



New book exposes Florida's mythical beasts.

LIFE, 1E

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007
BREVARD EDITION | 50 cents

FLORIDA TODAY

SERVING THE SPACE COAST

Series showdown begins in Boston.

SPORTS, 1D

floridatoday.com

INSIDE TODAY

Neighborhood news

Want to know what's going on in your community? Find out inside one of our seven neighborhood sections inside today.

NATION/WORLD

Trashed art could bring in big bucks

A painting stolen 20 years ago was found lying in trash along a street, and now it could fetch up to \$1 million at auction, **8A**

U.S. may delay missile defense system

The Bush administration tells Moscow it may delay activation of a proposed U.S. missile defense system in Europe until it has "definitive proof" that Iran poses a missile threat, Defense Secretary Robert Gates says, **4A**

WEATHER

Sunny, highs near 83

Chance of rain 55 percent. Winds 4-16 mph. Overnight lows near 71, **14A**

SPACE COAST

11 charged in drug bust

Authorities break up an alleged prescription drug ring that officials describe as one of the largest and most sophisticated ever seen in Central Florida, **1B**

Motels on alert after rash of robberies

After robbers — who remain at large — hit three Central Brevard County motels this month, changes are on the way: Managers are installing locks, cameras and convex mirrors — modern tools some of them didn't have before and now hope will deter would-be robbers, **1B**

BUSINESS

Airport wants answers about German flights

Melbourne International Airport tells a German tour operator that it breached a contract it had with the airport to bring European tourists to the Space Coast, **1C**

SPACE

Next rocket launch

Nov. 8: United Launch Alliance Delta 4-Heavy rocket with a missile-warning satellite from launch complex 37 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.
Launch window: To be announced.

COMING UP

Siblings ready to run

Satellite High cross country coach Peter Blount preaches team unity as an avenue to success. And having four sets of siblings on the girls and boys squads has made his job easier this season. That unity will be tested in Thursday's Cape Coast Conference cross country championship meet at Cocoa Beach Junior/Senior High. Coming **Thursday in SPORTS**

The latest Space Coast news:

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DISCOVERY'S MISSION Updates at floridatoday.com

LAUNCH HARMONY

Real heavy lifting begins when shuttle crew tackles construction tasks

BY TODD HALVORSON
FLORIDA TODAY

CAPE CANAVERAL — Discovery's astronauts are speeding toward the International Space Station and the start of the most demanding surge of construction work since outpost assembly began a decade ago.

Circling Earth at 17,500 mph — 25 times the speed of sound — the astronauts are due to dock at the growing space complex at 8:30 a.m. Friday.

The orbital hook-up will kick off a six-week sprint aimed at preparing the station for the December delivery of the European Columbus science laboratory.

Seven spacewalks and construction crane work that is unprecedented in degree of difficulty must be completed to set up the U.S. Harmony module, which will link the Columbus lab with the U.S. and Russian sections of the outpost.

"It's just a tremendous series of challenges in front of us," said NASA space operations chief Bill Gerstenmaier.

Discovery's astronauts set sail from Kennedy Space Center on Tuesday, rocketing off from an oceanside launch pad as thousands of engineers, technicians, managers and others looked on.

Among them: Florida Gov. Charlie Crist.

He was amazed as the **See SHUTTLE, 10A**



Cutting the clouds. Discovery lights up the sky after lift off Tuesday morning from the Kennedy Space Center on a mission to the International Space Station.

More coverage inside, online

SUPPORT. Gov. Charlie Crist says NASA crucial to state's economy, **10A**

MOVED. Science award winners inspired by Discovery's liftoff, **11A**

GALLERIES. See dozens of photos in our online photo galleries.

WATCH VIDEOS. See replays of the shuttle launch from external tank and booster cams at floridatoday.com

County approves islands deal 5-0

Students speak up for approval

BY JAMES DEAN
FLORIDA TODAY

VIERA — At least for a day, Brevard County commissioners were as smart as fifth-graders.

Lobbied Tuesday by about a dozen students from Freedom 7 Elementary, and dozens of adults, the commission voted unanimously to buy the last privately owned portion of the Thousand Islands in Cocoa Beach for \$3.2 million.

Commissioners Jackie Colon and Helen Voltz changed their votes from a month ago, saying they were satisfied the county was getting a better deal and that the community strongly backed the conservation effort.

"I think it's worth it," Voltz said.

Later, commissioners delayed until Nov. 13 a decision on a \$25 million proposal to buy more than 2,300 acres west of Titusville, which would have been the largest purchase yet by the voter-approved Environmentally Endangered Lands program.

They'll seek a second review of two appraisals done on the property known as Hunters Brooke, after Clerk of Courts Scott Ellis raised questions about their independence.

He said the state-approved appraisers used suspiciously similar data and language in **See COUNTY, 7A**

OTHER ACTION. More from the Brevard County Commission, **2B**

Bomb protocol under fire

BY MEGAN DOWNS
FLORIDA TODAY

VIERA — Brevard Public Schools has the final say over the handling of bomb threats and other safety emergencies, even if the response differs from accepted police protocol, according to the state attorney's office.

A sixth bomb threat at Central Middle School in West Melbourne on Tuesday morning led to questions over who has the ultimate authority during safety emergencies at district schools. The dispute erupted when school officials allowed students and teachers to return to classrooms before West Melbourne police could search the building with bomb-sniffing dogs.

West Melbourne Police Chief Brian Lock addressed the Brevard County School Board Tuesday night, asking for clarification in the policy.

Lock had used search dogs in the five prior bomb threats this year but wasn't permitted by school officials to use the dogs this time. Lock called the state attorney's office, which told him that he had to follow school orders.

"Up until today, the protocol had been that we evacuate and call in the bomb canine unit," Lock told the board. "I think that's a prudent and reasonable method of ensuring safety of students and faculty."

However, Area Superintendent Tom McIntyre said the West Melbourne Police Department's procedures don't allow **See BOMB, 7A**

County stamping out breast cancer

BY R. NORMAN MOODY
FLORIDA TODAY

MELBOURNE — Brevard County is putting its stamp on the fight against breast cancer.

The county's post offices are leading the nation in sales of breast cancer research stamps this October, which is breast cancer awareness month.

Brevard has three post offices in the top 10 out of more than 15,800 locations nationwide selling the special issue stamp, according to the U.S. Postal Service.

Suntree is second in the nation having sold more than \$18,700 worth of the stamps as of Tuesday, behind only the Stamp Fulfillment Service office in Kansas City. And that location is the clearing center for orders placed over the Internet and by phone.

Satellite Beach is third with sales of more than \$16,500 and Rockledge sixth with sales of \$14,462 as of Tuesday.

The sheet of 20 stamps sells for \$11 and generates \$2.80 toward research.

"Since I'm a survivor twice I'm going to push this," said Fran Melenwick, a clerk at Satellite Beach.

Kevin Bird, manager at Suntree, has led the effort to



Breast cancer awareness stamps are available year-round. A sheet of 20 generates \$2.80 toward research.

Raising funds

Top sellers of Breast Cancer Stamps this month:

No.	Location
1.	Kansas City
2.	Suntree branch
3.	Satellite Beach branch
4.	Tupelo, Miss.
5.	Air Mail Facility, Texas

promote the stamps, which are big sellers across Central Florida.

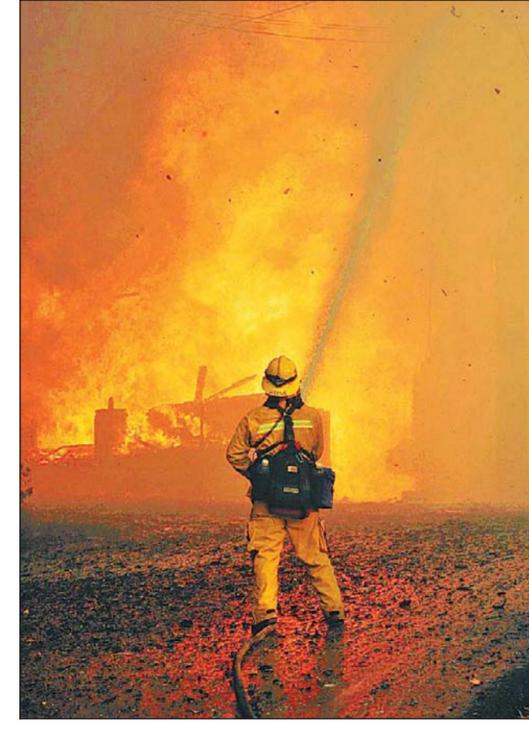
He said he's doing it for his wife, Donna, a 20-year breast cancer survivor who now has stage four cancer.

"Everybody knows somebody who has been affected by breast cancer," he said.

The breast cancer stamps are available year round, but the extra sales effort is made this month. ■

Contact Moody at 242-3651 or nmoody@floridatoday.com.

Wildfires torch Southern California



Fighting fire. David Jayne of the Big Bear Lake Fire Department fights a wildfire Tuesday as a house burns behind him in Running Springs, Calif. **STORY, 3A**

WILDFIRE PHOTOS. Click through multiple photo galleries from the California wildfires at floridatoday.com

VIDEO. West Melbourne's police chief and town officials talk about Tuesday's bomb threat at Central Middle. See it at floridatoday.com