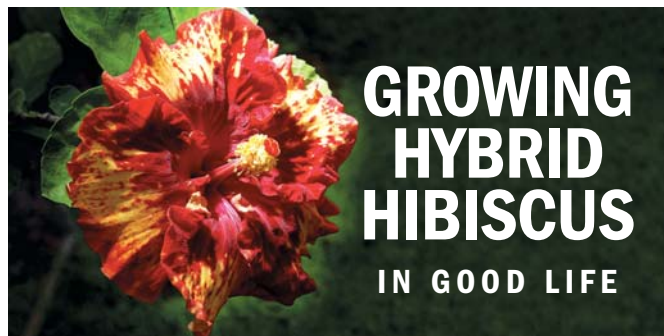


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The Palm Beach Post

Sunday, July 2, 2006

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Avian flu threat real

How Florida's birds could become infected

By STACEY SINGER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

The bidding starts at sundown.

On Friday nights, twice a month, Okeechobee auctioneer Patricia Pearce sells broilers, cocks, hens, chicks and guinea fowl to South Floridians who want them for meat, eggs or even religious rituals.

The L-Cross Livestock Auction is a tiny part of Florida agriculture that once merited little notice. But such places are increasingly recognized as a crucial front in the domestic battle against bird flu.

Fear persists that the transcontinental migration of wild birds or the massive commercial chicken industry will spread the deadly H5N1 strain to the United States. But backyard flocks, illicit cock-fights and certain religious rites fuel a trade in birds that also has health and agriculture officials' full attention.

At the L-Cross Ranch, Pearce

See BIRD FLU, 14A ▶

Commercially traded poultry pose threat

Why they could spread it:

■ Millions of tons of poultry meat are traded internationally. Live chickens and hatching eggs are the main means of its spread so far, World Health Organization scientists say.

Why the possibility is less likely:

■ Most U.S. producers keep their birds indoors, isolated from wild birds, and follow strict bio-security measures. Asian birds generally are raised outdoors.

■ Unlike the rest of the world, the United States imports relatively few chickens and eggs.

■ Birds in U.S. commercial flocks are regularly tested and would be quickly quarantined and killed if found to be infected.

■ Ways it may spread, 14A

Falls and a farewell at Wimbledon



Andy Roddick takes a back seat to his opponent.



GLENN CAMPBELL/AF/Getty Images
Venus Williams wears a defeated look Saturday.



DANIEL BEREHULAK/Getty Images

WIMBLEDON, England — Tennis great Andre Agassi acknowledges the crowd Saturday after his final match at the All England Club, a straight-sets loss to Rafael Nadal of Spain. Also exiting Wimbledon were Andy Roddick and Venus Williams. **Sports, 1B**

Baghdad market bombing kills 66

Just before the blast, gunmen grabbed a female Sunni legislator at a checkpoint in the capital.

By ROBERT H. REID
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A huge car bomb exploded Saturday at a bustling outdoor market in a Shiite district of Baghdad, killing at least 66 people and injuring about 100. It was the deadliest attack since the new national unity government took office six weeks ago and one of the biggest this year.

Shortly before the midmorning blast, gunmen seized a female Sunni legislator at a checkpoint in a Shiite area of the capital. Both attacks represented a major challenge to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's vow to curb sectarian violence that threatens to plunge Iraq into civil war.

■ Bin Laden urges insurgents on, 23A

The market bombing appeared timed to cause a maximum number of casualties among civilians doing their weekend shopping. It blew some victims onto the roofs of nearby two-story buildings and sent a plume of gray smoke billowing into the sky above Sadr City, stronghold of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Rescuers sprinted through streets littered with debris of shattered market stalls. Emergency crews bundled the wounded into ambulances and private cars and rushed them to hospitals. Late Saturday, Iraqi state television reported that 66 people died and about 100 were wounded.

The bombing was the deadliest since an April 7 suicide attack that killed 87 people at a Shiite mosque in Baghdad.

A statement posted on the Internet Saturday claimed responsibility for the Sadr City blast in the name of the Sunna Supporters Group in retaliation for Shiite attacks on Sunnis. The statement, whose authenticity could not be verified, accused Shiites of killing Sunnis and raping Sunni women in detention.

See IRAQ, 26A ▶

RIVIERA BEACH: The feuds, the finances, the future

For decades, Riviera Beach has struggled with image: Caustic politics, crime, blight.

Can decades of divisiveness be overcome so the city can prosper? As the city's mayor says:

'The whole country is watching'

By PAUL LOMARTIRE and PAT BEALL
Palm Beach Post Staff Writers

RIVIERA BEACH — Mayor Michael Brown calls Riviera Beach's waterfront "a bunch of gold that's unmined" — 400 acres fronting the Intracoastal Waterway, plus one of the finest beaches on Florida's east coast.

"It's the only place in the state" like it, developer Bob Healey says.

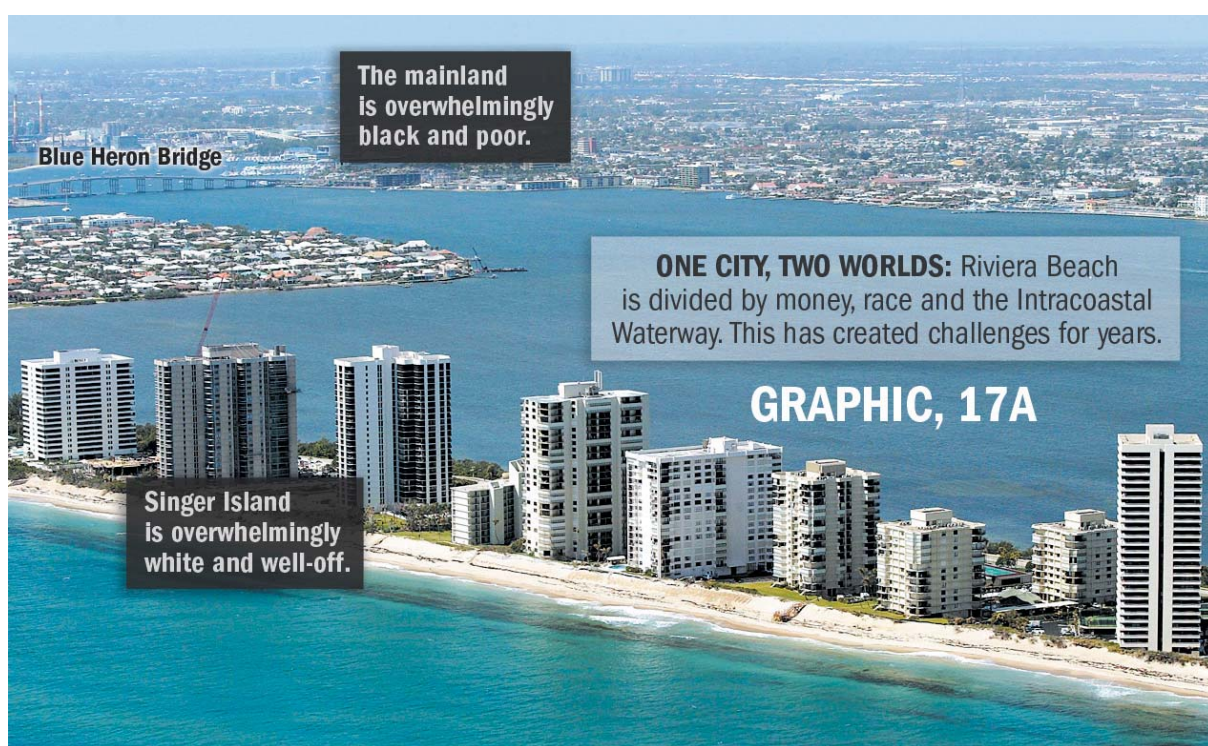
From a demographic standpoint alone, he is right:

Riviera Beach is a rare mix of rich and poor, black and white, oceanfront splendor and inner-city squalor — all within 8 square miles.

For decades, this city of 33,000 has tried to profit from its natural assets. But Brown acknowledges that Riviera's image is as shabby as most of the storefronts along U.S. 1.

"Why are we looking so ugly?" he asks. "The perception is negative. Business persons think it's difficult to get anything done here. The government is unreliable. The administration is unresponsive."

See RIVIERA BEACH, 18A ▶



LANNIS WATERS/2005 staff file photo

'Scrappy' UCF pulls itself ahead

By KIMBERLY MILLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

John Hitt was still president of the University of Maine in 1992 when he shared his plan for a struggling 21,000-student Orlando school with a colleague at Washington National Airport's Delta Crown Room Club.

Scribbled on a scrap of paper were five goals for the University of Central Florida, where Hitt had recently accepted the top position.

People had told him students were "knocking down the doors" at UCF, but when he checked the numbers, applications were actually stagnant. The school's marketing campaign consisted of a four-color brochure produced as a student project. And the university's president had just resigned after an investigation found he frequently called escort services on school business trips.

UCF, born during the Cold War-era space race to partner with NASA and fulfill President Kennedy's rousing 1961 goal of

See UCF, 6A ▶



Weather:
Storms.
High 87,
low 77.
FORECAST ON
BACK PAGE
OF SPORTS

DEAR ABBY 2D
BOOKS 6-7I
BUSINESS 1F
BRIDGE COMICS
CLASSIFIED 1G
DEATHS 10C
CROSSWORDS 19G
CROSSWORDS COMICS

EDITORIALS 2E
HOROSCOPE 2E
LOTTERY 2A
PEOPLE 27A
SCORES 15B
THEATERS 3J
TV SPORTS 2B

RED SOX
11
MARLINS
5

Top Story Rewind
Celebrate with the Heat and see how firefighters helped build a home.
PalmBeachPost.com

NASA calls off launch, will try again today
A storm may have put the Discovery in danger if it had to land after liftoff. **Story, 3A**

Police ready for crowds at Fourth on Flagler
About 75 officers will monitor an expected 150,000 people at Tuesday's event. **Local, 1C**

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