

OCSO to step up enforcement of bus laws

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

During the week of Oct. 19-23, the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office will heighten their enforcement of school bus safety laws—specifically, the passing of a stopped school bus.

Sheriff Paul May said this week has been designated as School Bus Safety Week by the National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT). And because of that, OCSO deputies will be assigned to certain areas in marked patrol units, unmarked cars and on motorcycles to catch and enforce Florida

state statute 316.172 which makes passing a stopped school bus a moving infraction.

There have been 100 times fewer fatalities on school buses than any other mode of transportation—including private vehicles, bikes and pedestrians.

Statistics show that per 100,000 passengers the fatality rate is: .01 for buses; .96 for private vehicles; and, .06 for airlines.

Last year in the United States, only five children were killed on a school bus as passengers. These deaths were due to extreme crashes.

Also last year, 29 children across the na-

tion were killed while getting on and off school buses. The majority of these fatalities were due to motorists illegally passing a stopped school bus.

According to federal law, school buses are required to have eight warning lights—four yellow and four red flashing lights—to warn motorists that the bus is stopping. Buses also must have a stop arm that extends from the driver's side of the bus.

It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus when the lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended.

If a motorist is convicted of passing a

stopped school bus, four points will be assigned to their driver's license and they will be fined at least \$173. The motorist may also face a mandatory county court appearance.

The NAPT is a non-profit organization with the mission of enhancing the safety of our nation's children. Their objectives are to: inform communities about the benefits of bus travel; conduct research regarding the safer and environmentally-friendly school bus; and, provide training and education for school transportation specialists.

For more on the NAPT, go to www.napt.org.

Okeechobee Arrest Report

The following individuals were arrested on felony or driving under the influence (DUI) charges by the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD), the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) or the Department of Corrections (DOC).

- Billy Jolly Jr., 52, N.W. 172nd Court, Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 5 by Detective Jack Hill on charges of grand theft and dealing in stolen property. He was released on his own recognizance.

- Adrian Tyrone Brazell, 22, N.E. 17th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 5 by Deputy Justin Akins on Okeechobee County warrants charging him with sale or delivery of cocaine (two counts) and possession of cocaine with intent to sell or deliver (two counts). His total bond was set at \$60,000.

- Pardell Keyon Rembert, 17, N.E. 14th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 5 by Deputy Dale Hardy on Okeechobee County warrants charging him with sale of cocaine (two counts) and possession of cocaine with intent to sell (two counts). His total bond was set at \$6,000.

- Lee Arlis Griffin, 45, N.W. 10th St., Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 5 by Officer Ryan Holroyd on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with dealing in stolen property. His bond was set at \$2,500.

- James Gruber, 19, N.W. 30th Ave., Ocala, was arrested Oct. 6 by Deputy Jason Hickman on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with violation of probation - burglary of an occupied structure and violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- Sue Maines, 38, River Bend Road, Lorida, was arrested Oct. 6 by Deputy Greg Popovich on an Okeechobee County warrant charging her with violation of probation - possession of a controlled substance. She is being held without bond.

- Jeremy George Arnold, 28, N.W. Ninth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 7 by Deputy Matt Crawford on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with violation of probation - burglary of a structure and violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- Dustin Lee Werk, 24, N.E. 18th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 7 by Deputy Corporal Aric Majere on a Department of Corrections warrant charging him with violation of probation - trafficking in stolen property. He is being held without bond.

- Joseph Martin Miller, 23, N.E. 51st Court, Okeechobee, was arrested Oct. 7 by Deputy Joseph Hall on Okeechobee County warrants charging him with violation of probation - resisting a retail merchant, violation of probation - petit theft and violation of probation - dealing in stolen property. He is being held without bond.

This column lists arrests and not convictions, unless otherwise stated. Anyone listed here who is later found innocent or has had the charges against them dropped is welcome to inform this newspaper. The information will be confirmed and printed.

Register for free volunteer guardian ad litem training

Beginning Nov. 2, the Guardian ad Litem Program will train individuals interested in helping nearly 300 abused and neglected children living in St. Lucie, Martin, Indian River and Okeechobee counties. Guardian ad Litem volunteers, and the attorneys working with them, make sure victims of child abuse and neglect are protected and have a safe place to live and the necessary services to overcome their circumstances.

Commenting on her experience as a Guardian ad Litem volunteer, Sue Werlin,

states, "You look in the mirror and know you've made a difference in the life of a child." Pattra Dodd, Volunteer Recruiter, says, "Our volunteers are ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things."

If you wish to make a difference in this community, contact Pattra Dodd at Pattra.Dodd@gal.fl.gov or call: 772-871-7225 or visit our website at GuardianadLitem.org for more information. It has never been easier to serve.

ReStore needs volunteers

Habitat for Humanity is in need of volunteers for their ReStore that is open on Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. If you can help call Shirley at 863-467-6484 or 863-801-5077.

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