

IN SPORTS: AL EAST RACE TIGHTENS AS THE YANKEES NIP THE ORIOLES AND THE RED SOX FALL TO THE BLUE JAYS



The Day

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Chat > Paul Smotas, East Lyme superintendent of schools, will host a discussion from 1 to 3 p.m. today. Go online to ask him a question.

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State Seeks Custody Of Dead Girl's Cousin

Kimberly Bemis, right, says she and her daughter, Cassandra Betancourt-Bemis, 7, will go into hiding to prevent DCF from taking custody of Cassandra and to avoid police questioning until the family can find an attorney.



ADENA STEVENS/The Day

DCF concerned for daughter of man charged in drowning, but mother vows to shield child, 7

By JULIE WERNAU
Day Staff Writer

The state is seeking custody of a 7-year-old girl who may be the only witness to the drowning of 2-year-old Treau Bemis other than the man who is now charged with the toddler's murder. Craig Betancourt was babysitting for his daughter, Cassandra Betancourt-Bemis, 7, and Cassandra's cousin, Treau, when the 2-year-old Treau drowned in

the bathtub Sunday. Betancourt and his fiancée, Kimberly Bemis, had temporary custody of Treau.

Betancourt was charged this week with capital felony murder after police said he confessed in "gruesome" detail to murdering the toddler while babysitting her.

According to paperwork left at the Groton home of Kimberly Bemis Wednesday, the state is asking that her daughter, Cassandra, be placed under the care of the state Department of

Children and Families, in part because Kimberly Bemis does not believe that Betancourt committed the murder. She and other members of the Bemis family believe the drowning was accidental and that Betancourt's "confession" to police was the result of an hours-long interrogation and Betancourt's suicidal thoughts following Treau's death.

"Her disbelief and minimization creates concern for her judgment and ability to protect and do what is in the best interest of her daughter," the State of Connecticut Superior Court for Juvenile Matters document states.

According to the documents, DCF re-

ceived a referral Monday morning from Groton Town police Lt. John W. Varone, who stated he believed Cassandra could be living with psychological trauma and in harmful conditions. DCF workers said they were unable to check on the welfare of the child following what police have called a murder, the documents state.

"The department and police have been unable to assess the well-being and safety of the child, as the mother and Cassandra's whereabouts are unknown," the paper states.

Varone could not be reached to com-

See **STATE** page **A3**

Contractors Working In Iraq Often Beyond Law

Congress wants to make U.S. military laws apply

By JOHN M. BRODER and JAMES RISEN
New York Times News Service

Washington — The shooting incident involving private security guards in Baghdad on Sunday that left at least eight Iraqi civilians dead revealed large gaps in the laws applying to such armed contractors.

Early in the period when Iraq was still under American administration, the U.S. government unilaterally exempted its employees and contractors from Iraqi law. Last year, Congress instructed the Defense Department to draw up rules to bring the tens of thousands of contractors in Iraq under the American laws that apply to the military, but the Pentagon so far has not acted. Thus the thousands of heavily armed private soldiers in Iraq operate with virtual immunity from Iraqi or American law.

There have been numerous incidents of killings or injuries

See **CONTRACTORS** page **A5**

Daniel Biechele granted parole

The band manager whose pyrotechnics ignited a nightclub blaze that killed 100 people in West Warwick, R.I., in 2003 was granted parole and will be released in March after having served less than half his four-year prison sentence, the Rhode Island state parole board announced Wednesday.

Daniel Biechele, the former tour manager for the '80s rock band Great White, has served 16 months so far after pleading guilty last year to 100 counts of involuntary manslaughter for his role in the fire. The parole board announced its unanimous decision after meeting with Biechele privately at the state's minimum-security prison, where he is held. See story, **B7**



TRIBE PLANS LEDYARD WATER PARK



Youngsters frolic under a waterfall at the indoor water park at Great Wolf Lodge in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation is developing plans for a similar water park in Ledyard.

Mashantuckets eye chain to build indoor facility with other attractions

By JENNA CHO
Day Staff Writer

Ledyard — The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation is developing plans for an indoor water park on property the tribe owns on close to 400 acres in the northeast corner of the town, two sources familiar with the project said Wednesday.

The Great Wolf Lodge water park in Ledyard would be one in a chain that Wisconsin-based Great Wolf Resorts Inc. owns or operates with affiliates and subsidiaries throughout North America. Resort locations include Sandusky, Ohio, Williamsburg, Va., and Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

Tribal officials have declined to comment on the project.

The nearest Great Wolf Lodge to New England is in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. A Groton developer in 2004 proposed a Great Wolf Lodge on Jerry Browne Road in Mystic but later withdrew his application.

Great Wolf Resorts is the nation's biggest name in indoor water-park resorts, according to its Web site, www.greatwolf.com. The company's "signature northwoods-themed resorts" include indoor water parks that range from 34,000 to 82,000 square feet and hotels with 270 to 400 suites, according to the Web site. Some of the existing resorts are only open to hotel guests.

The company provides "a full-service entertainment resort experience" to families with children between ages 2 and 14 who are within driving distance from the resorts, the Web site states.

A Wisconsin Dells, Wis., resort is 500,000 square feet of condominiums and indoor entertainment areas, according to the Web site. The 90-foot-tall indoor water park features 19 water slides, a wave pool, a rope-climb pool, a tubing river, an "interactive" tree house and a rock-climbing wall, among

See **WATER PARK** page **A5**

Redesign to make city hub user-friendly

New London reveals plans for makeover of historic Parade

By ELAINE STOLL
Day Staff Writer

New London — At the intersection of State and Bank streets, the public space known as the Parade historically served as a public square — a meeting place for residents and a hub where various modes of trans-

portation converged. But a 1970s redesign that significantly raised the plaza, created a walkway to the Water Street Parking Garage and added trees reduced the Parade's usable space, presented safety problems for pedestrians and motorists, and essentially separated lower State Street from the rest of downtown.

City leaders and residents have talked for more than a decade of restoring the Parade to its previous function and importance. That dream appeared closer than ever to

reality on Wednesday, when architects, engineers and designers revealed their plans at City Hall for a more than \$10 million Parade overhaul.

"This project takes what was formerly the most important public space in the city of New London and returns it to that status," said Bruce Hyde, director of the city's Office of Development and Planning.

The work will fix safety problems and turn the Parade into an invit-

See **PARADE** page **A9**

Cooling towers tall order for ratepayers?

Millstone operator says electricity would be more expensive

By PATRICIA DADDONA
Day Staff Writer

The chance that the state could force the Millstone nuclear complex in Waterford to install massive, costly cooling towers has raised fears locally that potentially higher electric rates could drive business-

es out of state.

Dominion met Wednesday with town, political and business leaders to hear and share concerns about a proposed draft water discharge permit the state Department of Environmental Protection is revising. The review is needed to account for a federal court ruling that requires use of the "best technology available" to avoid fish kills at power plants around the country.

Millstone draws in water from Long Island Sound to cool the steam that has passed through turbines

that generate electricity in its two operating reactors. The reactors also use grates to strain and attempt to save fish larvae from being killed in the process.

Adding cooling towers, which in some variations reach higher than 500 feet, could cost "hundreds of millions of dollars," would reduce electric output by 100 megawatts at Millstone, and could increase the cost of electricity for ratepayers, said Daniel Weekley, Dominion's

See **MILLSTONE** page **A9**

INSIDETODAY

NIGHT & DAY

Your weekly guide to entertainment

Thrill seeking

Radical Reels film tour drops in.



MUSIC: The I AM Festival returns to New London. ZZ Top rides into the Mohegan Sun for a concert.

STAGE: 'Ethel Merman's Broadway' bowls over Ivoryton.

A local actress plays Louisa May Alcott.

EVENTS: J.D. McClatchy opens Arts Café-Mystic's season.

NEWS

Delicacy in Jeopardy
The French government is out to get poachers of the ortolan songbird, right, which some roast and gulp down whole. **A2**



A Gambling Problem
Michael J. Robey, who pleaded guilty to stealing from the car dealership he managed to support his gambling, is sentenced to 7 months in jail. **B1**

WEATHER

Two More Great Days
Today and Friday, plenty of sunshine. Highs in mid to upper 70s. Lows near 60. Saturday, partly sunny. **C10**

INDEX

Business B12	Editorials A6	Region B1
Calendar B2	Movies B10	Sports C7
Classified C7	Nation A4	State B1
Comics B11	Obituaries B6	Television B10
Crossword B11	Police logs B2	World A2

