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Gun bill addresses suicide prevention

Some legislators feel the issues should be dealt with separately

By Michael Hartwell
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GARDNER — Suicide-prevention efforts in northern Worcester County may benefit if a gun-control bill is passed by the Legislature, but some elected officials would rather see those issues dealt with separately.

Suicide-prevention meetings planned/3

On Tuesday, House Speaker Robert DeLeo unveiled a bill with 50 different sections intended to reduce gun violence in the state. Several sections would specifically target suicide, and the bill is based on recommendations from a task force formed in response to the December 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Conn.

The proposed bill includes a requirement that Massachusetts public school districts provide suicide-prevention training every three years to school personnel, including teachers.

"I'm happy to see that is part of the legislation," said

Please see **SUICIDE/6**

ON THE WEB TODAY'S QUESTION

What happened to your high-school prom date?

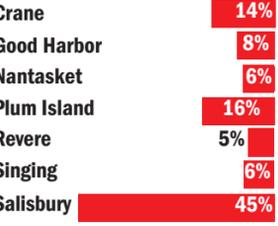
- I married him/her
- I divorced him/her
- We dated for a while
- We stayed friends
- We lost touch

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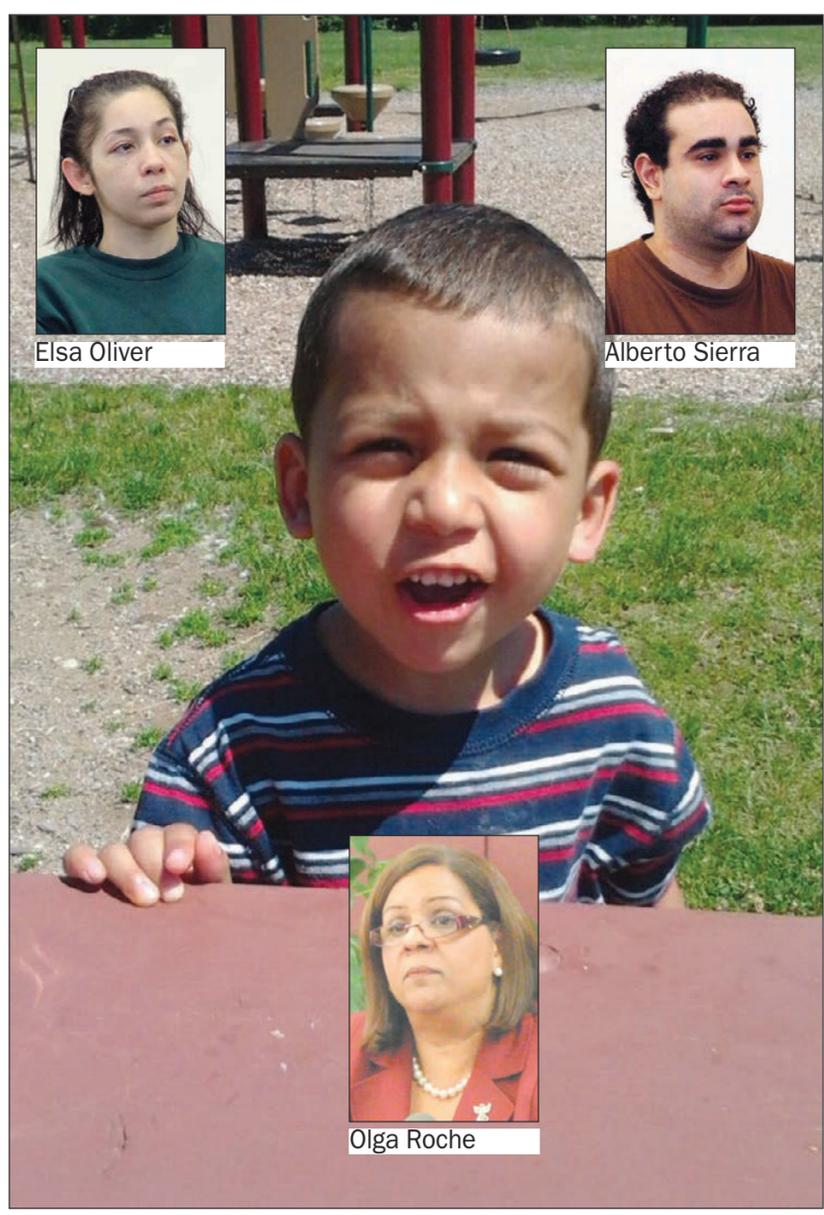
Not a scientific poll

YESTERDAY'S QUESTION RESULTS

What is your favorite beach in Massachusetts?



Total votes: 80



Elsa Oliver

Alberto Sierra



Oiga Roche

The state Department of Children and Families lost track of Jeremiah Oliver. The 5-year-old Fitchburg boy was found dead in Sterling last month.

Report: DCF needs more resources

Recommendations include additional staffing, accessibility to smartphones

By Bob Salsberg and Steve LeBlanc
Associated Press

BOSTON — Massachusetts' child-welfare agency should not be held responsible for the death of a 5-year-old Fitchburg boy whose family was under state supervision but officials did not do enough to protect the boy, according to an outside review released Wednesday.

The report from Child Welfare League of America into the Department of Children and Families following the disappearance of 5-year-old Jeremiah Oliver of Fitchburg also raised a number of significant concerns about the agency, including staffing problems and inconsistent handling of cases due to out-of-date policies.

Jeremiah's body was discovered along I-90 in Sterling last month. Relatives

The league said DCF is understaffed and its policies and protocols largely out of date.

said the boy hadn't been seen since September but police weren't told he was missing until December.

The league concluded that while there is significant evidence some DCF staff didn't do their jobs, "there is not evidence that DCF's actions and failures caused Jeremiah's death or that DCF could have prevented the tragic outcome."

"We're not saying the department is off the hook,

Please see **DCF/9**

Prosecutor: Hernandez killed 2 over spilled drink

By Denise Lavoie
The Associated Press

BOSTON — A spilled drink in a Boston nightclub led former New England Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez to kill two people in a drive-by shooting two years ago, prosecutors said Wednesday.

Prosecutors said Hernandez felt disrespected after a stranger bumped into him and spilled his drink, prompting him to follow the man and his friends then open fire on their car at a red light.

"I think I got one in the head and one in the chest," Hernandez told a friend as they fled the intersection, prosecutors said at the former gridiron star's arraignment.

Hernandez, already charged with killing another man last year, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to seven charges — including two counts of first-degree murder — in the July 2012 shooting that killed Daniel de Abreu and

Please see **HERNANDEZ/9**

N. Central Mass. spelling champ comes up short in national bee



Meryl Warpula won the North Central Massachusetts Regional Spelling Bee in March.

By Chris Camire
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OXON HILL, Md. — It wasn't meant to be for Leominster's Meryl Warpula.

Making her second consecutive appearance at the 87th Scripps National Spelling Bee, the 13-year-old seventh-grader came up short in her quest to advance to the televised rounds.

Meryl's mother, Janet Warpula, said Wednesday that the competition has been a "wonderful" experience.

"It's the best," she said. "Meryl's already talking about next year."

Advancing to the semifinals of the competition is not easy. Only 46 out of 281 competitors vying for the title of top speller in the English language make it.

All spellers appeared at least once on stage Wednesday, and their oral scores were combined with a computerized spelling and vocabulary test to produce the semifinalists.

The finals take place tonight. The winner gets more than \$33,000 in cash and prizes.

The highlights Wednesday were the funny sentences uttered by pronouncer Jacques Bailly. The bee uses a pair of comedy writers from Hollywood to add humor to the event, and some spellers looked disappointed if they received a word that didn't come with a laugh.

Meryl, who attends Sky View Middle School, was representing North Central Massachusetts in the

Please see **SPELLER/6**

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ANGELOU DIES AT 86

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Mostly sunny; highs in the upper 60s/**WEATHER ON 2**

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