

Metro Briefing

NEW YORK

ALBANY: STATE BUYS 1,000 ACRES OF WOODLANDS New York State is acquiring 1,000 acres of pristine woodlands — home to loons, bald eagles and other wildlife — in the northwest Adirondacks, Gov. George E. Pataki announced yesterday. As part of the deal, 800 adjacent acres in the area of the Bog and Beaver Rivers will remain in the hands of its owner, the Sabattis Land Company, but will be protected by a conservation easement to prevent it from being developed. The Nature Conservancy and the Adirondack Land Trust brokered the \$1.5 million deal on the state's behalf.

ANTHONY DEPALMA (NYT)

ALBANY: RAISE FOR EDUCATION COMMISSIONER The state



Board of Regents yesterday approved a \$25,000 raise for Richard Mills, the state commissioner of education. Mr. Mills makes \$170,165; it is his first raise since 1999. Commissioner Mills also serves as president of the University of the State of New York, a related system of state educational services, and the increase

was for his role as president.

(AP)

ANTHRAX PATIENT MAY LEAVE HOSPITAL SOON The condition of Vado Diomande, a drummer who contracted inhalation anthrax last month, has improved enough that hospital officials say he may be discharged in the next few days. Health officials believe that Mr. Diomande, 44, of Greenwich Village, contracted anthrax after working with unprocessed animal skins to make drums. He collapsed on Feb. 16 in Mansfield, Pa. On Monday, he was upgraded from fair to good condition at Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pa.

JOHN HOLL (NYT)

BROOKLYN: PRINCIPAL FACES FIRING OVER TEST The Department of Education said yesterday that it would move to fire the former principal of Public School 58 in Carroll Gardens, after an investigation found that she improperly gave students a look at questions on a state-wide exam. The investigation found that the principal, Joyce Plush-Saly, had kept copies of a 2005 fifth-grade English field test, which should have been returned to the state, and gave them to students as practice material for this year's test, which was given in January and included some of the same passages. Ms. Plush-Saly was reassigned more than two months ago, pending the investigation. Jim Devor, a P.S. 58 parent who is a member of the District 15 Community Education Council, called the charges "wildly inflated." He said Ms. Plush-Saly was an "outstanding" principal.

ELISSA GOOTMAN (NYT)

WESTCHESTER: MAN CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER An 18-year-old from Bedford, N.Y., who was involved in two separate car accidents that killed a friend and left an-

other friend seriously injured, was charged yesterday with vehicular manslaughter and 11 other counts, said Janet DiFiore, the Westchester County district attorney. Toxicology tests showed that the teenager, Ralph Tarchine, had been under the influence of marijuana at the time of the first accident, on Dec. 10, in which his friend Michael Plunkett, 17, was killed, the authorities said. On Jan. 27, Mr. Tarchine was involved in a second accident and the authorities said that he was drunk. Mr. Tarchine faces up to seven years in prison if convicted of vehicular manslaughter, said Lucian Chalfen, a spokesman for the district attorney's office. Mr. Tarchine was released on bail.

ANAHAD O'CONNOR (NYT)

BETHEL: CENTER TO OPEN ON WOODSTOCK SITE A performing arts and music center at the original Woodstock concert site will open July 1 with a performance by the New York Philharmonic. The center, the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, also announced that its 4,800-seat summer pavilion would play host to a two-day Woodstock anniversary concert the weekend of Aug. 12-13.

(AP)

MAYOR MAY ENDORSE DEMOCRATS, AIDE SAYS Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's top political adviser said yesterday that he would not rule out an endorsement this year by Mr. Bloomberg, a Republican, for Eliot Spitzer's bid for governor or Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's reelection effort. "I think you've got a guy who's independent, and I never rule anything out," Kevin Sheekey, a deputy mayor, said during an interview with Albany's WROW-AM radio.

(AP)

MANHATTAN: MAYOR STARTS EFFORT AGAINST LITTER Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the sanitation commissioner, John J. Doherty, have announced a series of anti-litter advertisements for television, newspapers and magazines. The public-awareness campaign, announced yesterday, called "Stomp Out Litter," is an effort involving the Sanitation Department; Stomp, a theater troupe that mixes percussion, dance and comedy; Waste Management, which has contracts with the city to export trash to out-of-state landfills; and other groups.

SEWELL CHAN (NYT)

NEW JERSEY

NEWARK: CUSTOMS OFFICER CONVICTED OF BRIBERY A former Customs and Border Protection officer at Port Elizabeth was convicted yesterday of bribery and attempting to conceal an illegal immigrant from detection, said Christopher J. Christie, an United States attorney. The former officer, Hakan Ozcelik, 31, of Astoria, Queens, was charged on Oct. 7, 2005, and was convicted of accepting a \$2,300 bribe for himself and another person from a cooperating witness in connection with a scheme to help the witness resolve a visa problem, the prosecutors said. He faces up to 27 months in prison.

(NYT)

Compiled by John Sullivan