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BRIEFING



SPORTS
For Blue Devils, Sweet 16 again leaves a bitter taste
Led by freshman Tyrus Thomas, above, LSU upsets top-seeded Duke and moves to the round of eight in the NCAA tournament. Duke is 3-6 in nine straight Sweet 16 appearances. Also advancing Thursday are Memphis State, Texas and UCLA. **D1**

LOCAL & STATE

Judge rules against mother of girl on expulsion hearing

He says the hearing did not violate the due-process rights of a SAD 57 teenager facing a lengthy in-school suspension for allegedly writing a bomb threat. **B1**

When a band of ranting homophobes tries to disrupt a Maine soldier's funeral, how should we react? Turn our backs and focus on the life and sacrifice of Sgt. Corey Dan. Bill Nemitz, B1

WASHINGTON
The case of an Afghan man facing prosecution for converting to Christianity has exposed a conflict in values between the conservative Muslim country and the nations rebuilding it. A2

BUSINESS FRIDAY
Robin Whitten likes to shun the rules, which has helped bring success to AudioFile, a magazine published in Portland for the audiobook industry and the public. C1

THE FLIP SIDE
A Minnesota college student comes back wealthy from spring break after winning \$1 million in a tournament on a poker-playing cruise. D6

WHEELS
Test drive the top-dropping Mitsubishi Spyder. And Click & Clack weigh in on a motor mount mystery and the wisdom of engine warm-ups. E1

COMING UP
Olympic skiers will be in our own backyard when gold medalists Ted Ligety and Julie Mancuso, Bode Miller and others come to Sugarloaf for the U.S. Alpine Championships. Saturday

Committee backs compromise on Katahdin Lake proposal

State House: Allowing some hunting saves the deal, but convincing the full Legislature is no sure thing.

By **JOHN RICHARDSON**
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — A legislative committee settled on a tenuous compromise plan Thursday that would add Katahdin Lake to

Baxter State Park while preserving hunting access on lands to the north.

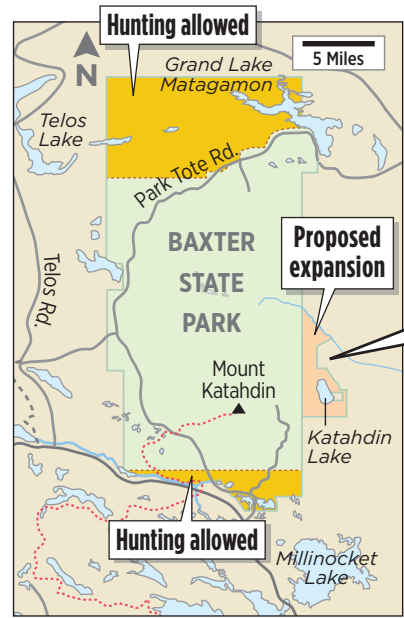
The vote followed several hours of emotional arguments and speeches. It keeps the historic deal alive, but in no way guarantees the plan will succeed when it goes before the full Legislature next week.

"I'm very hopeful," said Unity Democratic Rep. John Piotti, chairman of the Committee on

Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. "We all knew that this was only the beginning."

Others sounded less optimistic. "I feel a very strong sense of failure on this," Rep. Patrick Flood, R-Winthrop, quietly told fellow committee members before the vote. "I hope that others can succeed where we failed."

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The Katahdin compromise

To become public land, but not part of Baxter State Park. Hunting would be allowed.

Northern portion:
1,975 acres

Southern portion:
4,040 acres

To become part of Baxter State Park and off-limits to hunting.

STAFF GRAPHIC | JEFF WOODBURY

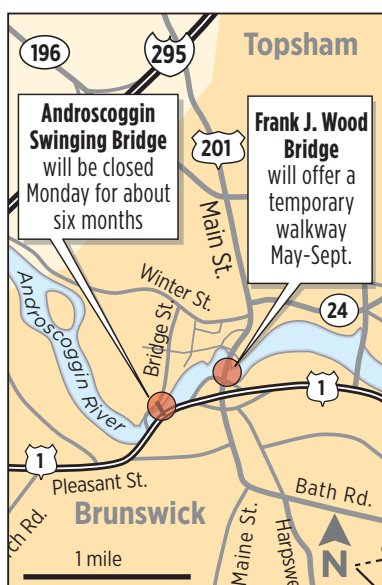
STROLLING STILL WELCOME



Colleen McKenna of Brunswick crosses the Frank J. Wood Bridge on Thursday in Brunswick. The state wants a path kept open on the bridge during repairs. The Androscoggin Swinging Bridge will close for repairs next week.

Staff photo by Shawn Patrick Ouellette

Bridge work won't halt walkers



STAFF GRAPHIC | MICHAEL FISHER

Contractors must leave a path for pedestrians and cyclists between Brunswick and Topsham.

By **DENNIS HOEY**
Staff Writer

TOPSHAM — People who walk or bicycle between Topsham and Brunswick's downtowns will have at least one route available while two bridges are worked on over the next several months, state transportation officials announced Thursday.

The decision allays concerns that repairs to the Frank J. Wood Bridge and the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge might force walkers or bicyclists to use the Coastal Connector, a span nearly a mile east of the downtowns.

Peter Brown, a Maine Department of Transportation engineer who will oversee work on the Frank J. Wood Bridge, said

the project contractor will be required to maintain a 4-foot-wide temporary walkway on the bridge at all times.

That means that while the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge is closed for the next six months, pedestrians, runners and bicyclists have the option of using the other bridge. The requirement will be incorporated into the bid contract, which will be advertised later this month.

Although the walkway will be narrow, it should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrians. Concrete barriers will be set up to protect walkers from cars.

"I cannot see any good reason not to require this," Brown said, "but I can see a lot of pluses."

The Androscoggin Swinging Bridge, a pedestrian footbridge that connects the Topsham Heights neighborhood with Mill

Please see **BRIDGES**, Back Page

SPEAKING OF HOCKEY

Pros from abroad work at acquiring gift of gab

English isn't mandatory for hockey, but Portland's foreign players want to learn for other reasons.

By **PAUL BETT**
Staff Writer

Portland Pirates defenseman Ladislav Smid studied English while growing up in the Czech Republic. But when he reported to training camp last September, he learned that speaking the language was a whole different matter.

"When I came here," he said, "my English was terrible."

Six months made a big difference. Smid had enough confidence to grab a microphone and give a brief hockey lesson to more than 6,000 fans during intermission of a recent game



Staff photo by Doug Jones

Igor Pohanka, left, and Pierre Parenteau are Portland Pirates hockey players who have worked to learn and speak English since joining the team.

at the Cumberland County Civic Center.

It was a big step. And it wasn't easy.

"I was so nervous," Smid

said of his participation in the Hockey 101 segment while he was sidelined with a head injury. "When I am nervous, I forget some words. But I get

nervous talking to a group of people in Czech, too."

After soccer, hockey is the most international of team sports. The Portland roster includes six players who grew up speaking a language other than English. Although it isn't essential that the players speak English, it sure is helpful.

"Fortunately, there is an international language of hockey," said Portland Coach Kevin Dineen. "We can all point to a chalkboard and show people where we want them to be. But knowing English is real important."

Since arriving in Portland, Smid has taken weekly lessons to improve his English.

"We're trying to expand his vocabulary," said Mary Lynch,

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Troops rescue Western hostages

British and U.S. forces bring the peace activists' ordeal to a quiet end, after another captive's death sparked fear for their fate.

By **JOHN WARD ANDERSON**
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD, Iraq — British and U.S. troops rescued three kidnapped Christian peace activists early Thursday. The military operation was based on information provided by two men detained just three hours earlier by U.S. forces, according to a U.S. military official.

The freed captives — Norman Kember, 74, of London, and James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, both of Canada — were members of Christian Peace-

DOZENS KILLED AS SECTARIAN VIOLENCE CONTINUES
A7

maker Teams, a Chicago- and Toronto-based group that advocates nonviolence and is opposed to the war in Iraq. They were kidnapped in Baghdad on Nov. 26 along with a fourth member of their group, Tom Fox of Clear Brook, Va.

The well-being of the three abductees had been a cause for concern ever since Fox's body was discovered on a trash-strewn street in Baghdad two weeks

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Emery: Probe Maine party's R.I. race role

Election 2006: The Blaine House hopeful says Gov. Baldacci must answer queries about donations.

By **PAUL CARRIER**
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — The Maine Democratic Party's decision to inject itself into an out-of-state U.S. Senate campaign spilled over into the governor's race Thursday when Republican contender David Emery blamed Gov. John Baldacci for the move and demanded a state or a federal investigation.

Emery said Baldacci, as the head of the Democratic Party in Maine, is responsible for the party's decision to give \$10,000 to U.S. Senate hopeful Matt Brown of Rhode Island and to accept \$6,000 from Rhode Island businessman Richard Bready, who supports Brown in the Democratic Senate primary there.

The flow of money between Rhode Island and state Democratic parties in Maine, Massachusetts and Hawaii has raised questions about whether Brown was trying to evade federal contribution limits by laundering additional donations from Bready and other backers who had reached the legal limit for such gifts.

Baldacci said through a spokeswoman Thursday that he had no knowledge of the donations. Crystal Canney, the spokeswoman, referred other questions to Maine Democratic Party

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WEATHER



Mostly cloudy, chilly
Highs near 40 **B6**

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