

# Jury finds McDuffie guilty in 2 killings, B3

## Local News



Stetson picks Wendy Libby as president, B4

# 11,000+

The square footage for exhibition space at the Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park. That includes the Tiffany Chapel from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

OrlandoSentinel.com/local

## Toll offenders might get break

By DAN TRACY  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Drivers who inadvertently miss paying a toll or two could face a more lenient punishment under a plan being discussed by regional and state road officials.

Many of the details remain in flux, but the biggest change being contemplated is to do away with automatically

affixing points to the drivers licenses of toll offenders.

That rule, aggressively pushed in recent years, has resulted in the suspension of thousands of drivers licenses — something unknown to many motorists until it came time for renewals. The suspensions could lead to higher auto-insurance rates, too.

But administrators with Florida's Turnpike, the Orlando-Orange County

Expressway Authority and other agencies now concede that a driver who mistakenly misses a toll should not be penalized as harshly as those who habitually blow through toll booths.

That means infrequent offenders in the future could have a hold placed on their car registration until the tolls are paid. There would be no points as-

PLEASE SEE TOLLS, B5

## Times get tougher for higher ed

By LUIS ZARAGOZA  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

The past year has been rough for many Florida colleges and universities as the sagging economy put the squeeze on budgets — and it looks as if the worst is yet to come.

At public universities, more state-mandated cuts are likely before the end of the year. And at private colleges, officials worry students will transfer to less expensive public schools because family finances are being hit by job losses and less access to home-equity and private student loans.

All schools expect financial-aid requests to skyrocket. While it's too soon to tell exactly how deeply the economic downturn will affect higher education in the long run, some immediate worries include:

■ Whether the financial crisis will have a lasting effect on usually well-shielded college endowments. Many schools rely on income from invested donations to pay for scholarships and new buildings, but the value of a lot of these investments has suffered because of the economic crisis.

■ What year-over-year budget cuts will do to the quality and availability of public higher education and to the development of new high-profile projects such as the University of Central Florida's medical school.

■ Whether students will be forced to postpone going to college because their families can't keep up with the rising costs of tuition, room and board, books and supplies such as computers, transportation and health insurance.

Hopes for a speedy economic recovery faded with every gloomy state-revenue report and stock-market plunge.

"These are scary times for peo-

PLEASE SEE COLLEGES, B5

### The cuts

Below are cuts from universities' 2007-08 and 2008-09 budgets along with the general state funds the schools received during those years.



**UCF**  
Cuts: \$45 million  
Funds: \$836 million\*



**UF**  
Cuts: \$47 million  
Funds: \$1.19 billion\*



**FSU**  
Cuts: \$32 million  
Funds: \$914 million\*



**USF**  
Cuts: \$50 million  
Funds: \$732 million\*

\* Includes general state revenues, lottery money, tuition and fees.

## ICE AT UCF? HOW COOL!

### Skating rink? Outdoors? In Florida?

Yes, yes, yes. It's the centerpiece of a 50-day, family-friendly holiday extravaganza focused on UCF Arena called "Light Up UCF," which opens today.

### Why is it called "Light Up UCF"?

One clue: the synchronized light show that plays across the arena's exterior every half-hour. Think 75,000 individual lights programmed to dazzle.

### If I decide to hit the ice, what do I need to know?

■ **Cost:** \$10, which includes skate rental.

■ **Hours:** 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Jan. 2.

■ **Parking:** Free, except when concerts are scheduled at the arena.

■ **Clothing:** Nothing fancy, it feels weird to go from warm and sunny outside to shaded and cool inside the big white tent over the ice, but preview skaters had no problem in jeans and T-shirts.

■ **Field of play:** The rink is 85 feet by 65 feet. Is there more to do besides skating?

You can watch UCF President John Hitt flip a giant switch for the official opening at 6:30 tonight. You can catch free holiday movies shown on a giant outdoor screen certain nights. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is on tonight. You can also tell Santa what you want for Christmas from 7 to 10 p.m. in the arena lobby through Dec. 23.

Who can attend?  
Everything is open to the public.

More info:  
lightupucf.com

— LUIS ZARAGOZA  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER



PHOTOS BY STEPHEN M. DOWELL/ORLANDO SENTINEL



Against the lights of the UCF Arena, the tent housing the ice-skating rink for "Light Up UCF" welcomes students Wednesday for a preview of some cool entertainment. Natalie Bitcon (left) and Scott Hickson hold hands as they test their skill on the ice. And they didn't even have to bundle up.

## Haines City police chief resigns — No. 2 indicted

By SUSAN JACOBSON  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Haines City's police chief, indicted last month on charges of soliciting prostitution, has resigned in the wake of a grand-jury investigation that found he abused his power by giving breaks to friends — some of whom were criminals.

Meanwhile, the department's second in command, Capt. Mervin Stewart, 43, was indicted on two counts of perjury in connection with sexual-harassment complaints against him.

The grand jury described him as "an embarrassment to the City, to his department and to his profession."

Neither Stewart nor his attorney could be reached late Thursday.

Morris West, who grew up in Haines City and became chief of the 42-officer department in July 2003, will step down Nov. 23 under a deal reached Thursday with prosecutors, West, 47, also agreed to give up his police credentials in exchange for prosecutors dropping the three prostitution charges pending against him.

The 22-year veteran of the force could not be

reached, and his attorney, Larry Hardaway, said he could not comment because he had not seen the grand-jury presentation issued Thursday. West's resignation letter denies that he committed any crimes.

The scathing grand-jury report says West "undermined the good and lawful work of his officers based on his community ties" and that since he took over, "all the years of hard work and taxpayer money have been thrown away" because the agency no longer is accredited, "ac-

PLEASE SEE POLICE, B4



COMMENTARY  
**George Diaz**  
SENTINEL COLUMNIST

### Election leaves Martinez caught in the crossfire

Election Day is all about the scoreboard.

When it came to Hispanics and the Republican Party, it looked like a piñata party: The GOP got whacked in Florida. Barack Obama beat John McCain 57 percent to 42 percent in the presidential race. Obama tripled John Kerry's margin from 2004 in Miami-Dade County. Closer to home, Osceola County flipped to Democrats.

For all the *qué pasa?* analysis, U.S. Sen. Mel Martinez wasn't surprised by the wets on GOP faces.

He has a few himself, the price one pays for taking a strong stance advocating immigration reform in a superheated political climate that wasn't interested in compromise.

Most of the rhetoric came from Republicans who led the charge in killing a reform package in Congress. That helped energize Hispan-

PLEASE SEE: DÍAZ, B5

### False alarm in Caylee Anthony search



PHOTOS BY JACOB LANGSTON/ORLANDO SENTINEL

The search for missing toddler Caylee Marie Anthony continued Thursday at an east Orange County park. At left, bounty hunter Leonard Padilla talks to a deputy. Divers found a bag containing toys and trinkets in the Little Econ River — but no bones, contrary to early reports. Nonetheless, the search drew plenty of onlookers to Jay Blanchard Park. The child's mother, Casey Anthony, has been charged with first-degree murder. **Story, B4**

# Toys, trinkets found in river but no link to Caylee

By AMY L. EDWARDS  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Divers looking for clues in Caylee Marie Anthony's disappearance sparked a frenzy Thursday with reports they'd found possible bones in an east Orange County park, but investigators quickly debunked the rumors.

Divers in the Little Econlockhatchee River at Jay Blanchard Park found toys, trinkets and what they thought were bones as they scoured the murky water near Dean Road.

Investigators from the Sheriff's Office and FBI responded to the scene and, with a crowd of spectators and news crews looking on, examined the items. Late Thursday afternoon, a sheriff's spokesman said none of the items

were credible or significant. "There was no bones located there," sheriff's Capt. Angelo Nieves said. California bounty hunter Leonard Padilla—who thrust himself into the case this summer when he helped Caylee's mother, Casey Anthony, bond out of jail—is organizing the search at the park.

He thinks Jay Blanchard Park has significance to the toddler's disappearance, even though a different team—Texas EquuSearch—has already examined the river and determined it has nothing.

Padilla, whose efforts are frustrating law-enforcement officials, plans to continue his search today.

Casey Anthony is charged with murder in the death of her daughter, who was reported missing four months

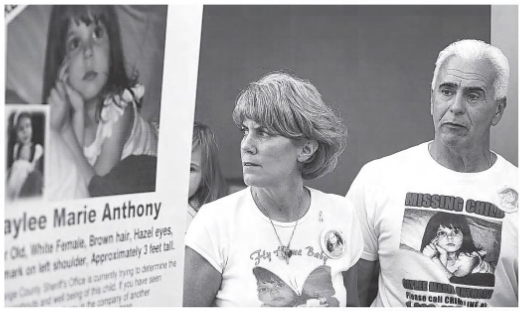
ago. The 22-year-old mother remains in the Orange County Jail.

Caylee's grandparents, George and Cindy Anthony, think the child is alive, and they continued their effort to find Caylee a few miles away Thursday, passing out fliers and talking to reporters.

Cindy Anthony said they heard about the suspicious findings at the park but didn't put much "stock in any of it."

"We kept doing our thing and doing what we normally do when we are here," she said. "Never once did I have an 'Oh, my God' type of reaction."

Sarah Lundy of the Sentinel staff contributed to this report. Amy L. Edwards can be reached at [aledwards@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:aledwards@orlandosentinel.com) or 407-420-5735.



RED HUBER/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Cindy and George Anthony, grandparents of Caylee Marie Anthony, work Thursday with Kid Finders, a network that brings awareness to missing people. A tent was set up along Goldenrod Road.

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**Music to their ears**

Another way to make a difference in a child's life is to purchase the Ultimate Holiday Collection CD. Available for only \$5, it's the perfect addition to your holiday music collection and supports children's health and education initiatives nationwide.

## Stetson names new president

By LUIS ZARAGOZA  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

DeLAND — Wendy Libby, president of Stephens College in Missouri, will become president of Stetson University next year after Doug Lee retires, the DeLand school announced Thursday.

"It was important for me to be at an institution with values at its core," said Libby, 57, at a news conference following the noon announcement of her appointment in front of a packed audience of students, faculty and staff at Elizabeth Hall Chapel.

"She's the perfect choice to lead Stetson," said Lee, citing Libby's nearly 30 years of teaching and administrative experience at schools across the country such as Furman University in South Carolina and Cornell University in New York.

Lee will become chancellor — a post equivalent to president emeritus — when he retires in May.

Libby is the first woman

appointed president of the 125-year-old private liberal-arts school. She will be making periodic visits to Central Florida before she assumes the post in July, Lee said.

Stetson has 3,700 students spread over four locations, including Tampa Bay and Celebration. It is consistently ranked among the top colleges and universities in the South that offer master's degrees in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual college rankings.

"No one here accepts anything less than excellence," Libby said of Stetson, noting that the school's extensive community involvement and academic rigor were key ingredients to take the job.

Stephens, located in Columbia, has 750 undergraduates and is 175 years old. Libby became president of the then-struggling women's college in 2003 and is credited with raising enrollment and promoting fundraising.

"She saved that college," Lee said. "She's taken enormous risks and succeeded."

Libby was selected from a field of 75 applicants after a 15-month national search. Interviews with the three finalists for the job were last week.

"When we began our search, we told people that Stetson was not broken," said Nestor de Armas, president of the board of trustees. "We were looking to take it to the next level. The reason she captured our imagination is that she has a huge heart. She's passionate about being involved in the community. She understands that Stetson is about transforming lives."

Libby is a Brooklyn, N.Y., native. She's married and has two grown sons. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology and an MBA with a concentration in finance from Cornell and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Connecticut.

Luis Zaragoza can be reached at [lzaragoza@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:lzaragoza@orlandosentinel.com) or 407-420-5718.

## POLICE

FROM PAGE B1

countability is gone" and morale is poor.

The grand jury also criticized West's brother, Horace West, a Haines City commissioner. Because the chief's brother and two of his friends were on the commission, City Manager Ann Toney-Deal "must tread lightly or risk putting her job in jeopardy." Neither West nor Toney-Deal could be reached.

According to the report, Morris West:

- Testified on behalf of two men on trial in a Winn-Dixie robbery case in which a shotgun was put to a cashier's head.

- Directed the release of an AK-47 with a 100-round magazine, usually used in a machine gun, because the aunt of the suspect was West's niece by marriage.

- Told one of his officers not to arrest a local businessman, a friend of West's, even though a warrant had been issued.



WEST



STEWART

ability for the department any of the city.

- Spent excessive time with the evidence custodian behind a locked door in her office.

As for Stewart, the grand jury found that he lacked the qualifications for promotion to captain, had paid a prostitute for sex as many as 10 times while in uniform in his patrol car, had an affair with a subordinate and refused to participate in an internal investigation about the relationship, plagiarized a paper at Polk Community College and sexually harassed one of his officers.

He has been with the agency for 17 years.

The grand jury recommended that both men be removed from the department.

It also recommended that Stewart lose his police certification and that all court cases that rely on his sole testimony be dismissed.

Susan Jacobson can be reached at [sjacobson@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:sjacobson@orlandosentinel.com) or 407-540-5981.

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