

GETTING HIS DUE

Dan Marino ready for his day in the sun, C1

HOME MOVIES

Home theaters, DVDs may add to summer movie slump, E1

MODEL BEHAVIOR

Veteran shares his big love for planes on a small scale, B1



Port St. Lucie News

High 88. Low 71. Chance of rain 20% Details, C8

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Shuttle crew begins long trip home

Discovery's return to Earth

WHEN: 4:46 a.m. Monday
WHY THAT TIME?: The time is dictated by the way the shuttle's orbit brings it in line with the approach to Cape Canaveral; if necessary, a second opportunity would come at 6:21 a.m.
WHERE: The shuttle will approach Cape Canaveral from the southwest, flying over Nicaragua, Cuba, the western Everglades and Lake Okeechobee.
WHAT ABOUT WEATHER?: The forecast looks favorable for Cape Canaveral, but bad weather would force Discovery to go to the backup landing site in California on Tuesday.
WHAT TO EXPECT: A horizon-to-horizon plasma streak across the pre-dawn sky. A sonic boom also might be heard on the Treasure Coast as the shuttle slices through the atmosphere at a velocity faster than the speed of sound.
Sources: NASA Web site and wire reports

The Associated Press

SPACE CENTER, Houston — With the most anxiety-ridden part of their flight still to come, space shuttle Discovery and its crew of seven set off for home Saturday after leaving the International Space Station.

Monday's planned pre-dawn re-entry will be the first by a space shuttle since Columbia's catastrophic descent 2½ years ago.

The two space station residents wished the Discovery crew a safe landing.

"It has really been a pleasure and, no,

ON THE NET

► NASA: www.nasa.gov/returntoflight
► Amateur videotaping tips: www.nasa.gov/returntoflight/crew/photo_tips.html

we are not glad to see you go," said station astronaut John Phillips.

Once undocked, Discovery looped around the space station for the first full photographic survey of the orbiting outpost since the last shuttle visit in late 2002, and then sped away into the blackness.

The departing astronauts reported they might have seen a piece of debris fly

off the space station, but Mission Control assured them it was just a camera reflection.

Deputy shuttle program manager Wayne Hale said the so-called anomaly list for the 13-day flight had 47 items "that people have thought about, worried about."

At Saturday's mission management team meeting, "We went through the entire list ... and agreed that none of the issues pose a landing concern that we have not already addressed and worked through, and so we are good for landing on space shuttle Discovery."

St. Lucie schools start critical year

Growth is the district's top priority, but others are jockeying for attention



photos by ALISON SIDLO staff photographer

Alex Ross, 5, left, and L.J. Ross, 8, color while their mother Amy Ross, back left, talks to Alex's kindergarten teacher Clarissa Duskin during Oak Hammock K-8 school's open house on Wednesday. Oak Hammock is the newest St. Lucie County school.

By Margot Susca staff writer

The students are here. And more are coming.

But as St. Lucie County school officials attempt to deal with staggering growth, there are other issues jockeying for priority: achievement. Building needs. Funding. Tougher federal mandates. Teacher recruitment.

By School Board policy, it also is the last year of the current controlled choice system, so that controversial program of student assignment also is undergoing a major overhaul.

Facing all those priority issues, school officials consider this a critical year, one that can make or break everything from economic development to preparing children for high-tech futures.

"I think it's a pivotal year for this

SOMETHING TO SHOOT FOR

See last year's FCAT information and school grades. PAGE A4

school system," school board Vice Chairwoman Kathryn Hensley said. "What we're seeing right now, this year, is a nexus, where everything is coming together."

The "everything" Hensley is talking about centers largely on growth — officials are projecting a student population spike of 8 or 9 percent.

School begins on Monday.

As of noon Friday, St. Lucie County student enrollment was 37,987, up more than 3,000 children from about the same time period last year, according to officials.

That number likely will drop in the

See SCHOOLS, A2



Sean Murray, building automation specialist for the St. Lucie County School District, places caps over the old intake vents beside newly installed dehumidification units at Mariposa Elementary in Port St. Lucie. The units will draw in more fresh air and better regulate interior temperature, which will help curb mold growth.

Toxic toads a nuisance, threat to your pets

The invasive bufo toad population, which thrives in hot, humid climates, continues to grow along the Treasure Coast.

By Megan V. Winslow staff writer

Pillowcase in hand, George Ward darts across the tennis court, crisscrossing the service lines and weaving in and out of bounds.

His movements are calculated — each sprint commences with a squat on the asphalt and then he's up again with a leap.

"Here, toady, toady, toady," Ward says after tossing another unwary specimen into the cotton bag.

Twenty minutes and 32 bufo toads later, he's done, his back drenched in sweat, the bag damp with toad urine.

During the humid South Florida summers, the Cane Toad, or Bufo marinus, is in its prime, setting up house in moist cardboard boxes and dining on bugs and small animals.

To Ward, an invasive species collection care specialist at the Herpetological Breeding Research center in Fort Pierce, the commercial market for bufo toads, including demand at scientific research facilities and in western Europe as pets, represents a supplement for the facility's production costs.

But it is the exotic bufo toad's lack of natural predators that makes it an unwelcome neighbor to many Treasure Coast residents.

See TOADS, A2



JASON NUTTLE staff photographer

George Ward, with Herpetological Breeding Research in Fort Pierce, holds a bufo toad caught in Fort Pierce. The poisonous toad's toxin is released when its parotid glands are squeezed.

Trapped sub surfaces

A Russian submarine that was trapped for three days under the Pacific Ocean surfaced on Sunday. PAGE A7

Pressel in Amateur final

Boca Raton's Morgan Pressel to play for the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship today. PAGE C1

INDEX

Americas.....	A17	Movies.....	E2
Advice.....	E2	Obituaries.....	B4
Books.....	E5	Offbeat.....	A16
Business.....	D1	Opinion.....	A20
Classified.....	F1	Sports.....	C1
Crossword.....	E3	Today.....	E1
Horoscopes.....	E3	Weather.....	C8



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Storm Harvey still going east; depression organizing

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Tropical Storm Harvey moved northeast Saturday in the open Atlantic Ocean, while a tropical depression to the south was becoming better organized, forecasters said.

At 11 p.m., Harvey had sustained winds near 60 mph and was about 585

miles east-northeast of Bermuda, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. On Thursday, Harvey dumped more than 11 inches of rain on Bermuda.

Harvey made a small loop Saturday afternoon, but was resuming a north-northeast motion near 9 mph and only was a threat to shipping.

Meanwhile, the hurricane season's ninth tropical depression was moving toward the west near 10 mph over the open tropical Atlantic, about 1,230 miles east of the northern Leeward Islands, forecasters said.

The depression had winds of 35 mph but little strengthening was forecast Saturday.