



# PRESS

SATURDAY  
MAY 1, 2010

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly sunny  
High: 85; Low: 64

75 CENTS

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## SPORTS

**DERBY IS WIDE OPEN**  
Rain could help Pletcher's horses.  
Story, Page C1

## NATION & WORLD

**CHOICE NEAR FOR COURT**  
The White House interviews candidates for the Supreme Court vacancy.  
Story, Page A20

## LOCAL

**LIBRARY'S GOOD BOOKS**  
The Monmouth County Library Commission has good news for taxpayers.  
STORY, PAGE B1

## BUSINESS

**MOTHER'S DAY SPENDING**  
Retailers and restaurants angle for a piece of the \$14.88 billion outlay.  
STORY, PAGE 14



## STATE

**DENTIST PAYS \$100,000 FINE**  
A Pennsylvania dentist guilty of dumping medical waste gets probation.  
STORY, PAGE A4

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# Slick nears coast, imperils wildlife

**GULF OF MEXICO:** Seabirds soaked in oil being rescued; high tides expected to drive spill over booms off La. shore



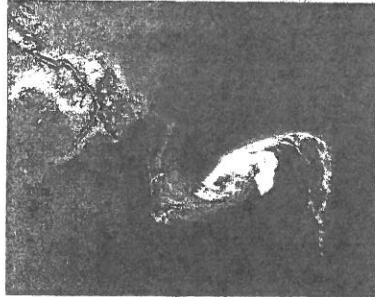
By MIKE HASTEN  
GANNETT

**BATON ROUGE, La.** — Day one of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill making its first contact with Louisiana's fragile wetlands found oil-soaked birds and emergency closures of fishing, shrimping and oyster harvesting zones.

Wind and waves pushed a light sheen of oil that escaped protection booms against the coast at South Pass, the southernmost point of Louisiana, said Rodney Mallett of the state Department of Environmental Quality. A separate report Friday afternoon said no oil had gotten deep into the saltwater marsh that is the breeding ground for much of the nation's seafood.

Wetlands preservation officials expressed concern that it will get worse, especially because the weekend forecast calls for tides up to 2 feet higher than normal. Wave action from high winds is likely to drive the oil slick over protection booms.

"On top of all of the other problems Louisiana has with its coast — subsidence, climate change and hurricanes — this is the last thing Louisiana needs," said Mike Tidwell, founder of the Chesapeake Climate Change



Top: Dr. Erica Miller, with Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research, works to give a dose of Pepto-Bismol to a Northern gannet, normally white when full grown, which is covered in oil from a massive spill in the Gulf of Mexico, on Friday in Fort Jackson, La. Above: A NASA satellite photo taken Thursday shows the oil slick in the Gulf of Mexico as it closes in on the Pass a Loutre area of Plaquemines Parish, La. Oil from the spill was starting to ooze ashore Friday, threatening migrating birds, nesting pelicans, river otters and mink along Louisiana's fragile islands and barrier marshes.

Network and author of "Bayou Farewell," which recounts his experiences in Louisiana. "It's going to be bad."

Veterinarian Jim LaCour of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries said seabirds soaked in oil were being transported to rescue sites in Venice and

Houma, where rehabilitation experts with the agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will first check what medical care they might need and, if healthy, clean the oil from their feathers with dishwashing detergent.

See Spill, Page A7

# Drug sting nets 17

**Freehold mother, daughter arrested**

By MICHELLE SAHN  
STAFF WRITER

**FREEHOLD** — Federal, county and local authorities arrested members of a borough-based narcotics operation that peddled various drugs including cocaine, heroin and painkillers, officials said.

Some 17 people have been arrested as part of the investigation, including a mother and daughter from Freehold, and a father and son from Union and Ocean counties.

The investigation was launched in the fall, when an undercover officer bought cocaine from someone who was a member of that drug network, according to the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office.

Authorities said they then used "additional investigative tools" to identify other members of that network, which distributed throughout Monmouth County cocaine, heroin, marijuana, OxyContin, Suboxone and ketamine, often called Special K.

Most of the arrests were made early Friday, and police also seized some \$28,000 in suspected drug proceeds, according to the Prosecutor's Office.

"These arrests demonstrate our collective resolve to investigate and prosecute these significant drug offenses," Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin said in a news release. "We will continue our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies to protect our communities."

Initially, detectives focused on Pedro DeJesus' heroin distribution, they said. Police determined DeJesus, a.k.a. "Peto," 36, of Freehold, supplied various drugs to others in the network, authorities said.

See Drugs, Page A3

# Cash payments common, says Van Pelt lawyer

**Ex-lawmaker accused of pocketing \$10G bribe**

By ERIK LARSEN  
STAFF WRITER

**TRENTON** — It happens all the time in Ocean County: Cash payments changing hands between the public and elected officials, according to the defense team for former state Assemblyman Daniel M. Van Pelt.

In discussing defense strategy and a potential witness list for the trial that starts Monday, Van Pelt's attorney Robert R. Fuggi Jr. told U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano during pretrial discussions that this is the political culture.

He argued that in exchange for officiating at weddings and performing other duties, it is not uncommon for mayors and other public officials to accept cash as payment for services rendered. Fuggi said Van Pelt had accepted cash payments in the past that were all legal and recorded for tax purposes and on financial disclosure forms, which officeholders must fill out.

Van Pelt, seated at the defense table on Thursday during pretrial motions, nodded his head in the affirmative as Fuggi made the case to the court. Pisano offered a skeptical look as he listened from the bench.

"It happens all the time in Ocean County," Fuggi said, adding there is a formal procedure for recording such payments with municipal clerks, who would in turn itemize such costs.