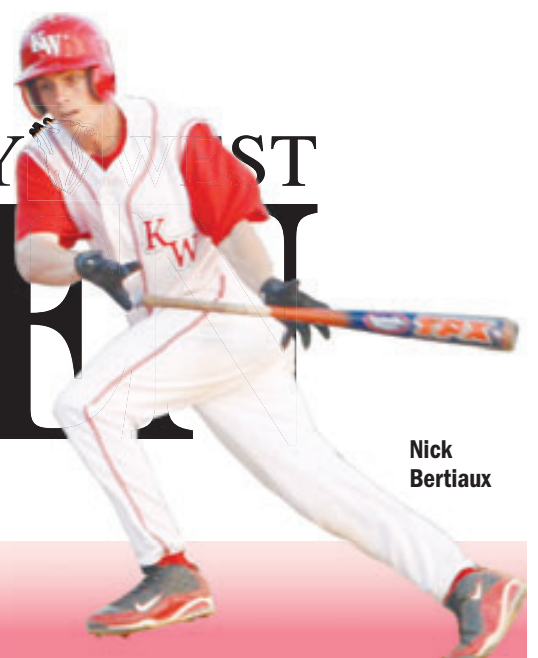


THE CITIZEN

The Florida Keys' Only Daily Newspaper, Est. 1876

KEY WEST



Nick Bertiaux

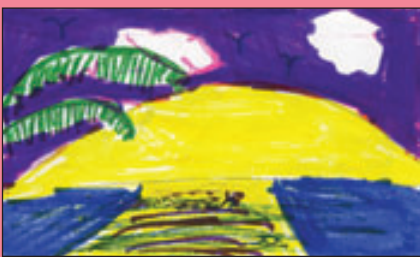
Conchs win, face Pace tonight — Page 1B

Tuesday

April 28, 2009 ♦ Vol. 133 ♦ No. 118 ♦ 16 pages

50 Cents

WEATHER



Micaela Price
Second grade, Sugarloaf School

Sunrise: 6:55 a.m. **Sunset:** 7:55 p.m.
Today: Partly sunny, breezy, shower. High 82
Tonight: Mainly clear, late shower. Low 75

Complete forecast on page 2A

FLORIDA KEYS

Bicyclist critically injured

KEY WEST: A bicyclist was struck by a vehicle on Flagler Avenue just before 4 p.m. Monday.

The victim was airlifted by the Trauma Star rescue helicopter and was in critical condition at press time.

No additional details about the victim's identity, the extent of the injuries or the details of the crash were available from the Key West Police Department.

Flagler Avenue between Fifth and 12th streets was closed until about 5:20 p.m.

Keys kids attend Law Day

KEY WEST: The Freeman Justice Center is sporting a new look this week as hundreds of Monroe County school-children are flocking to the courthouse to learn about the legal system.

Holly Elomina, trial court administrator, has been the guiding hand for "Law Day" at the courthouse for 10 years. This year is a little different, as the Monroe County Bar Association and Upper Keys Bar Association are hosting a banner contest. **Page 3A**

ON THE RADIO



Holmes



Naval Air Station Key West Capt. Steven Holmes talks about Peary Court, Armed Forces Day and the mediated meeting on jet noise.

Also on today's show:

- Peter Fraga, KWHS athletics
- Jean Somma, Florida Keys AHEC
- Morgan McPherson, Key West mayor
- Sean Morton, sanctuary superintendent
- Jill Landesberg-Boyle, FKCC
- Kim Gabel, Extension Service

LOCAL NEWS

US1 Radio (104.1 FM): 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. Noon, 5 and 6 p.m.
98.7 FM Conch Country: 7, 8 and 9 a.m. 3, 4, 5 and 6 p.m.

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FLORIDA KEYS
keysnews.com



House approves oil drilling bill

BY TIMOTHY O'HARA
Citizen Staff

The state House on Monday afternoon approved a bill that could allow oil drilling as close as three miles off Florida's west coast beaches.

House members voted 70-43, mostly along party lines, with Republicans voting in favor and Democrats voting against, said Florida Keys Democrat Rep. Ron Saunders, who voted against the bill.

There is a companion

Senate bill (SB 2294), but there is talk of attaching the House bill (1219) to a larger Senate energy bill, which would make it harder to defeat, said Saunders, adding he and others will continue to fight to keep the bill separate.

"All you can do now is keeping fighting it," Saunders said. "The problem is that there are people on the other side who are not concerned about our environment."

Drilling could not occur immediately off the Florida

Keys as it is protected by the federal government through the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. However, oil leaks and spills off the Panhandle could reach the Keys via strong

See **DRILLING**, page 8A

Keys vulnerable to travel warning



ROB O'NEAL/The Citizen

Monroe County tourism officials who are monitoring the swine flu outbreak said the Florida Keys had not experienced any cancellations as of Monday afternoon. The cruise and airline industries likely would feel the first effects. Lucky for the Keys the area is experiencing a substantial drive-down market at this time.

Europeans told to avoid US because of swine flu

BY MANDY BOLEN
AND JOHN GUERRA
Citizen Staff

As reports of swine flu inundate the news media Monday, local tourism officials were monitoring the situation and hoping for the best despite warnings from European health officials to avoid travel to the United States.

"I'm disappointed in the European Union's health commission warning," said Harold Wheeler, Monroe County Tourist Development Council director. "I don't think that was needed."

Nevertheless Wheeler was not overly concerned about declining tourism.

"We've had other health scares, such as bird flu, West Nile and SARS that haven't affected tourism in the Keys," he said, adding that the cruise and airlines industries likely would be affected due to their placement of travelers in close quarters. "Those industries will be hurt, but the Keys still benefit from the drive-down market."

The Miami-based Carnival Cruise Line on Monday announced the swine flu outbreak has not affected its trips to Mexico from ports in the United States, according to the Associated Press. The company, which travels to Mexico from ports in Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas and California, said it will not adjust its itineraries, and no pas-

sengers have reported having swine flu symptoms. Among those states, California has confirmed seven cases and Texas two. Also, New York City has 28 cases, Kansas two and Ohio one.

Many are from U.S. residents, including New York high school students, visiting Mexico.

Customs officials at airports, seaports and border crossings are watching people entering U.S. territories for signs of the illness. Wheeler's office had not received any calls about the new strain of influenza that had claimed 149 lives in Mexico.

As of Monday afternoon, there

See **FLU**, page 8A

School money reports in limbo

Board wary of shifting funds

BY JOHN L. GUERRA
Citizen Staff

The Monroe County School Board is not likely to approve the school system's monthly financial statements as a matter of course — as it routinely has done in the past, despite its complaints about money being moved from the capital fund to the operational budget.

The reports, which record revenue, expenses and how money is shifted from one place to another, are under inspection as never before. Specifically, February and March statements, which the board so far has refused to approve, likely will be a big part of the debate expected during a School Board meeting today on the future of the district's accounting practices.

See **SCHOOLS**, page 8A

KEY WEST

No more airport TB cases

BY TIMOTHY O'HARA
Citizen Staff

None of the 150 Key West airport employees who were tested for tuberculosis over the past two weeks has the contagious and potentially fatal disease, health officials said.

Officials on Monday were still awaiting results for about 20 to 30 Key West International Airport employees, but they were not expected to have the disease, as they showed no symptoms and were tested only as a precaution, according to Monroe County Health Department Director Bob Eadie.

Five employees whose skin tests were positive later were cleared by X-rays that showed they did not contract the disease.

"I think we're winding down," Eadie said of the investigation. "I think it is coming to a close."

See **TB**, page 8A

KEY WEST

CRB to get court involved

BY ADAM LINHARDT
Citizen Staff

In a move that could define the power of the Key West Citizen Review Board, the volunteer panel unanimously voted Monday night to go before the courts and ask a judge to enforce a subpoena it issued to a Key West police officer who told he board he would not testify.

The move is likely to pit the CRB against the police union, the Florida Police Benevolent Association, in court. The union stated in its letters that the CRB lacks the legal standing to order

officers to testify. It claims there is a conflict with the Florida Officer's Bill of Rights, Florida statute and civilian police review boards such as the CRB that investigate claims made against local police officers.

And it means a judge could order an arrest warrant against the officer for failing to comply with a court order.

Robert Cintron, an attorney for the CRB who does not sit on the board, told the board that if it moved to take the issue to court, it "will probably result in

See **CRB**, page 3A

SHIP SHAPE



Photo courtesy of Doug Rudolph/FKCC

From left, student Levi Metcalf, dive master Stacy Aguilar and dive instructor Ryan Smith, all of Florida Keys Community College, are among the volunteers providing support to crews readying the Vandenberg for sinking. See story on page 3A.