ORLANDO: MSU students to stay in Florida for a while

Two Michigan State University students who were considered missing until Saturday will stay in Florida for an undetermined period, police said Sunday.

Danela Alfaro-Lopez, 19, of Dearborn and Justin Gouveia, 21, of Lowell, Mass., have spoken to their parents, but will remain in Orlando, where they were found.

Their parents reported them missing July 26 after they did not return from a trip to Massachusetts, prompting a nationwide search.

Police said Alfaro-Lopez and Gouveia told authorities they were not aware of how extensive the search was for them.

John Roach, a Wayne County Sheriff's Department spokesman, said they went to Florida without telling their families because they were trying to deal with some personal issues.

Alfaro-Lopez's mother, Maria Alfaro-Lopez, said Saturday that her daughter was conflicted about her academic future. By Nancy A. Youssef

BRIDGMAN

Police search for fugitive who fled Indiana prison

Police say a fugitive from an Indiana prison rammed a police car with a stolen prison van early Sunday, then ran away.

Police in Bridgman, about 15 miles north of the Indiana border, say Troy Burge, 41, escaped Saturday night from Indiana's Westville Correction Center. He was serving eight years for burglary.

Officers from Bridgman and five other departments, using police dogs, were searching for him Sunday afternoon, police said.

He escaped when Officer Sheila Palmisano was trying to stop the prison van for defective equipment about 12:10 a.m. Sunday, police said.

As Palmisano got out of her patrol car, Burge put the van in reverse and rammed the car, police said. They said he ran the van over the hood of the patrol car, and the two vehicles became entangled.

Burge then ran away, carrying a white plastic bag that may have held a change of clothes, police said. They said he had been wearing a tan Westville Correction Center uniform. By the Associated Press

HOUGHTON

Man pleads no contest to touching girl, 13

An Illinois man faces up to a year in jail after police say he had sexual contact with a sleeping girl.

Mathew James Walsh, 23, pleaded no contest Friday to fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct, avoiding a more serious felony charge of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

The fourth-degree charge is punishable by up to two years in prison, but Houghton County Prosecutor Douglas Edwards, as part of the plea agreement, agreed to seek a sentence of no more than a year in prison.
Walsh, a former Michigan Technological University student who works in the Chicago area, is said to have lifted the 13-year-old girl’s shirt and kissed her chest while she was sleeping in 2001.

Police say the incident happened in the girl’s home and that Walsh knew the family.

Walsh’s bond was revoked after the hearing, despite pleas by his attorney that he remain free to seek psychological help. By the Associated Press

NEWBERRY

State official kills wolf that was attacking calves

A state official has shot a wolf under the new federal law that allows officials to kill the animals when they become a nuisance.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources killed the wolf after it was found feeding on a calf on a farm north of Engadine.

Federal law began allowing such killings April 1.

“The state worked quickly under this new law,” said Tom Weise, DNR wildlife supervisor for the eastern Upper Peninsula in Newberry.

The problem began May 31 when a wolf killed a calf on a dairy farm, dragged it across a road and fed on it. The DNR set traps but was unable to catch the wolf.

On July 30, a second calf was killed on a different farm about three miles away. Last week, a third calf was killed in the same manner. But wildlife assistant Terry Gouza arrived at the farm while the wolf still was feeding and shot the animal.

“The goal when working under the authority of this law is to be selective and get the specific animal that is doing the damage,” Weise said. “You can’t be any more selective than that.” By the Associated Press

BAY CITY

Polluted river has hope for a cleaner future

State and Bay County officials say faulty and illegal septic systems and runoff from fields and lawns have polluted the Kawkawlin River for years. Now they want to put an end to the problem.

When bacteria get into the river, they flourish, along with weeds. For the most part, the Kawkawlin only flows when it rains, acting more like an extension of Saginaw Bay than a river.

The river has the fewest groundwater sources of any stream in Michigan, according to the state Department of Environmental Quality.

The river remains under a public health advisory because of unsafe E. coli bacteria readings.

There are some water quality moves in sight, however.

The county Health Department says it hopes to start requiring septic system inspections when homes are sold in the county. A federal law that requires storm sewer and drain outlets to be monitored for illicit discharges takes effect later this year.

Bay County does not inspect septic systems now. Health Director Frederick Dryzga said inspections are not required by the state and they would be too time-consuming for the county.

The proposal for sale inspections is working its way through county committees.

The Kawkawlin River, with its main branch running through Bangor Township, has been flagged twice this year for unsafe E. coli bacteria levels.

E. coli are bacteria from the intestinal tract of humans and warm-blooded animals. Exposure to high levels can make people sick or cause an infection or disease. By the Associated Press