

**FORT PIERCE WESTWOOD
BEATS SLW CENTENNIAL**

14-7

Isaac Virgin
Fort Pierce Westwood QB
completed 10 passes for
162 yards and a touchdown

**MARTIN COUNTY BEATS
PARKWAY ACADEMY**

22-12



**PREP
PIGSKIN**

Complete high school
football results.

SPORTS, C1, C4, C5

13-7

The Bulldogs edged out Sebastian River.

**SOUTH FORK
WINS CLOSE ONE**

BACK IN THE NEWS



O.J. Simpson's name has
been linked to a theft
investigation in
California. **STORY, A3**

Teachers give merit pay changes low marks

New plan will force teachers to
compete for limited bonuses based
on a single test, critics complain

BY **BILL KACZOR**
The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — The Florida Legislature's new and improved teacher merit pay plan may have passed with grudging union support, but teachers still don't like it, and some school districts have declined to participate, turning down millions of dollars in state bonus money.

Florida is
about \$6,000
below the
U.S. average
for teacher
salaries.

The Merit Awards Program — MAP — is drawing some of the same complaints as the Special Teachers are Rewarded — STAR — program it replaced in March.

Proponents say the plan is a way to reward outstanding teachers for their work, but critics say it undermines teamwork by pitting teacher against teacher in a scramble for a limited number of bonuses. They say it's unfair and inaccurate to use a single high-stakes test to determine who gets the extra money.

"I hate it," said Portia Weisfeld, a kindergarten teacher at Peskoe Elementary School in Homestead. "I don't think teaching is a competitive activity. Teaching should be a cooperative

See **TEACHERS**, page A17

Meeting will address Martin burglary trend

BY **MEGAN V. WINSLOW**
megan.winslow@scripps.com

HOBESOUND — By the time Sept. 27 rolls around, Tom Fucigna hopes there won't be a need for a meeting.

By then, law enforcement officials may have arrested the people responsible for the sudden increase in daytime burglaries, and Martin County residents will be able to leave for work each morning without constantly worrying their homes might be ransacked while they're gone.

But until the crooks are caught, Fucigna and the Martin County Sheriff's Office are working to share preventative measures with the public and have scheduled a Community Crime Awareness

See **MEETING**, page A17

What: Community Crime Awareness meeting on the recent rash of daytime Martin County burglaries and tips to protect your home
Who: Orchestrated by the Martin County Sheriff's Office
When: 7 p.m. Sept. 27
Where: The Hobe Sound Community Center, (Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting place) 8980 Olympus Ave.



Suspected illegal immigrants arrested on Jupiter Island

Others detained offshore in boat that carried more than a dozen



Photos by **MATTHEW RATAJCZAK** • matthew.ratajczak@scripps.com

Border Patrol agent Richard Abbott, far left, opens the door of a prisoner transport vehicle as Martin County sheriff's deputy Joe Angelico, left, and deputy Andrew Porcelli escort a suspected illegal immigrant Friday morning on Jupiter Island.

BY **MEGAN V. WINSLOW**
megan.winslow@scripps.com

JUPITER ISLAND — At first, the workers at 61 South Beach Road thought the splashing object was a shark.

But they realized what was about 200 yards off shore was a man in a life vest. They saw the overloaded boat bobbing in the waves nearby, and knew something was wrong and called 911.

"At one point, a boat went right by him, and he was yelling, 'Hey, hey, hey,' and the guy just kept going," said Chris Miessau, a cooling technician for Couse Air Conditioning in Hobe Sound. "And at that point, we were going, 'All right, there has to be something wrong going on out here.' Because if it was a regular person, just yelling for help or something, somebody would have stopped for them."

About two hours after he jumped into the water Friday morning, the man in the life vest was plucked from the waves, and he and the 13 or so additional suspected illegal

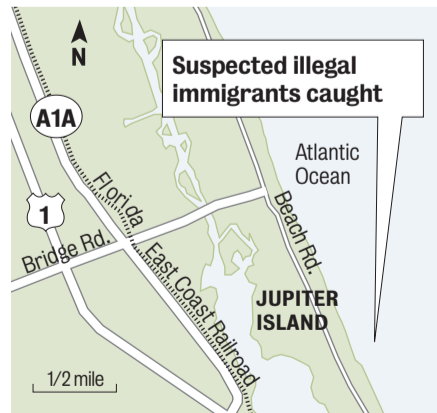
See **IMMIGRANTS**, page A17



A Department of Homeland Security helicopter crew scans the waters off Jupiter Island after receiving a report of the boat full of suspected illegal immigrants. This is the sixth time in about a year authorities have captured immigrants on the island — one of America's richest towns.



Coast Guard officials detain suspected illegal immigrants in a 25-foot boat off the coast of Jupiter Island. Two men made it to shore, were detained and have been turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities.



Staff graphic



CONTACT US

Have a story idea?.....221-4234
Delivery problem?.....221-4160
Classified.....(877) 247-2407

INDEX

Advice.....E3
Business.....D1
The Buzz.....A2

Classified.....F1
The Deal.....D2
Local.....B1
Lottery.....A2

Movies.....E7
Nation & World.....A4
Obituaries.....B4
Opinion.....A6

The Record.....B2
Sports.....C1
Television.....E9
Weather.....C8

INSIDE

Catch up on the latest
celebrity gossip. **A2**

Criminals, gangs turning to assault weapons

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The spray of bullets that killed one Miami-Dade County police officer and hurt three others this week came from something increasingly common on this city's streets.

Once solely found in the hands of soldiers, assault weapons like the one police said was used in Thursday's attack are becoming the guns of choice for gang members and other violent criminals. And when they are aimed at officers on patrol, there's little authorities can do to escape.

"It's almost like we have water pistols going up against these high-powered rifles," said John Rivera, president of the Dade County Police Benevolent Association. "Our weaponry and our bulletproof vests don't match up to any of those types of weapons."

Federal officials don't com-

pile statistics on the number of crimes involving assault weapons like the AK-47, and local municipalities' numbers across the country are patchwork. But here at least, there are signs it is becoming a major issue.

In 2005, the Miami-Dade Police Department reported two homicides involving an assault rifle; by last year there were 10. That agency covers numerous unincorporated areas in the nation's eighth-largest county, but not the biggest cities, which have their own police forces.

The Miami Police Department said 15 of its 79 homicides last year involved assault weapons, up from the year before. This year, already 12 of the 60 homicides have involved the high-power guns.

Another issue potentially at play is the 2004 expiration of the federal assault weapons

ban, 10 years after its passage. The legislation outlawed 19 types of guns, including the semiautomatic AK-47.

Kevin Morison of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund said his organization is considering tracking when assault weapons are involved in police shootings. Officer shootings had been on a downturn until this year.

More U.S. police officers were killed while on duty in the first six months of 2007 — 101 — than during any such period since 1978, according to the organization.

To date, there have been 132 officer fatalities this year, compared with 97 at the same time last year.

Cmdr. Linda O'Brien said the department was helping plan the funeral of Officer Jose Somohano. Officer Jody Wright was recovering from a gun-

shot wound to the right leg. The other two officers were treated and released.

On Friday, officers arrested six people accused of aiding Labeet. Alba Bello, 47; her son, Alain Gonzalez, 24; and Bello's boyfriend, Lazaro Guardiola, 35, all were charged with accessory after the fact for helping Labeet get away. Labeet's girlfriend, Renee Dangelo, 26, was also charged with giving police false information.

Later Friday, Labeet's brother, Shane LaBeet, 32, was charged with aiding his brother's flight to Broward County. Also arrested was Shawn Labeet's nephew, Jaleel Torres, 22, who was charged with resisting an officer with violence.

O'Brien said Labeet apparently had family ties to the U.S. Virgin Islands' most wanted criminal, Ishmael Ali LaBeet.

IMMIGRANTS

FROM PAGE A1

immigrants from the broken-down boat were captured by local and federal law enforcement at about 10 a.m.

This is the sixth time in about a year authorities have captured immigrants on the island — one of America's richest communities. Authorities say the island is a popular landing spot because boat captains likely want to avoid more populated areas in Palm Beach and Miami to the south.

Two of the suspected illegal immigrants, a man from the Bahamas and another from Haiti, made it to shore and were held by the Martin County Sheriff's Office until being turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, said Lt. Jenell Atlas, sheriff's spokeswoman.

The Sheriff's Office has identified the Bahamian man as boat Capt. David Knowles, 45. Atlas said investigators

believe he organized this trip with the suspected immigrants.

Flares were shot up by officers first on scene to signal to everyone else responding. While Martin County Fire Rescue personnel waited on shore to help, federal authorities apprehended the boat about 300 yards off shore of the first block of South Beach Road.

For the workers on South Beach Road, Friday's excitement marked the first time witnessing such a landing since the beginning of their tenure at a large unfinished home about eight months ago.

One worker, Stuart resident Shaun Franz, seemed sympathetic toward the immigrants' situation.

"To come all this way and see the land and have to turn around — it's heartbreaking," he said. "It's horrible."

Staff writer Rebecca Panoff contributed to this report.

TEACHERS

FROM PAGE A1

activity."

Weisfeld said teachers don't trust the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and alternate exams given for subjects not covered by FCAT.

"Every year we get a different kind of class," she said. "You don't know what's troubling each child. No matter what they scored last year, this year their parents might get divorced. They might not score so high."

Teachers and their unions also say merit pay should be put on hold until base salaries are increased to the national average. Florida is about \$6,000 below par, according to the Florida Education Association, the statewide teachers union.

The criticism doesn't faze merit pay supporters. They include Gov. Charlie Crist, the state Board of Education and MAP's sponsors in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

"Those who will always oppose paying teachers more money based on performance will oppose the Merit Award Program just as they would oppose any other plan," said Sen. Don Gaetz, one of its architects.

Gaetz, R-Niceville, said changes will be made to improve the program but that it will not be shelved.

Merit pay is commonly used by private business to promote higher productivity. Proponents hope it will do the same in the classroom and help attract and retain the best teachers.

The old program, though, was so reviled by teachers and local school officials that the Legislature replaced it less than a year after it was adopted and before the first STAR checks went out.

"It was a mindless, confusing, topdown mandate," said Gaetz, a former Okaloosa County school superintendent.

STAR was supposed to pay 5 percent bonuses to 25 percent

of the state's teachers based heavily on standardized test results.

MAP reduced the reliance on testing, but only somewhat — 60 percent of MAP is based on testing with the remaining 40 percent based on principal evaluations. It gives school districts more flexibility and it was developed after consultation with the Florida Education Association, which endorsed the new program as an improvement. Still, some local unions have balked.

William J. Slotnik has studied school merit pay as executive director of the nonprofit Community Training and Assistance Center in Boston, Mass. He believes the concept has potential but agrees MAP has serious flaws including the lack of any experimentation before it was implemented statewide.

"It needs to be developed with teachers, not done to teachers," Slotnik also said. "If the plan is largely based on a single high-stakes assessment it will be difficult, regardless of the construct, to gain the support of teachers."

Other tests students already take could be added to the mix, he said.

Rep. Joe Pickens, who worked closely with Gaetz on the new program, said another alternative that's been discussed is using test results from more than a single year.

"Rather than being awarded on a snapshot, it's awarded on the basis of a movie," said Pickens, R-Palaska.

Slotnik said the competition that irks teachers so much could be eliminated by giving merit pay to everyone whose students show improvement, not just the top few. That'll cost more, but Pickens said it's something he'd like to do if the state's financial situation improves.

Florida is facing a \$1.1 billion shortfall in anticipated tax revenues for the budget year that began July 1.

"We're a very trusting community in Hobe Sound, and sometimes, unfortunately, we let our guard down."

Jennifer Ferrari, Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce

MEETING

FROM PAGE A1

meeting for 7 p.m. that Thursday.

"There's been a lot of wondering of what's going on and there seemed to be a need," said Fucigna, chairman of Hobe Sound's Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

Part rumor control, part forum for burglary prevention tips, the meeting will begin with a 30- to 45-minute talk from Sheriff's Office Community Programs Coordinator Laura Passanesi about a rash of daytime burglaries in Martin County that seemed to begin earlier this month. Afterward, Passanesi will answer

questions from the audience.

Based on the positive response he's already received, Fucigna predicts the community center will be packed.

For the past few weeks, the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce has fielded calls from concerned residents about daytime burglaries in neighborhoods such as Hobe Hills, Zeus Park and Jupiter Narrows, said Jennifer Ferrari, the chamber's executive director. Chamber members are encouraging callers to attend the crime awareness meeting and share information with their homeowners associations.

"We're a very trusting community in Hobe Sound, and sometimes, unfortunately, we let our guard down," she said.

IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE

SUNRISE THEATRE

OPEN HOUSE

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Friday, September 21

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Tours of Sunrise Theatre

Membership Opportunities

Complimentary Light Refreshments

Café La Ronde • Cobb's Landing • Granny's Kitchen • Lorenzo's Tiki Bar • Yellow Tail Grille • Bluewater Beach Grill

POP/VARIETY/COMEDY

1964: The Tribute (9/29)

Working Class Hero: A Tribute to John Lennon (10/19)

Robert Cray Band (10/21)

Led Zepplica: The Led Zeppelin Tribute Experience (11/17)

3 Redneck Tenors (11/24) *

Aaron Neville's Christmas Show (12/7)

José Feliciano (12/11)

Four Bitchin' Babes (1/12)

Robin Trower (1/16)

D. L. Hughley (1/20)

The Pink Floyd Experience (2/8&9)

Smothers Brothers (3/5)

Natalie MacMaster (3/14)

THE FOUR TOPS (3/19)

"One Night of Queen" (4/20)

JAZZ

Preservation Hall Jazz Band (1/15)

Doc Grober & The Mudcats (1/26)

DAVE BRUBECK (2/3)

INTERNATIONAL/DANCE

Ballet Folklorico de Mexico (11/7)

Tango Buenos Aires (11/21)

ANUNA: CELTIC ORIGINS (11/27)

Vienna Boys Choir (1/27)

Peru Negro (2/20)

"THE MAGIC OF IRELAND" (3/2)

Momix (3/9)

African Footprint (3/12 +3/13)

Ballet Hispanico (4/12)

FAMILY

"A Christmas Carol" (12/23) *

New Shanghai Circus (2/2) *

James & the Giant Peach (2/16) (11AM)

Cirque Odyssey (3/16) *

BROADWAY

Peter Pan: The High Flying Musical (12/6)

"My Mother's Italian, My Father's Jewish and I'm In Therapy" (12/21)

The Producers (2/15)

*Indicates 2 shows

Sponsored by: **SCRIPPS Treasure Coast Newspapers**

For ticket information call (772) 461-4775

Become a member. Visit our website at www.sunrisetheatre.com

or the Sunrise Box Office at 117 South 2nd Street, Fort Pierce

The Sunrise Theatre is owned and operated by the City of Fort Pierce