



# OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 99 No. 296

Friday, December 26, 2008

50¢ Plus tax

## Briefs

### Red Cross class dates slated

The Okeechobee Branch of the American Red Cross will be holding the following Health & Safety classes in January: Tuesday, Jan. 6 - First Aid Basics at 6 p.m.; Wednesday, Jan. 14 - Infant/Child CPR/AED at 6 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 20 - Adult CPR/AED at 6 p.m. All classes are held at their Branch office located at 323 N. Parrott Ave. To register, or for more information call 863-763-2488.

### Main Street Mixer planned

Okeechobee Main Street will kick off the New Year with their first monthly mixer of the new year hosted by Raulerson Hospital on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009. The January mixer will be held at the Raulerson Company Care Office in the blue top building just north of the hospital at 1930 Hwy. 441 North. Main Street Mixers are a night of networking, refreshments, door prizes and a chance for you to win the Mega 50/50 at the end of the year. So invite a friend and join us.

### Glades County officials sworn in

The County Commissioners and newly Re-Elected County Officials of Glades County will hold their Installation Ceremony on Tuesday night, January 6, 2009 at the Doyle Conner Center at 7:00 P.M. County Commissioners Butch Jones; District 1, Paul Beck; District 3, and Bob Giesler; District 5, along with Sheriff Stuart Whiddon, Clerk of Courts Joe Flint, Property Appraiser Larry Luckey, Tax Collector Gail Jones, and Supervisor of Elections Holly Whiddon will be sworn into office. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.

### Drought Index

**Current: 605**  
Source: Florida Division of Forestry  
Local Burn Ban: None

### Lake Levels

**14.07 feet**  
Last Year: 10.25 feet

**Sponsored By:**  
  
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Source: South Florida Water Management District. Depth given in feet above sea level

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# Fair will be bigger, better

By Pete Gawda  
Okeechobee News

The 2009 Okeechobee County Fair appears to be bigger and better than ever. The dates will be Friday, March 13 through Sunday, March 22.

New in 2009 will be a lego building contest which will be open to everyone. The age groups are: four to six, seven to nine, 10 to 12 and 13 plus. Applicants will be judged on originality, creativity and precision. The project must be built so that

it can withstand being handled by the judges without collapsing. The first place winner will receive \$15 while second and third place winners will receive \$10 and \$5 respectively.

Each day will feature a different theme. Friday, March 13 will be "Support Our Troops Night" with free admission 5 to 10 p.m. The highlight of that day will be the Second Annual Miss Okeechobee County Fair Beauty Pageant at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 14, will be Seminole Heritage Day with a Seminole Heri-

tage Show between noon and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15 will be Family Day with a Hispanic Band Jamboree and a low rider car show. Monday, March 16 will be Bargain Night and will feature the popular Okeechobee Idol Contest from 7 to 10 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, will be Bike Night with a Bike Show at 7 p.m. Student Dollar Night will be Wednesday, March 18. Students will get it for \$1 with a student ID. Food Drive Night will be Thursday, March 19. Admission that night will be three cans of food plus \$2. Friday,

March 20 will be TGIF Nigh with a Bluegrass Festival from 6 to 10 p.m. Blue Grass Celebration Day will be Saturday, March 21. Family Day at the Races will be the final day, Sunday, March 22. As has become customary, the fair will end with a demolition derby at 4 p.m.

Every day there will be pig races. What's a fair without livestock judging? The youth livestock show and sale will be going on Tuesday through Saturday.

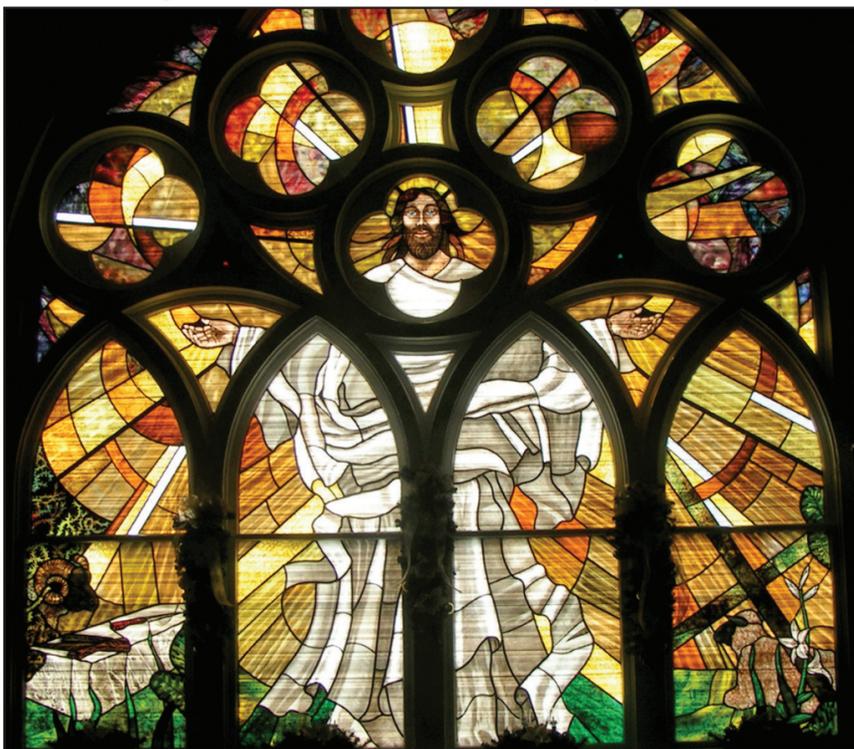
In addition to the lego build-

ing contest, prizes will be awarded for food, photography, fine art, vegetables, leather working and horticulture.

And of course there will be the always popular midway rides. According to Linda Syfrett of the fair association, the recently extended agreement with the county will enable the fair to get better midway contracts.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at [pgawda@newszap.com](mailto:pgawda@newszap.com).

## Stained glass: Windows tell a story



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

The First United Methodist Church stained glass window "Ascending Christ" pictures Christ ascending to heaven with outstretched nail scarred hands and radiating light. It is the largest and most colorful of the church's stained glass windows. The other 12 windows represent the 12 apostles.

## Memorials were donated by local residents

By Pete Gawda  
Okeechobee News

In all the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, maybe we should pause within the quiet of the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church to consider the true meaning of Christmas.

The great cathedrals built during the Middle Ages in Europe have what is called the "Poor Man's Bible." Because many people of that era could not read, the Gospel story was told in stained glass. Here in Okeechobee, even though

almost everyone can read, countless Christians have been blessed by the Gospel as seen in the 13 stained glass windows of First United Methodist Church.

Illuminating the 1924 sanctuary are 12 windows containing symbols representing the 12 apostles and one large window depicting the ascending Christ. The windows were given by various church members in memory of loved ones during the period from 1991 through 1996. All of them except the window representing James contain a cross in some form.

The first window installed was in honor of Peter. It is located in the center of the east wall, commanding a prominent position as is fitting for the leader of the apostles. It was installed in 1991 in loving memory of Mr. and Mr. J. R. Minehan, Sr. by Sarah Hamrick. The window contains the star of Bethlehem and a fish which has a double meaning. It represents Peter's trade as fisherman. He was also made a fisher of men by Jesus. (Luke 5:10) The window

See Memorials — Page 2

# Commissioner Marvin Wherrell will be missed

By Pete Gawda  
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee County Commissioner and long time businessman Marvin Wherrell, 64, died Tuesday evening, Dec. 22 at Raulerson Hospital.

Mr. Wherrell was well known in the community because of his church, business and political connections. He was known as a hard working commissioner who did his homework and voted his convictions.

For many years, Mr. Wherrell operated Wherrell's Auto Parts and Wherrell's Machine Shop. He was a long time member of First Baptist Church, serving as a deacon, chairman of the dea-

cons, church treasurer and member of the stewardship committee.

Among his community involvements, he served on a committee to help preserve the old jail.

"Marvin (Wherrell) was a big asset to the community," said Commission Chairman Clif Betts. "It's going to a great loss for Okeechobee."

He commented on the efforts Mr. Wherrell would go to become informed on an issue.

See Wherrell — Page 3



Marvin Wherrell

# Wildfire claims 4 hunting cabins

By Charles M. Murphy  
Okeechobee News

Four hunting cabins, a John Deere seeder, six tires and a pallet of fertilizer were destroyed in a fire that hit a hunting camp near the County line northeast of Fort Drum on Monday, according to Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office reports.

A report from Deputy Howard Pickering said a prescribed fire was set last Wednesday, Dec. 17, and apparently re-kindled sometime in the past week. Officials were unsure

how long the fire burned.

Paramedic Jay Curtis of Okeechobee County Fire Rescue said a cleaning lady showed up on Monday and found the cabins burned to the ground. The fire had also spread to underneath the main guest house at the facility.

The report said 100 acres were burning around a house, barn and four hunting cabins when the first crews arrived just after noon on Dec. 22. The cabins had burned to the ground.

See Fire — Page 3

## Local youth wins national art contest

Families at Real Life Children's Ranch have something new to celebrate this holiday season, especially 15-year-old Nicholas, who lives at the Ranch. Nicholas' entry into the 2008 national holiday card design contest hosted by Waste Management was chosen as the company's winner! As part of the design-contest, Waste Management awards \$1,000 to the affiliated organization of the artist, in this case Real Life Children's Ranch. Mark Mayers, Executive Director of Real Life Children's Ranch made the decision to place the award money in a trust fund for Nicholas, payable to him on his eighteenth birthday.

Each year, Waste Manage-

ment conducts a holiday card-design contest for non-profit organizations and schools across the nation. Not only will Nicholas' winning card design be seen by customers and community member around the entire United States, but recipients will also be able to learn about the ministry and mission of Real Life Children's Ranch by reading a description on the back of each card.

Real Life Children's Ranch is a faith-based family style group home which has been caring for abused, abandoned and neglected children for over 50 years. Just how many people will see Nicholas' artwork? In 2007, Waste Management offices across the country ordered

over 4,000 of that year's design-winning card.

Nicholas' artwork featuring a Waste Management truck being led by reindeer on a snowy day was among 70 entries from six different Waste Management market areas. Nicholas first heard about the contest earlier this summer when Waste Management's local community relations representative invited local non-profits and the school system to submit entries.

Upon hearing that he had won the contest, Nicholas smiled from ear to ear and stated, "I am so excited about winning this prestigious art-design contest and I am thankful to Waste Management for giving me this opportunity."



Submitted photo/WM

Nicholas (center) won the Waste Management Christmas Card design contest winning \$1,000. The prize was presented to him with (left) Mark Mayers, Director of Real Life Children's Ranch, Jenny Pung Waste Management Community Outreach, Nicholas, winning artist, and house parents Denny and Margo Davis.

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# Memorials

Continued From Page 1



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

Perhaps the most interesting of First United Methodist Church's 13 stained glass windows is the one representing Judas who betrayed Jesus. It contains a bag of silver that Judas was given to betray Jesus as well as the hangman's noose by which he took his life. However, it also depicts the forgiveness of God in the hand in the upper right.

It also contains another symbol connected with Peter - keys. In Matthew 16:19 Peter is given the keys of the kingdom by Jesus. In the lower right of the picture are three fish, signifying the Trinity.

Also in 1991 a stained glass window representing James was installed to Peter's right. That location is appropriate since in the Bible James is often identified along with Peter and John as being in the inner circle of apostles. Donors include Ruth Marsh in loving memory of Emerson and Nelta Marsh, Regina Hamrick, in loving memory of Eugenia Bowden, Bill and Merle Hendry in loving memory of Bill and Hope Hendry and Jim and Gladys Sullivan, Mrs. R. M. Faglie and family in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Raifsnider, and Bennett and Betty Yielding and family in loving memory of Leon and Nelle Yielding. Since James was thought to be a traveller to spread the Gospel, the window contains a traveller's hat with the letter J, a walking stick and a traveller's pouch. It also has a knife representing James' martyrdom.

To Peter's left, the window symbolizing James' brother, John, was also installed in 1991. The window contains the eagle, often used to represent John. The eagle has keen eyesight and can stare directly into the sun. This is appropriate since John's keen spiritual eyesight gave him the glimpse of the glories of Heaven he recorded in the Book of Revelation. This window contains the sword and serpent. These represent man's sin and the power of the sword the spirit over sin. A serpent wrapped around the sword is symbolic of the healing brass serpent found in Numbers 21:4-9.

To James' right is the window depicting Andrew. It was donated in 1991 by Larnell Watford and Margaret Rucks in loving memory of Sport and Granny Rucks. In the upper left of the window are the greek letters alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus said: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." (Revelation 22:13) Andrew was also a fisherman who was transformed into a fisher of men. The window contains an inverted anchor, representing Jesus as our anchor.

The window representing Thomas, also installed in 1991, completes the eastern wall. This window was given by Tommy T. and Betty J. Rucks in loving memory of Hobert W. and Viola J. Rucks. Thomas is thought to have been a carpenter and a mason. Therefore the window contains a hammer and square in the upper left. It also contains two spears and two arrows representing the supposed method by which Thomas was martyred. "Doubting Thomas" is the one who said he would not believe in the risen Christ unless he could see the hole in Jesus' hand and in his side. (John 19:25) This window contains Jesus' right hand with a nail hole.

The climax of the windows, and indeed of the Gospel message, is found in the large "Ascending Christ" dominating the south wall of the sanctuary. Christ is depicted with outstretched nail scarred hands ascending to heaven. The window contains a great amount of light and color representing Jesus as the Light of the World. (John 8:12). The lower left portion of this window contain the altar, wood, knife and ram representing Abraham's sacrifice. (Genesis 22:1-19) This sacrifice was symbolic of the sacrifice Jesus would make many years later on the cross. In the lower right are symbols associated with Jesus- a lamb, (John 1:29) the lilly of the valley (Song of Solomon 2:1) and a cross. This window was given by C.E. and Lois Newcomer and was installed in April of 1992.

The window representing Philip, to Jesus' left was given by the family of Emmet and Glen Rucks to the glory of God in 1992. Among other things the window contains a pilgrim staff representing the travels of Philip. The window also contains fish and bread representing the feeding of the 500 in which Philip had a part. (John 6:5-11) The lower left of the window con-



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

This is the First United Methodist Church stained glass window representing Thomas. In the upper left is a hammer and carpenter's square since Thomas was thought to be a carpenter. The two spears and an arrow in the upper right depict the means by which Thomas was martyred. The church at lower left represents a church in India. Thomas is credited for spreading the Gospel to India. Because Thomas said he would not believe on the resurrected Jesus until he could see the nail scarred hands, the lower left section of the window contains the hand of Jesus with a nail print.

tains flames representing the fire of the Holy Spirit. The staff and cross in the lower right refer to Philip's missionary journey in Upper Asia and Phrygia.

To Philip's left the Fulford families gave the window representing Matthew in 1992 in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Fulford, Randall Fulford, Murray Fulford, Sr. and Murray Fulford, Jr. The window contains three coin bags representing Matthew's occupation as a tax collector. (Matthew 9:9) The lower right of this window contains a dolphin symbolizing righteous-

ness. There are many stories of dolphins saving people by pushing them back to shore. This window also contains a fig tree. When Jesus called Philip to be an apostle, he referred to seeing Philip under a fig tree. (John 1:48-50)

The window honoring Bartholomew was donated in 1993 by Susan Rucks in loving memory of J. P. Deloney, the Olan Peters Family in loving memory of Eileen Peters, Cleo Avery in honor of Larry Krewson, the Fidelis Class in honor of Rev. V.J. and Corinne Ragsdale and in loving memory of William and Edith Boehomer. This window also contains fig tree, symbolizing fruitfulness and fidelity. This window also contains wedding rings. Bartholomew is thought to be another name for Nathaniel who is associated with the wedding at Cana where Jesus performed his first miracle. (John 2:1-10)

The window representing James the Less was given in 1993 by the Matilda Stewart Class, Ruth, Crozier, Wesleyan and Esther Circles in loving memory of Matilda Stewart and family and friends in loving memory of Ernest and Blanche Hunt. This window contains a right hand holding a sparrow. This represents God's tender mercy as birds are symbolic of human souls.

The window honoring Thaddaeus was given in 1994 by friends in honor of Larry Krewson. It contains a sailboat symbolizing Thaddaeus' travels by sea to Syria. Among the other symbols are a hammer and nails and a carpenter's square - tools used to build church buildings.

The last two windows were installed in 1996. The window representing Simon was given by Edward and Gladys Borgos in loving memory of Edward and Elizabeth Jewell, Emmanuel Borgos, Lena Livingston and William Hope, family and friends in loving memory of Betty O'Bannon and the Peters and Brough families in loving memory of Olan W. Peters. It contains a battle axe and oar referring to Simon's travels and martyrdom. The scroll represents the five books of Moses which constitute the most sacred law of the Jews.

Perhaps the most interesting widow symbolizes Judas, the apostle who betrayed Jesus. (Matthew 26:14-15) It was given by members and friends to the glory of God. It contains a hangman's rope and dark clouds symbolizing Judas' self destruction. (Matthew 27:3-5) On the positive side it contains a left hand and rays of light.

## Okeechobee Forecast

**Today:** Partly sunny, with a high near 82. Calm wind becoming east southeast between 10 and 15 mph. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph

**Tonight:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 61. East wind around 5 mph.

### Extended Forecast

**Saturday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 81. East southeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

**Saturday Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 61. East southeast wind around 5 mph.

## Lotteries

**Florida Lottery** — Here are the numbers selected Tuesday in the Florida Lottery: **Cash 3:** 8-2-0; **Play 4:** 7-9-0-6; **Mega Money:** 16-30-34-37 MB 4; **Fantasy 5:** 12-15-17-24-33. Numbers selected Wednesday in the Florida Lottery: **Cash 3:** 8-5-1; **Play 4:** 5-9-0-4.

# At Your Service

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# Wherrell

Continued From Page 1

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family," said County Administrator Lyndon Bonner. "I think he was very dedicated to the county and he will be sorely missed."

"Foremost, he was a Christian man," stated Commissioner Noel Chandler. "He cared a lot for Okeechobee. He was a good businessman and family man."

"Okeechobee has lost a really good man and a fine Christian,"

said local contractor Mack Whorley.

"A tragic loss" is how business owner Keith Walpole expressed his feelings. He said his heart goes out to the family.

Mr. Wherrell, a Democrat, was elected to the county commission in 2006 in a race that included four other candidates, incumbent Democrat John Abney, Republicans Ted Kelchner and Dr. Randal Rims and independent candidate George Roberson.

Mr. Wherrell said that giving back to the community was his reason for running for office.

He said his family had lived in Okeechobee for over 60 years and he pledged to protect the Okeechobee way of life.

It is expected that the governor will appoint someone to fill out the remaining two years on Mr. Wherrell's term.

Visitation will be from 10 a.m. until noon, Saturday, Dec. 27 at First Baptist Church, 401 S.W. Fourth St. The funeral will be at noon at First Baptist Church with Rev. Randy Huckabee officiating.

**Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Pete Gauda can be reached at [pgauda@newszap.com](mailto:pgauda@newszap.com).**

# Fire

Continued From Page 1

A mobile water tank, the seeder, a mobile fuel tank and seed were on fire. Tires were also burning on equipment. More flames were near the back of the main home. Fire crews protected the main structure and cleared some debris from near the home like pine needles that could have fed the flames.

Crews from the Division of Forestry joined Okeechobee County Fire Rescue Monday and used

two plows and two brush trucks to surround the fire. They also set back burns to kill the fuel for the flames. All together seven units and eight firemen and volunteers were on the scene for approximately six hours Monday.

Firefighters used 5,000 gallons of water to put out the flames.

The camps at 1050 NE 366 Trail were each valued at \$10,000 each. The estimate of property

damage was placed at \$52,500. There were no injuries reported.

The camps are owned by State Representatives Keith Wedgworth of Wellington and Gillie Russell of Lake Placid.

The fire report said the Gillie Russell cattle company had conducted a controlled burn about 200 yards north of the house on Dec. 17. Somehow over the weekend, the fire reignited.

# Traffic stop leads to felony drug arrest

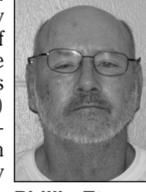
**By Eric Kopp**  
Okeechobee News

An Okeechobee man was arrested Tuesday on a felony drug charge following a traffic stop during which 3 grams of suspected crack cocaine was allegedly found in his possession.

Phillip Etoy Martin, 51, N.W. 30th Terrace, was arrested by detectives from the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force and charged with possession of cocaine. He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail under a bond of \$10,000.

Martin was stopped in the 200 block of U.S. 441 S. by Deputy John Ashby of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) for erratic driving, stated an arrest report by a task force detective.

Prior to searching the vehicle OCSO K-9 Rex performed a free air sniff



Phillip Etoy Martin

around the outside of the black Chevrolet Tahoe being driven by Martin, the report continued. The K-9 reportedly alerted to the driver's side door area and open window area.

The report goes on to state that when the detective looked inside the vehicle a suspicious substance was found in the driver's seat. When field tested, the substance indicated a positive result for the presence of cocaine.

According to the detective's report, a similar substance was found inside an empty cigarette

pack as well as under the cellophane wrapper on the outside of the same cigarette pack.

These substances were also field tested and all indicated a positive result for the presence of cocaine.

The Tahoe did not belong to Martin and was turned over to the registered owner once the towing fee was paid.

Martin was also issued traffic citations for stop bar violation, improper lane change and possession of cocaine.

# Fisheating Creek Trail hosts grand opening

Please join Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC) at Fisheating Creek WMA at the Field Office located on Banana Grove Road, just off C.R. 78 north of Moore Haven, Jan. 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

They are celebrating a new trail opening at Fort Center with lots of fun, hands-on activities and dynamic speakers sharing the story of Fisheating Creek through time. There is no admission fee and plenty of entertainment for

all ages.

- Audubon volunteers will be leading early morning birding tours by reservation only beginning at 8 a.m. Call Liz Sparks at 850-922-6160 to sign up.
- Ride an interpretive hayride with biologists to the new Ft. Center trail
- Learn how to read animal tracks with David Austin, retired FWC
- Kristin Wood, Director of FWC's Chinsegut Nature Center,

will share 'Incredible Edibles' - common plants good enough to eat

- Tom Matthews, FWC invites you to meet 'critters of the creek' up close and personal
- Kayak and canoe trips offered (depending on water levels)
- Learn birding and wildlife viewing basics
- Local conservation groups will have exhibits.

Speakers will do presenta-

tions:

- Ken Meyers - Swallowtail kites of Fisheating Creek
- Nancy Dale - Cow Hunters of Wild Florida
- Archeologists - the early inhabitants of the creek

Traditional country cookin' vendor will join us.

Event will be cancelled in case of rain.

Call Liz Sparks at 850-922-6160 to make birding tour reservations, or ask for more information.

# Aerial treatment to begin on floating vegetation

Beginning Monday, Jan. 5, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will begin aerial treatments of water lettuce and water hyacinths, two invasive exotic plants, on roughly 1,000 acres of Lake Okeechobee.

Although there has been a

consistent presence of six to 12 boats spraying for water lettuce and water hyacinth on the Lake in recent weeks, the rapid rise in water levels after Tropical Storm Fay over-stimulated the germination and proliferation process of the aquatic plants. They have spread over a vast area, primarily along the lakeward edge of the marsh and in some interior marshes. These dense patches of

vegetation can prevent growth of other desirable native vegetation, as well as inhibiting boat traffic.

The interagency teams plan to aerially treat 1,000 acres in places where solid bands of the exotic plants exist. At present, the areas to be treated extend from mid-Observation Shoal northward along the outside marsh, with some treatments extending along the north and eastern shores of

the lake as well.

This aerial treatment is considered the safest and most efficient way to gain control of the rapidly growing non-native floating vegetation on Lake Okeechobee. This measure, along with the continued treatment by boat and airboat of an additional 500 acres, will limit the expansion of these exotic, invasive weeds.

# Law Enforcement Calls

**Law Enforcement Calls**

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office received the following calls from Friday, Dec. 19, through Tuesday, Dec. 23:

Dec. 19

- vandalism in the 5100 block of S.E. 42nd Trace
- assault in the 4300 block of S.E. 21st Court
- burglary in the 3100 block of S.E. 18th Terrace
- Dec. 20
- fraud in the 7600 block of N.W. 80th Court

- assault in the 3500 block of U.S. 441 S.E.
- theft in the 11000 block of U.S. 441 S.E.
- Dec. 21
- larceny in the 2700 block of N.W. 53rd Terrace
- vandalism in the 1700 block of S.E. 23rd Terrace
- assault in the 6400 block of N.W. 147th Terrace
- larceny in the 1800 block of S.R. 70 W.
- Dec. 22
- assault in the 1700 block of U.S. 441 N.

Dec. 22

- vandalism in the 5900 block of S.R. 710
- burglary in the 500 block of S.E. 37th Terrace
- theft in the 17000 block of N.W. 176th Ave.
- burglary on S.E. 32nd Lane
- vandalism in the 3200 block of S.R. 441 N.
- Dec. 23
- burglary in the 700 block of N.E. 13th Ave.
- theft in the 200 block of N.W. Park St.

- fraud in the 2800 block of U.S. 441 N.
- larceny in the 2700 block of N.E. 11th Court
- child abuse on U.S. 441 N.
- two stolen boats in the 3200 block of S.E. 28th St.

Editor's Note: Only calls dealing with either a felony or a potential felony are entered into this column.

# Medicare users warned, beware of health care fraud

It's that time of year again. The Medicare enrollment period runs from Nov. 15 until Dec. 31. Again, its time to re-evaluate your health insurance plans, whether you have original Medicare, a Medicare Supplement plan, a Medicare Advantage plan (HMO/PPPO) and/or a Medicare Prescription Drug plan. But, beware of those who will be looking to take advantage of you or your health care accounts. This could be an agent selling insurance plans in a fraudulent manner or a doctor charging for a service that was not rendered.

Beware of improper marketing activities by insurance companies/agents/brokers selling Medicare Advantage and Prescription

Drug plans. They are not permitted to:

- Provide meals or subsidize the cost of meals;
- Contact potential enrollees unsolicited;
- Promote plans or collect enrollment forms at educational events;
- Promote non-health care related products;
- Promote plans or collect enrollment forms in healthcare settings.

It is also important to beware of fraud and scams that are com-

mitted by health care providers and suppliers. Protect yourself by:

- Guarding your Medicare/Medicaid number like a credit card number;
- Keeping a journal of your medical visits;
- Keeping receipts of returned medical equipment;
- Reviewing your Medicare Summary notice (MSN), explanation of benefits (EOB), or health care billing statements carefully for any questionable charges or services you don't recall receiving.

If you have questions or suspect such fraudulent activities, contact the Florida Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program, toll-free at 1-866-357-6677.

**Public Issues Forums: Join the discussion!**  
**newszap.com**  
Free Speech Free Ads

# NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS of Waste Management

**Waste Management will be closed on Christmas Day Dec. 25th**

**Deck The Halls With Boughs Of Holly!**

With Christmas being on Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, customers whose garbage is picked up on Thursday, will be picked up on Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup>. Friday pick-up will move to Saturday, December 27<sup>th</sup>

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*

From the Staff & Management of **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**Regular Hours for New Years Day**

**Remember DONUT CONNECTION For A Sweet Holiday!**

Be a Hero and Bring 24 Donuts plus 10 cups of coffee to your Holiday Party! \$19.95

Gourmet Single Scoop 99¢ with the purchase of a double scoop.

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989 S. Main St. BELLE GLADE (adjacent to Wendy's & KFC)  
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**Attention Medicare Eligibles!**  
Annual Election Period is Nov. 15 - Dec. 31.

Call us at **763-3101**. M-F, 9-5. TTY: 711.

**Jim McInnes**

**Farm Bureau Insurance**

BCBSF contracts with Medicare to administer MA & Part D plans.

A Contracted General Agency for BlueCross BlueShield of Florida

H1026\_23880 1008 S: 10/2008  
H5434\_23880 1008 S: 10/2008  
H3518\_23880 1008 S: 10/2008  
S5904\_23880 1008 S: 10/2008

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Gift Certificates available for a friend or loved one

**HOLIDAY DEADLINES**

Display Advertising DEADLINES

Tuesday, December 30 @ 3 p.m. For . . . . . Friday, January 2

Wednesday, December 31 @ 3 p.m. For . . . . . Sunday, January 4

The Staff Of The Okeechobee News Wishes Everyone Happy Holidays!

# Speak Out/Public Forum

Speak Out has moved online, where it is quicker and easier to share your ideas and converse with others. Go to [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com), click on the community name and your local or state Public Forum. There, you can create new topics or comment on existing topics. What follows is a sampling of some of the discussions currently taking place.

### Thanks for participating!

**OPEC:** (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) Today I needed to run some errands and as I passed the service station where I normally gas up, I couldn't help but notice that gasoline prices had already jumped twelve cents since OPEC said there were reducing their production. They apparently aren't getting rich enough, fast enough. I hope our Government takes notice of this. The next time one of these Countries needs our assistance tell them NO. If these countries are supposed to be our friends, we don't need friends like them especially when we are trying to pull out of a recession. If we supply them with any goods, cut them off.

**RACISM:** The plain simple truth is racism itself has been abused for far too long by minorities, ignorant people and politicians. It has become an overly used scapegoat. It has gotten so ridiculous in this country that no one could question or compliment Obama without being labeled a racist. Apparently you can only be racist if you're white, the Obama and Wright situation is clear evidence of that, even the media is scared to call it for what it is, they simply say "Obamas lack of judgement" as if he is some seven year old kid who doesn't know better. Racism is for ignorant people plain and simple. This country has been bullied into walking on egg shells and catering to others like a bunch of spoiled kids who didn't get their way. If someone chooses to not like others because of the color of their skin, that is their opinion and God-given freedom, if they choose to not like someone because of the way they wear their hair again that is their freedom and opinion. The abuse on racism and the recent Presidential election only prove further more that this country needs to grow up, and fast!

**SPORTS:** Okeechobee should be a 2A school if you just count the kids who go out for sports. It's a shame that they may never have a chance to compete for a title in the classification they are in.

**CAYLEE:** It is difficult to believe that someone could be so callous as to kill your own child, unfortunately it happens every day. Casey Anthony was pushed into keeping a child that she did not want. Her parents should be at fault for allowing a child to be born to a parent that did not want a child without giving her the option of adopting this child out. Thank God I had parents who cared about my decisions in life. Had I not wanted my children, my parents would have made every opportunity available to me so that this child could have been loved. When I was in my mid-twenties, I became pregnant with a child while I was already a single mother. My choices at the time were adoption or abortion. I chose adoption and now have met that young man who is now in his twenties. Such a sad ending for Caylee Anthony. There were other choices.

**COMMON SENSE:** I was driving to work and I was late and I drove real fast. I got a ticket. I explained that I was late and it was not my intention to speed and I have a safe driver discount and have never been in an accident. I still got the ticket. I went to court and explained to the judge and I still had to pay the ticket. The rule is the rule. If an honors kid or a kid in trouble has a prescription pill from his doctor, he gets the same punishment. Possession is possession. It is not the school's job to figure intent. Using so-called "common sense" would allow discrimination and I am scared of the setting most of you seem to advocate. Also, these students are not expelled. They are offered a short stay in an alternative setting where they have smaller class sizes and not miss any school in 30-45 days they are back in the regular school. If they complete the program without getting in trouble, the record is expunged. No harm, no foul. Way to go, Ms. Carlton and Ms. Owens. I think the other board members were cowardly for bending on their own code of conduct.

**HOME SALES:** Realtors are desperate to sell, sellers are anxious to move and buyers are relentlessly searching for deals. The three players involved in the "Buyers Parade of Homes" now taking place in this volatile housing market. Realtors and their prospective buyers are taking advantage of the feast while needlessly consuming the seller's time and emotions. Sellers in the state of Florida pay an average of 3 percent of the selling price to the selling agent. This amounts to thousands of dollars for them to simply screen the buyer, show the home, fill in the blanks on the purchase agreement, turn the deal over to a title company and attend the closing. The element of this procedure that is being grossly overlooked by the agents and is desperately needed in the currently over stocked housing market is the pre-screening of the buyer. With access to Home Details, Photos, Virtual Tours, Google Maps, Google Earth, Tax Rolls and Property Appraiser Records literally at their fingertips via the internet, agents along with their buyers should be able to determine whether or not a home fits the buyer's needs and desires prior to viewing the home. Another requirement of the screening is whether a buyer is financially positioned and ready to purchase. The lack of screening creates the "Buyers Parade of Homes" currently being experienced by sellers. Potential and wishful buyers are spending entire days traveling from one home to the next, determined to find the perfect home for the perfect price. Meanwhile sellers excitedly prepare time and time again, awaiting the perfect purchase agreement. And time and time again, due to a lack of thoughtful preparation by the buyers and their agents, they continue to anticipate the sale. With respect to the sellers, agents should be narrowing the buyer's potentials by implementing the tools and guidelines available to them.

**FOOD PANTRY:** At Christmas time it is great how people help others. The toy drives and the food drives are wonderful. But come January 1, there will still be lots of hungry people. Please continue to support the food pantries year round. There is so much need in our community, people help feed the hungry if you can. Jesus said that when you feed the poor, you feed Him. "Whatever you do unto these least ones, that you do unto me." Many churches in Okeechobee have food pantries year round. Please help them if you can.

**UNIONS:** When the unions were started many long years ago they were desperately needed, mainly because of unsafe working conditions and the long hours. But they just kept increasing their demands until the only way the automakers could escape those demands was to close up and move elsewhere. We know how greedy the big corporations and execs are, but the problem is: how do you get more out of them. What the unions were doing could not work forever and have them stay here in the United States. Have you not heard how well the non-union autoworkers in the southern states are doing? I'm sure they would not trade their \$40 an hour for being unemployed. Have you heard that GM is paying big bucks for Viagra for their current and retired workers? The amount was disclosed, but I am not going to look up the article. Ford and Chrysler will not disclose the amounts. How do you feel about paying for somebody's Viagra when you buy a new car? I am more concerned about the health of the American economy and those unions have done a lot to destroy it.

**TRADE:** Unions were good when they first started but as fltr has stated they have gotten so outrageous that they are actually hurting fair trade. If every industry went union it would be an awful affair we would be in because of the demands of the unions. It is no longer about safe work places it is about almost everything but safety. I don't remember if I read it here or someone told me but there was a worker that was either hurt or laid off and chose to work from a work bank. Jobs came open he could do but he did not have to take them, he just sat at home and has for years drawing 75 percent of his salary and if you are making \$35 dollars or more an hour you can still live well on 75 percent of your salary and he said he intended to never work again.

**DRUGS:** My son and another child that were playing basketball in the gym were searched for drugs. When asked why they had no apparent reason other than they looked suspicious, so now one incident with a student and they start harassing others, if they do their jobs with the drug dogs and walk the halls and lockers once a period then these issues would not happen. Look out parents they are now out for every child, especially if it is white and another ethnic color together.

**TOURISTS:** Well I have lived in Florida all of my life and I can say that I am smart enough to see that we need the people from up North. And while sometimes I get frustrated with the ones who are rude, most of the people from up north are very nice and helpful. Just like people from here. And besides my grandpa is from Delaware and my mom is from Pennsylvania so I got Yankees in my family.

# The Counseling Corner

## Don't give in to holiday depression

By the American Counseling Association

While the holiday season is usually one of joy, happiness and celebration, for many people the emotion of the season is often depression. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. Many of the things that leave us feeling depressed are things we can control.

For example, the constant stream of media and advertising holiday images contributes to depression for many people. Comparing our own lives to these unrealistic images of holiday perfection, it's easy to feel left out, inadequate, or as if we aren't getting all that's due us.

While there's no avoiding the holiday media/advertising blitz, it's easy to accept that what we're being shown isn't reality, but rather the make-believe that comes with actors, make-up artists and high dollar productions. We don't have to compete with that.

Eating healthier and getting enough rest is another way to fight holiday blues. Holiday foods usually mean too many rich, high-calorie party temptations, treats loaded with sugar, and opportunities to drink too much. Toss in a busy holiday schedule and it's easy to feel tired, unhealthy, overweight and generally depressed.

So should you just avoid all those holiday foods? Actually, no, since that can leave you feeling deprived and more likely to finally over-indulge. Instead, use common sense and moderation. Limit alcohol consumption and enjoy your favorite holiday foods, but in reasonable-sized portions and without going back for seconds.

And don't forget exercise. It's often ignored in busy holiday schedules, yet studies show that even small or moderate amounts of exercise can lift your spirits. It's also a great way to burn those extra calories of the season.

Lastly, don't let depression rule your life. Holiday socializing is a great way to combat the blues. Make the effort to go and meet people at a party, or just call up a friend to go for coffee and talk about interesting things. Spending time with others and re-focusing your thinking on positive things you enjoy is your goal.

Eating right, exercising, taking a realistic view of the holiday madness and having an active social life all take effort, but they're all essential to helping you enjoy the holiday season. Even small efforts in these areas can help you feel better physically and mentally.

But if you find nothing seems to help fight that holiday depression, talk to a counseling professional. They're trained to help you work through and cope with these feelings.

*"The Counseling Corner" is provided as a public service by the American Counseling Association, the nation's largest organization of counseling professionals. Learn more about the counseling profession at the ACA web site, [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org).*

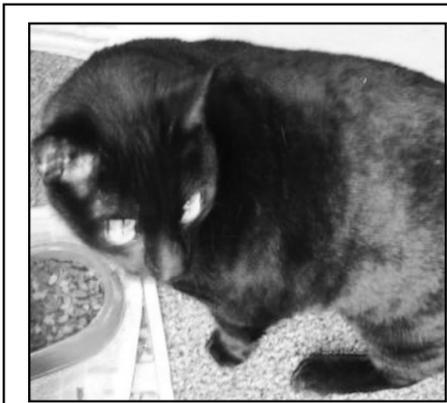
# Okeechobee News

## Our Purpose...

The Okeechobee News is published by Independent Newspapers of Florida. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent's mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community's deliberation of public issues.

## We Pledge ...

- To operate this newspaper as a public trust
- To help our community become a better place to live and work, through our dedication to conscientious journalism.
- To provide the information citizens need to make their own intelligent decisions about public issues.
- To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.
- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- To correct our errors and to give each correction to the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.



Submitted photo/ Humane Society Pet Rescue FL, Inc

## Adopt a Pet

**Tuffy and Raven are looking for a new home together. Their previous owner had hardships and could no longer take care of them. They are house kept felines! Both are 7 years old. Tuffy is a tan and white Persian mix and weighs 17 lbs. Raven is a black domestic short hair and weighs 20 lbs. They are both males, neutered, de clawed and dog friendly. Their vaccinations are also current. Adoption Fee is \$75 each. For more information on adopting these two furry friends call 863 532-1110.**

## Letters to the Editor

### Christmas Lights

Every year, as is our family tradition, I pick up the grandkids and we ride through the community and view all the Christmas decorations. This year when inquiring at Okeechobee News I was told there was only one home submitted for viewing. Not to be deterred we decided to adventure out on our own seeking beautiful lights. So last night, Anna and Noah Warren and our newest member to the family 23 month old Ethan Pope, and I loaded up and set out.

We were delighted to find that even though our country is going through an economic recession, there were people who were sharing their holiday cheer. We saw nativities of every sort, Santas and snow men of every size, singing mailboxes and caroling lighted trees. One of our greatest delights was to find the home in R-bar estates where the residents have decorated their home for many Christmas seasons. One of our best memories of this home was when Anna was younger and being invited in as we viewed the outside, to see the inside also.

It was just as beautiful inside. The owner told us that they started the day after Thanksgiving to get all the decorations up. This year we walked hand in hand with Ethan as he oohed at the beautiful display. We ended our evening of lights and Christmas music at the Okeechobee park downtown. Decorated so beautiful for Christmas. This is a great addition to our city.

We would like to thank all the people who work so hard putting up the lights and displays every year that brings so much joy to many. After all Christmas is not about what you have or what you can give, it is about who came and who you are with. Thanks so much and may your season be as blessed as you have blessed ours.

Anna Warren

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**Your community directory is a click away!**

## Community Calendar

### Friday, Dec. 26

**Tops Take off Pounds Sensibly #669** meets at 9 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 200 N.W. Second St. The public is invited. All persons interested in a sensible approach to losing weight and becoming a part of a caring group are welcome to come and see what we are all about. For information, contact Ollie Morcret at 800-932-8677.

**A.A.** meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 200 N.W. Second St. It will be an open meeting.

**A.A.** meeting from 8 until 9 p.m. at the Church of Our Saviour, 200 N.W. Third St. It will be an open speaker meeting.

**Highlands Social Dance Club** welcomes the public to their dance every Friday, from 7 until 10 p.m. at the Sebring Lions Club on Sebring Parkway, one mile east of U.S. 27 in Sebring. Tickets are \$5 for members and \$6 for guests. For information, call 863-471-0559 or 863-385-6671.

Compulsive overeaters are invited to a weekly meeting. **Overeaters Anonymous** (OA) meets at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 N. Parrott Avenue on Fridays, 6 until 7 p.m. (Use 4th Street entrance.) **Overeaters Anonymous** is not a diet club. There are no dues, fees or weigh-ins. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively. For more information call Loretta at 863-763-7165 or 863-697-0206.

### Saturday, Dec. 27

**Just for Today Club of Okeechobee**, 101 N.W. Fifth Street, Okeechobee, FL 34972 (Behind Napa Auto Parts) **A.A.** weekend noon Open Discussion; **N.A.** Sickest Of The Sick Group Step Study 7 p.m.; **N.A.** Nowhere Left To Go Group Open Discussion 8 p.m. \*The Just for Today Club of Okeechobee is not affiliated with any 12 step fellowships.

**Ballroom dancing in Okeechobee** A group class in ballroom dancing is being offered in Okeechobee at Church of Our Saviour Parish Hall, 200 N.W. Third Street on Saturday afternoons at 4 p.m. The cost for the hour lesson is \$10. Private instructions are also available. Come and enjoy the fun with or without a partner. For more information call 772-794-9040.

### Sunday, Dec. 28

**A.A.** meets from 7:30 until 8:30 p.m. at the Church of Our Saviour, 200 N.W. Third St. It will be an open step meeting.

**A.A.** open 12 step meeting from 7:30 until 8:30 p.m. at the Church of Our Savior, 200 N.W. Third St.

**Just for Today Club of Okeechobee**, 101 N.W. Fifth Street, Okeechobee, FL 34972

(Behind Napa Auto Parts), **A.A.** weekend noon meeting OD-Open Discussion; SS-Step Study; BT-Basic Text; SP-Speaker \*The Just for Today Club of Okeechobee is not affiliated with any 12 step fellowships. **N.A.** Sickest Of The Sick (OD) 7 p.m. OD-Open Discussion; SS-Step Study; BT-Basic Text; SP-Speaker \*The Just for Today Club of Okeechobee is not affiliated with any 12 step fellowships.

**A.A.** meeting will be held from noon to 1 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 200 N.W. Second St. This will be an open meeting.

**Foster Parent Orientation** will be hosted by the Hibiscus Children's Center on the last Monday of every month from 6 until 7 p.m. The orientation is for those interested in fostering or adopting in Okeechobee County. This meeting requires no RSVP and is a question/answer forum. It will be at the IRCC Okeechobee Campus, 2229 N.W. Ninth Ave. For information, call the Foster Care Program at 1-800-403-9311.

## Crossword

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- |   |   |                                  |                        |
|---|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>   | <b>DOWN</b>                             |                                  |                        |
| 1 Auth. unknown   | 1 Let in or let on                      | 29 Turkish title                 | 41 Noisy sleeper       |
| 5 Actor Romero  | 2 Hangman's knot                        | 30 Cattle drive VIP              | 43 Recent Olds         |
| 10 Narrow bed   | 3 "Ripley's Believe It ___"             | 31 Bistros                       | 44 Crystal-lined stone |
| 13 Fishing boat   | 4 Russian refusal                       | 33 Apples with keys              | 45 Cosmetician         |
| 14 Old Athenian meeting place   | 5 Foliage that foment's feline euphoria | 34 Celestial navigation guide    | Elizabeth              |
| 15 Disparaging remark   | 6 Long-necked wader                     | 35 Wall Street index, with "the" | 46 Impertinent         |
| 16 1995 Snipes/Harrelson film about a subway heist  | 7 Skyrocket                             | 37 Tennis units                  | 48 Bug-eyed            |
| 18 Ethereal   | 8 Onassis nickname                      | 38 Extend, as a library loan     | 49 Empty space         |
| 19 Brand of therapeutic gloves  | 9 Big beef over big beef?               | 40 Napped leather                | 50 Tax-auditing org.   |
| 20 Large swallow  | 10 Price-gouging business               |                                  | 51 Bronx attraction    |
| 22 Asian holiday  | 11 Your and my                          |                                  | 53 Despot Amin         |
| 23 First-aid ___  | 12 Take a stab at                       |                                  |                        |
| 24 Sylvia Plath's only novel, with "The"  | 15 Actress Kellerman                    |                                  |                        |
| 27 Agent, for short   | 17 Oxen connectors                      |                                  |                        |
| 28 Dead-end problem   | 21 ___ Bator, Mongolia                  |                                  |                        |
| 29 School orgs.   | 24 Silly mistake                        |                                  |                        |
| 31 Sir Arthur ___ Doyle   | 25 Vague emanations                     |                                  |                        |
| 32 Hot temper   | 26 Hwy's                                |                                  |                        |
| 33 Joseph's wife  | 27 "What'd I Say" singer Charles        |                                  |                        |
| 34 Computer's reading, or word that can precede the first word of 16- and 52-Across and 10- and 30-Down | 28 Lacking face value, as stock         |                                  |                        |

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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xwordeditor@aol.com

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By Robert E. Lee Morris  
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**For More Information See At Your Service On Page 2**

# Foster honored by Rotary Club

By Chauna Aguilar  
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee Rotarians honored their student of the month for December, Rebecca Foster at their luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 16. Ms. Foster is the daughter of Kevin and Debra Foster of Okeechobee.

Ms. Foster is a senior at Okeechobee High School who has reflected the Rotarian motto of "Service Above Self" through the volunteer hours of her time to the 4-H H2O Camp as a teen counselor and assisting in her mother's, gifted classroom. She has over 191 hours of community service.

The lifestyle of a Rotarian is deep in her family history as her grandfather and great grandfather were very involved in their local Rotary Clubs as President and began many civic events within their clubs.

Ms. Foster has received a 29 on her ACT which qualifies her for the 100 percent Florida Bright Futures scholarship and currently has a GPA of 3.565. She is currently ranked 23rd in her class of 316 students.

She is a member of the Okeechobee High School Drama Club and has held roles ranging from Monkey #12 to Annie Golden and Jo March. She is also a member of the OHS BETA club and National Honor's Society. She participates in class activities such as building the Homecoming float, decorating for the dance and helping set up the 2008 Graduation Ceremony.

Ms. Foster has aspirations to become a Psychologist in either the crisis or criminal field and has applied for admission at the University of Florida.

Mr. Eddie Matchett nominated Ms. Foster for this honor stating that she is a very hardworking student who brings a thoughtful perspective to the classroom. She approaches her studies with a seriousness that shows that she is committed to excellence.

The Rotary Student of the Month program is a project where the Okeechobee Rotary Club honors one OHS senior each month



Okeechobee High School student Rebecca Foster (center) was honored as the December Okeechobee Rotary Club Student of the Month by Rotarian President Maureen Budjinski (left) at their weekly luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 16, where she was accompanied by Mr. Bill Black, (right) from the school career center.

who presents character centered on the Rotary International motto "service above self."

This award is not based on academic performance alone, but rather a student's commitment to their community.

As a Rotary Student of the Month, one of the students will be chosen to receive one of the Rotarian college scholarships that they present at the end of the academic year.

The Rotary Student of the Month is chosen by staff at OHS for their outstanding achievements especially regarding "Service Above Self."

Rotary International is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders that provide humanitarian service encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

For more information on joining the local Okeechobee Rotary Club, contact Maureen Budjinski at 863-484-0110.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Chauna Aguilar can be reached at [caguilar@newszap.com](mailto:caguilar@newszap.com).



Okeechobee News/Chauna Aguilar

## New member

The Okeechobee News' own Linda Bridges (right) was inducted into the Okeechobee Rotary Club by Rotarian President Maureen Budjinski (left) at their weekly luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 16.

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# Police auxiliary members help keep community safe

By Chauna Aguilar  
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee Police Department Sergeant Russ Cale, the liaison for the Okeechobee City Police Auxiliary, recently spoke to Rotarians about the auxiliary and how they assist the OCPD and the citizens of the city on a daily basis.

Sgt. Cale has been with the OCPD for 12 years. Of those 12 years, two of them were with the auxiliary. Prior to working with the OCPD, Sgt. Cale worked as a prison guard.

Auxiliary members are unpaid and have to complete a scaled down version of the police academy. They ride along with commissioned officers and assist them in their duties as well as help with local events such as parades, the American Legion Fair, Halloween events at the ROC, Halloweeen on the National Day of the American Cowboy and any other events that additional help is needed.

There are currently ten auxiliary officers that lead their own "day jobs" in various areas from a landscaper to even bank employees. They come from all walks of



Okeechobee News/Chauna Aguilar

Okeechobee City Police Department Sgt. Russ Cale (left) spoke to Rotarians like Bennett Yeilding (right) on Tuesday, Dec. 16, about the Police Auxiliary and how they help the community.

life. The Chief of Police looks to the auxiliary first when considering hiring new officers.

All of these services are free of charge to citizens of Okeechobee. The auxiliary is a non-profit organization and they have to raise funds for their uniforms and other gear and equipment that they use.

The auxiliary holds monthly meetings and discusses fundraising opportunities. They will be

involved in the 2009 Health and Safety Expo at the Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center on Saturday, Jan. 17.

For more information about how you can help support the OCPD Auxiliary or to become a part of the auxiliary contact Sgt. Cale at 863-763-5521.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Chauna Aguilar can be reached at [caguilar@newszap.com](mailto:caguilar@newszap.com).

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**T.A. Aliapoulos, D.D.S.** License #DN1847  
Graduate University of New Hampshire in Zoology and Temple University Dental School. US Air Force Medical Corp. Served as Chair of Council on Dental Health. Formerly of West Palm Beach, he has merged his practice with Dr. Harrouff.

**Wade B. Harrouff, D.D.S.** License #DN10761  
Graduate University of Tennessee 1977. Author, lecturer who has appeared on TV, radio and print (WPBF/ABC, Palm Beach Illustrated and more) as the authority on implants as well as general dentistry. Member of International Congress of Oral Implantology. American Academy of Implant Dentistry & Misch Institute of Advanced Implantology.

**Jonathan M. Royal, D.M.D.** License #DN12061  
Graduate of Louisville School of Dentistry in 1989. Practiced privately in Boca Raton and has recently joined Dr. Harrouff's group. Past Vice President of South Palm Beach County Dental Association.

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**Brahman Theatre**  
Starting Thursday, Dec 25  
We will be open on Christmas Day,  
at 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM  
For Info, Call 763-7202

**THEATRE I "MARLEY AND ME"**  
Fri. @ 7:00 & 9:00. Sat, Sun, Tues. & Wed. @ 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. @ 3:00 & 7:00. Thurs. @ 7:00 & 9:00.

**THEATRE II "A TALE OF DESPEREAUX"**  
Fri. @ 7:00 & 9:00. Sat, Sun, Tues. & Wed. @ 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. @ 3:00 & 7:00. Thurs. @ 7:00 & 9:00.

**THEATRE III "BEDTIME STORIES"**  
Fri. @ 7:00 & 9:00. Sat, Sun, Tues. & Wed. @ 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. @ 3:00 & 7:00. Thurs. @ 7:00 & 9:00.

Tickets: Adults - \$5.50 • Children 12 & under - \$4.50  
Senior Citizens - \$4.50 all movies • Matinees - \$4.00  
MONDAY NIGHT is \$1.00 per person @ 7:00 PM

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That's right. Regardless of your past experience trying to lose weight, YOU HAVE OUR GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL LOSE WEIGHT without hunger, without going on a diet or your money back. Tonight you will experience hypnosis designed to eliminate unwanted cravings, reduce your consumption of sweets, and break the impulsive/compulsive eating habit. With Our Method of Clinical Hypnosis, you enter a deep, relaxed state of hypnosis where you are awake, aware and ALWAYS IN CONTROL. You'll leave refreshed, feeling good. But will it work for me - It doesn't matter how much weight you have to lose or how long you've been trying to lose it, this program is designed so you START LOSING WEIGHT IMMEDIATELY and gain control over your eating! It's designed so you can lose 30 lbs, 50 lbs even 120 lbs quickly and safely. Over 500,000 people have attended our Lose Weight With Hypnosis seminars. It can work for you - try it!

**Okeechobee Mon, January 5**  
7:00 pm to 9:45 pm  
Holiday Inn  
3101 US Hwy 441S  
(Across from the Flea Market)  
ONLY \$59.99 COMPLETE  
Register at door 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Cash, Check, Visa/MC, AmEx  
[www.trim123.com](http://www.trim123.com)  
"This is the easiest thing I've ever done. In 2 months, I lost 3 sizes and by 5 months 4 1/2 sizes for a total of 63 lbs." Debbie Kersh, TX\*  
**YOU HAVE OUR WRITTEN GUARANTEE YOU WILL LOSE WEIGHT:** Lose all the weight you want. If you ever want reinforcement, you may attend any of our weight loss seminars free, or if you are not fully satisfied with our program, you may have a full refund up to 45 days of this seminar. Join us, start losing weight now!

Ronald Gorayeb Hypnotist  
"Over 500,000 people have attended our hypnosis seminars. Designed to work for you just as it has for all these people":  
Roy Stripling (Lufkin, TX) lost 99 lbs in 8 months; Elaine Burrows (Liverpool, NY) lost 130 lbs in 13 months; Debbie Kersh (Ft Worth, TX) lost 63 lbs in 5 months; Jeff Pacotti (Grand Junction, CO) lost 50 lbs; Donna Jackson (Centralia, WA) lost 35 lbs in 2 1/2 mo.\*  
Corporate on-site seminars & group discounts are available: 1-800-786-7123  
© GS, INC 2000 - 1598 ON \*individual results vary.

## Service Club News

### The American Legion Post 64

501 S.E. Second Street, Okeechobee  
Office 863-763-2950 - Lounge 863-763-5309

We can accommodate meetings, weddings and parties of any size. The public is always welcome unless it's a members only event. Our kitchen is open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 1 to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Sunday: Open 1 to 8 p.m. - Regular Bingo from 6:30 p.m. Monday: Open 11-8 p.m. - Social Bingo 1 PM Tuesday: Open 11-8 p.m. Wednesday: Open 11-8 p.m. - "Taco Day" 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tacos - \$1.50 Music with Jim Elders 2-6 Thursday: Open 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. - Social Bingo 6 p.m. SAL Steak Dinner third Sunday each month \$12 donation. Legion and Auxiliary meet the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. The fourth Tuesday meeting includes a carry in dinner at 6 p.m. SAL Meet the third Tuesday at 7 p.m. Friday night dinners resume on Nov. 7. Christmas Basket Drawing to be held - tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. New Years Eve Party tickets on sale now! \$20 per couple, \$10 per single "buy now to avoid the rush" **Members - Guest only.**

### Am-Vets #2001

Am-Vets No. 2001 will hold a regular informational meeting on the first Saturday of the month at the Buckhead Ridge VFW Post #9528, 2002 U.S. 78 W., at 10

a.m. Applications for new members are available. Call Helen James at 863-824-7644 or Lou Eder at 863-357-0467.

Am-Vets Ladies Auxiliary meetings are the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. Contact the Post at 467-2882 for information.

### Eagles Aeries #4137

Eagles Aeries #4137 is located at 9983 U.S. 441 N. For information on events, call 863-763-2552. Every Tuesday bingo at 1 p.m. Food will be available for a donation. Wednesdays: bar bingo starting at 4 p.m. Food will be available. Every Thursday: washer toss at 1 p.m. First and third Thursday: Auxiliary at 6 p.m.; Aeries at 7 p.m. Fridays: steak night (16-oz.) starting at 5 p.m. for a \$12 donation. Music will be by Jimmy Harper. Saturdays and Sundays: music at 7 p.m. First and third Sunday: breakfast cooked to order from 9 until 11 a.m. for \$5 donation.

### Okeechobee Masonic Lodge #237

The Okeechobee Masonic Lodge is located at 107 N.W. Fifth Ave. For information about the club and events, call Jose Verano at 863-634-2071. The Masonic Lodge holds their meetings on the second and fourth Monday of each month starting at 7:30 p.m.

### Order of the Eastern Star - Chapter #128

The Order of the Eastern Star has many

fun activities planned on the first and third Tuesday of each month. For upcoming activities, contact Mary Ann Holt at 863-634-8087.

### B.H.R. Moose Lodge

The lodge is located on U.S. 78 W. in Buckhead Ridge. The Lodge's phone number is 863-763-2250. Sundays: breakfast buffet from 9 until 11 a.m. With many items to choose from. Sunday: Dec. 14 from noon until 4 p.m. there will be a childrens Christmas party for children up to age 16 years old of Buckhead Ridge Moose members and guest. Please sign-up your children so we will not miss anyone sign-up by Dec. 10.; Dec. 21 at 9 a.m. there will be a W.O.T.M. fund raiser bake sale. Please bring baked goods for this sale. Mondays: WOTM Chapter meeting the first and third Mondays of every month 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays: Bingo and food, food served at 5 p.m. and bingo starts at 6 p.m. Wednesday: Dec. 31 from 7 p.m. until ? New Years Party with party favors, hors d'oeuvres and breakfast at 1 a.m. Music by Burs and County Line Band. Seating limited so get your tickets early. \$20 each or \$30 per couple. Tuesday: Dec. 16, Moose Membership meeting at 8 p.m. with enrollment of new prospective members. Thursdays: dinner will be served from 5 until 7 p.m. Call the Lodge for the menu. Thursdays: Music for dancing at 7:30 p.m. Call to see who is playing. Thursday: 5-Card Bingo at 6 p.m. food available at 5 p.m. Thursday: Dec. 25 from noon until 6 p.m. Christmas dinner of ham and turkey with all the trimmings. Bring the family and enjoy a good meal. Fridays: dinner served from 5 until 7:30 p.m. Music for dancing at 7:30 p.m. Call to see who is playing. Saturdays: dinner starting at 6 p.m. Saturdays: Prime Rib Dinner served from 6 until 8 p.m. the first Saturday of the month. Saturday: Dec. 13 Large benefit for Jean Murphy starting at noon. Music all day, food will be roast pork or chicken quarter, baked beans and slaw for \$6 donation. Activities including a cake walk, wheel raffle, silent auction, straw drawing and 50/50. Auction starts at 3:30 p.m.

### VFW Post #10539

Post hours are 10 a.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday. Closing times are discretionary and dependent on the number of patrons but usually not before 8 p.m. on weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends. Happy hours: 10 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Noon to 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Monday: Card Bingo at 6 p.m. Tuesday: Ladies Auxiliary all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner \$5 donation beginning at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday: Bar Bingo at 12:45 p.m. Lunch by Ladies Auxiliary. Kitchen open from 5 until 8 p.m. Evening music. Thursday: Music, kitchen open from 5 until 8 p.m. Friday: Music, kitchen open from 5 until 8 p.m. Saturday: Noon, dollar hotdogs, \$1.50 Polish Sausage, both with Chili and all the fixings. Card bingo at 5 p.m. Music and dancing at 7 p.m. \$50 gas card giveaway. Scheduled meetings: VFW First Sunday at noon, Ladies Auxiliary second Monday at 7 p.m., Men's Auxiliary second Wednesday at 7 p.m. Do you have a family member serving overseas? We send packages of urgently needed supplies to them. We accept donations for this worth cause. Contact Cheryl Beniot at 863-697-2930. For further information call 863-763-2308.

### Shrine Club

The Okeechobee Shrine Club, S.R. 78 W., members will meet the first and third Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. The club is also available for weddings and parties. For information call the club at (863) 763-3378. They are now open three days a week. Weekly specials are: Tuesdays: Noon until 9 p.m.: Spaghetti dinner - donations only, music from 6 until 9 p.m.; happy hour 3-6 p.m. Thursdays: Noon until 9 p.m.: Fried Shrimp dinner or clams \$7 donation; happy hour 3-6 p.m.; shrimp skewers 2 for \$3. Fridays: Noon until 9 p.m.: Catfish dinner \$7 donation; happy hour 3-6 p.m. New Year party, tickets \$30 each. Happy Hour at 6 p.m. Steak or peppered chicken dinner will be served at 7 p.m. There will be a live country band for entertainment. Make reservations early. For reservations call the club or Max Simpson at 863-763-8650.

### Cypress Hut Eagles #4509

The Cypress Hut Fraternal Order of Eagles post #4509 located at 4701 U.S. 441 S.E. is now open to members Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., Sundays from 1 to 10 p.m. Information can be found by visiting www.foe4509.com, or calling 863-467-1154. Food is served several evenings a week. Aerie meetings are at 7 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the old Cypress Hut flea market restaurant. FOE Auxiliary meetings are at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. Friday night: 16 oz rib eye steak dinner with the trimmings beginning at 5:30 p.m. Editor's note: To add listings or make changes to the service club news, please email okeeneews@newszap.com.

### VFW Post #4423

The VFW North Post #4423 is located at 300 N.W. 34 St. The Post phone number is 863-763-0818. Happy hour Monday through Thursday 4 until 6 p.m. Mondays: 50-cent hot dogs. Tuesdays: Washer toss at 1 p.m. Wednesdays: Pizza and Grill 5 until 7 p.m. Fridays: Bingo at 1 p.m. Pizza and Grill 6 until 9 p.m. Karaoke 7 until 11 p.m. Saturdays: Bar Bingo at 1 p.m. Karaoke 7 until 11 p.m. Sundays: Dinner 2 until 4 p.m. Post and Ladies Auxiliary meetings third Sunday of every month at 11 a.m. Men's Auxiliary Meeting 3 Monday of every month 7 p.m. Membership for 2009 is overdue. Annual members are asked to please pay their dues. Big Screen TV and Pool Table

### VFW Post #9528

The VFW Post 9528 is located at 29012 E. State Road 78 in Buckhead Ridge. For information call 863-467-2882. Post opens at 11 a.m., Monday through Sunday.

We are taking applications for men or women who would like to join the VFW, Ladies Auxiliary, the Men's Auxiliary, AmVets or the Ladies AmVets Auxiliary. Wednesdays: Dinner by Ladies Auxiliary, Mens Auxiliary, or AmVet Ladies Auxiliary at 5:30 p.m. Music will be available. Thursdays: Bar Bingo at 1 p.m. Lunch will be available. Fridays: 16 ounce stead dinner with baked potato, salad and rolls will be served from 5:30 until 7 p.m. for an \$11 donation. Pork Loim dinner available for \$7. Dancing immediately following dinner. Sundays: 5:15 p.m. bar bingo. Food will be served for a donation. Membership meetings are held on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at 10 a.m. House Committee meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. For information contact Robert Hare, Post Commander at 863-467-2882. Call for Menu. All games and special events are shown on seven televisions, two of which are big screen. The game room has a regulation size pool table.

### Health News in Brief

**Cancer Society seeks volunteers**  
The American Cancer Society is recruiting volunteers who are interested in making a difference in the fight against cancer. Volunteers with the American Cancer Society's Florida Division participate in programs that support research funding, educate the community, deliver services to patients and advocate for policies that help defeat cancer. To get involved, call the American Cancer Society at 800-ACS-2345.

### Narcotics group to meet Tuesdays

Narcotics Anonymous will begin meeting every Tuesday at noon. Meetings will be held at the Just for Today Club, 101 N.W. Fifth St. For information, call 863-634-4780.

### Healthy Start group seeks donations

The Healthy Start Coalition is accepting donations of baby items such as furniture, shoes, clothing, maternity clothes, strollers and other items for infants and toddlers. Proceeds from the sale of donated items will be used to benefit infants and pregnant women in the community. For information, call 863-462-5877.

### Depression support meets

Depending on Christ is a support group for men and women suffering from depression. They meet every Thursday. For information, call 772-597-0463.

### Blood donors are needed

Florida's Blood Centers is looking for blood donors in Okeechobee. The Big Red Bus mobile unit will be at the Wal-Mart parking lot, 2101 S. Parrott Ave., on the last Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. For information, call 561-845-2323, ext. 1203 or 772-215-8360. All blood types are needed. There is no upper age limit, and most medications and conditions are acceptable. Diabetes and blood pressure donations can also be accepted. A picture ID is needed for all donors.

### Pregnancy financial assistance available

Are you pregnant? Have you been turned down for Medicaid? Healthy Start may be able to help. For information, contact Becky Smith at 863-462-5877.

### We want your news

The Okeechobee News welcomes news from the community. Email your news to okeeneews@newszap.com, to reach even more readers, post your news online at www.newszap.com.

## Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted to the Okeechobee News by e-mailing [obits@newszap.com](mailto:obits@newszap.com). Customers may also request photos and links to online guest books. A link to the obituaries is available at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com).

### Blanche L. Brasington, 89

ST. CLOUD — Blanche L. Brasington, passed away Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, in her residence in St. Cloud due to complications of Alzheimer's. Born May 31, 1919, in Bibb County, Ga., to the late Lonnie and Roxie Long. She came to St. Cloud from Ocala in 1996 and was a long-time resident of Lake Wales. She was a house parent for the Alice D. McPhearsan Residential Facility and of the Baptist faith. She enjoyed flower and vegetable gardening, fishing, camping and cooking. Blanche was preceded in death by her first husband, Olan Rucks in 1962; and granddaughter, Melissa Rucks Sellers in 2006. Survivors include her husband, Joe C. Brasington; daughters, Pat Brown (Richard) of Lake Hamilton, Sherrie Hearn of Lake Wales, Dale Barker of Haines City and Martha Young (Dave) of St. Cloud; sons, William Rucks (Ann) of Tifton, Ga., and Tony Brasington (Jami) of Ocala; 15 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren. Visitation will be held from 9 a.m. until service time at 10 a.m., today, Dec. 26, 2008, at the Marion Nelson Funeral Home in Lake Wales with Rev. Jim Waycaster officiating. Burial will follow at the Hollywood Memorial Gardens in Hollywood. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Vitas Hospice, 5151 Adanson Street, Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32804 or Alzheimer's Association - Florida Gulf Coast Chapter, 9365 U.S. Highway 19 North, Suite B, Pimellas Park, FL 33782. Condolences may be sent to the family and the services can be viewed at [www.marionnelsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.marionnelsonfuneralhome.com).

### James Carlos J.C. Gillis, 56

OKEECHOBEE — James Carlos "J.C." Gillis, of Okeechobee, died Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, in Raulerson Hospital. He was 56. Born May 15, 1952, in Ft. Pierce, he had been a lifetime resident of Okeechobee and was of the Baptist Faith. He is preceded in death by his father, Neal Gillis; brother, Ronald E. Gillis; and sister, Evelyn Hicks. He is survived by his parents, Bobby and Ella Mae Moon of Sneads; children, James Gillis Jr. of Okeechobee, Marie Saylor of Okeechobee, Neal Gillis of Chiefland, Carla Gillis of Apopka; brothers, Marvin Gillis of Edison, Ga., Mickey Gillis of Abbeville, Ala., Gary Gillis of Naples, Debbie Weeks of Sneads; and four grandchildren. Arrangements will be held at a later date. All arrangements are under the direction and care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th St., Okeechobee.

### Lottie Johns Baxley, 78

BRIGHTON — Lottie Johns Baxley, of Brighton, died Sunday, Dec. 21, 2008, in her residence. She was 78. Born Aug. 23, 1930, in St. Lucie County, she had been a lifetime resident of Okeechobee (Brighton) and was a member of the 1st Indian Baptist Church of Brighton. She is preceded in death by her son, Ricky Ray Baxley. She is survived by her sons, L.D. Baxley Jr. (Oneva) of Brighton, Elton Carl Baxley of Hollywood, Scott Lee Baxley (Sonya) of Okeechobee; daughter, Vicky Lynn Huff (John) of Brighton; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. In addition, she is survived by a host of Aunts, Uncles, and cousins. Services were held on Dec. 24, 2008, from 9 a.m. until service time of 10 a.m. at the 1st Indian Baptist Church of Brighton. Burial followed in Ortona Cemetery. All arrangements are under the direction and care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th St., Okeechobee.

### Marvin W. Wherrell Jr., 64

OKEECHOBEE — Marvin W. Wherrell Jr., of Okeechobee passed away Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008. He was 64. He was born Jan. 13, 1944, in Arcadia to Marvin and Kathleen Wherrell. He was the former owner of Wherrell Auto Parts and was a member of the First Baptist Church of Okeechobee. Mr. Wherrell was preceded in death by his father, Marvin W. Wherrell Sr. He is survived by is wife, Sandra Wherrell; mother, Kathleen Wherrell; son, Chad Wherrell (Landy); daughter, Dixie Ball (Billy); and two grandchildren, Brittney and Brandon Ball; sister, Gwen Chandler (Monrad) all of Okeechobee; brother, Ronnie Wherrell (Sissy) of Texas. Visitation will be 10 a.m. Saturday, until service time at noon at First Baptist Church of Okeechobee with Pastor Randy Huckabee officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the First Baptist Building Fund, 401 SW 4th St., Okeechobee FL 34974 or Hospice of Okeechobee, P.O. Box 1548, Okeechobee FL 34973. Friends may sign the guestbook at [www.bassokeechobeeff.com](http://www.bassokeechobeeff.com). All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home and Crematory, 205 NE 2nd St., Okeechobee, FL 34972.

### Order of the Eastern Star - Chapter #128

The Order of the Eastern Star has many

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Narcotics Anonymous will begin meeting every Tuesday at noon. Meetings will be held at the Just for Today Club, 101 N.W. Fifth St. For information, call 863-634-4780.

### Healthy Start group seeks donations

The Healthy Start Coalition is accepting donations of baby items such as furniture, shoes, clothing, maternity clothes, strollers and other items for infants and toddlers. Proceeds from the sale of donated items will be used to benefit infants and pregnant women in the community. For information, call 863-462-5877.

### Depression support meets

Depending on Christ is a support group for men and women suffering from depression. They meet every Thursday. For information, call 772-597-0463.

### Blood donors are needed

Florida's Blood Centers is looking for blood donors in Okeechobee. The Big Red Bus mobile unit will be at the Wal-Mart parking lot, 2101 S. Parrott Ave., on the last Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. For information, call 561-845-2323, ext. 1203 or 772-215-8360. All blood types are needed. There is no upper age limit, and most medications and conditions are acceptable. Diabetes and blood pressure donations can also be accepted. A picture ID is needed for all donors.

### Pregnancy financial assistance available

Are you pregnant? Have you been turned down for Medicaid? Healthy Start may be able to help. For information, contact Becky Smith at 863-462-5877.

### We want your news

The Okeechobee News welcomes news from the community. Email your news to okeeneews@newszap.com, to reach even more readers, post your news online at www.newszap.com.

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# Holiday donations cheer Martha's House residents

**By Chauna Aguilar**  
Okeechobee News

The mothers and children who live at the Martha's House Shelter enjoyed a Christmas tree full of presents, thanks to the generous donations of the community.

Martha's House Christmas Angels stepped up once again this year in providing the families at Martha's House with the possibility of a Merry Christmas despite the economy's faltering foundation.

Every year Crystal Royal, the shelter director conducts fundraising campaigns around Christmas to ensure that the Martha's House clientele have not only a safe holiday season but one where they are able to have their families receive gifts for Christmas and bring a sense of normalcy to their lives.

Martha's House also conducts separate fundraising campaigns throughout the year that help with other areas of the program that exist to help victims of domestic violence.

Ms. Royal thanked the following individuals, families and organizations: Peace Lutheran

Church, gift drive coordinator Fran Baumgart; Big O RV Resort sponsored by the Red Hatters; Smokey and Kay Sanders; Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson; Bank of Indiantown-Okeechobee branch; Dan and Joyce Moore; Linda Rochford; Malissa Morgan; Paul Trotter; Crystal Malone; Walter Mackin; Debbie Lawry-Beall's Outlet; and Andrea Winters-Dollar General.

Ms. Royal expressed her gratitude, "thanking each and every one of the Christmas Angels for your generous gifts and support to Martha's House throughout the years." She continued, "May God continue to bless each and every one of you as you go through life full of hope and love. If it was not for such angels, the children and women at Martha's House could not experience the gift of giving."

"On behalf of Martha's House staff we would like to say, We love you!"

Martha's House is a non-profit organization which serves victims of domestic violence, as well as other women and children in distress.

They serve victims statewide through use of their 24-hour

hotline (863) 763-0202, emergency safe shelter, counseling and education, self-sufficiency assistance, help in obtaining legal, medical and financial aid, victim advocacy, children's advocacy, information and referral, outreach programs, community and law enforcement training and the Speakers Bureau.

Martha's House offers a weekly support group program called Women in Need (WIN). It is developed specifically to meet the needs of women dealing with, or affected by, domestic violence and abusive relationships. The support group offers education, networking and a safe and supportive environment in which to process issues.

The WIN program is provided free of charge to all women age 16 and above.

Mental health counseling by contracted licensed mental health professionals is available to victims of domestic violence (past or present), sexual violence and to children who have witnessed domestic violence. The counseling is at little or no cost to the client.

Counselors are available at

Martha's House offices or on school campuses. The goal is to assist victims and their families to recover from the trauma of abuse, to prevent further occurrences and to help young people avoid the traps of abusive relationships.

Other programs offered through Martha's House include Teen Alternatives to Violence (TATV), the Rape Prevention and Education Program and the Rural Initiative Latina Program.

If anyone wishes to contribute to Martha's House, or to make monthly pledges, contact their administrative offices at (863) 763-2893.

For help in a domestic violence situation, call the hotline at (863) 763-0202.

If individuals are looking for an additional tax deduction before the new tax year, please contact the administration offices at (863) 763-2893.

**Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Chauna Aguilar can be reached at [caguilar@newszap.com](mailto:caguilar@newszap.com).**



Okeechobee News/Chauna Aguilar

**Martha's House, Christmas Angels**  
Martha's House shelter director Crystal Royal (right) and Arlene Luck (left) along with all the staff of Martha's House want to extend a special thank you to all of the Christmas Angels who gave of themselves to support the families who otherwise go without a Christmas full of gifts for their children.

# Freedom Outreach sponsors fishing series



70% payback. Rules of the tournament are:  
 • Limit of five fish per boat.  
 • 12 inch minimum.  
 • No culling at the ramp.  
 • 1/4 lb. penalty per dead fish.  
 • Short fish disqualification.  
 • Operating aerator and live well is mandatory.

• Life jackets are mandatory while gas engine is in operation.  
 • Safe boating and fishing practices must be observed at all times.

• Kill switch must be attached to driver any time combustion motor is running.

• Any participant under 18 years of age must have signature of parent/legal guardian on registration form.

• No drugs, no alcohol.  
 • 1 lb. penalty per minute for late weigh-in. After 15 minutes late-disqualified.

• All fish are to be lake released.

• No radios or cell phones except in case of break down or emergency.

• Only artificial lures with the exception of pork rinds may be used.

• In case of tie, the two places will be added together and winnings divided equally.

• Exemption cards will be handed out at registration.

• Polygraph test may be administered at tournament officials' discretion.

• Tournament officials' decisions are final.

For registration forms, tournament rules, and more information, please call 863-532-1718 or 863-634-3790.

**We want your news!** If you would like to share any information with the Okeechobee News about an outdoors event please email [Teresa.Matushek@tmatushek.com](mailto:Teresa.Matushek@tmatushek.com)

[newszap.com](http://newszap.com) or call 863-763-3134.

**We welcome news on all sporting events, outdoors activities, nature inspired hobbies and with hunting season nearing, please send in pictures of your prize kills. Please include your name, phone number and specific dates of the events. The Okeechobee News Outdoors column will run every Friday so please be sure to have all your information into the office no later than 5 p.m. Wednesday. Information can also be faxed to 863-763-5901. Refer all material to Teresa Matushek.**

# Outdoors

**By Teresa Matushek**  
Okeechobee News

It is a little late in the year to qualify for the "Classic" which requires fishing at least 7 tournaments, but it isn't too late to get in on the fun.

Freedom Outreach Ministries sponsors monthly fishing tournaments which are held on the last Sunday of every month. This month's tournament date is on Dec. 28 at Taylor Creek. The tournament will begin at safe light and will end at 2 p.m.

Entry fee is \$70 per boat; \$10 Big Fish pot; \$5 towards classic;



Submitted photo

**Webster Rakosi of Morgantown, W. Va., caught this 5 lb. bass on the Rim Canal while visiting family in Okeechobee on Friday, Dec. 19. Do you have a prize catch from a recent fishing trip? Want to show the community? Email it to [tmatushek@newszap.com](mailto:tmatushek@newszap.com) or bring it into the Okeechobee News office and look for it in the Outdoors Column. Call 863-763-3134 if you need more information.**

# SUDOKU

4	7			6	3		9
	6	3	4				
1	8	5		9			
	3	6		7			8
	1		5			9	6
				4	2	7	3
			1			6	
	2		3	8	7		9
					9		1

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Level: Beginner

**Here's How It Works:**  
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

8	1	8	6	9	2	7	4	5
9	6	7	7	8	1	2	7	9
2	7	4	7	5	1	8	6	8
1	8	7	2	4	9	6	5	8
9	2	6	8	3	5	4	7	1
8	7	9	1	7	6	9	8	2
4	9	2	8	6	7	5	8	1
7	8	1	5	1	8	9	6	6
6	5	8	9	1	8	4	2	4

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**ADORABLE ONE ROOM WINTER OR WEEKEND RETREAT.** large corner lot with a beautiful view of the water and many trees. It has a nice carport. MLS #200971, \$85,000. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.  
**NICE COUNTRY LIVING** Bring your horses and have fun. Property has large extra lot. Main yard is fenced in. Beautiful grandfather oaks and many other trees. Plenty of storage space. YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON THIS ONE. PRICED TO SELL!!!! MLS #200723, \$175,000. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.  
**WATERFRONT BEAUTIFUL FULLY UPGRADED DWMH.** Pala Windows with double panes throughout. Oak floors, upgraded kitchen cabinets. One car garage, boat dock. Too many features to include. MUST SEE THIS BEAUTY. MLS #201548, \$149,900. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.

**RIVER AND LAKE ACCESS** Very nice well-kept DWMH on a canal that goes directly to the Kissimmee River. Well-established park. Close to town but not too close. Country living at its best. MLS #200067, \$125,000. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.  
**5+ ACRES - BRING YOUR HORSES** Frame 2/2 house, 2nd kitchen w/separate entrance. Updated elec service, pole. New pump. Shed in backyard. Truly country living, spacious area with wild life. Fully furnished. MLS#93200, \$199,000. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.  
**2/2 SPLIT PLAN.** Front CBS structure with mobile home totally under roof. Screened in covered back porch, single car garage, storage building 10 x 20. Large lot on small water way with covered dock. Don't let this one get away. MLS 201072, \$92,900. Call Vicki at 863-634-4106.

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**5009-H: HOME ON ONE ACRE.** Completely fenced, large Old Oaks, fruit trees, one car garage, open front porch, screened back porch, lots of kitchen cabinets, tile and carpet thru-out, and circle driveway. Ready to move in. **\$175,000 MLS# 202024**

**FORECLOSURE!**  
**5034-H: Dixie Ranch Estates CBS 3BR/2BA** home built 2005 with attached garage. Make offer won't last long! **\$117,500 MLS# 201789**

**WATERFRONT!**  
**4001-M Buckhead Ridge** lake access Mobile home with attached screened room. Nice and **\$98,000 MLS# 201911**

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**5033-H Dark Hammock 2-story on 78+/- acres...** over 4000 sq ft. large brick fireplace, barn/stable w/ tack & feed room...RV hook up, ponds, walk up attic, covered patio and porch, equestrian wash area. **MLS# 200344 \$649,900**

**5037-H 3/2 CBS home w/ attached garage** located in Basswood. Well taken care split bedroom plan, new water system and pave driveway, appliances included. **MLS# 201827**

**5043-M 4-Seasons MH on 1 fenced acre.** 3/2 with fireplace, large screened rear porch, circle driveway, large garage/workshop and upstairs storage. **MLS# 201860**

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**"WHAT A TREASURE!"**  
 CBS 3/2/2 home w/remodeled kitchen, granite countertops/new appliances, new ceramic tile floors, large pantry. Open concept w/ cathedral ceilings. Upgraded carpet in living rm/bedrooms. Large screened back porch. Large oaks with circular drive. #201066 \$230,000

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**"LIVING LARGE"**  
 2/2.5 CBS home with extra lot. Currently using the 3rd room as a bedroom. Huge master suite with 2 closets and half bath. Large screen room across the front, sit out and enjoy the cool evening breezes. #202032 \$129,900

**"2.5 ACRE HOMESTEAD"**  
 • Very spacious 4 bedroom, 2 bath frame home. New Roof 2005, 2.56 acres equestrian lot with pond, beautiful lot. Call for more information. #201539 \$225,000

# Gilbert Chevrolet Collision Center honored for excellent service

**By Chauna Aguilar**  
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee Gilbert Chevrolet Collision Center was named the 2008 AutocheX Premier Achiever award for excellence in customer service and satisfaction at the seventh annual AutocheX

Premier Achiever Awards ceremony and reception in November.

The event was held in Las Vegas in conjunction with the International Autobody Congress and Exposition (NACE).

The Premier Achiever award

recognizes collision repair facilities that consistently demonstrate their commitment to customer care as reflected by their superior customer satisfaction scores.

Based on the hundreds of thousands of customer satisfaction surveys AutocheX performed

throughout 2008, Gilbert Chevrolet has been recognized as one of the top-performing collision repair facilities in North America.

The Gilbert Chevrolet dealership is 75 years old. The Body Shop Manager, George Pawliski has been with Gilbert's for 14 years. Mr. Pawliski and his team at Gilbert's strive for extreme customer satisfaction and take pride in every repair.

The Body Shop team includes: customer care/receptionist, Jody McGuire; painters, Roger Garrison and Ivan Bustos; body techs, Rafael Bustos, Sung Yoon, Thomas White and Drew Spencer; detail/prep, Bryan Pawliski; and detail, Roy Padgett.

In order to receive this award, the Class of 2008 Premier Achievers attained customer satisfaction scores in the top five percent of facilities that use the AutocheX service throughout the U.S. and Canada. They include collision repair facilities of all sizes, from small, family-run businesses to large consolidators, and represent

32 states across the U.S. as well as British Columbia, Canada.

AutocheX, a division of Mitchell International, is a leading provider of customer satisfaction measurement and performance management solutions to the collision repair industry. AutocheX and the participating insurance companies present the Premier Achiever awards each year as a way of honoring collision repair facilities that have proven their devotion to quality, service and customer satisfaction.

"We are delighted to recognize these exceptional facilities with the Premier Achiever Award," said Jason Bertellotti, Vice President of Mitchell Repair Solutions. "Clearly they go the extra mile for their customers. Their high satisfaction scores reflect their ongoing commitment to customer care and we want to congratulate them on their outstanding accomplishment."

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Chauna Aguilar can be reached at [caguilar@newszap.com](mailto:caguilar@newszap.com).



Okeechobee News/Chauna Aguilar

The Gilbert Chevrolet Collision Center Body Shop team (back row-left to right) Mark Luna, Thomas White, Roger Garrison, George Pawliski, Bryan Pawliski, Raphael Bustos, (front row-left to right) Roy Padgett, Ivan Bustos, Sung Yoon, Drew Spencer and Jody McGuire were honored with the 2008 AutocheX Premier Achiever award for excellence in customer service and satisfaction.

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Submitted photo/Tom Fecke

### He knows who's been good

Santa Claus visited the Lakeport Community Center for the annual Community Christmas Dinner on Monday, Dec. 22. Approximately 100 people turned out for the annual event. The First Bank of Indiantown (Lakeport branch) collected gifts for the local children. Families got together for a chili supper and waited for Santa to arrive.



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# Soccer players pushed to the limit

By Charles M. Murphy  
Okeechobee News

Iron Man had nothing on Okeechobee soccer players Monday night.

The Okeechobee High School Brahms played back to back 80-minute matches against John Carroll and Sebring in their Christmas tournament at Okeechobee High School. The Brahms defeated John Carroll 5-0, and tied Sebring, 1-1.

Okeechobee had to switch to a round robin tournament format last week when Lake Wales backed out of the tournament. Instead of one match on Monday and Tuesday, Okeechobee was pushed into two tough matches in a four hour period.

Coach Lonnie Sears substituted liberally to keep his kids fresh and some players said their training this year on the cross country team came in handy.

Adrian Leon scored twice in the opener to defeat the Rams, (6-6-1). Leon ran cross country this year and he said that conditioning motivated him to play better in soccer this year.

"This year has pretty much gone really well for me. I count on the team to do most of the job. I feel we are on the right track. Players are focusing more. We're looking high, we never look down," he said. Coach Sears said Leon has been a pleasant surprise this year. He said he seems to always be in the right place at the right time.

Leon said the mental part of soccer is just as important as the physical as he keeps his head up at all times and follows the ball.

"I made it count tonight. I wanted to score and I didn't back down from the defenders," he added.

Okeechobee dominated play

against the Rams as they constantly put pressure on their defense. On the other end of the field, goal keeper Pablo Caballero was on vacation, as he saw very little action in the first game. The lop-sided score also allowed the Brahms to use their bench and keep many of their starters fresh for the night cap.

Richardo Herrera, Alan Najera, and Jose Santibanez also scored for Okeechobee, (7-3-2).

In the night cap Okeechobee couldn't hold a 1-0 lead courtesy of an excellent one on one move by Najera. Sebring scored midway through the second half to tie the score when a shot beat Caballero in the lower left corner of the net.

Okeechobee dominated action for the most part as they out-shot the Blue Streak, 15-6. Najera had two other shots that barely missed the goal. One ricocheted

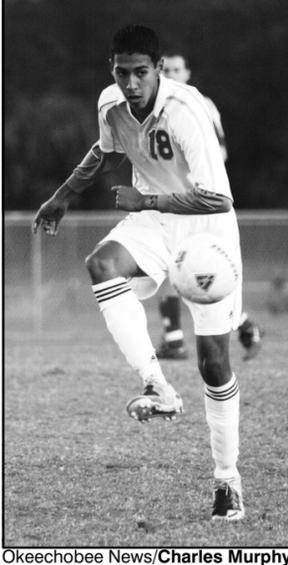
off the upper right corner of the goal post. The second appeared to hit the post under the net and bounced several times before going out of bounds.

Coach Lonnie Sears said his team was unlucky, but still need to take advantage of their scoring opportunities. "We must score to do anything in districts. It's frustrating and it's been a problem all year. I don't understand it."

Sears said his team worked the ball around and got some good shots. He suggested the team has a mental block that stops them from scoring.

"It's not like we're shooting 35 yards from the net. Many of these shots are wide open up close, we've got to get those," he noted.

Okeechobee resumes play on January 7 when they host Vero Beach.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy  
Adrian Leon #18 scored two goals in Okeechobee's win over John Carroll.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy  
Erick Garcia #22 jumps towards the goal as Raunel Denova looks on.

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CASE NO.: 2008-CA-193

MEECORP CAPITAL MARKETS, L.L.C., a New Jersey limited liability company, Plaintiff

vs.

DRY LAKE DEVELOPMENTS, INC., a Florida corporation; 3D DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, L.L.C., a Florida limited liability company; WINSONNE JACKSON FUNDING & INVESTMENTS, L.L.C., a Florida limited liability company; WEP RENTAL, INC., a Florida corporation; SOARES DA COSTA SC, L.L.C., a Florida limited liability company; and IRMA RODRIGUEZ, Defendants,

and

L.J. CLARK CONSTRUCTION, INC. a Florida corporation; Third Party Plaintiff

vs.

HOPE P. ANDERSON, GARY PLANGE, and ALICIA N. HAL (as to Lot 15), RUDOLPH LLOYD DIXON (as to Lot 27), LEE ROUGH (as to Lot 56), ADEL MUKHTAR, ARIF WAJID, and JAWAD BAIG (as to Lot 60), SALVADOR Y. BORTONE (as to Lot 61), BRUCE GOLDSTEIN and PAMELA GOLDSTEIN (as to Lot 64), MYACHESLAV GINZBUR, YEVGENY GINZBUR, SRINANSH KHACHATRYAN and PAUL BREYTMAN (as to Lot 65), RAM VENKATESH, LATHA VENKATESH, and NINA VENKATESH (as to Lot 66), LUSIK APKARIA, AVEDIS APKARIAN, KARAPET PARONYAN, and SUREN G. TUMASYAN (as to Lot 67), RKS & SKS SERVICES, L.L.C. (as to Lot 68), DANIEL SANOVEI (as to Lot 83), LUE CLEMENT and LUE MARGARET (as to Lot 84), THE OKEECHOBEE GROUP, L.L.C., a Florida limited liability company (as to Lot 86), DIAMOND TOUCH, L.L.C., a Florida limited liability company (as to Lot 87), Third-Party Defendants.

**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CASE NO. 47-2008-CA-000546

CIVIL ACTION

CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC SUCCESSOR BY MERGER TO CHASE MANHATTAN MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff

vs.

ILEANA RIVERO, et al., Defendant(s)

**Public Notice 5005**

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**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA

FIFTH THIRD MORTGAGE COMPANY, Plaintiff

vs.

RUBEN FLORES; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF RUBEN FLORES; ALMA FLORES; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ALMA FLORES; IF REMARRIED, AND IF DECEASED THE RESPECTIVE UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVIISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, CREDITORS, LIENORS, AND TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PERSONS CLAIMING BY THROUGH UNDER OR AGAINST THE NAMED DEFENDANT(S); COUNTRY VILLAGE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.; WHETHER DISSOLVED OR PRESENTLY EXISTING, TOGETHER WITH ANY GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, CREDITORS, LIENORS, OR TRUSTEES OF SAID DEFENDANT(S) AND ALL OTHER PERSONS CLAIMING BY THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST DEFENDANT(S); UNKNOWN TENANT #1; UNKNOWN TENANT #2; Defendant(s)

**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR HENDRY COUNTY, CIVIL DIVISION

FIFTH THIRD MORTGAGE COMPANY, Plaintiff

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RUBEN FLORES; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF RUBEN FLORES; ALMA FLORES; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ALMA FLORES; IF REMARRIED, AND IF DECEASED THE RESPECTIVE UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVIISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, CREDITORS, LIENORS, AND TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PERSONS CLAIMING BY THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST DEFENDANT(S); UNKNOWN TENANT #1; UNKNOWN TENANT #2; Defendant(s)

**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL ACTION

CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC SUCCESSOR BY MERGER TO CHASE MANHATTAN MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff

vs.

ILEANA RIVERO, et al., Defendant(s)

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**Public Notice 5005**

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FIFTH THIRD MORTGAGE COMPANY, Plaintiff

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vs.

ILEANA RIVERO, et al., Defendant(s)

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**Parts - Repairs 4045**

**Pickup Trucks 4050**

**Sport Utility 4055**

**Tractor Trailers 4060**

**Utility Trailers 4065**

**Vans 4070**

**Public Notices 5000**

**Public Notice State Public - Legal Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No. 2008-CA-489

**SAMMY HANCOCK, Plaintiff,**

vs.

CABERNET I, LLC, a Florida Corporation; BETTY JO MARTIN, FIRST FIDELITY SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION a Florida Corporation; BANK ONE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, a Florida Corporation; VARNETT BANK OF OKEECHOBEE, n/a; BANK OF AMERICA, METROPOLITAN MORTGAGE COMPANY, a Florida Corporation, PARRISH SEPTIC TANK, INC., and as to each of the foregoing person, if alive or deceased, their unknown heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, and all other parties claiming by, under or against these Defendants.

**NOTICE OF ACTION**

TO: BETTY JO MARTIN; FIRST FIDELITY SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, a Florida Corporation; and BANK ONE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, a Florida Corporation.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action for quiet title of the following described property:

Parcel Identification Number: 1-20-37-35-0A00000120000

Beginning at the NE Corner of the SE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of NE of Section 20, Township 37 South, Range 35 East, Run South a distance of 165 feet; Thence run West a distance of 177 feet; Thence run North a distance of 165 feet; Thence run East a distance of 177 feet to the Point of Beginning. Less and except a strip of land 15 feet wide on the East and South sides thereof, which is reserved for road purposes.

has been filed against you and your heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, and all other parties claiming by, under or against the named defendant(s).

Clerk of the Circuit Court By: /s/ D. Hammond Deputy Clerk

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action for quiet title of the following described property:

Parcel Identification Number: 1-20-37-35-0A00000120000

Beginning at the NE Corner of the SE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of NE of Section 20, Township 37 South, Range 35 East, Run South a distance of 165 feet; Thence run West a distance of 177 feet; Thence run North a distance of 165 feet; Thence run East a distance of 177 feet to the Point of Beginning. Less and except a strip of land 15 feet wide on the East and South sides thereof, which is reserved for road purposes.

has been filed against you and your heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, and all other parties claiming by, under or against the named defendant(s).

Clerk of the Circuit Court By: /s/ D. Hammond Deputy Clerk

**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL ACTION

CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC SUCCESSOR BY MERGER TO CHASE MANHATTAN MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff

vs.

ILEANA RIVERO, et al., Defendant(s)

**Public Notice 5005**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL ACTION

CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC SUCCESSOR BY MERGER TO CHASE MANHATTAN MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff

vs.

ILEANA RIVERO, et al., Defendant(s)

**Employment 200**

**Employment - Full-Time 205**

**Employment - Medical 210**

**Employment - Part-Time 215**

**Employment Wanted 220**

**Job Information 225**

**Job Training 227**

**Sales 230**

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Percentage of new-car shoppers who consult the Internet for product information, based on the self-reported shopping habits of 27,901 buyers

SOURCE: J.D. Power and Associates, Westlake Village, Calif.

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# WHEEL DEALS

## Commanding 'The General'

NASCAR TV reporter Krista Voda knows her way around a racetrack, but drives a car that's anything but sporty.

By Dave Waldon  
CTW Features

As a NASCAR pit reporter and in-studio anchor for Fox Sports and the SPEED Channel, Krista Voda has become an expert on cars – at least to a certain extent. “I understand racing,” says Voda. “I can talk about downforce and what’s going on with the car at a moment. But it’s not necessarily anything that I’m dealing with when I’m out on the road driving.”

Another vehicular area that Voda has gained more interest in through her NASCAR work is auto maintenance. That idea makes sense considering the fancy equipment that Voda is surrounded by during an average weekend at the track, though she also attributes that to simple maturity. “As you get older and more experienced, your money becomes a lot more important to you. You take care of things a little better.”

And, in some situations, you have to take care of things a lot better, especially when they already showed up in less than pristine condition. Such can be said for Voda’s primary personal vehicle – a red 1997 Honda Civic that has “character,” which is car code for “busted up.”

Voda bought her car used in 2000, when she was working as a sports reporter for a TV station in Lexington, Kentucky. At the time, the car was far from being a junker, but it did already have 32,000 miles on it and was also a bare-bones model, practically from the Stone Age, if one considers a lack of power locks or windows to be “primitive,” Voda describes herself as someone for whom aesthetics didn’t rank high when it came to choosing a car, so the dearth of accouterments didn’t really register with her – until a visit to her Iowa hometown recently.

“My 8-year-old nephew got in the car one day, and he said, ‘Where’s the button for the window?’ And I said, ‘Well, it’s right

See Celebrity — Page 2



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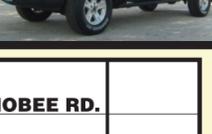
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<p>FORD <b>F-150</b></p>  <p>16 AVAILABLE</p>	<p>FORD <b>ESCAPE</b></p>  <p>18 AVAILABLE</p>	<p>FORD <b>RANGER</b></p>  <p>25 AVAILABLE</p>	<p>FORD <b>EXPEDITION</b></p>  <p>8 AVAILABLE</p>
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<p>'06 FORD <b>MUSTANG</b></p> <p>PERFORMANCE WHITE, LEATHER, AUTO., 4.0L V6, 25 MPG HWY., #81051A</p> <p><b>\$16,395</b></p>	
<p>'06 FORD <b>FUSION SEL</b></p> <p>BLK. CLEARCOAT, CAMEL INT., V6 AUTO., CLIMATE CONTROL, 29 MPG HWY., #P3358A2</p> <p><b>\$16,495</b></p>	
<p>'04 FORD <b>EXPEDITION E.B.</b></p> <p>WHITE, TAN LEATHER, MOONROOF, NAVIGATION, DVD, 5.4L V8, 40K MI., #8756A2</p> <p><b>\$16,995</b></p>	
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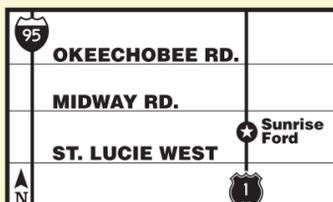
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**Finding Used-Car Bargains**

# You can get a great deal without buying 'someone else's troubles'

by Jay Koblenz  
CTW Features

With the economy in its greatest turmoil in decades, fewer buyers are willing to make a major investment in a brand-new car or truck. Yet the need for basic transportation still exists, no matter what a family's economic situation.

Thus, many astute car shoppers are instead considering pre-owned models these days. The good news is that there are great bargains available on what are very reliable used vehicles.

Depreciation is the biggest long-term cost of any new vehicle purchase and by the time a typical car or truck is just a few years old it has lost more than half its value.

That means a car that cost \$30,000 three years ago is likely to sell for around \$14,000 on the used market.

The average car for this age will have about 40,000 miles on the odometer, which not a lot for a modern car where a 200,000-mile lifespan (with the proper maintenance) is becoming common.

Essentially, there are two trains of thoughts on buying a used car. The first is simply to get the lowest price possible on a vehicle with acceptable performance, comfort and reliability. The flip side is to take the money you might spend on a bare bones, bargain-priced new car and instead obtain a much more luxurious used model for the same capital outlay.

These days it's fairly easy to do some research to learn about virtually all cars and trucks built and sold over the past decade.

Various Web sites can provide plenty of information about which models were available in a given year, the trim levels that were offered and a list of standard equipment and options.

There is also plenty of information to help shoppers estimate a price for a given pre-owned vehicle. Unlike new models, however, the costs of which are based on the manufacturers' retail prices, the market establishes the transaction prices of used models.

That price can vary depending upon condition, location and even by color.

The most important step for a used-car buyer is simply to ensure that a given model comes with no hidden problems or undisclosed history. Fortunately, this is easier today than it has ever been. One simple solution is to simply buy the car from a reputable dealership. Many will offer a comprehensive warranty on late-model vehicles.

What's more, most new-car dealerships also participate in manufacturers' "certified" used car programs that include a thorough inspection plus a warranty. While this is the most expensive way to buy a used car, it's still quite a bit cheaper than choosing a new model and still gives nearly

the same level of confidence.

When buying from an individual party, however, buyers need to take extra care. Potential pitfalls include cars that come with undisclosed problems. One example is a model that's been damaged in a flood.

Although states require salvaged cars to say so on the registration or "pink slip," unscrupulous sellers are known to move cars from state to state to "clean up" the paperwork.

To avoid this sort of rip-off, experts suggest used-car buyers have the VIN (vehicle identification number) checked before handing over any cash.

That number is found on the dashboard visible through the windshield on the driver side. A number of organizations can check this number for you online.

Among the best known is Carfax, which charges a varying fee based upon the thoroughness of the report.

Although a VIN search will disclose any reported problems, it can't tell a used-car shopper about many issues with a car that easily go unreported.

If a car was damaged but repaired without an insurance claim, it's unlikely to show up in a report, for example. That's why consumer advocates universally recommend those buying a vehicle from a private party have the car or truck professionally inspected by a mechanic before taking ownership.

Plan to spend \$75 to \$150 to have a qualified technician perform a pre-sale inspection.

A mechanic should be able to assess various systems and components, such as the engine, transmission, brakes, suspension and so on.

A good mechanic should also be able to determine if there has been previous body damage or other signs of trouble. If major problems are indicated, consider these to be deal-breakers.

If there are only signs of minor trouble, such as incomplete maintenance records or wear-and-tear type repairs that will likely be necessary down the road, this information may be used to renegotiate a lower price with the seller.

One of the toughest elements of buying any car these days, new or used, is financing. It used to be that a dealership would be happy to finance a car because money was plentiful from myriad lenders and it meant additional potential profits. With the current credit crunch, however, cash is king.

Those needing to borrow should pre-check with their own bank or credit union to see what sort of rates and maximum loan amounts are available, and how large a down payment is required. These days the more a buyers can put down on a vehicle, the easier it is to get a loan, and that's the case nowadays whether one is acquiring a used car or a new one.

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## Celebrity

Continued From Page 1

there - it's that crank. Just roll it down." And he had never been in a car with roll-up windows. And I thought, "What's wrong with this kid?" Then I realized that no 8-year-old has ever been in a car with roll-up windows. So that's when it really hit me that maybe I'm driving an interesting model, if nothing else. But it's had its issues."

Such issues include two cracks in the windshield and a defective seal that allows rain and moisture to leak into the car. "If there's any participation, you can actually get standing water in the trunk," says Voda. And if it's winter - and it's often winter in Pittsburgh, where she currently lives - she can find herself scraping both sides of her windshield.

Then there was the time she drove the Civic to a racetrack in nearby Mansfield, Ohio. At the end of the day Voda asked a colleague to drive her to the other side of the facility so she could get her ride - and to stick around to make sure that it started. It did, but her co-worker noticed something else about the Civic. "I'm telling him all about the battery issue, but I totally forgot that at the time, the plastic casing in the front right wheel well had some loose, so I actually had to strap it to the front fender with a bungee strap, and I had neglected to tell him that part of it. But that's fixed now."

Indeed, the Civic - named "The General" in honor of former basketball coach Bob Knight, though it also has been known as "Squeaky" or something else "based on whatever sound it's making at the time" - has

proven to be quite resilient over the years. In short, the Civic is hanging in there, but that doesn't mean that Voda isn't cognizant of its shortcomings, or how much longer it can get her from Point A to Point B.

"At 5 a.m., if I'm heading for the airport, I'm scraping the inside of my car," she says. "And every time I do it, I think, 'Why am I driving this car? I have to upgrade to a different car.' But it just keeps doing the job, and especially now with the gas prices the way that they are, this car makes gas, at least compared to others. It gets the job done on that regard."

Just in case the engine eventually falls out of The General, though, Voda does have backups, including a 1995 Ford Explorer, used primarily to "haul stuff," and a dirt bike that she learned how to ride when she was covering the Supercross motorcycle circuit. She seldom gets to ride the latter these days because of her busy schedule, which often includes sideline reporting for a few of Fox's NFL and college football broadcasts. And if and when the time comes to retire the Civic, Voda already has her eye set on its possible replacement.

"My dream car is actually an El Camino," she says, which is a car/pickup truck crossover Chevrolet sold in the 1960s through the '80's. Her rationale for the unusual choice sounds reasonable - she likes the way they look.

"Every time I see one, I'm drawn to it. And I think it's because I'm a terrible decision maker. I'm one of those people who will spend 20 minutes figuring out what shirt to wear. And so, since an El Camino is part car, part truck, I think it suits my personality. I don't have to make a decision!"

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