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NEW ENGLAND IN BRIEF

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BOSTON

Woman accused of setting fire indicted

A grand jury indicted a 26-year-old woman on murder and other charges yesterday in the setting of an April 6 fire in South Boston that killed two children. Nicole Chuminski (inset) faces two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Acia Johnson, 14, and Sophia Johnson, 2. The Suffolk district attorney's office said the fire was set at the West Sixth Street home after Chuminski had a lover's quarrel with the mother of the two girls. Chuminski was arrested May 9 and has been held without bail since being arraigned May 12.

Teen's search-and-seizure verdict upheld

The Massachusetts Appeals Court has upheld the conviction of a Dorchester teenager found guilty of bringing a loaded handgun to a public high school, ruling that the warrantless search of the student was reasonable under both the Fourth Amendment and the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, Suffolk District Attorney Daniel F. Conley said yesterday. Amenhotep Smith, 19, was convicted in 2006 on charges of unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition two years after he brought a loaded .380-caliber semiautomatic handgun to Brighton High School. A school administrator found the gun in Smith's jacket pocket while the youth was detained. On appeal, defense counsel argued that the search went against the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights. The appeals court said the search "was reasonable in the circumstances, and the motion judge correctly ruled that the evidence found in the defendant's jacket need not be suppressed."

Club warns of fake candy fund-raisers

Officials with the Boston Boys & Girls Club are urging people not to buy candy from youths professing to be raising money for the organization. The club has received multiple reports recently of teenagers selling candy outside Boston area stores. Club spokeswoman Jan Goldstein said the organization does not raise funds that way. (AP)

AMHERST

New UMass chancellor signs contract

The incoming chancellor of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Robert C. Holub, has signed a three-year contract that will pay him \$375,000 annually, university officials announced yesterday. The university will also place an additional 7 percent of his salary, or about \$26,000, into an investment fund of his choice. Fringe benefits include the use of a leased car and \$8,000 for the cost of life or disability insurance. Under the deal, Holub would be guaranteed at least half his salary if he decided to step down as chancellor and take a faculty position at the university. His salary is well below the median for president and chancellors at major research universities, UMass officials said. Holub, now the chief academic officer at the University of Tennessee, will take over as chancellor early next month.

NORTHAMPTON

Man gets probation in girl's death

In what prosecutors say is an unprecedented case, an Easthampton man has been sentenced to five years' probation after pleading guilty to involuntary manslaughter in supplying the vodka a teenage girl drank before her death. Timothy Parent pleaded guilty Wednesday in Hampshire Superior Court. Alexis Garcia, 15, died in February 2007 of alcohol poisoning. An autopsy showed that her blood alcohol level was .33 percent, more than four times the legal driving limit of .08 percent. Prosecutors say Garcia and Parent's 15-year-old daughter got the vodka from a bottle Parent bought at his daughter's request. (AP)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Lawmakers seek OK for floating turbines

The 10-member Massachusetts congressional delegation has urged the federal government to consider leasing a portion of federal waters to **Blue H USA** for a test of deep-water wind technology off the coast of the Bay State using a floating wind turbine. Blue H applied too late for the first round of projects that the US Minerals Management Service approved in the spring. Company officials said yesterday that they hope to win approval in time to start construction of a test project in the fall. Ultimately, Blue H wants to float 120 wind turbines 48 miles off the coast of New Bedford, where they will be virtually invisible from shore.

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