

Is it OK to text someone for a date?



ACCENT, PAGE 1E

# The Daytona Beach News-Journal

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF VOLUSIA & FLAGLER COUNTIES

THURSDAY  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

TODAY'S FORECAST

It's OK to text for sunny day. High: Upper 80s. Low: Mid-70s. PAGE 6C

**DALE'S NEW LOOK**  
Double-8s, Dew dress Junior's ride  
**SPORTS, PAGE 1B**

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THE FAST LANE

Keeping you on track for today, tomorrow

Paging Doctor Pluto!

Mickey Mouse might be cheering up patients at a new children's hospital, with the Walt Disney Co. announcing Wednesday it is donating \$10 million to the facility.

The Disney-themed hospital in Orlando will revamp and replace the current Florida Children's Hospital on the site. Officials have not yet decided on the full hospital name, but said it will include the Disney name.

Major construction started Wednesday on the seven-story, 200-bed building. The \$35 million facility is expected to be complete in 2010.



Tiny bird threatened by French appetite for crunch

On the world's list of weird foods, ortolan — a bite-size songbird roasted and gulped down whole — can claim a place of distinction. It's an illegal place, though, because the ortolan is a protected species and hunting it is banned in France.

Now the government is out to get poachers of the coveted fowl, which aficionados say is satisfyingly crunchy, with a subtle hazelnut taste.

According to tradition, the French shroud their heads in a napkin to eat ortolan, which is killed by being drowned in Armagnac brandy, plucked and roasted with its yellow skin and skeleton intact.

A single bird can fetch \$210 on the black market.

Most needy have skipped flu shots

Only a fraction of the people who need flu shots the most are getting them — including just one in five babies and toddlers, say health officials who hope to boost those numbers as a record vaccine supply heads out this fall.

The government sounded the alarm Wednesday, worried that a string of mild flu seasons and the vaccine confusion of recent years are deterring people from this simple lifesaver.

Manufacturers expect to ship more than 130 million doses of flu vaccine in coming months.

— Associated Press

## NAACP fights racism in Jena, at home



News-Journal photos/JUSTIN YURKANIN

Philip Prescod, in foreground, a Bethune-Cookman University student, huddles beneath White Hall on Wednesday with other students, including Brannon Gary, center. Around 35 students were waiting to board a bus for Jena, La., to partake in a two-day protest in support of six black teens known as the Jena Six.

### B-CU students join in fight for civil rights

By JOHN BOZZO  
STAFF WRITER

**DAYTONA BEACH** — Brannon Gary huddled under the rain Wednesday with 35 other Bethune-Cookman University students, waiting for a 12-hour bus ride to support the Jena Six.

They will join potentially thousands of protesters expected in the small central Louisiana town of Jena today, where six black teens were charged in December with attempted murder in an assault on a white classmate.

The fight took place amid mounting racial tension after a black student sat under a tree in the school yard where only white students usually sat. The next day three nooses were hanging from the tree.

"I'm kind of shocked that in 2007, racism can be so blunt," said Gary, a 19-year-old sophomore from Orlando.

Charges against the teens have since been reduced. One of the students was set to be sentenced today to up to 20 years in prison, but an appeals court last week overturned the aggravated battery conviction.

SEE JENA, PAGE 9A

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The local NAACP chapter had shirts made for the trip. Thousands of demonstrators were expected at the rally.

### Local chapter faces new challenges

By JOHN BOZZO  
STAFF WRITER

One day at work, a co-worker put a noose over Clarence Thomas' neck.

Another day, the 39-year-old found a noose hanging over his work area at a Holly Hill equipment rental company.

After Thomas complained about the grim reminders of a past of lynchings and overt racism, his employer laid him off.

"They retaliated on me like I was the perpetrator," said Thomas of Cocoa Beach, who had worked for the company more than a year and was trying to put his life together after serving time for robbery.

Thomas turned to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for help.

"I never really dreamed everything that happened to me could happen in this day and time," he

said. "I felt like any small mistake I might make, I'd be back in the penitentiary."

Despite a long history of battling racism against brutal opposition, the NAACP finds its relevance questioned today, especially by young people who enjoy the benefits of the struggle for civil rights. Much of the group's work goes on without fanfare — settling disputes between workers and employers, training black youths for future leadership roles — leaving many unaware of the NAACP's impact.

Yet the zeal remains.

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MORE ONLINE: Learn more about the NAACP: news-journalonline.com

## Groups try to quash Hometown Democracy measure

By JIM SAUNDERS  
and JAMES MILLER  
STAFF WRITERS

**TALLAHASSEE** — Friederike Holt thinks giving voters a greater say in development decisions might be one way to keep Central Florida from becoming, as she puts it, a "cement jungle."

That's why she signed a petition to put the proposed Florida Hometown Democracy constitutional amendment on the Novem-

ber 2008 ballot.

So when the Ponce Inlet retiree got a letter from former House Speaker John Thrasher last week asking her to revoke her signature and telling her the amendment would let big developers "ruin Florida's scenic beauty," she wasn't confused.

She was mad. "I think it's terrible," Holt said this week. "You know they're trying to turn it around like we're all

a bunch of idiots, that we don't know what we're signing."

Thrasher's letter was part of a wide-ranging effort by business groups to try to scuttle the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment.

If passed, the amendment would require voter approval of changes to local land-use plans that serve as blueprints for development.

During a debate Wednesday in Tallahassee, Thrasher warned that the amendment would hurt economic development in the state.

"It's about stopping growth in the state of Florida," said Thrasher, a lobbyist whose high-powered list of clients includes The St. Joe Co., one of the state's major landowners.

But the tactics of Thrasher and a group he helps lead, Save Our

Constitution Inc., are drawing criticism.

In a letter asking voters to revoke petition signatures, Thrasher contended the amendment would lead to higher property taxes, allow "big developers" to

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News-Journal/JIM TILLER

A woman tries to stay dry Wednesday morning on Cedar Street in Daytona Beach. Flooded roads, power outages and accidents became problems for area residents.

## Record rain won't remain

Wednesday's deluge dumped more than 4 inches of rain on Daytona Beach by 9 p.m., a record for Sept. 19 in the city. The pounding rain knocked down power lines and flooded neighborhoods, but most residents of Volusia and Flagler counties found it to be merely a nuisance and were thankful it was not a hurricane.

When will it end?

The good news is we should see the sun today with the steady rains tapering off to intermittent showers and thunderstorms, forecasters say. The high will be 87 degrees and partly cloudy.

Flooding

Riverside Drive in Holly Hill and Shockney Drive in Ormond Beach flooded.

In New Smyrna Beach, work crews kept North Atlantic Avenue passable and pumped water out of the Central Beach neighborhood.

One lane of southbound U.S. 17-92, south of DeLand, was closed Wednesday afternoon because of heavy rains.

In Palm Coast, water flooded some cul-de-sacs on the city's southwest side and on Pritchard Parkway. Others reported street flooding on Parkway Drive off Belle Terre Parkway in Palm Coast near Wadsworth Elementary and also in the R section near White View Parkway and Belle Terre.

Water rose near the rim of retention ponds and some canals in the city.

— Staff Report

Power Outages

1,400

homes in Edgewater lost power when a tree limb hit a power line

1,500

homes in Flagler County lost power when a breaker switch malfunctioned

12

homes in West Volusia lost power

Roads

150

wrecks troopers raced to Wednesday in the Central Florida area

0

fatalities

Rain Totals

5.50 inches

Palm Coast

4.27 inches

Daytona Beach

2.20 inches

Deltona

1.50 inches

New Smyrna Beach

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7 Sections  
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Crosswords 4E, 4F

Deaths 4C  
Horoscope 4F  
Score & More 1G  
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Weather 6C  
Your Money 1D

Off the beaten path

Cross-country runners have seen it all.

THE SCORE & MORE, SECTION G



Coming Friday: Jazz Festival

New Smyrna's annual jam is this weekend. GO!

Contractors outnumber troops

U.S. has assembled an imposing industrial army in Iraq larger than its fighting force. WAR IN IRAQ, PAGE 2A