

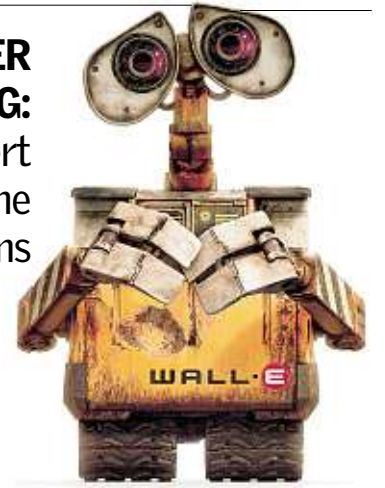
**SPORTS:** Rutgers' football team rallies for its third straight bowl victory, then cheers its biggest supporter.

S-1



**SPORTS:** Eric Mangini's firing is no reason to celebrate as long as his bosses remain. **Ian O'Connor, S-1**

**BETTER LIVING:** Roger Ebert gives you the 20 best films of the year. **F-1**



**POLITICAL STILE:** N.J. made progress against politics-as-usual in 2008. **L-1**



# The Record

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www.northjersey.com Keep up with our "True Blue" blog as the Giants prepare for the playoffs.

## Affordable housing rules spark debate

Municipalities around the state must submit plans by Wednesday on how they will provide opportunities for 115,000 more affordable housing units statewide by 2018. The state Supreme Court has said towns must arrange for housing opportunities for people of modest incomes. In North Jersey, that is someone earning \$16,000 to \$43,160. The issue has sparked a heated debate between those who say the rules offer better opportunities for those with lower incomes, and those who say it will lead to crowding, heavy traffic and a glut of market-rate housing.

— Complete story on L-1

## RU athletic director post filled in interim

Rutgers University on Monday picked a longtime faculty member to be interim athletic director while the state university searches for a permanent replacement for the ousted Bob Mulcahy. Carl Kirschner, a professor at Rutgers since 1976 and member of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, has been the chairman for more than a decade of a committee that reviews admission applications and academic progress of student-athletes. The university, which said Kirschner will not be a candidate for the permanent post, also named a committee to aid in the search. Mulcahy was fired earlier this month and his last day on the job is today.

— Complete story on A-4

## N.J. gas prices near a five-year low

Gasoline prices in North Jersey continue to drop as the year comes to a close. AAA-Mid-Atlantic says the average price for regular was \$1.51 a gallon Monday in the Bergen-Passaic region, down from a record high of \$4 a gallon in July. The average in New Jersey is \$1.50. The auto club says prices are even lower in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties at \$1.46 a gallon. The most expensive gasoline can be found in the Trenton area, where it's \$1.54 a gallon. The last time the price was \$1.50 in the state was in January 2004. Nationally, AAA says gasoline prices were \$1.62 on Monday, down from a high of \$4.11 in July.

— The Associated Press

# Tanks poised to strike

### INSIDE

- Iranian group seeking volunteers to help fight Israel.
  - Ambassador to U.N. says Israel will fight on until Hamas is "completely" destroyed.
- Coverage on A-6

## Israel vows 'all-out war' in Gaza

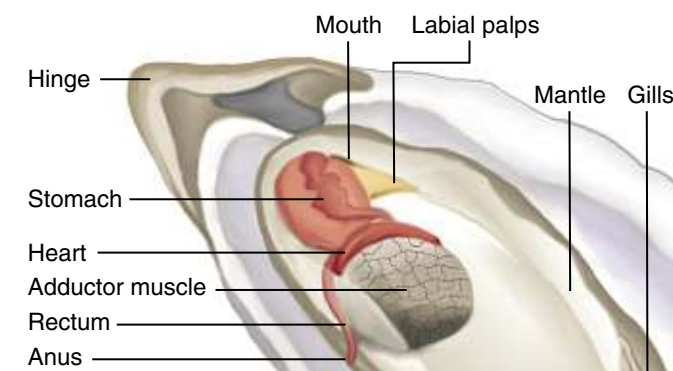
By **ASHRAF KHALIL** and **RUSHDI ABU ALOUF**  
LOS ANGELES TIMES NEWS SERVICE

JERUSALEM — Residents of the Gaza Strip braced for a long-feared Israeli tank incursion as warplanes on Monday

pounded the bottled-up coastal enclave for a third straight day. The West Bank-based Palestinian Authority announced the suspension of peace talks with Israel in protest over the Israeli campaign against the militant Hamas movement, which controls Gaza.

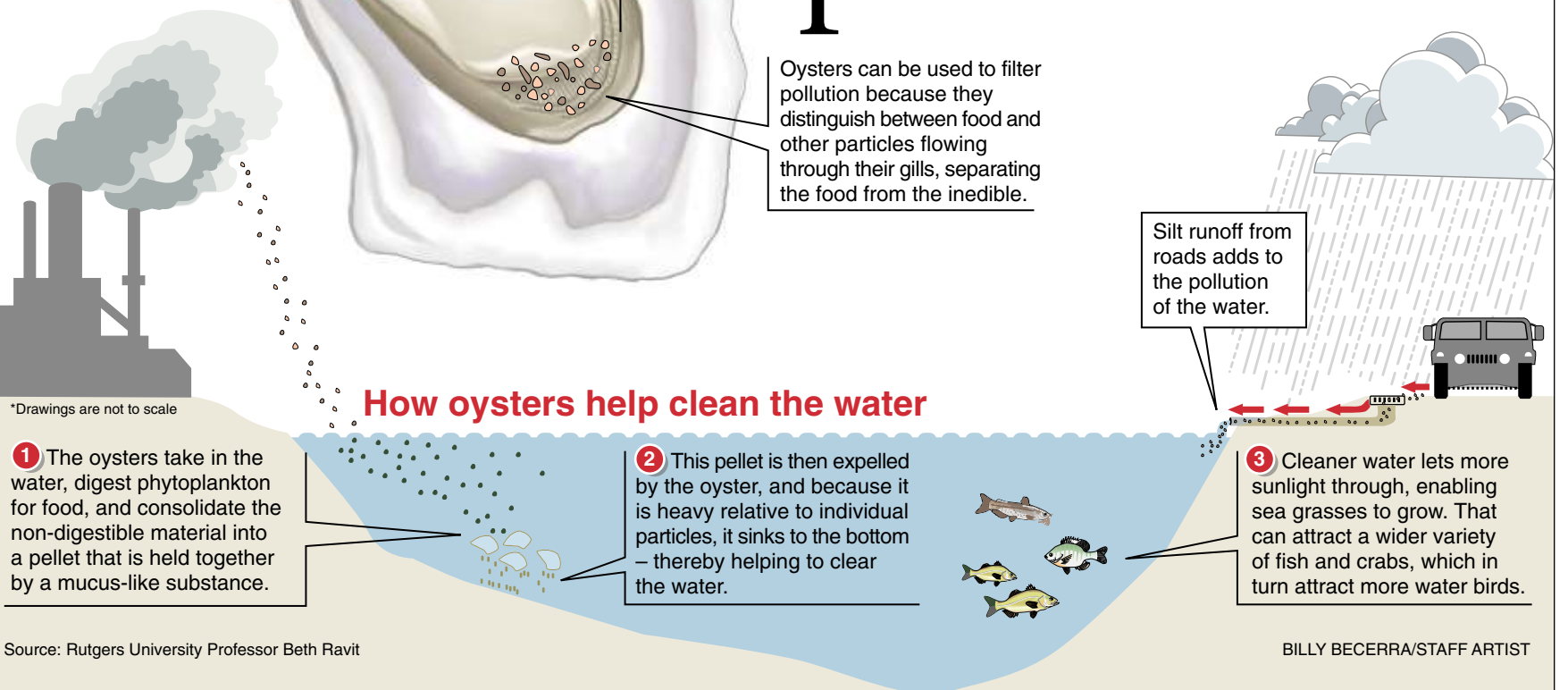
But Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak promised an "all-out war against Hamas and its kind." Early today, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five Hamas government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were killed. See **MIDEAST** Page A-6

## Anatomy of an oyster



# Small shells hold big promise

Oysters can be used to filter pollution because they distinguish between food and other particles flowing through their gills, separating the food from the inedible.



Source: Rutgers University Professor Beth Ravit

BILLY BECERRA/STAFF ARTIST

## Returning oysters to area rivers may help fight pollution



LESLIE BARBARO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rutgers researcher Beth Ravit, right, helping project manager Nicholas Vos-Wein collect samples from oyster cages in the Hackensack River.

By **JAMES M. O'NEILL**  
STAFF WRITER

Small groups of transplanted oysters are thriving in the Hackensack River, a promising sign for researchers who say oysters could be used to reduce pollution in the river and create reefs that will attract fish, crabs and water birds. "The Hackensack system can support this animal, which is great news," said Beth Ravit, a Rutgers University professor who has monitored the test groups of oysters for nearly two years. Ravit's research is part of a broader plan to develop hundreds of acres of new oyster reefs in the Hackensack and other waterways in the New York Harbor region. Oysters can be used to filter pollution because they distinguish between food and other particles

flowing through their gills, separating the edible from the inedible. The oysters combine inedible particles of silt with a mucus-like substance and then spit them out as pellets, which drop to the river's floor. Because many of the river's contaminants, such as heavy metals and PCBs, attach to floating silt, these are also cleaned from the water by the oysters and embedded in the pellets. Cleaner water lets more sunlight through, enabling sea grasses to grow. That can attract a wider variety of fish and crabs, which in turn attract more water birds. Oysters provide an additional benefit: While many bivalves, including clams and mussels, can reduce pollution through their filtering, oyster offspring also attach to the shells of the adults, building ver-

See **OYSTERS** Page A-6

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