

'SNL' writers talk about being fair, funny in political sketch

Deputy saves driver from burning vehicle after chase

Florida, Tennessee quarterbacks ready to handle the pressure



Star-Banner



50c / FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

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IN A MINUTE

DID YOU KNOW...

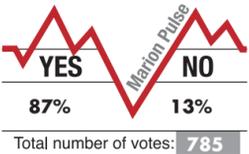
TURNING 113
Japan's Tomoji Tanabe celebrated his 113th birthday and the honor of being the world's oldest man. **2A**

SUPER SUPPER
The government is considering proposals to sell genetically engineered animals — fish, chickens and cows — as food in the grocery store. **7A**

AN ASPIRIN FOR PLANTS?
According to researchers, when plants are under stress they release an aspirin-like chemical into the air to protect them. **7A**

MARION PULSE

THURSDAY'S QUESTION:
Is Sarah Palin more popular right now than John McCain?



TODAY'S QUESTION:
Do you think either presidential candidate is addressing the nation's economic situation?



WEATHER

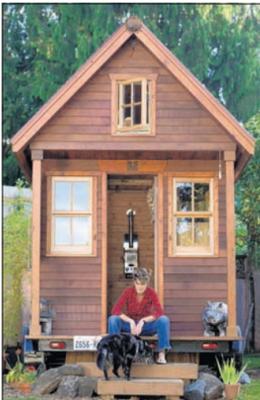


Showers possible
High 85 Low 67

For more on weather, see **6B**

COMING UP

LIVING SMALL
Instead of taking on big mortgages and high bills, more people are purchasing homes less than 1,000 square feet. Find out more in Saturday's **Big Sun Homes**.



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- BUSINESS..... **8C-9C**
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US plans to buy up bad debt from banks

BY EDMUND L. ANDREWS
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — In another breathtaking display of government intervention, top officials at the Treasury Department and Federal Reserve began discussing with congressional leaders a plan to buy up vast numbers of distressed mortgages held by ailing financial institutions.

While the details of the plan

Federal bailout could be largest in history

■ Dow rises 410 on news, **8C**

remain to be hammered out, the discussions could result in the biggest bailout in U.S. history, and the most direct commitment of taxpayer funds so far in the worst financial crisis that Fed and Treasury officials say they have ever seen.

“What we are working on now is an approach to deal with systemic risks and stresses in our capital markets,” said Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. It would be “a comprehensive approach that



Paulson

would require legislation to deal with the illiquid assets on financial institutions' balance sheets.”

The essence of the new plan is expected to be loosely modeled on the Resolution Trust Corp. that bought up

and eventually sold hundreds of billions of dollars worth of real estate in the 1990s from failed savings-and-loan companies. In this case, however, the government is expected to take over only distressed assets, not entire institutions.

It came on a day when the Federal Reserve poured almost \$300 billion into global credit markets and barely dented the

PLEASE SEE **BANKS, 5A**

FIGHT FOR FLORIDA



TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Sarah-mania” in The Villages: Local Republican officials report interest is running very high as vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin — shown Wednesday in Grand Rapids, Mich. — is set to visit Sunday.

Battleground state

Palin event is poised to be biggest-ever Villages rally

BY JOE FOLLIK
STAR-BANNER TALLAHASSEE BUREAU

For years, the nation's top Republican candidates have trekked to The Villages in central Florida as a must-stop on the campaign trail.

The retirement community of more than 80,000 residents has hosted President George W. Bush, Florida Govs. Jeb Bush and Charlie Crist, GOP presidential candidates including Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney, and many others in recent years.

But local Republicans say this Sunday's rally with Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the party's vice presidential nominee, may be the largest ever.

“Sarah-mania has taken over here,” said Richard Cole, the chairman of the The Villages Republican Club of Sumter County. “I think Gov. Romney, Mayor Giuliani and Sen. McCain drew 5,000 people. This one, we're expecting between

PLEASE SEE **PALIN, 5A**



CHRIS CARLSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

“Change” of scenery: Democratic Sen. Barack Obama, shown Wednesday in Las Vegas, is expected to visit Florida this weekend.

Obama to visit Florida, tout message on economy as polls show closer race

BY ANNA SCOTT
SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

Barack Obama's campaign is pressing his economic message in Florida, leading up to the Democratic presidential nominee's scheduled visits to Miami and Jacksonville this weekend.

Obama's visit to the state comes as a CNN/Time/Opinion Research Corp. poll this week showed him moving into a tie with John McCain among Florida voters, with 48 percent each. Earlier polls had shown a slight advantage for McCain in the state, which President Bush won by

about 5 percentage points in 2004.

Across the state, supporters staged rallies at gas stations to draw attention to Obama's stated intention to fix the problem behind rising fuel prices. Volunteers calling potential voters have added details about the candidate's tax plan to their scripts, and have been instructed to focus on economic policies such as rebates for workers earning \$75,000 a year or less.

Democratic campaign officials also are rapping McCain for say-

PLEASE SEE **OBAMA, 5A**

Power to you: Ocala Electric to lower rates in November

Average residential customer to see bill decrease 18 percent.

BY JESSICA GREENE
STAR-BANNER

OCALA — A drop in natural gas prices should bring lower utility bills to Ocala Electric Utility customers in November.

The average residential consumer will see their bills decrease by about 18 percent in November, said Kathleen Libby, fiscal manager for Ocala Electric Utilities.

The new rate is set at \$56.31 per 1,000 kilowatt hours. That is about a \$30 decrease from the current rate of \$87.76.

In the past OEU has adjusted rates about twice a year, but sharply fluctuating fuel costs of late have required the utility to look at, and typically adjust, these charges every other month, said Henry Hicks, utilities director for the city of Ocala.

Like its customers, OEU is hostage to vagaries of the fuel market that have rocked the economy. While some power companies produce their own energy, OEU does not. It purchases power from a bulk supplier, the Florida Municipal Power Association, which purchases the energy it sells OEU from companies that rely heavily on natural gas for production.

PLEASE SEE **UTILITY, 5A**

Plaintiff scores win in Nichols DUI civil claim

BY SUEVON LEE
STAR-BANNER

OCALA — The man who sued Ocala businessman William “Billy” Nichols Jr. in the wrongful death lawsuit of his wife and daughter scored a victory in court Thursday, when a judge ordered Nichols to have an independent medical exam to test his claim that he suffered from a rare gastrointestinal disorder that was key to his successful defense in the criminal case against him.

An attorney for Nichols tried vigorously to prevent Adrian “Stretch” Cummings' lawyer from subpoenaing Nichols' medical records and requiring he be examined by Dr. Baha Moshiree, a gastroenterologist at Shands at the University of Florida. He objected on the grounds it was “harassing,”



Cummings



Nichols

PLEASE SEE **DUI, 5A**

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