



A pitching career for the books

Deering senior Leslie Warn enters this season near the head of the pack. Softball preview. **SPORTS, D1**

Collecting a hedge against hard times?

The value of old coins and vintage cars may hold better than stocks and funds. **BUSINESS FRIDAY, C1**



BRIEFING



SPORTS

Manny being Manny: Two homers to help beat Yanks

Boston pitcher Josh Beckett earns his second victory, New York pitcher Mike Mussina is again ineffective, tempers get testy and the Red Sox win, 7-5. **D1**

The Boston Bruins take advantage of a critical turnover and defeat Montreal 5-1 to stay alive in their playoff series. **D3**

LOCAL & STATE

Summer turnpike detour comes with an E-Z perk

No, those drivers shut out of Interstate 295 because of road construction won't get a free pass. But they will get a free loaner E-ZPass transponder. **B1**

NATION

A hearing on the fate of children taken during a raid on an alleged polygamist sect in Texas turns circus-like as hundreds of lawyers struggle to make their objections heard. **A5**

WHEELS

Toyota Matrix: Economy car with unneeded frills

Take a test drive, plus Click & Clack advise that changing the oil in your car need not be a headache, once you've learned the ropes. **E1**

OUT & ABOUT

Folk singer Patty Larkin plays Stone Mountain Arts Center, the Escapists bring improv to the Portland Stage Company, and the Midcoast Sustainable Energy Expo comes to Damariscotta. **B6**

COMING UP

Spring is the season when squirrels bear their young, and this is bad news if the nesting spot happens to be your attic or roof. **Sunday**

WEATHER



Partly sunny and mild
Highs 66-68 **B6**

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EXTREME BEACH MAKEOVER



The tides: Always on the march

Photos by Gordon Chibroski/Staff Photographer

Fran White of Durham and Gail Letourneau of Readfield are disappointed that a river channel on Popham Beach now blocks them from walking to Fox Island at low tide.

Mother Nature reconfigures popular Popham Beach, and the new landscape may be less enjoyable for park visitors.

By JOHN RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

PHIPPSBURG — Gail Letourneau and Fran White sat on Popham Beach at lunchtime this week, soaking in the sun, scenery and salt air and waiting for the tide to slip away so they could take the season's first walk out to Fox Island.

But they soon realized the beach had other ideas.

"Normally this water right here would be over there," White said, looking over a fast-moving channel of water separating them from their destination.

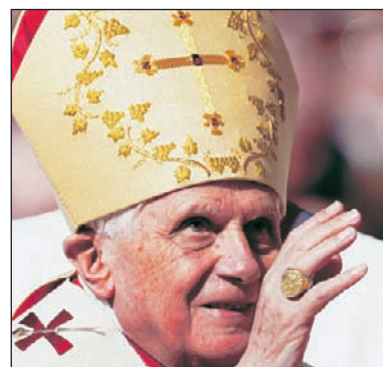
Popham Beach, Maine's most popular day-use state park, is known for its shifting landscape and currents nearly as



The relocated Morse River and tidal currents have uprooted trees, washed away the tall dunes on the western side of the beach and left boardwalks suspended several feet in the air. Rising sea levels also cause erosion.

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Pope prays with victims of clergy abuse



The Associated Press

Benedict XVI held what was believed to be the first meeting between a pope and sex abuse victims Thursday.

The session, which is described as emotional, follows an open-air Mass that drew more than 45,000 people.

By VICTOR L. SIMPSON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pope Benedict XVI prayed with tearful victims of clergy sex abuse in a chapel Thursday, an extraordinary gesture from a pontiff who has made atoning for the great shame of the U.S. church the cornerstone of his first papal trip to America.

Benedict's third day in the U.S. began with a Mass celebrated in 10 languages at a baseball stadium, and it included a speech to Roman Catholic college and university presidents.

But the real drama happened privately, in the chapel of the papal embassy between events.

Benedict and Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley met with five or six clergy sex abuse victims for about 25 minutes, offering them encouragement and hope, said the Rev. Federico Lombardi, a papal spokesman. The group from O'Malley's archdiocese were all adults, men and women who had been molested as minors. Each spoke privately with the pope.

"They prayed together. Also, each of them had their own individual time with the Holy Father," Lombardi said. "Some were in tears."

Bernie McDaid, one of the victims, said in an interview with CNN that he told the pope he was an altar boy when he was abused and "it wasn't just sexual abuse, it was spiritual abuse. And I want you to know that. And then I told

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Real ID license changes passed

The bill will make licenses more secure and give the state time to meet federal identification demands.

By PAUL CARRIER
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — The Legislature gave final approval Thursday to a bill that will tighten the state's procedures for issuing driver's licenses.

Gov. John Baldacci sought the changes to avert a showdown with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which contended that Maine's lax practices encouraged fraud.

The bill, which Baldacci is expected to sign, orders the state to take several steps to make Maine licenses more secure.

They include verifying that applicants are in this country legally before issuing licenses to them. Maine is one of six states that do not currently have a "legal presence" requirement for immigrants seeking licenses.

The federal government is demanding that the state make that change and others by Dec. 15, in exchange for giving the state more time to comply with other provisions of the federal Real ID Act.

The federal law is supposed to make all of the states' driver's licenses more uniform and secure, but Maine is one of several states that have passed laws refusing to comply.

Homeland Security had threatened to stop accepting Maine driver's licenses as a valid form of identification to board commercial flights and enter federal buildings unless the state made some licensing changes this year.

The House of Representatives backed the reforms on a preliminary vote of 79-58 Thursday afternoon and then gave the bill final approval without another roll-call vote.

That set the stage for final passage in the Senate on a 19-15 vote.

Thursday's votes capped two days of debate in the Legislature as lawmakers raced to complete what was being billed as the final or near-final day of the 2008 legislative session, which began in January.

Legislative leaders had hoped to wrap things up Wednesday

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Suspect pleads to lesser charge of manslaughter in drug brawl

Joshua Stewart is freed of a murder charge in the killing of his estranged wife's fiancé and gets a 20-year term.

By SETH HARKNESS
Staff Writer

ALFRED — A man accused of killing his estranged wife's fiancé during a drug deal in Sanford pleaded guilty Thursday to a lesser charge of manslaughter and criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon.

York County Superior Court Justice Paul Fritzsche sentenced Joshua Stewart to 20-year and five-year terms, to be served concurrently. Stewart, 21, of Sanford stabbed

21-year-old Allen Bennison in the parking lot of the Airport Variety store on Jan. 23, 2007.

Deputy Attorney General Bill Stokes said the state negotiated the plea agreement because he felt a jury could have seen the case as either manslaughter or murder.

"I don't think Mr. Stewart went there with any preconceived purpose with a knife to cause harm to Allen Bennison," Stokes said. "We are looking at it as a low-end murder or a high-end manslaughter."

A murder conviction would have resulted in a minimum sentence of 25 years.

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John Patriquin/Staff Photographer

Don Bennison, the father of stabbing victim Allen Bennison, reads a statement in court Thursday in front of defendant Joshua Stewart.