses are painted with much brighter colors. "These colors are correctly blended and historically accurate," Quinlan said.

Quinlan added that metal stirrups have also been replaced with step-ups from the floor to reduce damage to the new paint, and brass poles have been installed for each figure.

"To see the horses restored to their former glory is really exciting for me to see," exclaimed Donna Houle, 43, assistant director of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, who brought her daughters Lindsey, 7, and Michelle, 3, to ride the carrousel. "It is great for families with children and will definitely

bring people back into the park."

Quinlan hopes to send another six horses to Connecticut to be restored in August if the money is available. He estimates that it will cost about \$250,000 to restore the entire carrousel by its 100th anniversary in 1995. "But, realistically, it may take a good three to four years," he predicted.

A restore-a-horse program has been launched to raise money for the renovation. Each donor who contributes \$3,500 or more will get to name the figure they wish to restore and a plaque recognizing their contribution will hang at the carrousel.

The 99-year-old carrousel was built by Charles Loeff, a Danish immigrant, in 1895 and moved to Pawtucket in 1910. The carrousel fell into disrepair and was closed in 1967. The ride was refurbished and reopened in June 1979 with financing from the city and the state Historical Society.

Scituate puts on an old-fashioned holiday

■ A pancake breakfast, baseball game and teddy bear contest were among the events at Olde Home Day.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

SCITUATE — Hundreds of people came to Olde Home Day yesterday to celebrate a quiet, relaxing and very low-key Fourth of July.

For the 14th consecutive year, the holiday gathering, held on the sprawling North Scituate Village Green, drew scores of residents from Scituate and families from throughout Rhode Island who

chose not to be part of larger crowds and snarling traffic jams at parades and festivities in other parts of the state.

"Everyone will enjoy today's old-fashioned, family-oriented activities," said Home Day chairwoman Barbara Sarkesian. "The event gives us a little bit of stability and tranquility in our lives," she said, noting that it also brings the community together.

The festival had a little bit to offer for young and old.

An early pancake breakfast started off the day's fun-filled activities, which included a Little League baseball game, a bake sale sponsored by the Northwest Ani-

mal Protection League, and a blacksmith showing bystanders how to shoe horses and repair equipment.

Small children, with their parents hovering close by, sat cross-legged under the shade of a large maple tree hugging, petting and chasing rabbits in a small fenced area. Holding the furry animals cost only 75 cents. Across the street, from the Old Congregational Church, built in 1831, children could ride on small Shetland ponies for just one dollar.

Young couples browsed through piles of crafts, bric-a-brac and antiques lying on vendor tables surrounding the white gazebo

draped with red, white and blue banners. With the gazebo as a backdrop, folksingers Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly entertained a small crowd of listeners sitting in lawn chairs, some who sang and clapped their hands to the haunting songs.

In yesterday's event, a happy and surprised Robert Rivera, a 10-year Scituate resident, won the 1994 Citizen of the Year Award for outstanding service to fellow citizens.

"He goes the extra mile for his neighbors," Sarkesian told the

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crowd that stood in front of the old church. As a nurse-anaesthetist at Rhode Island Hospital, Rivera would visit any Scituate resident who was hospitalized at his facility and would visit them after they

were released, she said.

And scores of children waited patiently to find out if they won the "dress-up-your-teddy-bear" contest. "Over 70 children entered a total of 110 teddy bears this year," said Penny Altman of Scituate, who organizes the bear contest every year.

Everyone was a winner in today's event, Altman said. "Each child will receive a bag of candy or a ribbon for participating," she noted.

"The teddy bear contest is great because it gets the children involved in the town's activities," said Doris Wall of Providence, who has attended the festivities for the last 10 years with her husband, James Wall, a retired firefighter. She and her husband sat in lawn chairs watching the excited children claim their prizes during the 45-minute awards ceremony.

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NORTH PROVIDENCE

Fire ravages vacant mill

■ One firefighter is injured. Police close off Conant Street because they fear the building could collapse.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — A blazing fire destroyed the inside of a vacant mill complex yesterday, sending black smoke over Route 95 and slightly injuring one firefighter.

Firefighter Kenneth Moreau, who was overcome by smoke and heat, was taken to Memorial Hospital for treatment and was released later.

People poured into the street to watch firefighters from Pawtucket and Central Falls douse the flames, said Madelyn Burke of 235 Weeden St.

"Lots of smoke and flames came out of the building," she said.

Police quickly moved bystanders away from the building, at 200 Conant St.

City officials turned off the electricity along Conant Street because

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Fire

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they feared that the east wall of the building could collapse onto utility poles.

The vacant mill was a popular place for teenagers to drink, said police Officer Christopher Busher, who kept the curious away from the building.

Police had feared a fire at the building over the Fourth of July weekend, Busher said. "They told us to keep an eye on that building every hour," he said.

Busher said yesterday's fire was so hot that people standing 150 feet away could feel the heat.

Police have closed Conant Street to traffic for the weekend because city officials fear the building's walls could collapse, Detective Mark Force said.

The street could remain closed until city officials can determine whether the wall can be strengthened or whether the building should be demolished, he said.

Force said the cause of the fire is not known. Fire officials were beginning their investigation last night.

Police said they were still trying to determine who owns the building.

Upon arriving at the scene, firefighters quickly moved to keep the flames from spreading to an occupied mill across the street.

With temperatures approaching 90s degrees, firefighters were given water breaks every 15 minutes and were kept cool by being sprayed with water from a booster line connected to a fire truck.

Firefighters arrived at the scene shortly after 3:30 p.m. and had the fire under control by 5.

Hoop league puts police, youths on same team

■ Officials say the recreation program is an effective way for young people and the police to get to know one another.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

CENTRAL FALLS — Under a blazing sun with temperatures approaching 90, the Bulls squeaked past the Celtics, 51 to 48, Saturday at the Higginson Avenue recreation area.

It was the opening game of a 10-week season for the Central Falls Community Police Basketball League. The players on the league's 12 teams ranged in age from 14 to 21.

CENTRAL FALLS

Each one pledged not to use drugs, drink alcohol or fight.

Before the tip-off, the Rev. Joseph Hagar, the chaplain of the city's Police and Fire Departments and pastor of St. Basil's Church on Broad Street, told the players his secret for making holy water: "You boil the hell out of it." He then blessed the crowd, sprinkling holy water on them.

Mayor Thomas Lazieh, Atty. Gen. Jeffrey E. Pine, and City Council members Sandra

Moreau and Louis Paquette Jr. mingled with scores of players, community volunteers, families and friends. The officials praised the recreation program as an effective way of getting young people to develop more positive relationships with the police and community.

Saturday night is the traditional time when children go out to drink, said Manny Macedo, 39, a volunteer who maintains the league's membership roster and playing schedules. "If the kids spend hours playing basketball and watching their friends, they are kept busy and out of trouble," he said. "It's great if we can get these kids high on basket-

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'The kids learn team cooperation and how to get along with others ... We'll get to know how the kids tick. It won't be 'us' against 'them' anymore. It is 'us' and 'we' together to make our community a better place to live.'

POLICE CHIEF ROBERT E. SASSO

Basketball

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ball and team spirit. The games can give them a natural high and they won't need drugs to feel good."

The program, financed by a \$12,440 grant from the Governor's

Justice Commission with the support of 20 local businesses, is a win-win program for all involved, said Police Chief Robert E. Sasso.

"The kids learn team cooperation and how to get along with others," Sasso said. Another plus is that the players and police will get to see each other as human beings, and not as adversaries, he said.

"We'll get to know how the kids

tick," he said. "It won't be 'us' against 'them' anymore. It is 'us' and 'we' together to make our community a better place to live."

Standing on the sideline and watching the action, Shamel Bullcock, 15, raved about the program as a good place for his friends to meet.

"My friends talk about how good they are playing basketball and now they must show it," he said.

Cleanup complete, pond opens

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

WOONSOCKET — State officials announced Saturday that the pond at World War II Memorial State Park is safe for swimming, one day after Rep. Ron Machtley blasted the Sundlun administration for botching the cleanup.

“Machtley and other candidates may not be aware of the steps the department has taken

WOONSOCKET

to open the pond,” said Stephanie Powell, an administrative officer at the state Department of Environmental Management.

Powell said the DEM has been testing the water every day since July 8 to determine if it was fit

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Pond

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for swimming, after samples taken that day showed high levels of fecal coliform bacteria.

The state standard for freshwater bathing beaches is 200 counts of fecal coliform bacteria per 100 milliliters of water. A high level of bacteria indicates the presence of disease-causing organisms.

Two samples taken Thursday showed counts of 0 and 160. By contrast, samples taken July 8 had counts of 2,300 and 1,500, Powell said.

The DEM worked very hard to get the levels down and open the pond yesterday, she said. It treated the pond each day last week with chlorine to kill the bacteria, she said.

To provide relief from the heat while the pond was closed, the DEM hooked up a sprinkler at the park "to keep the kids cool," and provided free RIPTA buses to take swimmers to Lincoln Woods State Park, Powell said.

Even before the discovery of the fecal coliform bacteria, the pond hadn't opened because the state had difficulty hiring lifeguards.

"We began our recruiting efforts for lifeguards during Thanksgiving but we were unable to attract any applicants," Powell said. The pay was competitive, she said, but there was intense competition with private apartment pools and beaches.

"When we couldn't get applicants we put a display ad in local and state newspapers," Powell said.

When the state got no responses, it quickly reassigned lifeguards and offered others overtime pay to staff the pond, she said.

Feast of Holy Ghost offers lots of fun with fund raising

■ The three-day festival was sponsored by the Portuguese-American Club of Georjaviille for charity.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

SMITHFIELD — Hundreds of people turned out yesterday for the final day of the Feast of the Holy Ghost, a three-day event sponsored by the Portuguese-American Club of Georjaviille to raise money for charity.

The event, in its 38th year, had a little bit of something for everyone: games, carnival rides, chowder and clamcakes, and country western dancing. Yesterday featured a free Portuguese meal, a fund-raising auction and fireworks at 9 p.m.

"While we enjoyed the food and games, the purpose of this religious event is to raise money for charity," said Joseph DeAngelis, this year's "mordome," a Portuguese word meaning "the man in charge of decorating the feast."

Yesterday at 10 a.m. more than 100 people — including Governor Sundlun and his wife, Marjorie, Lt. Gov. Robert A. Weygand, local officials, Smithfield firefighters and police officers, the state police honor guard and representatives of local Portuguese clubs — left the Portuguese-American Club on Fenwood Avenue to march to St. Michael's

SMITHFIELD

Church on Waterman Pike. The 22-member Portuguese Independent Band of Bristol played traditional Portuguese marches.

The event is part of a traditional Portuguese festival that honors Queen Elizabeth, who ruled Portugal from 1292 to 1336. During each year of her 44-year-reign, the queen would invite the poor to her palace, where they were fed and clothed. She would put a crown on the head of a subject to show that power is given by God to the people.

After a Mass honoring the Holy Ghost and the crowning of Nicole Leiville, 12, of Smithfield, a symbol-

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Other local news from Metro West

- Cranston police assailed for gun-permit policy **A-1**
- Foster Old Home Days provides glimpse of traditional farm life **C-4**

Feast

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ic rite reenacting the queen's benevolent actions, the crowd returned to the clubhouse grounds, quickly filling up 17 picnic tables under a large red outdoor pavilion.

To feed the crowd, kitchen volunteers prepared 55 pounds of chourico, Portuguese sausage; 200 pounds of roast beef; and 45 gallons of Portuguese soup, with its potatoes, collards, kale and beef.

Paula Loffredo, 37, of North Providence and her friend Robert Javarey, 30, of Providence, sat pa-

tiently in lawn chairs waiting to be served.

"Ethnic festivals are so much fun to go to," Loffredo said, with Javarey nodding in agreement.

Once the meal was served, egg baskets, watermelons, a bicycle, sweet bread, liquor bottles, homemade crafts and other items were auctioned to raise money for local charities.

But it was tougher to raise money this year because of a new state law that prohibits gambling at such events, said Gino Fetta, 30, a member of the Portuguese-American Club.

Gambling allowed the group to bring in \$3,000 to \$4,000 dollars last year, Fetta said, all of it donated to local charities.

"Because of hustling and pushing food sales, we're holding our own this year," he said.

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Steamboats lure crowds to revitalized river

■ The six-day celebration in Pawtucket ends today.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — More than 25 years ago, Jack and Peggy Owens and their son, Bob, recalled, the Pawtucket River, along old State Pier off School Street, was a cess-pool and its shoreline an oily mess.

As the Owens family walked along the 750-foot pier yesterday during the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's third International Steamboat Muster, the former city residents excitedly pointed to waterfowl swimming in the river and to clean sand along the banks.

"It's great to see the river cleaned up" and a revitalized city of Pawtucket, said Jack, 65.

Hundreds of people joined yesterday at the pier, lined with American flags, to watch a rowboat race and 12 antique steamboats from the East Coast gather for the muster. They also listened to folk groups and took 30-minute tours of the Pawtucket River on the Blackstone Valley Explorer riverboat.

The six-day celebration, which

ends today, has featured a craft fair at the historical Slater Mill, military bands, a dinner and dance on the Steamboat Muster Vista, a Civil War and Boy Scout encampment and a Pawtucket Red Sox game against the Ottawa Lynx at McCoy Stadium.

As mist settled over the river early yesterday, a score of bystanders

lined up along the pier to watch a rowboat race saluting Franklin G. Appley's 2,000-mile voyage to the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, by rowing from the Pawtucket Harbor to the shores of Lake Michigan.

Outrowing three competitors, Lt. Gov. Robert Weygand and Matt Largesse, the Jamestown actor playing Appley, "battled it out to

the end of the race," said Dave Bal-four, vice president of the tourism council. "To see those guys rowing against each other in a good stiff breeze was fun to watch."

It was also a great day for almost a dozen candidates running for state and federal office who crisscrossed the pier to schmooze meet with voters.

The sounds of traditional Irish folk music, sea chanteys and traditional tunes of the Blackstone Valley region floated over the five-acre site as folk groups, including Fiddler

Green and Pendragon, took turns playing to a captivated adult crowd sitting under the protection of a huge white tent. Wood barrels and burlap sacks were thrown up against the stage to create the image of a 19th-century steamboat dock.

Helen Hanley, 65, and her sister, Frances Nunes, 71, of Cumberland, are loyal supporters of the muster.

"We come every year to see the steamboats, ride the riverboat and listen to music," said Hanley. Nunes added, "I just love everything about the event."

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& RHODE ISLAND

A day in the sun with the Moonlighters

■ The organizers hope to expand next year's festival, which raises money for scholarships for young musicians.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

SCITUATE — Surrounded by thousands of oak, maple and evergreen trees, more than 100 music lovers were treated to an afternoon of Big Band tunes and folk music yesterday at the Scituate Music Festival at Brightmans Pond.

The Moonlighters orchestra waived its customary \$1,800 fee for the second year to raise scholarship money to help young musicians at Scituate Junior-Senior

SCITUATE

High School attend summer music camps at local universities.

The benefit performance honored the 16-member orchestra's late manager and saxophonist, Vincent Centracchio, said Centracchio's brother Reginald, who plays the trumpet in the orchestra.

Last year's event raised more than \$700, Centracchio said. He said 12 Scituate students received \$70 stipends to attend summer music camps.

The event was briefly delayed yesterday when thundershowers forced people to take shelter.

The Moonlighters opted for T-shirts and shorts instead of the

black-tie clothing they wore last year.

"The formal attire proved to be impractical because of the heat last year," said lead singer Michele O'Malley.

Opening up the event, Danya Moore, 39, of Coventry, playing an acoustic guitar, warmed up the crowd by singing popular Broadway tunes, including "Hello Dolly" and "Cabaret."

Next, folk singers Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly of Hope captivated the crowd with their blended voices and variety of instruments. The duo quickly changed between guitar, banjo, Appalachian mountain dulcimer, bones, spoons and Irish tin whistle, depending on whether they were playing traditional Celtic ballads,

American folk songs or sea shanties.

For their first number, the Moonlighters played "Sing, Sing, Sing," which included a booming drum solo by Gordon Davignon of Coventry.

Madeleine Caplette of Coventry sat listening to the Big Band tunes while knitting a blue wool sweater for her daughter.

"You just don't have the opportunity to hear the Moonlighters unless you go to a fancy ball," she said. "In this informal setting I can sit outside, listen to the music, and enjoy myself."

Centracchio said he hopes to expand the festival next year to a full weekend event, with rhythm and blues, rock and roll, country and western, and reggae music as well.

August 15, 1994, Providence Journal

Skydivers say free-fall is the 'ultimate high'

■ Beginners can opt to jump in a tandem rig, sharing a parachute with their instructor.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

LINCOLN — Many people would consider jumping out of a plane and free-falling toward the ground at 120 mph a crazy thing to do. But skydivers say it is the ultimate thrill.

Throughout a cool Saturday afternoon recently, skydivers jumped from a Cessna 182 flying at 10,000 feet above the fields surrounding the Boston-Providence Skydiving Center, housed in a hangar at North Central State Airport. Among them were 15 first-time skydivers, including a housewife,

LINCOLN

a mechanic, a prison guard and three high school students.

Since the center opened in April, more than 300 people have jumped for the first time, said Peter Wolfe, 27, of Woonsocket, who owns the center with his wife, Mia Astrom. Both are certified by the United States Parachute Association and the Federal Aviation Administration as free-fall instructors.

Up to 15 to 20 new students are now coming to jump each week, Wolfe said.

"Skydiving is the ultimate high," said Lori Wass, 26, of Wolfeboro, N.H., who has jumped more than 120 times. "It's an

adrenaline pump that you can't experience anywhere else."

Steven Dzialo, 31, of East Providence, a guard at the Adult Correctional Institutions who has been skydiving seven times, couldn't agree more.

"Right now, skydiving is an obsession with me," Dzialo said, adding that he now drives to North Central Airport twice a week to skydive and mingle with the parachuters.

Despite the potential danger, parachuting is considered a relatively safe sport, averaging 30 fatalities each year in the United States. In addition, 1 in 600 jumps results in minor scrapes and bruises, while 1 in 3,000 jumps results in a major injury.

The center offers tandem jump-

ing for beginners, Wolfe said. The tandem gear, which costs \$8,000, allows the student to wear a harness that is attached to the instructor's parachuting equipment. After jumping from the plane and free-falling for about 45 seconds, either the instructor or student pulls the rip cord and a parachute designed for two is deployed. It takes about seven minutes to reach the ground.

Before making the first jump, new students receive 45 minutes of training. Besides watching a 10-minute video that gives them an overall orientation to a jump, the students are taught by instructors about their equipment, how to enter and exit the plane, how to free-

Turn to **SKYDIVING**, Page C-3



Journal-Bulletin/GLENN OSMUNDSON

DOWN TO EARTH: After his first jump from an airplane earlier this month, Scott Barbarossa, left, shakes hands with instructor Peter Wolfe from the Boston-Providence Skydiving Center.

Skydiving

Continued from Page C-1

fall, how to pull the rip cord, and how to make a soft landing.

The tandem jumps cost \$175 on weekdays and \$195 on weekends. College students can jump for \$165 any day.

After dropping gracefully to the ground, D.T. Johnson, 26, of Chelmsford, Mass., and his friend Joe Gilligan, 25, of Quincy, Mass.,

both first-time skydivers, gave each other "high-fives."

"It was a pretty unbelievable experience," said Gilligan. "Even at 800 feet, you could see the skylines of Boston and Providence and a little bit of Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay."

Burrillville council candidate hosts rock concert fund-raiser

■ Some residents say Frank L. Hopkins Jr., who was denied an entertainment license, became a candidate so he could throw a party.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

BURRILLVILLE — Frank L. Hopkins Jr.'s first political fund-raiser was a Woodstocklike event featuring local rock bands, with a little politicking thrown in.

Hopkins, a candidate for Town Council, usually hosts a rock concert on his wooded property off Black Hut Road this time of year, but he was denied an entertainment license this year for what would have been the 15th annual PaToad Fest.

Town officials and some residents believe Hopkins became a candidate just so he could throw a big party. Under state law, politicians are able to hold fund-raisers without a license.

Regardless of the event's label, blankets were spread out before a 40-foot black stage with a huge banner reminding the crowds to "Vote for Frank Hopkins for Town Council." Throughout the evening, Hopkins' wife, Pat, urged the growing crowd to vote for Hopkins.

Asked why he was running, Hopkins said, "I want to preserve the rights of people and the rural character of this town. They say you've got to build, build, build to generate more income, but you only end up paying more in taxes. I don't see any sense in having a lot of growth."

By 6 p.m., more than 500 supporters and friends had bought \$15 tickets to hear the rock bands, eat sandwiches, drink beer and soda, and add to Hopkins' political coffers. Lo-

cal bands, including Dynamite, Dance Junkies and Down to Earth entertained until 10 p.m.

Supporters also bought white T-shirts with the word "vote" placed above a green toad wearing a red, white and blue hat and sitting under a flag-shaped mushroom. Hopkins earned the nickname Toad in the third grade because of the "hop" in his name.

Volunteers also pitched a videotape of the local bands and shots of the crowd for \$25.

In the past, neighbors have complained about rowdy crowds, fights, lewd behavior, excessive drinking and drugs. As a result, Hopkins hired 35 security guards and off-duty police officers to patrol the grounds. Local police said there were no disturbances.

Not all the neighbors complain about the event. "Today's festival is a family gathering for us," said Kathy Mattia, who attended the event with her husband, Dan, and their two children.



HOPKINS

Pilgrims flock to 91st festival in St. Rocco's honor

■ A major event of the four-day affair is the procession of a life-sized statue of the church's patron saint.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

JOHNSTON — Church tradition and religious devotion mixed with a little good weather were powerful ingredients that brought together hundreds of parishioners, friends and neighbors of St. Rocco's Church yesterday to celebrate the last day of the 91st annual feast and festival in honor of St. Rocco.

According to church officials, this year's four-day festival attracted more than 25,000 people, with pilgrims coming from the Massachusetts communities of Quincy, Brighton and Braintree, and as far away as Waterbury, Conn.

Cranston resident Rose Petrozzi, a member of the church for 69 years, along with hundreds of others waited patiently for the Mass to end and the procession to begin.

"The festival is absolutely a spiritual and uplifting experience for ev-

JOHNSTON

eryone," Petrozzi said.

Pilgrims and parishioners who have left the church still come back every year to celebrate and be healed by St. Rocco, she said.

With fireworks exploding over a field behind the church on Atwood Avenue and bells ringing, more than 200 marchers began walking to the strains of John Philip Sousa and religious hymns played by the 18-member Rhode Island Symphonic Band.

Walking behind the state police color guard, Governor Sundlun, Lt. Gov. Robert A. Weygand, Atty. Gen. Jeffrey B. Pine, Mayors Michael A. Traficante of Cranston and Ralph R. Russo of Johnston were just a few politicians who joined the 45-minute traditional walk. During the procession, about 50 parishioners took turns carrying the 250-pound life-sized statue of St. Rocco on their shoulders. The procession

Turn to **FESTIVAL**, Page C-3



Journal-Bulletin/BOB THAYER

ATTENTION! Christopher Kidd, foreground, of Johnston, waits patiently at attention with other members of the American Youth Military Academy as the processional at St. Rocco Church starts.

Festival

Continued from Page C-1

stopped before the original St. Rocco Church on Clemence Street in Cranston, before the marchers began their short trek back to the church.

"It's pretty neat to have the procession going right past your house," said Jean Parenti of 30 Tweed St., who instructed her 8-year-old son to wave to the governor. The family was among hundreds who watched the procession.

Yesterday's feast honors St. Rocco, a 13-century Frenchman, who renounced his wealth and comforted the sick during his pilgrimage to Rome. When he was stricken with the plague, he lived in a hunter's hut in Northern Italy to avoid spreading the deadly disease. Each morning, a dog came to him carrying a loaf of bread from a neighboring nobleman — thus began the tradition of the blessing of St. Rocco's bread during the annual celebration, which started last Thursday.

After the procession came the blessing of 3,000 small loaves of St. Rocco's bread that were given to parishioners, and Bishop Francesco Tommasiello of Teano-Calvi, Italy, blessed the congregation with a religious relic — a bone chip — reputedly from the 14th century saint.

Good weather and the efforts of more than 150 volunteers have made the festival a financial suc-



HOMAGE: Stephen Barone of Johnston leads the processional.

cess, said church official Bob Tasca of Scituate.

Raffle tickets, food and beverage sales and revenue will raise about \$50,000, Tasca predicted. He added that the funds will be used to repair and add embellishments to the church, rectory and school.

CORRECTION

A story Thursday, profiling the four candidates in the Democratic primary race for Smithfield School Committee, failed to include some details on candidate Michael R. McGuinn. Providence College this year awarded him a master's degree in education with emphasis on special education.

The Journal-Bulletin willingly corrects all errors. To report an error or suspected error, call 277-7303 and ask for the city editor. Additional corrections may appear on Page A-2 and on the second or third page of Business, Lifebeat and Sports.

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Here comes the bride — and dozens more in 9 limos

■ Ricardo and Fatima Costa are wed, accompanied by one of the largest wedding parties in Rhode Island history.

By **HERBERT WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

SMITHFIELD — While the wedding ceremony of Ricardo and Fatima Costa was just one wedding among scores held throughout Rhode Island yesterday, it stood out from the rest.

It may have been one for the record books, under the category of "largest wedding party."

It took nine 30-foot-long stretch limousines to transport 54 people in the East Providence couple's wedding party to the Living Waters Church off Stillwater Road, where bride and groom exchanged vows before more than 100 guests.

"Today's wedding ceremony is one of the biggest we've had," said Frank Ianiero, 50, the church's wedding coordinator. Ianiero said the unusually large wedding party included the bride and groom, their parents,

Turn to **WEDDING**, Page B-6



Journal-Bulletin/GLENN OSMUNDSON

SAY CHEESE: Photographer Steve Paquette runs to his camera for a shot of newlyweds Ricardo and Fatima Costa.

Wedding

Continued from Page B-1

19 bridesmaids, 19 ushers, 3 flower girls, 3 ring bearers, 1 matron of honor, 1 maid of honor and 2 best men.

"We always knew that we wanted to have a pretty big wedding party," said the groom. "Portuguese weddings are always big affairs."

Family and friends formed the rank and file of the wedding party. According to Costa, having two best men is a Portuguese tradition.

The wedding ceremony began at 2:20 p.m. with the musical strains of "Make Us One." After the seating of the parents of the bride and groom, the bridesmaids, wearing emerald green silk taffeta, Southern Belle-style dresses, paired off with ushers outfitted in black tuxedos to walk down the aisle. They were followed by flower girls wearing white ruffle organza dresses, and ring bearers dressed in small, black formal wear.

By the time the bride walked the 47 feet to the altar, 20 minutes had passed.

"It is a new experience for me to be in something so big," said Danny Raposo, 19, an usher and first cousin

'We always knew that we wanted to have a pretty big wedding party. Portuguese weddings are always big affairs.'

RICARDO COSTA
Groom

of the bride. "I have been in two weddings, and nothing compares to this because it is so enormous."

"The wedding ceremony was a wonderful testament to love and to a strong family bond that created such a large wedding party," said Pat Perna of Providence, a friend of the groom's parents. "It went very well because of the involvement of family and friends."

Steven Simone, owner of Five Star Limousine Service, said, "This is the biggest wedding party we have ever carried in 11 years we've been open." He said the average number of cars used for a wedding is three. "You will never see this happen in the near future."

After the ceremony, the bride and groom attended a reception at the Venus de Milo, in Swansea, with 500 guests.

History rings on anvil in Winsor Blacksmith Shop

■ A blacksmithing demonstration brings a time-honored craft to the public.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

FOSTER — The craft of blacksmithing came alive yesterday in a Civil War-era blacksmith shop as James C. "Bud" Heaton pounded a glowing iron rod to show how metal is bent and twisted into a de-

FOSTER

sired shape.

The 76-year-old retired welder, whose hobby is blacksmithing, gave his demonstration at the Winsor Blacksmith Shop, located at the fairgrounds behind Town Hall.

George and Dorothy Brayton, 69, bought the blacksmith shop last year from Alma Hayfield,

whose late husband, Clarence, last used the shop. The Braytons then donated it to the Foster Preservation Society, which sponsored yesterday's event.

About 1:30 p.m., David Brown, 43, of Foster watched as his son Tyler, 8, helped Heaton heat up the piece of iron by yanking on the long wooden pole connected to a large bellows that shot blasts of air into the stone forge.

"Take a long stroke," suggested

Heaton. Each stroke intensified the heat in the stone forge, making the small pile of red-hot coals glow brighter and increasing the temperature in the forge to more than 2,000 degrees.

Heaton then pulled the iron shaped like a leaf out of the fire with long metal tongs, and placed it quickly on a nearby iron anvil.

Turn to **BLACKSMITH**, Page C-3

Blacksmith

Continued from Page C-1

Scott Knox, 17, a student at Ponaganset High School, held the piece of metal in place with tongs while Heaton chiseled veins into it by using a 2-pound hammer.

"Watching the blacksmith brings people back to a simpler time," said Brown. "The sound of the hammer hitting the anvil always has a calming influence."

A team of more than 25 volunteers dismantled the 360-square-foot blacksmith shop on Winsor Road over two weekends and moved it six miles to the fairgrounds.

"Most of the artifacts in the shop came from the original site," said Donald Boyden, treasurer of the Foster Preservation Society.

RHODE ISLAND

R.I. labor movement bolstered by festival turnout

Thousands of people attend the fifth annual Rhode Island Labor and Ethnic Heritage Festival, at Slater Mill Historic Site, expressing solidarity and just plain having fun.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — Thousands of people gathered at the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in America yesterday to affirm that the labor movement is alive and well, and still a power to be reckoned with.

Also attending the fifth annual Rhode Island Labor and Ethnic Heritage Festival were a large number of politicians.

Union members, wearing baseball caps or T-shirts imprinted with union logos, strolled around the Slater Mill Historic site off Roosevelt Avenue with their families and others to show the union flag and have a good time.

A time-honored craft

The six-hour festival featured continuous entertainment by six bands and eight folksingers, children's theater, a 30-minute Slater Mill tour, ethnic foods and over 15 labor exhibits. Children could climb on fire trucks provided by the Pawtucket Fire Department.

A crowd quickly gathered around Rick Guillemette's forge to watch him make an iron knife. The Taunton, Mass., blacksmith pulled the piece of iron out of the fire with long metal tongs, and placed it on a

nearby iron anvil to hammer.

Other traditional folk artists also demonstrated canning, woodworking and weaving.

Standing on a small stage overshadowed by old mill machinery equipment, jazz-inspired folksinger Vance Gilbert sang a variety of tunes, including one describing the life of a country-western rap singer. Maureen McEntee, a signing interpreter, used her hands to bring Gilbert's lyrics to life to the hearing-impaired.

Throughout the day union representatives handed out literature to the growing crowds. (Among them were representatives of the Providence Newspaper Guild, which urged the public not to subscribe to the Journal-Bulletin because of unresolved contract talks.)

The festival with its storytellers and music is the best show in town, said Howard Boksenbaum, 46, who has attended the festival for several years with his wife, Judith Stokes, 44, and their young daughters, Emily and Martha.

"The children can have fun while we get to touch base with grassroots politics in Rhode Island," said Stokes, a Rhode Island College librarian and union member.

Special meaning for labor

The symbolism of holding the annual festival at Slater Mill has not been lost to the organizers, said Scott Molloy, acting director of the Labor Research Center at the University of Rhode Island. While it is



Journal-Bulletin/STEVE SZYDLOWSKI

INTRICATE WORK: Providence's Steve Emma displays chair caning technique yesterday at the Labor and Ethnic Heritage Festival.

widely known that the mill is called the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, it isn't commonly

known that the first significant strike by factory women happened here in 1824, Molloy said.

"The standard of living, working conditions and the whole cornucopia of good things that Americans

enjoy come from incidents like the strike (by women) who just wanted a better life," he said.

At Salve, long-distance courses gain popularity

■ Graduate students can earn degrees through a regular exchange of written comments, telephone conversations and electronic mail.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NEWPORT — Hughes Eudeline, of Brest, France, is pursuing graduate education at Salve Regina University without taking classes at the picturesque campus on the rocky cliffs near the Atlantic Ocean. During a yearly submarine patrol lasting up to 6 months, the high ranking French military officer uses his free time to read, complete written assignments and take an open book final examination.

Last year, Salve's Graduate Extension Study program, headquartered in McAuley Hall, 100 Ochre Point Ave., enabled Eudeline along with 287 other students in 38 states and 9 foreign countries to complete accredited graduate courses at their convenience.

College instructors, who teach similar graduate courses on the 66-acre campus, guide and monitor each extension student's progress through a regular exchange of written comments, telephone conversations and electronic mail. Students have a six-month time limit to complete each course.

Salve's distance-education program is now gaining popularity because it gives busy professionals who want a master's degree the flexibility to choose the time and place to study, said Sister Leona Misto, who has served as director of

graduate extension study since the program's inception in 1984.

"These individuals work very long hours or travel a lot and don't have an opportunity to get on campus two or even one night a week," she said.

Initially, Newport-based Navy War college graduates were the first ones to enroll in Salve's extension study program, Sister Misto said.

According to Sister Misto, the program is attracting a growing number of business professionals who did not need a master's degree when they started out.

"We're finding out that these individuals want to advance their education to compete with younger people who are coming up ranks with master's graduate degrees," she said.

Since the educational program began, over 250 people have completed the required 36 credit hours of study along with a one-week residency on campus to become eligible to receive a master of arts degree in international relations, a master of science in management degree, and a master of arts in correction studies. An average of 18 students have received their degrees each year.

Sister Misto said that the graduate extension study program, now offers a new insurance-oriented master's degree program. Up to 12 hours of chartered property casualty underwriters or associate risk management examination credits, accredited by the American Council of Education, can be applied toward the 36 credit requirement to lead to a master's of science in management with an insurance concentra-

tion, she said.

"Our new master's program is timely because many larger insurance agencies are merging, getting larger, and requiring more sophisticated management skills in addition to knowledge about the insurance industry from upper management," Sister Misto said.

This semester, a master's of arts in international relations will become available through the Electronic University, a division of America On-Line. Students can register for classes, pay their application fee, tuition and on-line fee by credit card, complete course work and communicate with their instructors and other students through electronic mail.

"We are one of the first universities that offers students an opportunity to take their courses by electronic mail," Sister Misto said. She noted that only one other university, Rogers State College in Oklahoma, allows students to take courses by computer to satisfy associate degree requirements.

While nobody has yet registered to take their courses by computer, the university has already received six inquiries about this new mode of transmitting course work. "We have a three-year agreement with America On-Line to offer our program. The trial period will determine if this method of teaching really works," Sister Misto said.

"Salve Regina's distance learning-program is cutting edge educational technology," noted Gerry Willis, 31, of Newport, a former student of the program who is an assistant professor in the university's sociology department.



INNOVATIVE EDUCATION: Sister Leona Misto, director of the graduate extension study program at Salve Regina University, explains the program to a candidate for it.

"I don't know how I would have been able to take graduate courses without going through this program," Willis said. "Because I worked until 9 p.m. each night, taking courses in the traditional classroom setting was just impossible for me," he said.

Far from being hesitant, employers are becoming very interested in this type of educational program," Willis said.

With all the benefits of the program, some students don't thrive in an educational setting where they don't get direct instructor feedback or an opportunity to participate in class discussions, Sister Misto said. "If somebody is not disciplined or motivated, this type of program won't work."

But many students in the dis-

tance-learning program compensate for the lack of classroom discussion by discussing assigned readings with spouses, colleagues, or friends at the health club.

"The master's degrees earned through our distance learning program, accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, are solid, substantial degrees," Sister Misto said. ▲

Tuition for 1994-95 is \$300 per credit hour for all Extension Study courses. Textbook costs average over \$100 per semester.

For more information about Salve Regina's Graduate Extension Study program, call (800) 637-0002 or write to 100 Ochre Point Ave., Newport, R.I. 02840.

3 N.E. Tech students get top FAA training

The trio join a select group of aviation trainees from schools nationwide

■ The Federal Aviation Administration can't guarantee the students jobs once they graduate, but a great need for technicians will exist in the next few years.

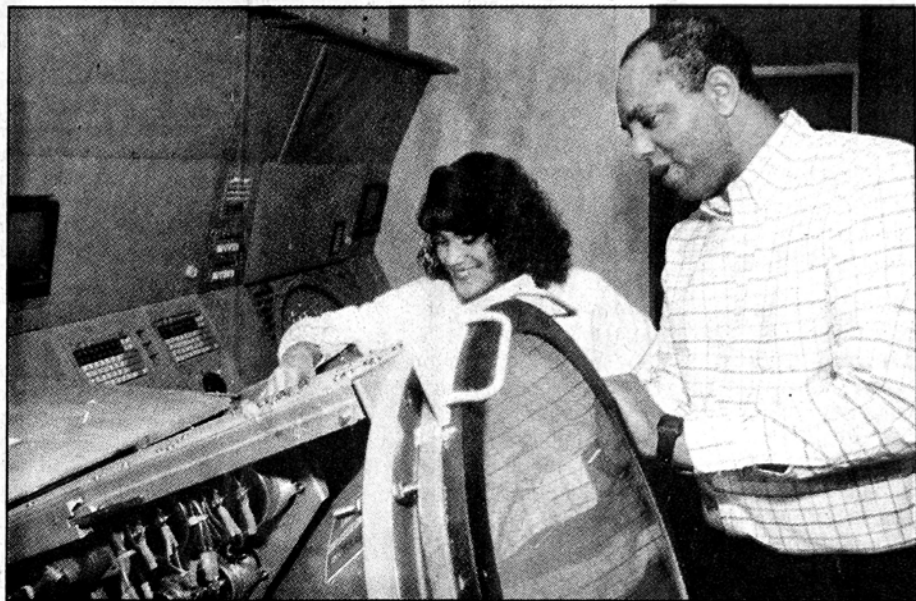
By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Special to the Journal-Bulletin

Wanted: The best and the brightest — the cream of the technological crop.

Last January, four officials of the Federal Aviation Administration came to Warwick to select students at the New England Institute of Technology to participate in a new training program.

Through paid internships at airports across the country, the FAA's Collegiate Training Initiative Electronics Technician program will be training a new generation of aviation electronics technicians. The need to train, and then hire, entry-level personnel is critical to the FAA, because in the next five years nearly half the agency's technicians will be reaching retirement age.

In Rhode Island, the FAA chose Green State Airport for its internships. The 11 New England Tech candidates who applied for them were all working toward an associate in science in electronics technology. For the January interviews, they had to assemble their college transcripts and résumés, complete a federal employment application, and, with the



Journal-Bulletin/KATHY BORCHERS

TOP JOB: New England Tech student Carmen Lamboy of Warwick checks out the radar scope with John Carpenter of the FAA at Green State Airport.

help of the school's director of career services, fine-tune their interviewing skills.

After each candidate was interviewed by the four FAA officials, the agency chose three

of the students: Carmen Lamboy, of Warwick, Dennis J. Samuelian, of Seekonk, Mass., and Mark A. Gonsalves, of East Falmouth, Mass. By February, the students had begun their internships at Green airport.

Lamboy, Samuelian and Gonsalves now find themselves in the select group of undergraduates from 28 institutions around the country who are learning, on the job, the work of the Federal Aviation Administration. Specifically, they are becoming acquainted with the communication and navigation systems that ensure the safety of aircraft — from little Cessna airplanes to Boeing 747 jumbo jets.

To help the FAA in its training effort, New England Tech has developed a two-year curriculum that provides students with advanced instruction in electronic technology, says Charles K. Rogers, the school's spokesman.

The topics include semiconductor devices, digital electronics, antennas and radiation patterns, and transmission-line theory.

The FAA's instruction includes an introduction to the agency, along with the fundamentals of electronics and general shop practices. Using test equipment, the FAA staff helps familiarize the interns with the agency's methods and guidelines for equipment maintenance.

Even in high school, Carmen Lamboy knew she wanted to become an electrical engi-

FAA

Continued from cover

neer. The young woman went after her training by moving to Rhode Island to attend the New England Institute of Technology, a technical college offering both associate's and bachelor's degrees.

During her FAA internship at Green Airport, Lamboy, now 20, logs an average of 30 hours a week on computers that tower 8 feet high. "You can walk into one 15-by-25-square-foot room adjacent to the air-traffic controllers and see wall-to-wall equipment," she says.

"Most of my work has involved preventive maintenance on radar equipment, which includes the 'scopes used by the air-traffic controllers and processors that feed information to the 'scopes," Lamboy says. The FAA radar technicians have given her many opportunities to work with them, she says.

Lamboy says that the FAA's program has allowed her to apply classroom theory to reality. "Figuring out why something went wrong is one of my job's greatest challenges," she says.

After 22 years of working at an electronic-components plant in North Attleboro, Mass., Dennis J. Samuelian, 42 — the oldest of the three interns — found himself without work. It took six months of job hunting before he decided that he needed a college degree to compete in the job market.

"Even with my good job experience," he says, "people didn't bother to call me back because I didn't have a degree." Working 60 hours a week had made it impossible for him to get one.

"Being laid off," he says, "was just the opportunity for me to seek my degree from New England Tech."

As an FAA trainee, Samuelian works at Green Airport on air-conditioning and heating systems, and replaces light bulbs on landing aids. "My department has been very good in involving me in activities," he says.

Samuelian is now positive about future employment, especially once

SUNDAY *Brunch*

Ammachi



M.A. Center



Journal-Bulletin/DAVID CARSON

LAST MONTH hundreds of followers gathered at a gymnasium at Bryant College to get the personal attention of Mata Amritanandamayi — Ammachi, top right — to receive a hug, a blessing and guidance on personal problems. In keeping with Hindu practice, they left their shoes at the door.

Holy woman draws hundreds to Bryant

By HERBERT P. WEISS
Special to the Journal-Bulletin

SMITHFIELD

For over seven hours one Thursday evening last month, and twice a day on Friday and Saturday, 850 people sat on stadium chairs, round meditation pillows or the hard wooden floor of a gymnasium at Bryant College to listen to a short, dark-haired Hindu holy woman.

Patiently, they waited for their chance to get the personal attention of Mata Amritanandamayi, whose name means "the mother of immortal bliss" — a hug, a blessing and guidance on personal problems.

Dressed in a plain white sari, the woman her followers call Mother, or "Ammachi," began each program by sitting on the front edge of a large stage in the gym, surrounded by flowers. A huge white banner with large

gold letters spelling out "Salutation to the Mother of Immortal Bliss" surrounded by four golden lotus blossoms hung on the wall behind the stage.

Male devotees wearing their simple traditional Indian white cotton dhotis (skirts) and females in colorful saris sat before her. Others wore red, blue or purple T-shirts printed with the 41-year-old Indian sage's organizational symbol, along with comfortable worn blue jeans or shorts.

Almost everyone in the crowd had rudraksha beads draped around their necks. The strand of 108 prayer beads is used by devotees and disciples to enhance their meditation.

All those attending had removed their shoes when they entered. Later, they would scramble through the huge pile of thongs, loafers, Reeboks

Turn to DEVOTEES, Page 6

FROM THE COVER

Devotees seek
Ammachi's blessing

Continued from the cover

and Birkenstock sandals to find their shoes as they left.

While fragrant sandalwood incense burned, and five huge fans whirled, cooling the crowded room, devotees and spiritual seekers ope by one slowly approached Ammachi. Many brought offerings of flowers and fruit as a sign of respect. Others asked her to bless their rudraksha beads, crosses, Native American medicine pouches, and pictures of Ammachi, their parents, spouses, children and friends.

Over the years I have sought out and studied with Indian gurus, spiritualists, psychics, Muslim and jufi sages and Native American medicine men, to find my own spiritual path. In 1988, curiosity, combined with an intense desire to grow spiritually, led me to meet Ammachi.

Several of my "yogi" friends had excitedly told me of Ammachi's impending arrival in Maryland. By attending her program, they assured me, I would receive her blessings. They said she was not just an ordinary spiritual teacher but a "mahatma," a great soul who comes to the world in an enlightened state to uplift humanity through unconditional love.

Ammachi's total focus on God at the program, along with her unconditional love and acceptance of her devotees, struck a deep chord within me. Seven years later, in 1995, I still study her teachings and attend her annual program in New York City, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Her following grows

When she first came to America, only dozens gathered around Ammachi to receive her teachings and blessings. Today, hundreds of thousands of spiritual seekers in India, the United States and Europe come to listen and receive her blessings. In India alone, she draws more than 25,000 people to her on a single day.

In 1993, she was the recipient of the Hindu Renaissance Award, an annual reward given to the "Hindu of the Year" by the publication *Hinduism Today*. That year she was also named one of three presidents of Hinduism by the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Ammachi's Summer 1995 world tour brings her teachings and philosophies into eight states, including Rhode Island, and into seven foreign countries.

At Bryant College, hundreds of people not attending the retreat came to her Saturday night worship, meditation and blessing program. According to her followers, the Smithfield retreat was the largest one held since the beginning of her first World Tour in 1987. The majority of attendees were not born into Hinduism, although a handful were born in India.

During her daily talks, Ammachi used stories to reinforce spiritual themes. Although she spoke to the crowd in her Malayalam language, a dialect spoken in South India, a swami quickly gave the audience an interpretation of her message.

Thursday evening she told us: "Be a witness and never move away from the real center of your existence. Dwell in the self and simply watch everything as it happens. Once you learn this art of witnessing, which is your true nature, then everything becomes a beautiful and most delightful play."

After each talk, Ammachi, surrounded by her orange-robed swamis and devotees, began to chant and sing devotional songs she had written. The swamis and devotees played drums, tambourines, harmoniums and tiny cymbals while hundreds of people sang along, some devotees dancing to the music.

Once the meditation session ended, Ammachi's "darshan" — blessings — began.

Individual blessings

Each day I patiently waited for her as I slowly moved up to the head of the darshan line. Finally, up front, I positioned myself for my long-awaited hug. Devotees removed my glasses and wiped my face of the sweat accumulated in seven hours in the overheated hall.

As I inhaled before Ammachi, with the assistance of a devotee she took me into her arms and carefully laid my head on her chest. Rocking me gently back and forth, she rubbed my shoulders and back, dropping fresh rose petals onto the top of my head, chanting a mantra that sounded like, "I-ma-a-ma-a-ma."

With a big smile, she placed a small Hershey chocolate kiss in my palm, kissing my fingers. (During her Rhode Island program, I estimated that over 5,000 kisses were passed out.) She anointed the foreheads of other lucky devotees with sandalwood paste at the place of the "third eye." Her followers say that this has the effect of awakening the individual's spiritual energy, as well

as rejuvenating the body's nervous system and vital energies.

Throughout the morning and evening programs, devotees who choose not to meditate or chant while waiting for Ammachi's blessings wandered outside of the gymnasium to talk with friends or sit by the fountains. Or they browsed through scores of items for sale, piled high on 10 eight-foot tables. These items included spiritual books written by Ammachi, cassette tapes of her chants, videotapes of past programs, her photographs, prayer shawls, Indian clothing, and statues of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Others waited in a special line to give Ammachi handwritten notes that asked questions about personal relationships, jobs, and their spiritual growth. Some also asked for spiritual names, in Sanskrit, and mantras, repetitions of words that aid in meditation. A swami translated her response to the questioner in English.

When my turn in this line finally came, I asked Ammachi for her special blessing and inspiration to write this article (divine assistance isn't such a bad thing to request when you need to write a tight article and meet your editor's deadline). I told her, too, about a book project, requesting her divine help in piquing the publishing company's interest. She granted both blessings.

But most importantly, believing her to be an all-knowing guru, I asked her to bless my eight-year relationship with my fiancée. Ammachi smiled as she confirmed that November will be a good month to marry.

Ammachi's followers

According to her followers, Ammachi doesn't seek converts. Her mission is to help people find their oneness with the divine power within.

Many say they come away from retreats and public programs positively changed by meeting her.

"She comes to give us a universal message that God is within and God is love and that we must love everybody," said Prakash M.K., of Smithfield, an engineer and former resident of South India, who brought his family to Bryant College to see Ammachi for a second time.

Ammachi has given Chapel Hill, N. C., resident Steve Melnick, 39 — a computer consultant and seven-year Ammachi devotee — practical advice about his career and spiritual practices.

"Almost everyone who comes to receive her blessings and grace, even if they come from other traditional religious backgrounds or follow other gurus, feels her love and presence," he said.

Being a physicist earlier in his career did not satisfy a growing thirst for spiritual truth, said Ron Cohen, 56, now a professor of academic computing at Sullivan County Community College in Loch Sheldrake, N. Y. Today, Cohen finds solace in Ammachi's teachings and philosophies and regularly attends her Rhode Island retreat and programs in New York City.

"Her way of teaching is not just a practice, it's her presence," Cohen said during the blessings. He added that she inspires and instructs everyone to do what is best for them.

"The devotional music at her programs is unbelievably beautiful, and makes it easy for people to get into their meditation," he said.

Barbara Keane, 35, of Brooklyn, N. Y., works on temporary nursing assignments for a home health nurse agency. Job flexibility allows her to travel regularly to India to visit Ammachi's ashram, or headquarters, and to follow her each year to retreats and programs held throughout the United States.

"My relationship with Ammachi has deepened my inner awareness of the divine," Keane noted, saying that she has taken the spiritual name of Sita Devi from her guru. Keane said that since meeting Ammachi, she has had the vision of Christ and Ammachi in many dreams.

Her devotees understand what Ammachi is all about, said Swamiji, one of Ammachi's earliest disciples.

"Mother's message is love, compassion and peace," he said. "She wants to reach out to as many people as she can to give them this message."

"There is not another great soul who spends so much personal time with devotees and wipes away their tears," he said. "She gives as much attention and energy to the last one in the darshan line as the first."

Ammachi's public programs are free. The retreats, including room, board and a chance to see her twice a day, cost \$195. For more information about Ammachi and her teachings, call the Mata Amritanandamayi Center at (510) 537-9417.

Herbert P. Weiss is a Providence-based freelance writer.

Marine science holds oceans of opportunity

■ Graduates find their skills in demand in areas as diverse as the biotech industry and ocean resource management.

By **HERBERT P. WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

With the growing need to manage Atlantic Ocean and Narragansett Bay coastal waters that stretch along the state's 400-mile shoreline,

there are a diverse number of employment opportunities becoming available for students trained in marine science.

Educational training is key to successful entry into this rapidly growing field. Nationwide last year, students seeking a career in marine science could enroll in one of 49 undergraduate or 100 graduate degree programs, located virtually in every coastal state.

"People usually want to work as a marine biologist after watching television specials hosted by Frenchman Jacques Cousteau," said Mark Gould, Ph.D., director of Roger Williams University's marine biology program, the state's only undergraduate program. But Cousteau never talked about the technical courses and training that one needs to excel, such as chemistry or biology, he said.

"People tend to look at the marine science field through rose-colored glasses," Gould said, noting that marine biologists are oftentimes viewed as people who feed "Flipper," TV's most famous dolphin. But in reality, students who enter this profession must have a firm foundation and grasp of the natural sciences, he said.

According to Gould, the number of job openings with specific job categories may be small, but there are many types of jobs available.

For instance, the biotech industry is burgeoning, and people trained in biotech and marine technologies are in demand. "These individuals could work in pharmaceutical companies developing new drugs. Or manufacturing companies might hire them to serve as technical representatives to sell scientific equipment," he said.

Even a minor in English combined with marine science curriculum can open doors to employment, Gould predicted. A job hunter with a knack for writing might find employment as a scientific writer for publishing companies, or as a public affairs specialist in trade associations or large corporations interested in research, public policy issues or product development in the marine science field, he said.

Students interested in pure research or finding employment in state and federal agencies should consider pursuing advanced degrees offered by the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, Gould recommended.

Declines in fisheries have increased the demand for professionals trained in resource management, said Terry Schaff, of the Consortium of Oceanographic Research and Education, a nonprofit group representing university programs offering marine science courses. These people, usually with master's or Ph.D. degrees, monitor the amount of fish caught and set fish catch limits, he said.

Regulatory agencies are also hiring people with graduate degrees to oversee their coastal management programs to monitor and regulate pollution and wetlands, Schaff added.

Schaff said that a growing number of technician level jobs are opening up for people with bachelor's degrees in marine science or related fields. "The technicians assist university researchers by performing a variety of field and laboratory measurements, such as counting fish, measuring oysters and collecting organisms," he said.

College graduates with a marine science background and a teaching certificate are now being hired to teach science courses in secondary schools, he noted.

More jobs will be created as Rhode Island's aquaculture industry develops, said Bob Rheault, Ph.D., president of the Ocean State Aquaculture Association and owner of Moonstone Oysters, a 2.3-acre oyster and scallop farm in Wakefield.

"In 1992, the aquaculture industry from West Virginia to Maine was valued at \$146 million, creating more than 1,000 full-time and 1,000 part-time jobs," Rheault said. Nationwide, aquaculture is the fastest growing segment of agriculture, experiencing a 20 percent growth rate annually for the last 15 years, he said.

Rheault said, "We can expect 200 full-time jobs will come on line in the New England region each year, from highly paid managers and boat captains to those who cull shellfish, sort and clean fish.

"The job skills needed for shellfish farming are not typically taught in marine science curriculum," Rheault said, noting that he hires responsible people with skills in boat handling, outboard repair and knot tying.

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CLEANING UP

Volunteers pitch in for a cleaner neighborhood

■ Fifty-five people spend five hours tidying up in Woodlawn.

By **HERBERT WEISS**
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PAWTUCKET — Even a hazy, humid day with a high temperature in the 90s did not keep 55 volunteers away from the Capeverdean American Community Development organization's neighborhood cleanup

PAWTUCKET

on Saturday.

Mayor Robert E. Metivier and his wife Carol stopped by the group's headquarters at 902 Main St. to thank the volunteers, who carried rakes, shovels, and brooms, for their

Turn to **WOODLAWN**, Page C-3

Pawtucket police blotter

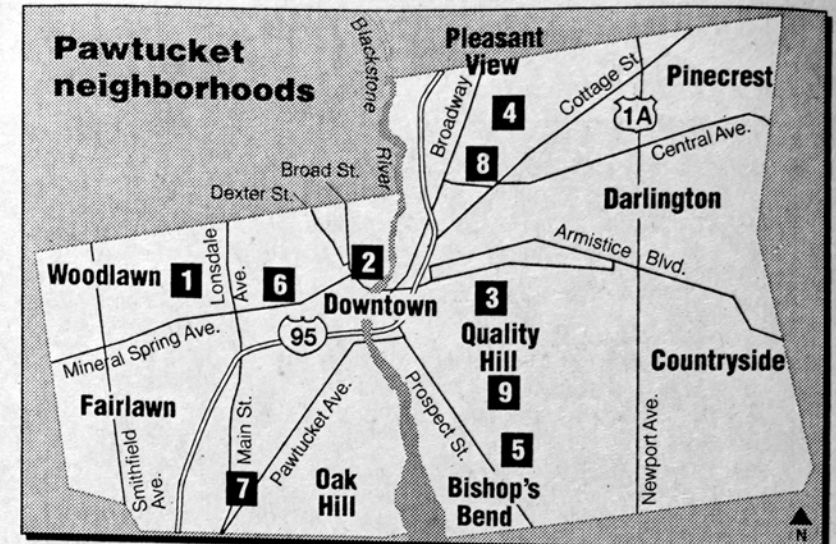
1 RUSSELL P. THRELFALL, 32, 36 Privet St., was arrested and charged with domestic assault for the alleged beating of Katherine A. Carty at their home at 4:42 a.m. Saturday, police said. Carty told police that when she returned from a night out, Carty punched her in the face and upper body.

2 STEPHEN AYER, 26, 484 Kenyon Ave., was arrested and charged with carrying a concealed weapon — a three-inch lockblade knife — Saturday at 3:50 a.m. on Barton and Montgomery Streets, police said. Police had responded to an anonymous complaint that people in a black Cadillac were harassing pedestrians. They found Ayer yelling and screaming from the car that police were harassing him. After a body search, they found the knife and took him into custody.

3 ROBERT MARTIN of Pawtucket Mill Supply, 240 York Ave., reported at 1:51 a.m. Saturday that someone took an air conditioner, valued at \$500, from a factory window.

4 A RESIDENT of 19 Columbine Ave. who declined to be identified told police he found a pink bike, valued at \$100, in his yard at 8:14 a.m. on Friday. Police tagged it and placed it in the police garage.

5 A 12-YEAR-OLD boy, a student at Fallon Memorial School, 62 Lincoln Ave., suffered severe arm lacerations on Friday at 8:29 a.m., after attempting to rescue a bird that appeared hurt in a tree behind the school. When the boy started to climb a fence in the school back lot, he slipped and fell with his left arm scraping along the top of the fence. The prongs on top of the fence tore the inside of his bicep, ripping open the skin. Rescue workers took him to Memorial Hospital.



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6 POLICE REPORTED that someone threw a padlock through a window, valued at \$250, at East Coast Auto, 286 Mineral Spring Ave., Friday morning.

7 LILLIAN HARRIET, 27 Trenton St., reported that a man grabbed her purse at 11:30 a.m. Friday as she left Shaw's market on Ann Mary Street and began walking to CVS. The man took her purse and billfold valued at \$650, \$800 in large bills and a diamond ring and wedding band valued at \$6,500. She said several men tried but could not catch

him as he ran up toward North Main Street.

8 ROBIN SODERLUND, 156 Sabin St., said someone stole a 20-inch blue bike, valued at \$100, from her backyard between 3:30 p.m. Wednesday and 1:29 p.m. Friday.

9 JOSE A. PEREIRA, 194 Memorial Drive, said someone stole a bike, valued at \$50, from his open garage Friday.

Woodlawn

Continued from Page C-1

commitment to make the city a cleaner place to live.

Following the mayor's brief remarks, the volunteers, wearing shorts and yellow T-shirts provided by nine local businesses, scattered over 25 city blocks in the Woodlawn neighborhood to pick up trash and litter, rake leaves and pull weeds.

The neighborhood cleanup was more than just picking up tin cans, bottles, and papers, said Manuel John Goncalves, the cleanup coordinator and neighborhood Awareness director for the Cape Verdean

group. The program "changes the attitude of kids," he said. "If we can get them to respect their community, they will become empowered to change it."

As mid-morning approached, a small group of volunteers roamed up and down Sterry Street picking up trash as several residents looked on. The city's diverse ethnic groups can be brought together by a cleanup program because it helps them to focus on common community problems, said Carlos Rodriguez, 43, a resident.

After five hours of hard, sweaty work, the volunteers headed to

Slater Park to eat pizza and play games.

According to Ismael DaSilva, president of the organization, the volunteers bagged enough trash to fill a small truck. "We're going to schedule a monthly cleanup," DaSilva said, because the program is a good way to "show members of our community that we have to work together."

Founded in November, CACD is a nonprofit organization that develops educational, social, cultural and recreational programs for Cape Verdeans and other ethnic groups in the Pawtucket and Providence area.

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Many people turn to New Age in their old age

By HERBERT P. WEISS
Special to the Journal-Bulletin

While millions of adults 50 and older turn to mainstream religions, such as Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism, for solace in their later years, a growing number are seeking alternative forms of spiritual pursuits to reach "self realization" — they join the rank and file of the New Age Movement.

Researchers estimate that New Agers represent 11 percent of the total U.S. population. Some believe that seniors represent about half of this group.

Ray Whitman, Ph.D., 57, an economist teaching at a university in Washington, D.C., didn't start his spiritual quest in his 50s. His desire to understand his spirituality was a long, sometimes painful process. Whitman remembers, saying that a midlife crisis at age 39 forced him to reevaluate his personal life, including his ties to the Episcopal Church.

"My personal crisis created an interest to explore New Age beliefs and activities," he says. During his search, he learned how to cast astrology and numerology charts, attended metaphysical church services, practiced yoga, and sought advice of psychics and the counsel of gurus.

Today, Whitman is a devotee of Guru Mayi Chidvilasananda, the current head of the Siddha lineage of gurus. "I have a much clearer vision of the truth through the teachings of Siddha yoga than I received through the theology of the Episcopal Church," he said. "I don't need to search any more because I found my guru."

For many other seniors, seeking personal spiritual experiences becomes even more important than belonging to a particular religion or church. Just like Whitman, they are attracted to a wide array of spiritual disciplines and philosophies.

Many of these individuals are also practicing techniques promoted by the human potential movement and are studying Eastern and Western esoteric and Shamanic traditions.

New lifestyle changes and patterns of behavior take hold when old agers put their New Age beliefs into action.

Some drop junk food, soft drinks and coffee from their diets in favor of following macrobiotic recipes, eating organically grown foods and drinking spring or distilled water.

Many also seek spiritual guidance from

psychics, astrological charts, rune stones, I Ching coins, tarot card readings and channelers — even if they choose to consult with religious leaders at their neighborhood churches and synagogues.

Many old agers even combine traditional medical treatments with nontraditional forms of alternative healing practices, including yoga and Tai Chi, meditation, crystal healing, visualizations, affirmations, biofeedback, body therapies such as massage and reflexology, and past life regression through hypnosis.

"If you attend the metaphysical churches or New Age events, you will end up seeing a lot of white hair," observes Dr. Gordon Melton, Ph.D., of the Institute for the Study of American Religion, based in Santa Barbara, Calif.

This should not be surprising, because alternative religions have been around since the 1880s, Melton says. "You have a lot of people who have grown up around alternative formats for most of their lives," he notes.

"While a minority of seniors become sticks in the mud, becoming older frees many from conventionality," Melton says. "They don't have anything to prove to anybody any more," he says.

Seniors want to make their final days count, Melton says. "Becoming older and wiser gives them a certain freedom to go exploring."

New Age philosophy also comes to old agers when they are confronted with a health crisis or go through a life change such as a divorce or death of a partner, says Jonathan Adolph, senior editor of *New Age Journal*. "Any of these life events that cause reflection can be a trigger for examining New Age beliefs and many of these life changes occur in later life," Adolph notes.

More than 50 percent of adults 50 and older still follow traditional religious practices, estimates John Garrett, director of marketing at SRI International's Value and Lifestyle Program. He puts these individuals, median age 55, into a marketing segment called Believers.

But Garrett notes that 25 percent of age 50-plus adults fall into another marketing segment called Fulfilleds — these individuals, median age 48, are more likely to be open to nontraditional ways of doing things, he says.

Fulfilleds are more holistic and open to the ideas of Eastern religion than Believers and

are more likely to take a look at why we are where as people and ask questions about life after death, Garrett says.

These individuals are also information-oriented people, and intellectual religions are going to appeal to them much more than traditional religions, Garrett notes. "They need lots of information to fuel their belief systems," he says. "Any form of information is appealing to them. They are avid readers of books and magazines and collectors of catalogues."

Even if Fulfilleds are not actively involved in New Age practices and philosophies, it is very important for them to be aware of and familiar with them, Garrett says. By contrast, Believers may not even consider learning more about any other traditional or alternative religion, he says.

As millions of baby boomers age, Garrett predicts, they will probably expand the numbers of the New Age movement.

Age should be no barrier to a senior wanting to learn the art of meditation, says Dr. Jim Green, Ph.D., a 77-year-old retired sociologist and anthropologist and former State Department staffer who teaches meditation classes and practices psychotherapy in Falls Church, Va.

In his 14 years of teaching meditation, Green has noticed that his classes are always attended by retirees seeking to learn the techniques. His oldest meditator was age 82, he notes.

While many older people question whether they can learn to meditate and have doubts about their capacity to properly practice it, they always find out their limiting beliefs were wrong, Green observes.

"In fact, they have a greater capacity to learn because they can draw upon a whole lifetime of experiences," he says.

"For some people there is a contemplative dimension to aging where one begins to pay more attention and notice things in one's own interior and in the world that was not noticed before," says Father Ray Studzinski, Ph.D., associate professor at the Catholic University of America, based in Washington, D.C. As a result, "there is an openness to mystery, he says. "All of this can find a good fit in certain spiritual practices such as meditation and yoga."

"Sometimes meditation techniques can even bring about a sense of real integration or

real harmony within one's self as well as offer ways to deal with some of life's hurts," Studzinski says.

But while meditative practices, visualization and the use of mantra-like affirmations may be beneficial for some individuals, "don't consider them to be like over-the-counter drugs," Studzinski warns. "They may work very well for some people but not well for others."

Herbert P. Weiss is a Providence-based writer who covers alternative and conventional medical therapies.

Holidays

The Feast of the **EPIPHANY**, which celebrates the visit of the Three Kings to the Christ Child, is being officially celebrated tomorrow by Roman Catholics and on Monday by Anglicans and Protestants. Meaning "manifestation" or "appearance," the Epiphany is sometimes referred to as "Little Christmas," or as the end of the 12 days of Christmas.

Monday, for Orthodox Christians, is the feast of the **HOLY THEOPHANY**, or Baptism of the Lord. It commemorates Jesus presenting himself at the Jordan River for baptism by his cousin, John the Baptist, by which he sanctified the waters of baptism. It also recalls the Manifestation of the Holy Trinity as the heavens opened and the voice of God declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to him." The following day, Orthodox Christians using the Julian calendar will celebrate the feast of **CHRISTMAS**.

For the world's Muslims, Monday is **LAYLAT AL-BARA'AH**, the Night of Repentance when, according to Muslim tradition, God approaches the Earth to call humanity and to grant forgiveness. On or about Friday, Muslims will begin their observance of **RAMADAN**, the holiest month on their calendar, with 30 days of fasting.

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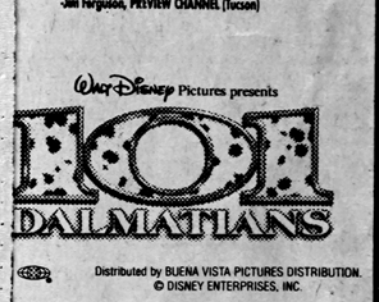
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R.I. elderly must try to get more

HERB WEISS

DID YOU GO to the Bristol Fourth of July parade? Or perhaps you were one of the hundreds who gathered at Slater Mill to hear U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy announce his bid for reelection.

If you attended one of these events this year, or one of the hundreds of other such gatherings around the Ocean State, you probably met gubernatorial and legislative candidates seeking high visibility. The clock is ticking for the candidates.

And they are now scrambling to fill their calendars with "must attend" events. Political wisdom tells us that candidates for election are particularly interested in going to coffees, festivals and other such gatherings that attract older voters.

This is because seniors as a group get to the polls more often than do younger people. According to the Census Bureau, in the 1996 presidential election, voter turnout among Americans over 65 was 67 percent — only 10 percentage points lower than their registration rate. Americans over age 50 had almost the same rate (64.4 percent). Yet only 31 percent of voters aged 18 to 20 cast a vote in that election.

Does this apply to Rhode Island's 2002 elections? You bet. The question is whether those running for federal and state office are prepared to confront the changes that are coming with an aging America.

In the next Congress, Republican and Democratic leaders must work together to develop sound policies on old age.

Federal lawmakers must come to grips with helping seniors pay for costly long-term care, as well as maintaining high-quality health services. They must continue to hammer out a bipartisan law to make drugs affordable, and to keep both Medicare and Social Security financially solvent.

At the state level, the Gray Panthers of Rhode Island, with the Rhode Island Forum on Aging and the Rhode Island Minority Elder Task Force, seek to educate elderly voters on state and federal aging issues. This Senior Agenda/Election 2002 project, funded by the Rhode Island Foundation, will identify the top issues; will solicit, through a questionnaire, the candidates' positions on them; and

will hold four regional forums to discuss them.

The forums are planned for next month. Their results, with the information culled from the candidates' questionnaire, will be written up and distributed to both the elderly and the news media.

The questions directed to the gubernatorial and other statewide candidates (in contested races) will include their positions on prescription-drug aid, affordable home- and community-based care, quality in nursing facilities, and ways to better serve the elderly members of minority groups.

The congressional candidates will be asked their positions on such Capitol Hill issues as universal health insurance, privatization of Social Security, the combining of Medicare Parts A and B, and changing the funding formula for the Older Americans Act to reflect a state's changing demographics. They will also be asked their views on how to put the brakes on spiraling drug costs.

For their part, elderly voters should educate themselves on the issues and then address the candidates. At campaign events, tell the candidates to make further reforms in the state's pharmaceutical program. These voters can also speak of the need for

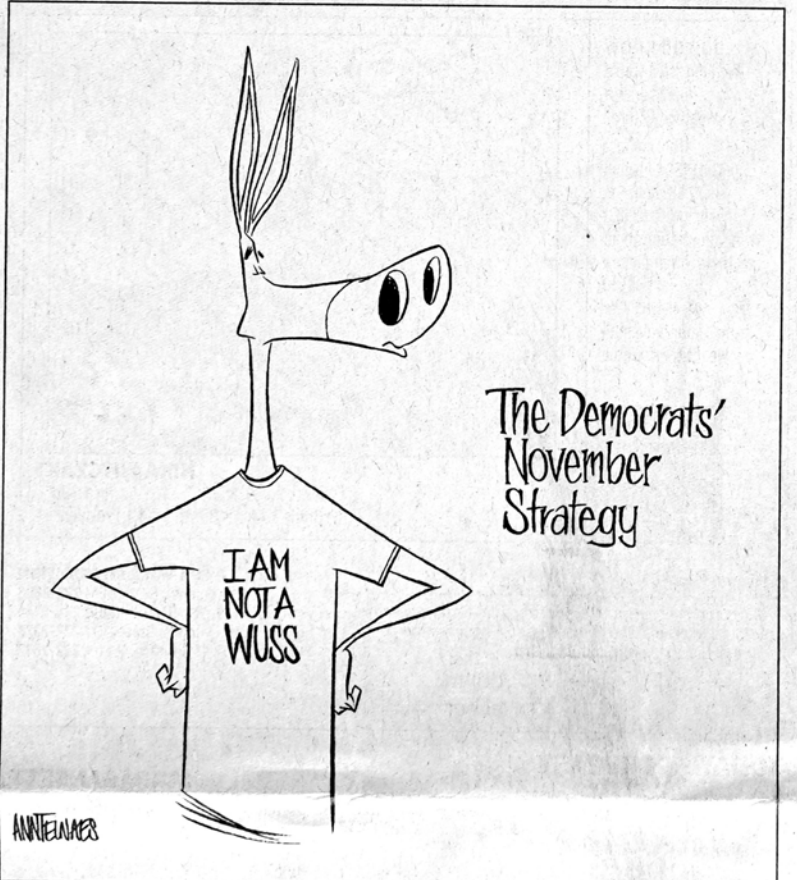
assisted-living facilities for moderate- and low-income seniors, and for affordable housing for frail or low-income seniors.

Elderly voters should call for the adequate funding of a seamless continuum of long-term care, from nursing facilities to community-based services. And they should urge the candidates to work on solving the state's staff shortages in nursing facilities and home-health groups — as well as providing the state agencies with enough funds to perform their legislative-oversight duties.

Finally, seniors should recommend to the congressional candidates the bipartisan creation of a federal prescription-drug benefit and the bipartisan strengthening of Social Security and Medicare. With neither the Democratic nor the Republican leaders mustering enough votes to support their particular solutions, this is an urgent need.

An educated voter who votes consistently has clout. He or she should speak up to those seeking election to meet the pressing needs of the elderly — a group to which we all, ultimately, hope to belong.

Herb Weiss is a Pawtucket-based writer covering aging and health-care issues for state and national publications. He can be reached at hweissri@aol.com.



Arts districts

Cost-effective way to enhance economy

HERB WEISS

ART IS NOT just a landscape or abstract picture or a shapely vase. It is a powerful economic engine that can change the cultural or economic landscape of a city or even may be a state. As Pawtucket's economic and cultural affairs officer, I wish to throw in my two cents in the state budget debate to describe how the state's Arts Tax Incentive Program, creating arts districts, has assisted the Pawtucket Planning Department to bring economic vitality and stability to some of its blighted urban areas.

Through Mayor James E. Doyle, we are embracing the arts and experiencing one of the biggest building booms in decades. Our arts district has allowed us to more effectively market our community, by changing a negative image of Pawtucket from an old worn-out mill town, to one now known as among New England's emerging artist communities. Recently, the March issue of Art Calendar, a national magazine for professional working artists, named Pawtucket one of the top 10 great towns for working artists. Yes, as our printed materials suggest, Pawtucket is Rhode Island's "Creative Community."

Before the creation of our arts district, Pawtucket had trouble attracting developers. Once created and promoted by nationally-recognized news outlets, such as The New York Times, The Boston Globe, the Christian Science Monitor, and even local papers, our city is on the development community's radar screen. We are now attracting developers from locations both nationally and internationally, such as San Francisco, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, California, and the United Kingdom, who have come here seeking properties to buy and develop.

Since 1999, when the Rhode Island General Assembly created our 307-acre arts district, 13 vacant or underused commercial buildings in the city's historic downtown have been purchased and rehabilitated by artists or creative sector companies. Although the creation of the historic tax credits in 2002 was a major factor in attracting developers to our city, making old mills economically viable to rehab, the buzz about Pawtucket's efforts to reinvent itself through the arts started in 1999, when the General Assembly established the city's arts district.

As mentioned, the positive impact of our arts-district policy is not "blue smoke and mirrors" but can be shown concretely. For example, we have seen two large downtown mills — both vacant for years — become new homes to over 100 residents who now pay property, auto and state income taxes, and support local restaurants and retail establishments. Many of these residents now serve on several of our nonprofit boards and have become active in bettering our community.

To illustrate this point, 14 new residents moved into Rhode Island to purchase condos at Riverfront lofts. Several of these new property owners moved to Pawtucket from Massachusetts, and from as far away as Arizona and New York. Before the build-out of Riverfront Lofts, the empty mill brought the City of Pawtucket \$17,000 in property taxes. Now, \$250,000 in property taxes come into our city coffers. In addition, condo residents have registered their cars here, too.

Two other downtown mill projects are in the works in our arts district that will bring in 370 condos and apartments by 2010. Both are being developed by developers from outside of Rhode Island who intend to market the spaces to the Boston area. We expect hundreds of new downtown residents, some from outside of Rhode Island, will be drawn into the city's historic downtown arts district that will bring new life and vitality to this section of our city.

The state's Art Tax Incentive Program has even enticed hundreds of artists to set up their studios outside of the city's arts district. We have even attracted developers, too. Several years ago, we attracted a California developer who ultimately purchased three large vacant mills, totaling over one million square feet of space, to develop. Yes, our economic growth throughout the city continues because of the arts district.

Pawtucket's arts district also brought us the widely acclaimed Gamm Theater, Stone Soup Coffee House, Mixed Magic Theater, the Foundry Artist and was instrumental in creating the first public statewide arts high school.

Furthermore, by attracting artists and small businesses into underused and vacant mills, public safety is enhanced throughout our city. Before redevelopment, these mills were potential fire hazards. Remember the Greenhalgh Mill that burned to the ground, destroying six homes and damaging a dozen more in the surrounding neighborhood? An arts district that brings increased activities in these properties will help ensure that we never again see fires raging through our mills.

In conclusion, the Arts and Entertainment District in Pawtucket and those in other Rhode Island communities have proven to be a fantastic, low-cost marketing tool. After 9½ years, Pawtucket only has 16 artists enrolled in the State's Arts Tax Incentive Program. At little cost to the state, this law has been just the economic jump-start that we needed to reinvigorate our economy and the city's blighted urban neighborhoods.

Herb Weiss is Pawtucket's economic and cultural affairs officer.