

Obama's Poll Numbers Up

But support for Afghan war is falling • Page 6A



RESIDENTS HAVE PLENTY OF IDEAS FOR PALATKA'S RIVERFRONT • PAGE 2A

PALATKA DAILY NEWS

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PALATKA, FLORIDA

75¢

The voice of Putnam County since 1885

FORECAST

Partly sunny
40% chance of rain

91 | 72

For details, see 2A

Did You Know?



Rosanne Cash's new CD is compiled from her dad's list. **Page 8A**

Real Life

Teen rides on top of van in box

ALBERTVILLE, Ala. — An Alabama woman has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child after police say she let her daughter ride in a cardboard box on top of their van.

Albertville Police spokesman Sgt. Jamie Smith said the 37-year-old woman was arrested Sunday after police received a call about a minivan on a state highway with a child riding on top.

Smith said the woman told police the box was too big to go inside the van, and that her daughter was inside the box to hold it down.

Smith said the mother told officers it was safe because she had the box secured to the van with a clothes hanger.

The 13-year-old daughter wasn't harmed and was turned over to a relative. A jail worker said the mother was out on bond Monday.

—AP

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Attorneys: Haleigh's father to divorce Misty

Lawyer cites strains on family since kindergartner went missing

By KRISTIN CHAMBERS
Palatka Daily News

Ronald Cummings and Misty Croslin-Cummings may be planning a divorce just seven months after they tied the knot and eight months after Cummings' 6-year-old daughter, Haleigh Cummings, disappeared from her Satsuma home.

"There have been discussions that it may be best for both of them to move on," Brandon Beardsley,



Ronald



Haleigh



Misty

family law attorney for Ronald Cummings, said. "Everything surrounding their relationship since Feb. 10 has strained it, as it would with any marriage.

"I anticipate that they will come to an agreement and there will be an uncontested dissolution filed and that they will go their separate ways," he added.

No paperwork had been filed or signed, he said. "I anticipate it happening in the near future," Beardsley said.

Robert Fields, Croslin's attorney, confirmed the couple's split.

"It is our understanding Ronald will be filing for divorce," Fields said.

Croslin was babysitting Haleigh the night she vanished. Investigators have said she has been

See HALEIGH, Page 7A

A Look at Old Florida



Photos by PATRICK C. LEONARD / Palatka Daily News

Cattle graze on a pasture on the Clay Family Ranch in West Putnam.

Visitors to be welcomed by Land Conservancy

Clay family ranch in Grandin is a good place to experience nature

By TRISHA MURPHY
Palatka Daily News

GRANDIN Large oaks, open prairies, wildlife and even grazing cattle are all things that bring to mind the charms of old Florida. All have their place on the almost 3,000-acre, 160-year-old Clay family ranch in Grandin whose existence has spanned seven generations.

"Our prairie areas are part of the Etoniah Basin, which was a subtribe of the Timacuan Indians," said Tommy Clay Jr., who lives on the ranch and runs it with his son, Chance, 22, and his 84-year-old father, Tommy Clay Sr. "The middle of our prairie land is what we call the islands. Not long ago, it was an island and at one time was surrounded by water."

According to Clay, who serves as president of the Putnam Land Conservancy, his ranch is a great place to feel or experience nature and that's why it's the perfect place for folks to take a step back in time on Saturday while attending the PLC's Fall Roundup. The event will be from noon to 5 p.m.

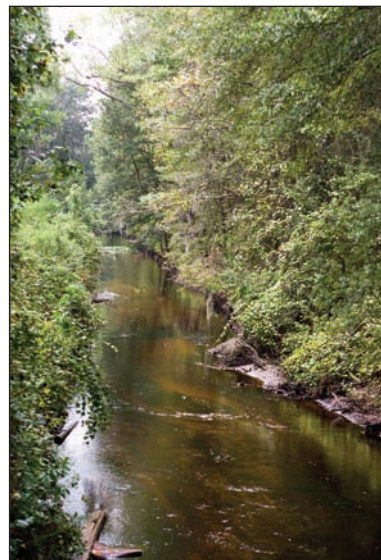
"It's just beautiful," he said. "It has an oak tree on it with a 20-foot girth. Huge palm trees and oak trees — there's always a breeze rustling through the trees."

That's not all that makes the Clay Ranch a part of history.

See CLAY, Page 6A



In the photo above, Tommy Clay Jr. piles wood into a fire pit on his family's ranch in West Putnam. The Putnam Land Conservancy is holding its annual Fall Roundup at the historic ranch. Hayrides will feature the beauty of old Florida along with many other events and demonstrations. In the photo at left, a canal flows through a portion of the Clay family ranch. Dug in the early 1900s, the canal is used for pasture irrigation.



Suit over PUD ends

Mediation settles Riverbend sewer facility issue

By KRISTIN CHAMBERS
Palatka Daily News

A lawsuit involving a proposed 1,500-unit housing development in East Palatka has been resolved through mediation and now awaits Putnam County Commission approval.

The lawsuit, between Putnam County and Horizon Capital Group and Miami attorney Craig Sherar, was filed in 2007 after commissioners approved the community near the St. Johns River called Riverbend to be constructed along East River Road and Fullwood Road.

Sherar had argued that a statement in the county's comprehensive plan did not allow a sewage treatment facility to exceed 500,000 gallons per day. The proposed development's plant would have a 600,000-gallon per day capacity.

Conditions of the settlement include that "Horizons and the County agree to reduce the wastewater treatment facility's capacity by 100,000 gallons per day."

"It was really a case of that the cart was a little before the horse, in that when we passed the plan unit development (PUD) the county comp plan had not yet been amended," Donald Holmes, attorney for Horizon Capital Group, said. "It has now been amended to allow exactly what we did in the PUD."

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