

Okeechobee abuzz over mystery winner of \$46 million prize
IN LOCAL

HOLIDAY MOVIES
IN TGIF



Gators top 'Canes, set school record with 11-0 start
IN SPORTS

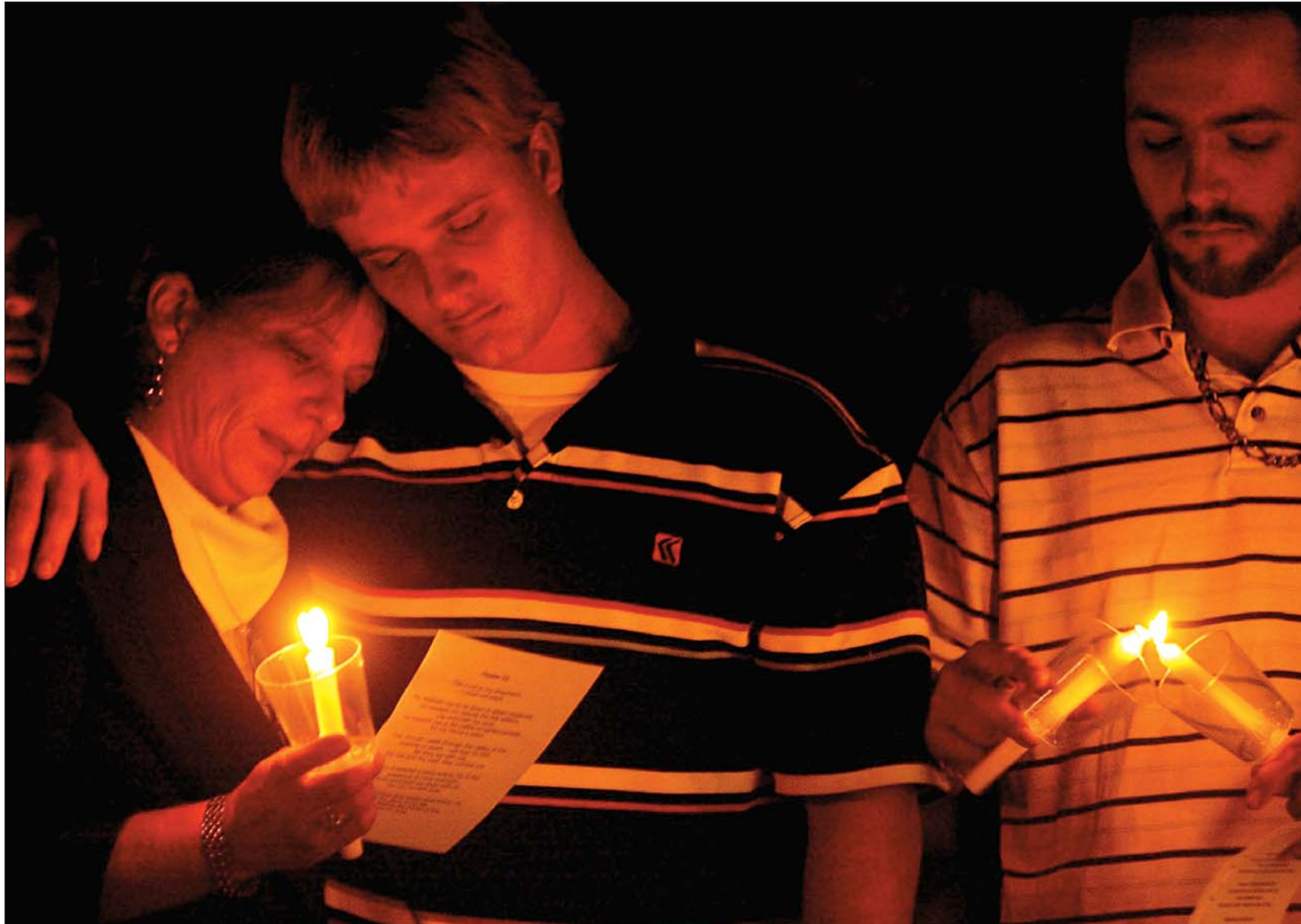
The Palm Beach Post

Friday, December 23, 2005

Final Edition • PalmBeachPost.com

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Three seaplane crash victims remembered



ERIK LUNSFORD/Staff Photographer

STUART — Jonathan Register comforts his mother, Jill, while his brother, Matthew, relights a candle during a vigil Thursday at St. Mary's Episcopal Church for three of their relatives who

died Monday in a seaplane crash: Eric Johansen of Port Salerno; his father, Larry Johansen of Palm Beach Gardens; and his father-in-law, Marlin Nachtigal of California. **Stories, 18A, 3D.**

Patriot Act gets 5-week add-on

The deadline to renew the bill now will probably fall amid hearings on domestic spying.

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — In a frantic finish before adjourning for the year, the House and Senate voted Thursday to extend the broad anti-terrorism bill known as the USA Patriot Act by five weeks.

The deal averts the expiration of the law while setting the stage for a partisan clash over civil liberties and national security when lawmakers return to Washington early next year.

The extension was approved by voice vote in sparsely attended sessions in the two chambers.

The action was taken after the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., threatened to derail a six-month extension passed by the Senate late Wednesday.

■ Bush's drop drives GOP disarray, 9A

As it wrapped up business for the year, Congress also gave final approval to a \$453.3 billion military spending bill that included \$50 billion for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, \$29 billion in new aid for hurricane victims, \$3.8 billion to prepare for a possible outbreak of avian flu and a government-wide 1 percent spending cut.

The Republican leadership stripped out language for \$2 billion in extra assistance for low-income people to pay their home heating bills.

Extending the Patriot Act provided the real drama. It was the final twist in a six-day game of brinksmanship between President Bush and Senate Democrats who, joined by a handful of Republicans, had blocked a bill to make

See PATRIOT, 8A ►

Collision leaves mother, 3 children dead

They hit a truck, whose driver also was killed, while heading to a funeral.

By JILL TAYLOR
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Wrapped Christmas gifts spilled from luggage Thursday as traffic investigators went through

the wreckage of a head-on crash north of Okeechobee that killed five, including a mother and her three young children.

Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Tim Frith has responded to crash scenes for years and usually keeps his composure when he does interviews with reporters.

This one was a struggle. "When those presents in the luggage spilled out, that was

tough," Frith said, a catch still in his voice hours after the 8:25 a.m. crash on U.S. 441 south of Yeehaw Junction.

Mary Ann Smalls, 34, of Okeechobee County was driving north on the two-lane road, heading for the Orlando airport, where she and her children Samantha, 11, Anthony, 9, and Jonathan, who appeared to be about 4, were planning to catch a flight, Frith

said. They were headed to Indiana, where her husband, Laverne, had driven earlier to attend his grandmother's funeral.

A 2005 Dodge truck hauling a trailer and a Bobcat loader was heading south, driven by Frank Brady Jr., 48, son of a well-known Indiantown rancher whose ranch was the site of a televised drug bust

See CRASH, 19A ►

HOLIDAY HODGEPODGE

Interfaith families blend celebrations as Christmas and Hanukkah coincide.

By CHARLES PASSY
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

What do you do when the first night of Hanukkah falls on Christmas Day?

For Wellington resident Heidi Swartz, there's a simple answer: You celebrate with roast goose and potato pancakes.

Swartz will be cooking such a feast in a bend-over-backward effort to give each holiday its due.

She's Christian, hence the roast goose. Her husband, Marc Unterhalter, is Jewish, hence the potato pancakes.

"When the holidays are separate, it's a little less hectic," Swartz said.

But this year, for the first time since 1959, they coincide.

And the 1 million-plus interfaith families throughout the United States are tackling the "December dilemma" in a more direct way than ever before.

That means more than just menorahs sharing space with Christmas trees. It means figuring out ways to split the day among friends and relatives of different faiths — or developing creative solutions for observing both at the same time, such as lighting the Hanukkah candles in the midst of Christmas dinner.

In some cases, however, the holiday convergence is making things easier. Instead of having to plan for two parties, families are

See HOLIDAYS, 19A ►



CAROLYN DRAKE/Staff Photographer

SOME CALL IT 'CHRISMUKKAH': 'To be honest, it's convenient for us,' says David Parker, a Jewish man, with wife Polly, a Christian. The Boynton couple plans a combined party.

Sights of the season at PalmBeachPost.com: Submit and view photos showing holiday spirit.

Wal-Mart workers win suit over denied lunch breaks

By DAVID KRAVETS
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — A California jury Thursday awarded \$172 million to thousands of employees at Wal-Mart Stores Inc. who claimed they were illegally denied lunch breaks.

The world's largest retailer was ordered to pay \$57 million in general damages and \$115 million in punitive damages to about 116,000 current and former California employees. The jury ruled the company violated a 2001 state law that requires employers to give 30-minute unpaid lunch breaks to employees who work at least six hours.

The damages originally were tallied as \$207 million after a court clerk mis-

California jurors decide the retailer should pay \$172 million to thousands of employees.

read the punitive damages as \$150 million. The amount of punitive damages later was clarified.

The class-action lawsuit in Alameda County Superior Court is one of about 40 nationwide alleging workplace violations by Wal-Mart and the first to go to trial. The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer, which posted profit of \$10 billion

See WAL-MART, 14A ►

Contractors avoiding schools over worker fingerprinting law

By RANI GUPTA
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

A state law meant to keep sexual predators away from schools is scaring away builders and hiking construction costs in the process.

The Jessica Lunsford Act, named for the 9-year-old Citrus County girl who was killed in March, requires most people working on school grounds to be fingerprinted and undergo background checks, including construction workers. A convicted sex offender who once

worked as a construction worker at Jessica's school was charged in her death.

But many contractors are choosing to work elsewhere, saying some of their Hispanic workers are reluctant to submit to fingerprinting for cultural reasons. With no shortage of construction jobs, they say there's no need to deal with the red tape involved in school work.

The law, which Gov. Jeb Bush

See SCHOOLS, 14A ►

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Palm Beach Post
Vol. 97 No. 235, 8 sections
7 28041 10000 7

Weather:
Sunny, milder. High 72, low 54.
FORECAST ON BACK PAGE OF SPORTS

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Festive flicks

Check movie times and see a year-end film review.
PalmBeachPost.com

N.Y. transit workers end three-day strike

The union will continue contract talks as buses and the subway restart for 7 million. **Story, 13A**

Son, 18, of Colts coach dies of apparent suicide

Tony Dungy's son, James, is found dead in his apartment north of Tampa. **Sports, 1B**

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