

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 100 No. 134

Sunday, November 8, 2009

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Okeechobee bowler qualifies for state tournament ... Page 15

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Smith could face 60-year sentence

By Eric Kopp
 Okeechobee News

After over four hours of deliberation, a six-member jury found an Okeechobee man guilty of aggravated manslaughter of a child Friday, Nov. 6.

Sentencing for Jeremy Lee Smith, 30, has been set for Dec. 7 at 10:30 a.m. With the conviction, Smith is facing a possible maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

However, Assistant State Attorney Ashley Albright told the judge shortly after the verdict was read Friday afternoon that the state will be seeking a habitual offender

classification for Smith. With that enhancement, Mr. Albright said Smith could be facing a maximum of 60 years.

According to Okeechobee County Clerk of Courts records Smith has been convicted in four felony cases, dating back to 1999. Those same records indicate that he has been convicted on possession of cocaine charges four times and robbery once. In a 2005 case, Smith was found guilty on three counts



Jeremy Lee Smith

of possession of a controlled substance.

As he waited for the jury to return with a verdict, Mr. Albright admitted that he was nervous.

"With that serious of a case, that's circumstantial in nature, sure," he said, visibly relieved when Circuit Court Judge Lawrence Mirman finally announced that court was dismissed.

Smith was originally charged with second degree murder in connection with the death of 14-month-old Xavian Leach.

Smith and Leann Leach, Xavian's mother, had rented a room at the Traveler's Inn Motel, 601 N. Parrott Ave., on Jan. 11. Ms. Leach

testified on the first day of the trial that she and Smith smoked marijuana laced with cocaine that night.

The next day Smith, Xavian, Ms. Leach and her brother Xavier Leach drove down to the lake. On the way back to their rented motel room, Ms. Leach called Zippy's Wings and ordered some chicken wings.

Mr. Leach then drove back to the motel and let Smith and Xavian out of the car. Although hesitant to do so, Smith agreed to watch the baby while Ms. Leach and her brother went to get the food.

See SMITH — Page 2



Special to the Okeechobee News/Bobbi Poole

Performing books

Parents, family members and friends, recently were invited to enjoy a morning assembly at Okeechobee Christian Academy featuring the entire student body performing books they read. Each class read a different book, age appropriate. Students were dressed in costume dramatizing the characters in the books, along with special quotes or things they learned from each book. This project is one of the many learning experiences each child grows in throughout the year at Okeechobee Christian Academy.

Church fire assessments increase

By Pete Gawda
 Okeechobee News

With the delivery of 2009 tax bills, some churches in the unincorporated area of the county are having to "render more to Caesar." Even though churches are exempt from the new emergency medical services assessment and do not pay ad valorem taxes, those churches in the county outside the city limits still pay a fire assessment.

The fire assessment rate for commercial buildings, including churches, remains the same as last year. That rate is based on the number of square feet in the building. However, even though some churches have not increased their square footage, they are seeing slight and sometimes not so slight increases in their fire assessment.

See CHURCH — Page 2

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SMITH

Continued From Page 1

In his statement to Detective Bettye Taylor, of the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD), Smith told Ms. Leach that he didn't want to stay with her baby. He said "he didn't feel stable" because he had been awake all night snorting cocaine.

In his statement to Detective Taylor, Smith said he played with the baby for a while then laid the baby on top of a pillow on the bed. He then took a hot shower in an attempt to clear his nose so he could breathe. When he had finished showering he found Xavian lying on the floor, in between the two beds. The baby, he said, was stiff and gasping for air.

Smith went on to tell the detective that he shook the baby and performed cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). But, he couldn't tell her how hard he shook the baby.

Ms. Leach testified that when she and her brother pulled into the motel parking lot Smith came running out of the room saying something was wrong with the baby.

During her testimony Ms. Leach said Xavian had a "lump on his forehead." So she picked up the child, got back in her brother's car and rushed Xavian to Raulerson Hospital.

Later that day Xavian was airlifted to St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach where he died on Jan. 20.

In his opening statement to the jury, Assistant State Attorney Don Richardson said Xavian had two significant injuries -- a fractured occipital bone and a subdural hematoma. Mr. Rich-

ardson described a subdural hematoma as a large bruise to the brain.

Defense attorney Shari Vrod maintained during her questioning of Dr. Roger Mittleman, from the District 19 Medical Examiner's Office in Fort Pierce, that it was possible Xavian's injuries could have come from his falling off the motel room bed. Dr. Mittleman, however, said he felt the baby's injuries were consistent with a fall from a much greater height.

The motel room bed, stated Mr. Albright later, was 25 inches in height.

Dr. Mittleman did not actually perform the autopsy on Xavian. Although now-retired Dr. Charles Diggs actually did the autopsy, he was unable to testify in this week's case.

Under cross examination by Ms. Vrod, Dr. Mittleman agreed that neither Raulerson Hospital nor St. Mary's reported seeing a skull fracture after doing a CT scan on Xavian.

"But," he said, "a skull fracture was present. They just didn't see it. Sometimes they're just not seen. I can't tell you why. It just depends on the view."

Dr. Mittleman also stated that he felt like Xavian would have been "immediately incapacitated" by the injuries and that he would have been unable to cry or whine.

After being pressed by Ms. Vrod, Dr. Mittleman told the jury it would be possible for a child to suffer such injuries in a fall from a bed onto a cement floor with a minimal amount of carpeting. But, he added, it would be "very unusual" for a fall like that to cause injuries so severe and that it would be "a rare event."

"I think the injury here was sustained in a more severe manner," testified Dr. Mittleman.

And the jury of four men and two women agreed.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Correction...

In the Oct. 28 edition, we incorrectly identified pic 18 as Jackson Worthy. His actually name is Jayton Howard. He took first place in the 4-6 year old division.

USE
DROUGHT-RESISTANT
PLANTS.

sfwmd.gov

CHURCH

Continued From Page 1

That is because the property appraiser's office is now imposing a fire assessment on maintenance and storage buildings on church grounds. In the past such buildings were recorded as "extra features." The record keeping system now used by the property appraiser's office identifies these extra features as "buildings." Some churches saw their fire assessment go up \$20 because the fire assessment rate for the category industrial/warehouses, which includes church maintenance and storage buildings, imposes a \$20 assessment on buildings of 2,000 square feet or less.

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Salvation Army seeks volunteers to ring the bells

By Katrina Elsken
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee Chapter of the Salvation Army is looking for recruits to ring some bells. The annual Salvation Army holiday collection campaign starts right after Thanksgiving, and local organizers hope to find enough volunteers to man seven different stations in Okeechobee.

Last year the Okeechobee campaign raised more than \$22,000—and 90 percent of that money stayed in Okeechobee to be used to help families in need.

Organizers have already obtained permission to post bell ringers at two doors in front of Walmart as well as in front of Publix, Winn-Dixie, U-Save, Walgreens and CVS.

Bell ringers work in two-hour shifts. The campaign will start on Nov. 27 and end on Dec.

24. Volunteers can sign up for one or many shifts of bell ringing.

The Salvation Army encourages local businesses, clubs and organizations to sign up for a day of bell ringing at a particular location. The Okeechobee Red Hat society has already signed up to take one day at Publix. Some local Real Estate offices have also signed up, as has the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office.

Seacoast Bank will count the money collected in the red kettles.

This year, the Okeechobee Salvation Army hopes to bring in the most donations of any town in our population size in the state of Florida.

To sign up as a bell ringer, contact the Salvation Army office at 863-763-6020, or call bell ringer chairman Kip Gardener at 863-357-0427.



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M.E. releases death report

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

According to the final report by Dr. Roger Mittleman, of the District 19 Medical Examiner's Office, a man found in the back of his van died due to diphenhydramine toxicity.

The decomposing body of William Arnold Batchler, 52, was found in the back of his Ford Windstar mini van that was parked in the Walmart parking lot.

Although the area was treated as a crime scene, foul play was not suspected. The investigation was handled by Detective John

Zeigler, of the Okeechobee City Police Department.

While Dr. Mittleman has learned the cause of death, the manner of the man's death is still undetermined.

According to Drugs.com, diphenhydramine is an antihistamine that is also known as benadryl. Although it's usually used to treat the symptoms of allergies and the common cold, diphenhydramine can also be used to treat motion sickness, induce sleep and to treat mild forms of Parkinson's disease.

SFWMD supports bill to ban importation of exotic pythons

The South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance, George Horne, testified Friday before a United States House of Representatives subcommittee in support of a bill (H.R. 2811) to ban the importation of non-native pythons.

Sponsored by U.S. Rep. Kendrick Meek and co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney, H.R. 2811 would classify Burmese, African rock and other pythons that have invaded America's Everglades as "injurious animals."

As a top predator and prolific breeder, these exotic snakes threaten state and federal restoration efforts and prey on the natural wildlife that call the Everglades home, including species already threatened or endangered.

Since 2000, the District and Everglades National Park have removed 1,248 Burmese pythons from the Everglades. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, Burmese python population estimates range from 5,000 to more than 100,000 in the Everglades.

Okeechobee's Most Wanted

The following people are among Okeechobee's Most Wanted persons. There are active warrants for each of them. The criteria for making Okeechobee's Most Wanted top five is based on the severity of the crime in conjunction with the age of the warrant.

If you have any information on the whereabouts of any of Okeechobee's Most Wanted you can call the Treasure Coast Crime Stoppers at 1-800-273-TIPS (8477). If you call Treasure Coast Crimes Stoppers, you have the option of remaining anonymous. You can also receive a reward if the information results in an arrest.

Reed Ashton Hair, 20, 6'1" 215 lbs. Mar-



Reed Ashton Hair



Jack Folk



Daniel Kyle Morvant



Huber Ambriz Sierra

tin County Charge - Dealing in stolen property - Okeechobee County escape warrant pending.

Jack Folk, 7/29/1977, Burglary Structure, Grand Theft, Criminal Mischief, Bond \$55,000.

Daniel Kyle Morvant, DOB 9/17/1987, Aggravated Battery, Bond \$20,000.

Huber Ambriz Sierra, H/M, DOB 6/13/1965, Burglary Structure, Grand Theft. No Bond.

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).

- Joshua David Stevens, 24, N.E. Fifth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Nov. 5 by Deputy Corporal Aric Majere on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with grand theft-auto. His bond was set at \$2,500.

- Lora Campbell, 40, Hunter Road, Okeechobee, was arrested Nov. 6 by Deputy Brian Cross on a charge of felony battery. She was released on her own recognizance.

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.

American Legion to host Steak dinner

The Sons of the American Legion will sponsor their monthly steak dinner on Sunday, Nov. 15, from 3 until 6 p.m. at American Legion, Post 64, 501 S.E. Second Street, Okeechobee. Dinner includes steak, baked potato, salad, roll, dessert, iced tea or coffee and entertainment for a donation of \$12. The public is welcome.

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OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Community Service
Through Journalism

Public Forum/Speak Out

Speak Out has moved online, where it is quicker and easier to share your ideas and converse with others. Go to 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!

Forums down Nov. 8-14

Editor's note: The Newszap.com forums will be offline Nov. 8-14 while we update our software. We apologize for any inconvenience. During this time, comments for this column may still be emailed to okeenews@newszap.com, or mailed to Okeechobee News, 107 S.W. 17th Street, Suite D, Okeechobee, FL 34974 or dropped off at the newspaper office.

More than 3,000 dogs and cats euthanized

• Let's get a spay and neuter clinic at the Ag center, putting it to good use -- Two birds with one stone.

• Okeechobee County residents deserve more help from the county with the stray animal problem and it is not going to get any better until they really push to get people to spay and neuter their dogs and cats. Some people just can't afford it, so they keep letting them have more and more puppies and kittens and these unwanted animals wind up at the county animal shelter. They think the shelter will find homes for them, but instead many of them are just put to sleep. I think it would be a real help if the county sponsored low-cost spay clinics, the way they do on the coast. Also, the county should offer low-cost rabies shots for all animals, just as a public health service.



Teen deaths

• The school can do only so much. Parents need to set good examples. Don't drive drunk and don't let your kid drink. If you know a kid is making bad choices, tell the parents. Talk to the kid yourself. Don't worry if you make someone mad. Mad is better than dead or responsible for the death of someone else.

Rodeo arena

• I love the old arena. I wish they would go back to using it. Inside the new one just seems gloomy. The old arena was bright and open and if it did rain, the rain didn't seem to bother the spectators, as most of the stands are covered. The old arena held more people. It was packed on the big rodeo days. I don't think any of the rodeos held at the new arena have attracted the crowds the old arena did.

• The Ag barn was built to bring concerts and more attractions to Okeechobee, it is slowly doing that ... but the construction and design of the center is very poor. The stalls are too small, they had to add bleachers. One suggestion -- put a sign out front on State Road 70 so that you can see what the heck is going on!

• My family prefers the new arena with nice restrooms and a nice concession stand, all under one roof.

• I love rodeos and I love the old arena. It's authentic. You can feel the history there. I much prefer the open arena and I think it is a lot more comfortable there as you get a breeze. The new arena is like an oven. We went there once and my family will not go back to a rodeo there.

Halloween festival

• There were so many really creative costumes -- you could tell some people really put some effort into them. Loved the Legos. The balloon-boy was very cute. I also liked the robot and the kid in the homemade Halo Master Sergeant costume. The Sponge Bob costume and the bass boat costume were good too. I am just really glad that I didn't have to be a judge as it would have been very hard to pick just a few winners from that crowd.

• Considering the crowds they got for the Halloween Festival, here's an idea for the county fair. Have one day be "Okeechobee Day," don't charge gate admission, give out free candy at the booths and have a western costume contest and a karaoke contest. What you don't collect in admission, the vendors and rides will make in sales once the crowd is there.



Letters to the editor

Blood Center prepares for largest donation drive

There is no substitute for blood. Only you, who donate, can give life to those who need a transfusion. Every drop of blood used at Raulerson Hospital comes through the company which will be collecting blood at the Okeechobee Blood Roundup Friday and Saturday, Nov. 13 and 14.

Volunteers have committed to perform their skills and training to entertain you, to give donors a massage, to inform you about hearing and sight, to give you Red Cross information, to prepare your after-donation hot dog, to hand out more than \$8,000 in prizes donated by local businesses and otherwise make your donating experience a happy one.

Three top prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 are given to whoever brings in the largest number of donors. Simply put a name or organization down when you sign in (even an individual such as DeeDee Cates).

Preparations have been on-going for four months. Seven donor buses will be on hand in the Methodist Church parking lot, 200 N.W. Second St. from 10 to 7 Friday and 9 to 6 Saturday. There will be more than 50 Florida's Blood Centers personnel and more than 30 volunteers standing ready.

But despite all that, you will be saving lives. Every unit of blood can save as many as three lives. The blood supply stays at critical levels because not enough people are willing to donate. Only 37 percent of the total U.S. population is eligible to donate, but, more depressing, is the fact that only 5 percent actually do donate.

When blood is needed, it must be on hand; it cannot wait to be collected. This Roundup, the largest independent blood drive in the state of Florida is dedicated to those around us who would not be alive without your donation. Let Steve Cates tell you how important blood drives are.

Rae Duesinger
Okeechobee Blood Round Up

Please donate, for DeeDee and for others

My wife, DeeDee, had been feeling run down but didn't want to take the time to go

for a checkup. A July incident kept her in Lawnwood for a week, but they didn't find anything so she came home. Running our business, Porter's Cleaners, and taking part in a lot of community projects seemed more important to her.

But on Aug. 28, I finally took her to the hospital where exams and testing found she had liver cancer. It was critical to get her immediate care and she was flown to Tampa the next day for surgery where they removed a tumor the size of a Nerf football.

She needed one unit of blood during surgery and recovery seemed quick. She was due to come home Sept. 17, but that day her condition went straight down and they found she had internal bleeding. More transfusions. She has since needed six more units of blood.

We are trying to get her strong enough to come home so she can be around our wonderful Okeechobee friends (and her precious dogs) as she completes this terminal battle.

I want to thank everyone who has ever given blood and especially those who will give at the Roundup because every minute of life with the one you love is special. Maybe their loved one will benefit from this donation.

If you want to send DeeDee your wishes, or tell her you'll donate for her, you can reach us at: topappraisal@yahoo.com.

Steve Cates
Okeechobee



Submitted photo

Dee Dee Cates

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

To Reach Us

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The Okeechobee News welcomes submissions from its readers. Opinions, calendar items, stories ideas and photographs are welcome. Call (863) 763-3134 to reach our newsroom. Items may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed.

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The Okeechobee News is available three times a week via home delivery and is on sale at rack and store locations throughout Okeechobee County. Call the office to find out if your home is within our present home-distribution boundaries.

Call 800-282-8586 to report a missed newspaper or poor delivery.

Additional copies of the newspaper are available for 50 cents Wednesday and Friday and 75 cents for Sunday at the office. Home delivery subscriptions are available at \$18.00 for three months.

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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.
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- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.



Community Events

SUNDAY

A.A. meeting 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.

MONDAY

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

A.A. Grapevine open meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. every Monday at Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 N. Parrott Ave.

Coast Guard Auxiliary of Okeechobee meets the second Monday of each month, at 7 p.m. at the entrance to Okeechobee Camp Grounds. We are seeking new members who are, "Semper Paratus - Always Ready."

For information call 863-824-7623

VFW #10539 Ladies Auxiliary lunch and bingo will start at noon at the Post, 3912 U.S. 441 S.E. Auxiliary members and their guests are invited. Please R.S.V.P. to 863-763-2308.

Okeechobee Senior Singers meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 North Parrott Ave. Everyone who enjoys singing is invited. For information or to schedule an appearance for your organization or group, contact Marge Skinner at 863-532-0449.

The Genealogical Society of Okeechobee will meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Okeechobee County Public Library, 206 S.W. 16th St. The meeting is open to anyone interested in tracing his or her ancestry. The annual membership is \$10 per person, and \$12 for a family. For information, call Eve at 863-467-2674; or, visit their web site at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flgso>.

Artful Appliquers is a recently formed chapter in Okeechobee. This chapter meets at the Turtle Cove Clubhouse, 10 Linda Road, Okeechobee on Mondays from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Karen Graves, Chapter leader would like to extend a warm welcome to any interested persons to come by and see what they are about. For information call 863-763-6952.

Flotilla 57 - U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary meets at 7 p.m. at the Coast Guard Auxiliary Station located at the entrance to Okeechobee on Road 78 on the second Monday of each month. Everyone is welcome to come as a guest and inquire about membership. Do get your safe boating certification. Call to enroll for course or to inquire about membership 863-763-0165.

TUESDAY

Civil Air Patrol set to meet
The Civil Air Patrol meets each Tuesday evening at the Okeechobee Airport T-Hanger #1, meetings start at 7:30 p.m. For information please call Capt. Joe Papasso 561-252-0916 or Lt. Greg Gernat 863-697-9915 Freedom Ranch Al-Anon meets every Tuesday and is open to all who deal with someone with addictions. There is support with this epidemic. The meetings are Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Freedom Ranch, 11655 Hwy. 441 S.E. Contact Jay at 863-467-8683 for questions or concerns.

Okeechobee Substance Abuse Coalition meets the second Tuesday of the month, at 11:30 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church, lunch is provided. For information contact Jim Vensel at 863-697-1792.

New Beginnings Narcotics Anonymous has moved to 103 S.W. Second Ave. at 7 p.m. For information, call Monika at 801-3244 or Rocy at 610-0975.

Rotary Club of Okeechobee meets each Tuesday at noon at Golden Corral Restaurant, 700 S. Parrott Ave. The meetings are open to the public. For information, Call Maureen Budjinski at 863-484-0110.

New A.A. Meeting in Basinger: There is now an A.A. meeting in Basinger on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Basinger Christian Brethren Church on 700-A, north off U.S. 98. Beginners are welcome.

Christian Home Educators of Okeechobee will meet at the Grace Christian Church Fellowship Hall, 701 S. Parrott Ave. Anyone currently home schooling or interested in home schooling is welcome. For information, call Lydia Hall 863-357-6729 or Betty Perera 863-467-6808.

Al-Ateen - meeting will be held at the Church of Our Saviour, 200 N.W. Third St., at 8 p.m. For more information, please call Amy at 863-763-8531 or Dan 561-662-2799.

Al-Anon meeting will be held at the Church of Our Savior, 200 N.W. Third St., at 8 p.m.
A.A. Closed discussion meeting from 8 until 9 p.m. at the Church of Our Savior, 200 N.W. Third St.

Grief and Loss Support Group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Hospice Building, 411 S.E. Fourth St., in Okeechobee. Everyone is welcome. For information, contact Brenda Nicholson at 863-467-2321.

Family History Center meets from 1 until 5 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 310 S.W. Sixth St. Anyone interested in finding who your ancestors are is welcome to attend. For information, call The Family History Center at 863-763-6510 or Richard Smith at 863-261-5706 for special appointments.

Widows and Widowers support group meets at 7:30 a.m. at the Clock Restaurant, 1111 S. Parrott Ave., for breakfast. For information, June Scheer at 863-634-8276.

The Gathering Church Overcomers Group meets at 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall at 1735

S.W. 24th Ave. This is a men's only meeting. For information, call Earl at 863-763-0139.

Bible study at the Living Word of Faith Church, 1902 S. Parrott Ave., at 7 p.m. Informal and informative discussions bring many Bible truths to life. Everyone is invited.

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

Okeechobee Substance Abuse Coalition meets every second Tuesday, at 11:30 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church. For information contact Jim Vensel at 863-697-1792.

The Lighthouse Refuge support group meets on the first and third Tuesday at 401 S.W. Fourth Street at First Baptist Church and on the second and fourth Tuesday at Red Cross from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. Women who need emotional support or someone just to care are welcome. For information call the hot line 863-801-9201 or 863-357-4447.

Compulsive overeaters are invited to a weekly meeting. Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meets at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 N. Parrott Avenue on Tuesdays, 6 until 7 p.m. (Use 4th Street entrance.) Overeaters Anonymous is not a diet club. 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.

The First United Methodist Church, 200 N.W. Second St., will be hosting God's Time --a morning of free organized Christian activities that includes play, instruction and interaction for parents and their pre-school children. The event will be held each Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. until noon. Child care will be provided for infants during the class. For information, call 863-763-4021.

Haven of Rest Church, 2947 S.W. Third Terr., holds meetings for persons with alcohol and drug related problems at 6 p.m. For information call 863-357-3053.

Reflections from the Pulpit

Robyn Spradlin

Pastor, The Vineyard of Okeechobee

The primary topic of many conversations over the past eighteen months has echoed of economic down turn and financial crisis. The news outlets have been inundated with job loss, foreclosures, and hopelessness. No town or city, large or small, seems to have been exempted from the slump. Concerns, even fear, of what's next are wide spread. Are we sinking with the ship into the abyss? Will it get any better? Are we, as believers, to anticipate different results than these in such trying times?

In Exodus, Israel was facing similar hardships. Enslaved by Egypt, being forced into rigorous labors, building treasures cities for the Pharaohs. As Israel multiplied Egypt aggressively increased the labor until Israel cried out to God. He heard and answered with a promise of redemption. This redemption didn't begin manifestation as they exited or Egypt, but as a dividing line, a separation, between the children of God and the Egyptians. (Exodus 6:5-7, 8:22, 23)

As plagues spread across the land in epidemic and pandemic proportions, right in the midst of devastation, destruction and distress, Israel was protected. Flies, lice, hail, boils, murrain (livestock dying), darkness, even human deaths, Israel was passed over. Why? Because of God's promise! Redemption was at work separating God's children from everyone else. (Exodus 9:4,26 10:21-23, 11:4-7, 12:29,30)

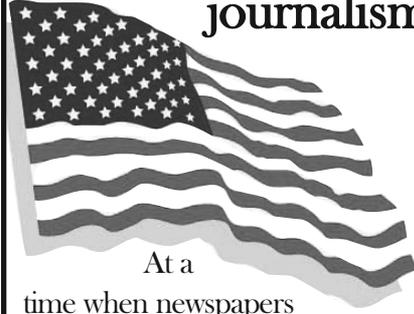
How does this apply to us? With wide spread credit card debt, bad mortgages, investments gone wrong, many have found themselves slaves to the Pharaoh, DEBT, and they are filling the coffers of the wicked world. There's chaos, even calamity financially, as the Dow shoots up then plummets

again. Flus of great variety are now racing to the media forefronts, with forecast of sickness in tsunami proportions. What are we to expect? We can expect to be like Israel, protected, spared, safe from harm and danger. We have a promise from God and what God promises, He'll do! He does not change and He does not lie. He's never failed to keep His word. (Joshua 23:14, I Kings 8:56, Psalms 89:34, 91:1-16, Malachi 3:6, Numbers 23:19, Romans 4:20,21)

Jesus came as our Redeemer so when we receive Him as Lord and Savior, we become part of a covenant that He is the mediator and guarantee of "...a better covenant, established on better promises." (Hebrew 7:22, 8:6) With this we are entitled to the promises God has already made. If Israel received it then and our covenant's better with better promises, if you are redeemed you have nothing to worry about or fear, you have a redemptive line already drawn around you, separating you from the destruction and plagues befalling the world. That's better than Israel had!

During days of financial uncertainty, a faltering economy and impending disaster, we can be sure of one thing, in Jesus Christ we are safe and secure. Thousands may fall at our side, but it won't touch us, no weapon formed against us will prosper. The earth may move, mountains may shake, but God's unfailing love will not be shaken. Every need will be supplied according to His riches in glory and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith! (Psalms 91, Isaiah 54:10,17, Philippians 4:19, I John 5:4,5) Where is our faith based? It's in the promises of a truthful, loving Heavenly Father. Right here, right now, we are provided for and protected, just like Israel in Exodus! Glory to God!

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Community events

Pet Rescue hosts Open House

The Humane Society Pet Rescue FL, Inc of Okeechobee will host an open house event to celebrate National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week. Come visit our shelter at 120 Hwy 98 N. (west side between Live Stock Market and Gator Feed). The event will be held on Sunday, **Nov. 8**, from noon until 3 p.m. Guests will be welcomed by wagging tails and purring felines. Snacks and drinks will be served and tours of the shelter and improvements made since opening will highlight the event. Donations for shelter operations are always needed and welcome.

Seacoast to head up local food drive

Seacoast National Bank is hosting a Food For Families drive through **Nov. 20**. Please drop off nonperishable food items to 500 N. Parrott Avenue or 1409 S. Parrott Avenue. All food donations will help local residents. For more information, please call 863-467-5330 or 863-467-4663.

Breakfast at Masonic Lodge

Okeechobee Chapter No. 128, Order of the Eastern Star will hold a Breakfast on Sunday, **Nov. 8**, at the Okeechobee Masonic Lodge, 107 NW 5th Avenue. Breakfast will be served from 8 -11 a.m. and will include scrambled eggs, ham, hash brown casserole, grits, biscuits and sausage gravy, orange juice and coffee. The cost is \$6/person. For information, contact Mary Ann Holt at 863-634-8087.

Shrine Club has dinner

The Okeechobee Shrine Club will host spaghetti dinners every Tuesday from 4 to 7 p.m., with music from 5 to 8 p.m. A donation of \$5 per person is asked. The local Shrine Club raises money to support the Shrine hospital for burned and crippled children.

H1N1 fatality confirmed

By Pete Gawda

Okeechobee News

Frank Krupa, administrator of the Okeechobee County Health Department, announced on Friday, Nov. 6 that he had received positive confirmation that the 47-year-old Okeechobee woman who died Oct. 24 at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center had H1N1.

He added that the woman had underlying health problems. Her name was not released.

As of Oct. 27 the Florida Department of Health reported 140 deaths in the state due to H1N1.

On a positive note, Mr. Krupa stated that over 1,000 elementary school children were vaccinated for H1N1 this past week and everything went smoothly. He said the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office did a good job of handling traffic and the longest a person had to wait was 40 minutes.

Mr. Krupa expects to be announcing soon the dates and location of the next round of

Safety classes announced

The Okeechobee Service Center of the American Red Cross will be holding the following Health & Safety classes in November:

- Monday, **Nov. 9** - Infant/Child CPR/AED at 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 12 - First Aid Basics at 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 18 - Adult CPR/AED at 6 p.m.

All classes are held at their Service Center, located at 323 N. Parrott Ave. To register, or for more information call 863-763-2488.

Town Hall meeting planned

There will be a town hall meeting-Public Safety Presentation, Monday, **Nov. 9**, at 6 p.m. at the Health Department Auditorium, 1728 N.W. Ninth Ave., Okeechobee, to discuss all current and future needs and aspects of Public Safety. Presentations will be given by Law Enforcement, Fire Rescue Public Safety Center, E-911 Communications Center & Emergency Operations Center.

Hospice plans Yard Sale

Hospice of Okeechobee (411 S.E. Fourth Street) will hold a Yard Sale on Thursday, Nov. 12 and Friday, Nov. 13, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Shop in air conditioned comfort in our Blue Building or the Country Store OR shop at our "Flea Market" (outside under the Carport) where every item is dirt cheap (prices start at only 10 cents per item). For information call 863-467-2321.

OCEA plans meeting

The Okeechobee County Education Association (OCEA) will have its second general membership meeting of the 2009-10 school year on Thursday, Nov. 12, at 4:30 p.m. in the media center at Osceola Middle School (825 SW 28th St.) For more information call 863-467-1564.

vaccinations which will probably be for the general public.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com

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Veterans Day services set

American Legion Post 64 continues an Okeechobee tradition with a Veterans Day Celebration Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 10 a.m. in Veterans Park. The speaker will be Jim Vensel, president of the Okeechobee Kiwanis Club. Once again the New Ground Quartet will sing the National Anthem and God Bless America and the Okeechobee High School JROTC Honor Guard will present a rifle salute. There will also be a reading of the names of local military people who were killed in action. New Ground Quartet will once again be singing the National Anthem.

Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted to the Okeechobee News by e-mailing 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.

James Perry Hodges, 84

OKEECHOBEE — James Perry Hodges, age 84, life long resident of Okeechobee died November 6, 2009 at the Hamrick Home, Okeechobee Hospice.

Mr. Hodges was born Jan. 12, 1925, to the late Emory and the late Cola Hodges. Mr. Hodges was self employed owning the Pioneer Gas Company in Okeechobee. He served in the U.S. Navy, was a member of the Masonic Lodge in West Palm Beach, and was of the Baptist faith.

Mr. Hodges is survived by his wife of 61 years, Mary Lou Hodges of Okeechobee; one daughter, Cary Vannormed of Vero Beach; one son, Emory James Hodges of Okeechobee; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren

A private service will be held at a later date.

Friends may sign the guestbook at www.bas-sokeechobee.com.

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home and Crematory, 205 NE 2nd Street, Okeechobee, FL 34972.

Lou Jenkins, 69

OKEECHOBEE — Lou Jenkins, age 69, passed on to our Lord Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009.

Lou is survived by his mother, Lois Jenkins Harper; brothers, Maynard, Jack and Bob; three daughters, Luanne, Sherry, Shana and their husbands; six grandchildren; and stepson, Jesse. He is also survived by his wife of 25 years, Claudia Wellner Jenkins; and his best buddy, Pe-tey. He was so loved and will be missed by all of his friends and family.

There will be a small memorial for Lou, Saturday, Nov. 14 at 10 a.m. His remaining ashes will be spread across The Monkey Box on Lake Okeechobee. Boats will be leaving from Harney Pond Ramps. Those with airboats are all welcome and those without will be offered rides from others.

Christmas Cantata planned

The Okeechobee Community Choir, in its 11th year under the direction of Sandy Perry, is rehearsing for the presentation of the Christmas Cantata, "A New Birth - A New Beginning," and other seasonal favorites. Rehearsals will be held on Sundays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 200 NW Second St. All interested singers, both locals and our Northern friends, are invited to participate. Singers should be able to match pitch and read music somewhat. For more information, call Sandy at 863-634-7714.

Joan Beverly Goggans, 71

OKEECHOBEE — Joan Beverly Goggans, age 71, of Okeechobee, died Nov. 5, 2009, at Raulerson Hospital.

Mrs. Goggans was born Nov. 10, 1937, Long Island, N.Y., to the late Albert and late Josephine Homer. She came to Okeechobee from Lake Placid in 1962 and was a school bus driver for the Okeechobee School District for 24 years; she was of the Baptist faith.

Mrs. Goggans is survived by her husband of 54 years, Grady Goggans; daughters, Merita Loredo (Jose) of Okeechobee, Debbie Hawes of Okeechobee (Bo Jensen of Sweden), Bonnie Mathes (Willard) of Lake Placid; brothers, Albert Homer Jr. of Mississippi, Bruce Homer of Okeechobee, Johnny Homer of New York; sister, Judy Munger of Tennessee; daughter-in-law, Pam Goggans; grandchildren, Shawna Dunn (Dennis), Doug Hawes (Beth), Jennifer Goggans, Justin Goggans, Crystal Goggans, Kimberlie Mathes, Ashley Goggans, and Amanda Goggans; and great-grandchildren, Noah Pafford, Logan Dunn, Jaylynn Seigh, Haley Hawes, Cammryn Hawes.

Mrs. Goggans was preceded in death by her son, Randy Goggans; brothers, George Homer, David Homer Steve Homer, Ronnie Homer, Dick Homer; and a sister, Dorothy Hackworth.

Family will receive friends between the hours of 10 and 11 a.m., Monday, Nov. 9, with the service following at 11 a.m. at Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home.

Friends may sign the guestbook at www.bas-sokeechobee.com

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home and Crematory, 205 NE 2nd Street, Okeechobee, FL 34972.



Sign guestbooks at
<http://www.legacy.com>

Brantley to appeal for fine reduction

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

Junkyard owner Marvin Brantley is scheduled to appear before the City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board Tuesday night to request a reduction of his latest fine. For over 15 years the code enforcement board and Mr. Brantley have been at odds because of what the code board calls the unsightliness of Mr. Brantley's business. The latest round came at last month's board meeting when Mr. Brantley was again decreed to be in noncompliance beginning Sept. 11, the date of notification of the violation. He was fined \$500 a day for every day of noncompliance. On Oct. 14, the day after the meeting, his property was declared to be in compliance by Fire Chief Herb Smith.

Turning to other business, six property

If you go ...

What: Monthly meeting of the City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board

When: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 10

Where: City Council Chambers, Okeechobee City Hall, 55 SE Third Ave.

owners have been cited for general cleaning and beautification. They are: Super Stop Petroleum, Inc., 510 NE Park St., David and Maria Terrazas, 1012 SE Fifth St., Citimortgage, Inc., 135 SE Thirteenth Ave., Chase Home Finance, 1103 SE Eighth Ave., Bank of New York Trust Co., 805 Se 10th St., and Bank of America, 301 SE Third St.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com.

Okeechobee Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 82. East wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 71. East wind around 10 mph.

Extended Forecast:

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 84. East wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Monday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 72. East southeast wind around 10 mph.

Tuesday: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 83. East southeast wind around 10 mph.

Tuesday Night: A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 68. East southeast wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Roasted Turkeys

The Okeechobee Masonic Lodge is selling fully cooked whole roasted turkeys from 18 to 20 pounds for \$30 each. Orders must be placed and paid for by Nov. 21. Orders are limited to the first 75 pre-paid orders. Orders can be placed at Porter's Cleaners, 1700 S. Parrott Ave. Cash, checks, Visa and Mastercard accepted. Orders may be picked up on Thursday, Nov. 26, from 9 a.m. until noon at the Masonic Lodge, 107 NW 5th Ave.

Lotteries

The Florida Lottery: Numbers selected Thursday in the Florida Lottery are: **Cash 3:** 1-7-5; **Play 4:** 7-4-6-1; **Fantasy 5:** 4-6-9-19-31. Numbers selected Friday in the Florida Lottery are: **Cash 3:** 6-4-3; **Play 4:** 7-1-4-1.

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School Information Guide: <http://specialsections.newszap.com/SS/Page.aspx?&secid=68371&pagenum=1>

Okeechobee Livestock Market Report

November 1 and 2, 2009

Cows		
Breaking	\$42.00	\$44.00
Cutter	\$37.00	\$36.00
Canner	\$25.00	\$37.00

Bulls		
1500-2000	\$52.00	\$59.50

	Monday	Tuesday
Calves	604	1302
Cows	107	216
Str	0	8
Hfrs	4	43
Bulls	14	15
Yrlngs	35	66
Mix	0	0
Total	764	1650

Med #1	Steers	Hfrs
170-190	145-165	90-115
200-250	125-155	85-97
250-300	122-130	95-105
300-350	104-115	88-97
350-400	97-109	84-93
400-450	95-105	77-84
450-500	87-95	75-81
550-600	84-90	73-79
600-650	81-89	70-78

Med #2	Steers	Hfrs
150-200		90-115
200-250	105-110	85-97
250-300	105-117	75-95
300-350	87-112	60-75
350-400	86-104	78-88
400-450	70-86	70-85

Small #1	Steers	Hfrs
250-300		80-95
300-350	97-110	82-87
350-400	97-102	70-79

Prices continue to hold steady. Looked like steer calves may have been a little higher from 3-500#. Heifers were mostly in mid to upper 70s. Demand looked good. Cows and bulls are just struggling to stay steady. Conrado Rodriguez topped the calf market with a high of \$1.65, bought by Reynolds. Seminole Tribe and CM Rucks Dairy topped the cow market with a high of 48, bought by Central.

No sales the week of Thanksgiving!

See ya next week, Todd



Sales:

Monday at 12 p.m.
Tuesday at 11 a.m.

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Okeechobee Motor Company continues tradition with Driver's Ed program

Despite tough economic times, Okeechobee Motor Company finds a way to provide for a local high school.

With the exception of a few years, Okeechobee Motor Company has been providing cars for Okeechobee High School's Driver's Ed program since 1964.

Okeechobee Motor Company opened its doors in 1946. Dowling Watford, General Manager of Okeechobee Motor Company, is proud that the company has been able to provide vehicles for the school for the past few decades.

"Okeechobee Motor Company has served the community for over 63 years and we are glad to be able to support the youth and the students of Okeechobee High School," Mr. Watford said, "This is just one example of how we help our community."

Kenny Buckner, Driver's Education instructor at Okeechobee High School, appreciates what Okeechobee Motor Company has done for the driver's education program.

"With the economy being the way it is right now, they are still the only company providing vehicles to our class," he said. Mr. Buckner has been the Driver's Education instructor at the school for the last 11 years and is grateful for Mr. Watford's support of the high school.

"He's an Okeechobee High School supporter, 100 percent, and without him we wouldn't have much of a Driver's Ed class because we wouldn't be doing any driving," Mr. Buckner said.

Locally, Okeechobee Motor Company is committed to supporting the high school

and its driver's education program. Nationally, Ford Motor Company encourages safe driving by introducing its new MyKey Technology. This brand new technology enables parents to encourage their teens to practice safer driving behavior and addresses the number one cause of teen fatalities—auto accidents. The new technology allows par-

ents to set speed and radio volume limits, encourage safety-belt usage and ensure critical systems such as traction control remain activated. The relationship between Okeechobee High School and Okeechobee Motor Company is rich in tradition and the company looks forward to supporting the school as best they can in the future.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Doc Watford of Okeechobee Motor Company presented the first Driver's Education vehicle to Okeechobee High School in 1964.

Fire caused \$40,000 in damage in Fort Drum

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

A fire caused damages estimated at \$40,000 to a Tiki bar in Fort Drum Ranchettes on Oct. 29, according to Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue.

No one was hurt in the blaze. County Fire reports said two units and six firemen responded to 325 NE 342nd Trail around noon time and saw a large column of black smoke from miles away in route to the blaze.

Paramedic Everette Wooten said the cause was under investigation. There were

no injuries reported. Firemen were on the scene for just under four hours.

The fire report said heavy smoke and fire were seen coming from an open structure with partial roof collapse when firemen arrived.

The home owner Patrick Long said he had burned a small pile of pine needles near the structure the day before. He heard his dog barking, looked out the window, and saw the blaze.

The fire report said 2,000 gallons of water and five gallons of foam were used to put out the blaze.

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Special to the Okeechobee News/CES

Students of the Week

Central Elementary Students of the Week for Nov. 2, are: Kindergarten students, Caylus Hopewell, Khamari Jones, Anthony Boswell, Wyatt Friend; first graders, Cristofer Gutierrez, Jayce Morgan, Travis Fludd, Jashun Jones, Ganessa Garcia, Jamari Corde, Anacely Velazquez; second grade students, Christian Campos, Cole Younger, Ricard Ayala, Kymber Sauerwine, Juan Leon; third graders, David Solorzano, Elana Rodriguez, Rocky Wise, Paulina Meras, Raeshel Bell and fourth grade students, Hunter Strickland, Kaleigh Sparkman, Quintin Holt, Dustin Holmes, Robin Bell.



Special to the Okeechobee News/OHS

Students of the Week

Okeechobee High School Students of the Week are—Front Row: Cheyenne Fallman, Libby Parker, Roger Duque; Back Row: Chris Wegmann, Kayla Harrison, Eric Aguirre.

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OHS plans homecoming week activities

Okeechobee High School will celebrate Homecoming this week.

Daily activities are planned at the high school. The members of each class who dress according to the theme for that day will be counted. Classes will be ranked in order of percent of participation each day and points will be awarded. All dress days relate to the "Battle of the Bands" theme.

Student dress and participation must be in accordance with OHS rules. Anyone violating school rules should be sent to the office, and points will be taken from his class' score.

Monday Nov 9 -- MIX & MATCH -- Students must wear clothes that do not match. They may wear shorts only if participating in the dress of the day. Shorts must still satisfy school guidelines.

Tuesday, Nov. 10 - HIP HOP DAY -- Students will dress in the Hip Hop style. Student must meet the school guidelines.

Wednesday, Nov. 11 -- RED, WHITE, & BLUE -- Veterans Day Observation.

Thursday, Nov. 12 SPIRIT DAY-The student class will dress as follows: Seniors: Camouflage JUNIORS: Purple SOPHOMORES: Gold.

Friday, Nov. 13: Students must dress according to theme "Battle of the Bands". Sophomores - 90's - Juniors - 70's Seniors - 80's freshman-Millennium.

On Thursday, Nov. 12 the school will host a Night Float Parade at 6 p.m. in downtown Okeechobee, followed by a pep rally and bon fire at Okeechobee High School.

On Friday, Nov. 13, the Homecoming Football game will start at 7:30 p.m. The Homecoming Queen will be announced during halftime festivities.

The Homecoming Dance will be Saturday, Nov. 14.



Okeechobee News/K. Elsen

Two horses caught near river

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office captured two mares on South Florida Water Management Property near Basinger last week. The horses have been tested negative Coggins. If the owner does not claim the horses within three days of the advertised notice (which appeared in the Nov. 6, Okeechobee News) the horses will be sold at public auction. The two mares, one black and one chestnut, are domestic horses which were apparently running with a group of mustangs that have been seen in the Basinger area for a few months. They are being kept at the Okeechobee Cattlemen's old rodeo grounds on U.S. Highway 441. To claim the horses, the owner must pay the impound and holding fees. Deputies are still trying to catch approximately 15 horses which are still loose on water management property.

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<p>"ROOMY! ROOMY! ROOMY!"</p> <p>Not only does this two story home have 4Bd 2.5Ba, living room family room, eat in kitchen & dining room, there is also a 3 car garage. MLS# 203405 \$154,900 Call Wendy Bostwick 863-697-6716</p> <p>NEW LISTING</p>	<p>"1 ACRE OF TRANQUILITY"</p> <p>1988 DW in great shape on 1 acre in Otter Creek. Lg master suite w/lg bath & garden tub. Yard has flowers and beautiful oaks. MLS# 202810 \$98,000 Call Sheryl Byrd 863-634-3572</p>

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Grandparent's week

North Elementary School students recently celebrated grandparent's week. Austin Waldron with his grandmother celebrating grandparents week.

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New children's health center groundbreaking planned

Stimulus funding adds new pediatric center locally

On Thursday, Nov. 12, at 3:30 p.m. federal stimulus funds will work their magic in Okeechobee County when Florida Community Health Centers, Inc. will break ground on a new pediatrics and dental center. Florida

Community Health Centers received a \$1.6 million grant which will provide seed funding for the construction of the \$3.5 million pediatric and dental center in Okeechobee County. The event will take place on the site of the new facility located at 2015 Highway 441 North in Okeechobee (across the street from Raulerson Hospital. Look for the big white tent.

The new pediatrics and dental center is scheduled to open Fall 2010. The Center will be appropriately named the Dr. Fred Brown Children's Health Center, in recognition of the care and commitment of Dr. Fred Brown who has been caring for generations of Okeechobee families for nearly 30 years.

"Florida Community Health Center (FCHC) is to be applauded for the decades of medical and dental care it has provided Okeechobee residents. In addition, to providing outstanding health care, FCHC has educated and trained so many health professional students. Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine has graduated many physicians who received

outstanding educational training at the FCHC Okeechobee centers. Today they are practicing physicians. Many thanks are extended to FCHC's dedicated, highly professional staff," stated Dr. James Howell, Department of Rural Medicine Chair at Nova Southeastern University and Florida's first Secretary of Health.

The mission of Florida Community Health Centers, Inc. (FCHC) is to provide accessible, cost-effective, high-quality, comprehensive primary and preventive health care to all persons regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.



Special to the Okeechobee News/

Students of the Week

Everglades Elementary students selected as students of the week included Kindergarten students, Colten Courson, Emily Pereyra, Trinity Reynolds, Joann Hickman, Morgan Gurrola; first graders, Itzabelly Meza, Caleb Reynoldo, Tiadora Sontay, Tristen Lewis, Rion Ernst, Destiny Kirkland; second grade students, Saul Garcia, Alexis Torres, Skyla Stanley-Chism, Rebecka Mims, Ayanna Luevano, Peyton Jarriel, Kara Hawk; third graders, Shian Koebnik, Allan Portocarrero, Sebastian Hull, Magdalena Moran, Alexis Eastman, Patricia Fussell; fourth grade students, Sonia Delgado, Bailey Hansen, Kayla Aguilar, Janavise Futch, Austin Cloud; fifth graders, Richard Spiess, Alex Lackey, Aubrie Holmes, Alise Geary, Brooke Arnold. Congratulations! to our many outstanding students.

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Special to the Okeechobee News/Teresa Chandler

Sheriff takes 8

Seacoast National Bank supported the 17th Annual Skip Bryant golf tournament on Oct. 17. Sheriff Paul May and wife Delores staked out hole #8 at the Skip Bryant golf tournament. Hole #8 was a \$50,000 win for a hole in one and Sheriff May wanted to witness that one!

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New Hampton Inn opens with celebration

Vero Beach based developer Kite Properties, LLC recently celebrated the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting at the new 85-room Hampton Inn in Okeechobee. Atlanta-based Hotel Equities serves as the managing partner with Mary Chesley as the hotel's General Manager.

The hotel staged an open house and invited the local businesses and community members to tour the state-of-the-art facility. Dignitaries on hand for the festivities included Keith Kite, Founder and Managing Member, Kite Properties; Kelly Kite, Kite Properties; Fred Cerrone, president and CEO of Hotel Equities; Maureen Burroughs, president, Okeechobee Main Street; James Kirk, Mayor of Okeechobee, Kathy Scott, executive director, Okeechobee County Tourism Development Council; and Candace Berk, executive director, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce.

Properties; Fred Cerrone, president and CEO of Hotel Equities; Maureen Burroughs, president, Okeechobee Main Street; James Kirk, Mayor of Okeechobee, Kathy Scott, executive director, Okeechobee County Tourism Development Council; and Candace Berk, executive director, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce.

"We are delighted that the Okeechobee community has welcomed the hotel's arrival in the market," said Keith Kite, Founder and Managing Member of Kite Properties. "Our guests are in good hands with Hotel Equities' award-winning hotel management."

Backed by its 100 percent satisfaction guarantee, Hampton Inn provides guests with Cloud Nine, the Hampton bed experience, plus complimentary hot breakfast and high-speed wireless Internet access. Features include an exercise room, an outdoor heated pool and a meeting room available for rent.

The Hampton Inn is conveniently located near Lake Okeechobee at 1200 N.E. Park Street in Okeechobee. It fronts Florida S.R. 70, one half mile east of U.S. 441. For more information and to make reservations, please call 863-824-0003 or visit them online at www.hampton.com.

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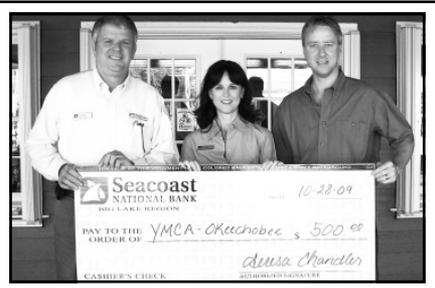
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Special to the Okeechobee News/Teresa Chandler

YMCA-Okeechobee
Seacoast National Bank donates \$500 to the YMCA study project. The study cost is \$20,000 and with the efforts of the local committee the amount raised is at \$14,500.00. To help, please call Brandon Tucker 863-763-4010. I-r Jon Geitner/Regional Manager, Teresa Chandler/Marketing Manager and Brandon Tucker/Event Chair.



Submitted photo

At the recent Okeechobee Hampton Inn grand opening ribbon cutting (left to right) are Maureen Burroughs, president, Okeechobee Main Street; Fred Cerrone, president and CEO, Hotel Equities; Mary Chesley, general manager, Hampton Inn-Okeechobee; Kelly Kite, Kite Properties; James Kirk, Mayor of Okeechobee, Kathy Scott, executive director, Okeechobee County Tourism Development Council; and Candace Berk, executive director, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce.

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Seniors hope to lead girls hoops to post season

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Jewel Buck and Markeisha Youmans have played a long time together. They grew up together and played at Yearling Middle School before becoming varsity players. Both enter their senior year with visions of playing college ball and earning college degrees. Both are also excited about the team's prospects this year.

Markeisha, whose sister Calandra is also on the squad, predicts another winning season with a better finish. She also played in the off season and keeps herself in excellent condition. "I think things will go well this year. Many of us have played five or six years together. I think we were just used to each other. It's going to be hard, but you have to work hard to get anywhere."



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Senior basketball players (l-r) Markeisha Youmans, Jewel Buck and Keighly Stewart, are ready to lead the team to new heights.

"I feel we'll be real competitive this year. I trust my team. We have to work hard and I feel we'll do better this year," Buck stated. The theme for this year's team could very well be unfinished business. Both girls said they were disappointed with how last year ended, with a loss in the first round of the district tournament. Buck said the players get along well and have a lot of fun together. She worked hard in the off season by playing travel ball, and attending several basketball camps. She thanked her mother, Emma Jean Urbina for her support of her basketball career.

Transfer to make immediate impact

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Most of the time Okeechobee doesn't get a lot of transfer students who have a lot of athletic talent. This year things have changed as the girls basketball program is excited about a new player who could lead the team to the post season for the first time.

for my parents. I'm totally supportive of what is most important to our family," she said.

Coach Tony Sherlock is glad to have Stewart on the squad. She will become an immediate starter and substantially improves the teams outside shooting ability. Stewart said she has been welcomed with open arms by her new teammates, "I really like being on this team," she said. "They make me feel right at home. I get along with everyone. I like it here."

Keighly Stewart was a three year starter at Mason County Central in Lundington, Mich. She moved here with her family in the off season, and lives at Rollins Ranch. Her parents, Kenny and Jenny, got an opportunity for a new job and although she hated to leave her friends and teammates, she is glad to be in Okeechobee. "It's a lot different than Michigan, but I really like it, whatever is best

Stewart also has two younger brothers. Jimmy, who will play basketball at OHS this year, and Jacob an eighth grader at Yearling.

Stewart admits basketball is very important in Michigan. Support and fan interest is more laid back in Florida. She predicted that she will face tougher competition in Florida than she would have up north.

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Volleyball season ends in regional quarterfinal

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee High School Lady Brahmins lost to powerful Merritt Island 26-24, 25-18, and 25-11 in the Class 4A Regional Quarterfinal Wednesday night.

Okeechobee finished the season with a record of (20-11). Merritt Island (21-4) moved on to host Jensen Beach in the semifinals.

Okeechobee Coach Todd Jones said Merritt Island was a good team but that he was disappointed that his team didn't play better, "I definitely think we could have won. It was frustrating. When you work so long and so hard on something and you lose so badly, it kind of

leaves a bad taste in your mouth."

Okeechobee played well in the first game as they matched Merritt Island point for point until the final three points. Jones said Okeechobee did below average on their passing and defense in the second and third games.

"Once the passing falls apart, everything else does to. It was a downhill spiral after we lost the first game," he said.

Jones said game three was atrocious as the girls appeared to get frustrated with themselves and their teammates, "If it had been a close match and a hard fought battle, I wouldn't be nearly as disappointed as I am. Things just fell apart for us."

Okeechobee bowler qualifies for state tournament

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Freshman James Steiert has quickly made a name for himself when it comes to bowling. He finished third overall at the District 8 tournament last week as he knocked down 649 pins leading Okeechobee boys to a sixth place finish.

Steiert said he felt good about his work at the district although he felt he could have done better in the last frame, "I feel pretty good," he said. "I've been watching all the scores and I know mostly everyone. I know their weakness. I just try to bowl."

Steiert has been bowling for eight years. He took up the sport when he was seven years old, and liked the sport. He's never stopped bowling and is now a member of the United States Bowling Congress. He also goes to Lake Wales to work at a bowling training center. He's bowled in Stuart leagues for the past three years to improve his game.

Steiert also went to national tournaments in the past three years. He visited Niagara Falls in 2007, Detroit, Mich. in 2008, and In-



James Steiert

dianapolis, Ind. this year.

Steiert maintains he is not going to be intimidated by playing the best bowlers in the state. He said he plays a lot of tournaments with talented bowlers.

"I'm excited," he said. "I think it should be a lot of fun. I watched the tournament last year. Hopefully I'll bring a win to Okeechobee. I've bowled in a lot of tournaments. I'll treat it like another tournament and do the best I can."

Steiert said he thinks the Okeechobee bowling program is on the upswing. He praised new Coach Tony Sherlock for his tips and guidance about the sport.

He noted his goal is to get a college scholarship. He also would like to be a professional bowler some day. He said his parents, Jimmy and Laurie Steiert, have supported him all the way. He stated they are proud he's made it to the state tournament.

The state tournament will be held next Tuesday and Wednesday at Boardwalk bowl in Orlando.

O.L.G.A. Results

Ladies of the Okeechobee Ladies Golf Association played their weekly tournament at the Okeechobee Golf and Country Club on Thursday, Nov. 5. First place winner was a tie between Joyce Huffman and Saba Cur-

ren. Second place went to Nancy McAlinden and fifth place went to Fran Dierig. For information about O.L.G.A., please contact Okeechobee Golf & Country Club at 863-763-6228.

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Tale of two halves in Brahman game against Rams

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee stood toe to toe for 24 minutes with Palm Beach Lakes Friday night but a strong first half wasn't enough to give Okeechobee its first win of the season.

Palm Beach Lakes (6-3) won the runner up spot in District 15-4A with a 49-20 victory over Okeechobee as they overcame a sluggish, and sloppy first half.

Okeechobee fell to (0-9) despite one of their better efforts this year.

"I feel pretty good to be honest with you," Brahman senior Walt Fortner said, "Especially about the first half." Okeechobee held their first lead of the year and only trailed 21-14 at the half.

"We did our thing. We made a few little mistakes. The other team came out on top. Overall we did our thing. We only have one more stage to hit and we'll be in there," Fortner added.

Brahman Coach Myron Jackson said he tried to devise a game plan that would take advantage of the Rams weaknesses. At times the Brahman moved the ball. In the end it was mistakes and turnovers that made it a lopsided game.

The offensive line blocked well in the first half and the defense appeared to have a lot of energy as they made a number of solid hits.

Okeechobee drove 78 yards in 11 plays on their first series of the game and took a 7-0 lead on a six yard run by Walt Fortner. Okeechobee turned to a power running attack on the first drive and got some excellent blocks up front. D.J. Washington broke loose for a 16 yard run on the drive, and T.J. Allen made a juggling acrobat catch for another big first down.

Palm Beach Lakes responded quickly with a long run on a third down and 12. Emarkis Gunn broke loose for a 65 yard touchdown run to tie the score at 7.

A questionable call cost Okeechobee a touchdown on their next offensive play. Jack Radebaugh threw a swing pass to Fortner that fell incomplete. The referee ruled it was a lateral and Matt Thomas picked it up and returned it 17 yards for a touchdown and a 14-7 Rams lead.

Dylan Ciceroni forced a Rams fumble later in the half at the Lakes 41 yard line. Okeechobee missed on a 47 yard field goal try after they couldn't get a first down.

Fortner came up with big play on defense on

the Rams next drive. Demetrius Moore overthrew his receiver in the flat and Fortner caught the ball in stride and returned it for a 32 yard touchdown to tie the score 14-14.

Lakes drove 64 yards in nine plays late in the second quarter to take the lead for good. Juan O'Farrill rushed for 33 of those yards. Moore ran in a QB sneak from the two yard line to make it 21-14 at the half.

"In the first half we came out sloppy," O'Farrill said, "Coach talked to us at half time and told us we had to pick things up."

O'Farrill said Okeechobee showed us some different things from the film. Coach talked to us. Hey, we've got to start playing Rams football."

Okeechobee appeared to have the momentum to start the second half as they recovered an onside kick at the Lakes 47 yard line. That was the high water mark for Okeechobee as they committed two penalties for 20 yards, lost 14 yards due to a poor center snap, and faced a third down and 44 situation.

Lakes would score on their next three possessions to take control. Tommy Lee Lewis scored on



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Aukeemian Mills and the Brahman wide receivers had a productive night Friday.

a 54 yard touchdown run, O'Farrill added a 50 yard touchdown run, and after a blocked punt, O'Farrill scored on a 16 yard touchdown run.

Matt Thomas scored on a 25 yard touchdown run to end the Lake scoring. Okeechobee's final score came when Cody Bonea fumbled the ball at the Lakes 17 yard line. T.J. Allen scooped up the ball and scored on the fumble return.

Game notes

Okeechobee had a season high in offensive yards and first downs. The Brahman did fumble the ball away three times.

Terrance Allen had a season high with five pass receptions for 62 yards. Walt Fortner added an interception late in the first half.

Palm Beach Lakes made a number of dumb penalties that helped the Brahman cause in the first half.

Josh McCall made a number of key hits including one that dropped Deon Charles for a three yard loss in the first half. Fortner and Deforest Shanks also had tackles behind the line of scrimmage for Okeechobee.

Okeechobee honored six seniors before the game. Seniors on the team this year are Walt Fortner, Garth Streibel, Justin Conrad, Josh McCall, David Carter and Terrance Allen. All of the senior cheerleaders, band members, and participants in fall sports were honored before the game.

Next week season finale is homecoming. Clewiston will provide the competition. The annual homecoming parade will be held on Thursday night at 6 p.m. in downtown Okeechobee.

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Public Notice

CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT BOARD MEETING NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board will be meeting on Tuesday, November 10, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. City Hall, 55 SE 3rd Ave, Rm 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED that no stenographic record by a certified court reporter will be made of the foregoing meeting. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at said meeting upon which any appeal is to be based. Please contact Sue Christopher, 863-763-4423, or website www.cityofokeechobee.com, to obtain a copy of the agenda. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 persons needing special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the Fire Department at 863-763-4423 for assistance. by: Jamie Gamiotte, Code Board Chairperson 338564 ON 11/8/09

PUBLIC NOTICE The 19th Judicial Circuit is offering a Request For Proposal for a Residential Foreclosure Mediation Manager. Information is available on our website www.circuit19.org or through Court Administration, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Suite 217, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986. 772-807-4383. Deadline for submission is December 7, 2009 @ 2:00 PM. 338298 ON 11/8/09

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Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL ACTION CASE NO. 47-2009-CA-000617

CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC SUCCESSOR BY MERGER TO CHASE MANHATTAN MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff, VS. RAMIRO RODRIGUEZ, et al Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION TO: RAMIRO RODRIGUEZ LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: 3617 SW 20th Street Okeechobee, FL 34974 CURRENT ADDRESS: UNKNOWN

ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST THE HEREIN NAMED INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSE, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEE, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property in OKEECHOBEE County, Florida:

LOT 17, BLOCK 8, OAK PARK SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 3, PAGE 3 PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses within 30 days after the first publication, if any, on Florida Default Law Group, P.L., Plaintiffs attorney, whose address is 9119 Corporate Lake Drive, Suite 300, Tampa, Florida 33634, and file the original with this Court either before service on Plaintiffs attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or petition.

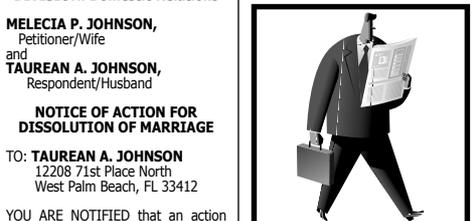
WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court on this 3rd day of Nov. 2009. Sharon Robertson Clerk of the Court By: Linda F. Young As Deputy Clerk 338222 ON 11/8,15/09

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Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2009 DR 451 DIVISION: Domestic Relations MELECIA P. JOHNSON, Petitioner/Wife and TAUREAN A. JOHNSON, Respondent/Husband NOTICE OF ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE TO: TAUREAN A. JOHNSON 12208 71st Place North West Palm Beach, FL 33412 YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action has been filed against you and that you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on attorney for Petitioner, MELECIA SIMPSON, whose address is: Sasha A. Watson 121 South Orange Avenue Suite 1500 Orlando, FL 32801 Your answer and or written defenses are due within 30 days of 1st publication date. Before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter, you

on or before 11-17-02, and to file the original of the written defenses with the clerk of this court either before service or immediately thereafter. Failure to serve and file written defenses as required may result in a default entered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition. Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request. You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Notice of Current Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed to the address on record at the clerk's office. WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings. Dated: 10/15/09 Robert W. Germaine, CLERK Clerk of the Circuit Court 337919 ON 11/1,8/09



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are required to also file the original with the Clerk of this Court at:

Okeechobee County Clerk of Court 312 Northwest 3rd Street Okeechobee, FL 34972

If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition. Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request.

You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Notice of Current Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed to the address on record at the clerk's office.

WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.

SHARON ROBERTSON, CLERK Arlene Nealis Deputy Clerk 337889 ON 11/1,8,15,22/09

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY, FLORIDA Case No.: 09-001074-FCS

IN RE THE MARRIAGE OF: Michelle Renee Lighty, Wife and Gregory Allen Lighty, Husband

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: Gregory Allen Lighty (Address Unknown)

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage has been filed in this court. You are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, on Petitioner's attorney, whose name and address are:

Keith A. Peterson, Esquire Law Offices of Peterson, P.A. 101 NW 5th Street Mulberry, FL 33860

on or before 11-17-02, and to file the original of the written defenses with the clerk of this court either before service or immediately thereafter. Failure to serve and file written defenses as required may result in a default entered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition. Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request. You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Notice of Current Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed to the address on record at the clerk's office. WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings. Dated: 10/15/09

Robert W. Germaine, CLERK Clerk of the Circuit Court 337919 ON 11/1,8/09

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers filled in.

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!

Completed 9x9 Sudoku grid.

ANSWER:

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- ACROSS 1 Olfactory enticement 6 Fashion show strutter 11 Chugalug's opposite 14 65-Down-strengthening exercise 15 Online surfers, e.g. 16 Cyberaddress, briefly 17 Franklin's almanac-writing alter ego 19 "Right to bear arms" gp. 20 Flower holder 21 Scarlett of Tara 22 Port in Yemen 23 Detroit labor org. 25 Furius 27 Young, promising fellow 32 Hosp. staffer 33 1/12 of a foot 34 Conspiring band 37 Solemn vow 39 Woman's golf garment 42 Nevada city 43 Before surg. 45 Consider 47 Enjoy Aspen 48 Beneficent biblical traveler 52 Cocktail maker 54 Actor Affleck 55 "___ brilliant, and the slithy ...": Carroll 56 Beautiful, in Bologna 59 Business garb 63 Dine 64 F. Scott Fitzgerald title character, with "the" 66 "You ___ here" 67 Paris Hilton's sister 68 Nigeria neighbor 69 Hosp. VIPs 70 Theater employee 71 Garden shovel 2 Civil uprising 3 Nebraska tribe 4 Cooring sound 5 Mo. when 1040s are due 6 "___ Ado About Nothing" 7 Labor Dept. arm 8 Sweetheart 9 Grocery trip, say 10 Leary's turn-on 11 Church garb 12 Flawed, as sale mdse. 13 Hangar occupant 18 Hawkeyes, statewide 22 Clamorous 24 Sushi tuna 26 "Dancing with the Stars" network 27 Broadway disaster 28 On ___ with: equal to 29 Blends together into a whole 30 "Bleah!" 31 Valerie Harper sitcom 35 "Puppy Love" singer Paul 36 Pork cut 38 Fish catchers 40 Dream state acronym 41 Pekoe packet 44 "The Raven" poet 46 Desert Storm chow, initially 49 Rubbish 50 Oration 51 Arched foot part 52 Second-string squad 53 Emmy or Oscar 57 Tahoe, for one 58 Astronomical distance meas. 60 Annapolis inst. 61 Footnote abbr. 62 Daly of "Cagney & Lacey" 64 Wildebeest 65 Tummy muscles

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

Completed crossword puzzle grid with words filled in.

xwordeditor@aol.com

Large crossword puzzle grid with some numbers filled in.

By Donna S. Levin (c)2009 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

Seniors hope to lead girl's soccer to success

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Hailey Venables, Janna Mullis and Megan Clements are the only seniors on this year's varsity girls soccer team.

All three are excited about the upcoming season, which will be delayed a bit, due to a recent change in coaches.

Venables said she has been very impressed with her teammates at practice. She

has played three years of soccer at the high school, and made varsity for the first time this year. She has played youth soccer since she was seven years old.

"I think things are going good. There's a lot more running, but the girls get along good and I think we'll get a lot better. I can't wait to play a game," she said.

Mullis has been on the varsity for three years. She will be looked on to provide leadership on the team this year. "I'm pretty

confident; I think we will do great. I've seen improvement over last year. We are running a lot and getting a lot more work on the field and getting more skills."

Mullis said there is a little more pressure on the seniors this year because it is a young team. She noted that the pressure is a good thing for the older girls because it gives them more confidence and also makes them work harder.

"I want to give these girls a good year.

I definitely see a successful year. I like the new coach and feel it will be positive," she added.

Mullis had played soccer for nine or ten years having started when she was in OCRA. She said in life you need to have endurance both on and off the field.

Clements will join the season as their goal keeper at the conclusion of the volleyball season.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Emily Raulerson fires a shot on net during a recent girls soccer practice.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Brittney Ball (left) practices her scoring touch as Hailey Venables looks on during a recent girls soccer practice.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Janna Mullis is being counted on to provide senior leadership to the girls soccer team this year.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Hailey Venables is excited about making the varsity team this year. She is one of three seniors on the squad.

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