

Battle for the sexes

Clothing retailers are crossing gender barrier

BUSINESS 35



HOME LIVING

Don't be a drip

Sleek and stylish faucets are latest fad

HOME LIVING 45



High school football

- Silver Lake 21
- Rockland 7
- Abington 14
- Wareham 7

SPORTS 29, 34



Matters of life and **DEATH**

HELPING IN
HAITI

A Story of Hope, Charity and Faith



■ Maindes Benitha leads a procession of mourners bringing the body of her 13-month-old daughter home to be buried. The mother carried the girl for three hours to a hospital through the dark of night, but the girl died of dehydration soon after they arrived.

A four-part series by KAREN ESCHBACHER & photos by GARY HIGGINS / THE PATRIOT LEDGER

A ROAD TOO LONG

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is difficult sometimes for reporters to stay remote from the stories they cover. The unwritten rule is you don't tell readers how you felt or what you did. Sometimes it is worth telling stories a different way.

Maindes Benitha staggered up a mountain, her arms flailing above her head. With every step, she wailed. Behind her, the body of her 13-month-old daughter was carried in a tattered cardboard box. An American priest and Haitian laborer acted as pallbearers in the impromptu funeral march. The box had gotten wet, and packing tape barely kept it whole. The two men, the priest and the laborer, held the makeshift coffin tightly from the bottom for fear it would fall apart. All the while, a mother's moans interrupted the morning silence. I had arrived the day before in Fond des Blancs, a mountainous agricultural region in southern Haiti. Some time in the night, as I slept in an apartment above St. Boniface Hospital, Benitha left her home.

Please see **HAITI** — Page 14

A PUNISHING POVERTY

A FOND DES BLANCS, Haiti broad smile creeps across James Joseph's face, and his eyes, bright against his dark skin, light up as he outmaneuvers his opponent in the complicated Haitian card game "casino."

A month ago, the simple act of smiling seemed impossible. James is 15, but with his tiny frame and skinny arms he hardly looks 10 years old. For almost five years, he vomited every day. Born with a defect that severely restricted his ability to digest food, he developed ulcers at an early age. The pain became so intense he couldn't eat; when he tried, he couldn't keep it down. Last month, James finally received the treatment and medicine he needs at a hospital paid for and built by an organization more than 1,600 miles away, on the South Shore.



■ A newborn is treated minutes after birth at St. Boniface Hospital. The hospital serves a region of 45,000 people.

Hidden amid the mountains of southern Haiti in a rural region called Fond des Blancs, St. Boniface Hospital is a refuge in an area where medical care is scarce and people's ability to pay for it scarcer.

Here, at a 20-bed hospital and through services funded with donations from families in Quincy, Randolph, Hingham and other communities on the South Shore and beyond, the people of Fond des Blancs find relief from the poverty that surrounds and in many ways defines them.

The St. Boniface Haiti Foundation was initially formed by parishioners at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Germantown, a Quincy neighborhood where many people live in public housing and where parish resources are limited. The St. Boniface foundation "adopted" Fond des Blancs nearly two decades ago. The group began with the simple goal of vaccinating residents against polio, measles, mumps and

Please see **BONIFACE** — Page 15

Mold causes schools misery

Infestations blamed on wet, humid weather

By **LANE LAMBERT**
 The Patriot Ledger

When students and teachers at Hobomock Elementary in Pembroke went back to school Monday — six days late — one of the first things they did was check out the new carpet in 23 freshly mold-free classrooms.

In the wake of an usually warm, humid summer, Hobomock became one of about two dozen public schools in eastern and central Massachusetts that had to clean out mold infestations.

From Newton to Plymouth, from New Bedford to Southbridge, schools have had to spend a combined total of hundreds of thousands of dollars to rid their buildings of the outbreaks of tiny spores, which can irritate the eyes, nose and lungs and sometimes cause allergic reactions or respiratory infections.

"This is probably the worst number we've seen in a few years," state Department of Public Health spokeswoman Roseanne Pawelec said.

Most of the schools reported so far to the state and in the media are in the south of Boston area. Besides Pembroke, they include Silver Lake High School in Kingston, Plymouth South Middle School, and schools in Hingham, Plympton and Bridgewater, among other towns.

None have reported any cases of mold-related illness among students or adults.

Some of the affected facilities, including Hobomock, are decades old. Others, such as South Middle

Mold in schools

- Most problems in state reported south of Boston
- 18 reports of mold problems recorded in state from October 2002 to July of this year
- Cleanup will cost \$187,000 at Hobomock School in Pembroke

Please see **MOLD** — Page 2

Choices matter when it comes to federal debt

By **MARY DEIBEL**
 Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — What does a record federal deficit mean to most Americans? Absent action, Uncle Sam will go in the red another \$1.4 trillion over the next decade, the Congressional Budget Office says.

That's \$4,795 for every man, woman and child in the United States atop their \$23,400-a-person share of the national debt racked up over the nation's 227-year history.

President Bush wants \$87 billion more for Iraq next year. That item alone adds \$298 to each American's share of the 2004 deficit and pushes White House deficit estimates above \$500 billion apiece in the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30 and the new fiscal year.

That's \$1 trillion of red ink this year and next — a total that Bush spokesman Scott McClellan calls "manageable."

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, the top Bush White House economist picked to head the Congressional Budget Office, isn't worried short-term, either, but concedes

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INSIDE: Stark faces in a barren land **PAGES 14-16** **MONDAY:** A South Shore group builds houses, and a better life, for Haiti's poor

WEATHER: Page 44



Saturday
 Sea breeze,
 68°



Sunday
 Hazy, humid,
 76°

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Coffin art

■ Ghana's big fish can be buried in a car, a hammer, or a big fish **PAGE 13**

Drag strip nuisance

■ Police and juiced cars play cat and mouse in Connecticut city **PAGE 28**

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