

Condo wins \$950,000 in hurricane claim, B3

Local News

Is Caylee alive? Defense team sends mixed message, B3

72.4%

The state's high-school graduation rate in 2006-07, according to the Florida Department of Education. During that time, 6.9% of Florida teachers left their jobs.

OrlandoSentinel.com/local

Dear McCain: Joes, plumbers and many more are frightened

Assuming Joe the Plumber isn't going to be a difference-maker in the election, John McCain comes to Miami and Melbourne today in a frenetic charge to gather support.

Down big in most polls, McCain has 19 days to convince people why he's the better man to lead this country out of its economic chaos than Barack Obama.

"The American people are angry," McCain snapped during Wednesday's debate.

I think his read on the public pulse is a bit off. People aren't angry. They're scared.

Blowing off steam at some Wall



George Diaz
SENTINEL COLUMNIST

COMMENTARY

Street executives is only a short-term fix. What matters most is job security, a mortgage that's due, and the frightening prospect of your family being on the brink of a financial meltdown.

Consider this late September e-mail that Dave Krepcho, who runs Central Florida's Second Harvest Food Bank, recently received:

"Last year this time I was the sole support(er) of a family of 5, house in College Park, kids in private school, and a comfortable career. I made a detrimental mistake by leaving my position at a large reputable company for one that dangled a large carrot in my face. It lasted 90 days and the new job went over budget and I was laid off. That was Aug. 4th 2008.

"The first thing that went was the

PLEASE SEE **DÍAZ, B5**



PHOTOS BY RICARDO RAMÍREZ BUXEDA/ORLANDO SENTINEL
Kasey Edwards, 19, who lost his arm to an alligator in June, shows off his new bionic i-LIMB Thursday in Orlando.

Alligator's victim: 'I lost my arm, but I gained my life'

By **SATTA SARMAH** || SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Four months after losing his left arm in an alligator attack, Kasey Edwards, 19, was beaming with gratitude Thursday in Orlando.

Edwards, who said he had neither the time nor desire to be depressed, came to Orlando to meet with the prosthetic experts who have given him a new limb — and a new perspective on life.

Before testing a new bionic hand on a fishing rod, baseball and other items, Edwards talked about the June day that started with a swim with friends.

They were hanging out at South Florida's Lake Okechobee when he decided to jump into a 25-foot canal near the lake.

As he swam, an alligator surfaced, clamped down on his arm and thrashed him around. What remained of his left arm was "a bunch of mangled meat and bone," he said.

Edwards survived by grabbing onto a buoy cable but was hit in the stomach by a second alligator as his friends pulled him from the water.

He said the attack was, in many ways, the best and worst thing that ever happened to him. "It was a horrific experience," Edwards said. "I lost my arm, but I gained my life."

A special hand has added a renewed sense of normalcy.

Called the i-LIMB, the hand is activated by electrical signals transmitted from muscles in Edwards' upper arm. It is the first prosthetic hand that gives



Edwards says he is grateful for the prosthetic hand, which will allow him to move and flex individual fingers.



Edwards can perform delicate tasks with the prosthetic hand. Only 350 people in the world have one like it.

amputees the ability to move and flex individual fingers. Only 350 people in the world have it.

Edwards, who didn't have health insurance at the time, says he is grateful for the prosthetic hand that gives

PLEASE SEE **ARM, B2**

Biketoberfest 2008



JACOB LANGSTON/ORLANDO SENTINEL

The custom paint job on a couple's motorbike draws the attention of passers-by in Daytona Beach on Thursday as motorcycle lovers begin arriving for Biketoberfest. This year's event is unlikely to draw as many as in years past, observers say.

PARTY GETS STARTED DESPITE DOWNTURN

By **RACHAEL JACKSON** || SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

DAYTONA BEACH — Biketoberfest's roar into the city on Thursday was muffled a bit by the depressed economy, but those attending the bike rally say it won't hinder their good time.

"We're not going to give up our passion [because of] the economy," said biker Joe Marra, 65, as he clutched a beer in a Biketoberfest-themed sleeve.

But across the area, fewer hotel rooms than usual were booked. Karen Gehris, owner of Boot Hill Saloon, said she saw fewer bikes cruising down Main Street, the Daytona stretch that's at the core of the four-day rally.

Choppers World salespeople found more people buying necessities such as headlights and sunglasses, and fewer people springing for pricier leather goods.

"I know, because I get paid on commission," grumbled Sheila Salemi.

PLEASE SEE **BIKERS, B5**

Online effort gets help to the hungry

By **KATE SANTICH**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Faced with a growing chasm between supply and demand, Central Florida's main food bank has started sending teams of workers into the community to help people sign up for food stamps.

"The demand for food is just so far outpacing what we can collect that we had to look at what else can possibly be done," said Dave Krepcho, executive director of the Orlando-based Second Harvest Food Bank, who announced the new program Thursday.

The outreach is a "user-friendly" effort to sign up people who go to local charities hoping to get groceries or free meals. There, they may encounter one of Second Harvest's six full-time outreach specialists, each equipped with a laptop computer, wireless Internet access, printer and scanner.

If the person has not applied for food stamps, the specialist helps file online on the spot. Some applicants, they find, are also eligible for state Medicaid and emergency cash assistance. The program, which has been



HILDA M. PEREZ/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Liz Soto of Second Harvest Food Bank uses a laptop computer to help Stephanie Van Clief, 45, apply for food stamps Thursday at the Christian Service Center in Orlando.

in operation about three months, already has taken more than 700 applications.

Workers have been particularly successful in signing up those who normally don't have computer access — including the homeless and elderly shut-ins.

"Overall, we're ecstatic about this," Krepcho said.

PLEASE SEE **HUNGER, B5**

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