

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 100 No. 142

Friday, November 27, 2009

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Holiday Happenings ... Page 6

Index

Classifieds.....	15-17
Community Events.....	6
Crossword.....	17
Obituaries.....	6
Opinion.....	5
Speak Out.....	4
Sports.....	1
Weather.....	5

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County to have new EOC by early 2011

By Pete Gawda
 Okeechobee News

Before the 2011 hurricane season Okeechobee County should have a state of the art emergency operations center (EOC). At their meeting on Nov. 12, Okeechobee County Commissioners awarded a contract for the building. Construction is expected to start early in 2010 and will take about 12 months.

For a time, during recent budget debates, it appeared that the EOC project would be put on hold. However, due to the depressed economy, the bids came in much lower than anticipated.

Commissioners were made an offer they could not refuse. The 2008/09 budget contained \$5.6 million for the EOC. That was the estimated cost of the construction. The budgeted amount contained state and federal grants totalling \$1.5 million. If commissioners had delayed action until next year, they would have lost that grant money.

The low bid was \$3,499,000. Adding \$95,000 for a radio tower brought the total cost to \$3.6 million. Subtracting the grant from that total and allowing for fees and a 5 percent contingency brought the county's cost down to \$2.4 million, a figure some commissioners thought was a real bargain.

The current EOC, located in the old county hospital building, is very cramped for space during emergencies. The new building, which will be built to withstand 185 mph winds, will have sufficient space to house everyone who would be involved in combatting an emergency. The new building will also house the 911 communications center and the sheriff's dispatch center. Calls to 911 could still be received, even during a hurricane. There will be a media room with the facilities for a live video feed. The building will be designed to be self contained for up to seven days with a generator, well, and sewage collection tanks.

The EOC currently shares the old county hospital building with the building planning department. Some time in the near future the building department will move to the health department building. The EOC will remain in its present location until the new building, which will be built in the area between the sheriff's office and county/fire rescue station 1, is completed. Then the old hospital building will be torn down. *Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com.*

Young angler hopes to go professional

By Charles M. Murphy
 Okeechobee News

Kyle Monti has been fishing since he was a small child and knew right away that he loved the sport and wanted to pursue it.

Monti, 17, a senior at Okeechobee High School, is now a member of the BFL tour and is competing against some of the best adult anglers in the world on a monthly basis.

"I started by fishing in local tournaments and I did pretty well," he noted.

In 2009, Monti finished ninth in the BFL Everglades Division tournament and finished 17th out of 200 anglers in the BFL Everglades division overall. He also finished 14th at the Lake Kissimmee Super Tournament. He finished 35th out of 200 anglers at the South East Regional held on Lake Seminole in Georgia.

Monti said competing against

adults and the pros will only make him better.

He remembers fishing with his grandfather Ray Alston on Lake Okeechobee at a young age. He was born in Belle Glade and became a member and the president of Big O Teen Anglers. He has been the president of that organization for five years.

He has done well in youth tournaments as well. Monti was second in the state in the Big O Teen Anglers State tournament series in 2006 and 2009. It is officially called the Florida Bass Federation Junior State Championships.

He has had so much success that he now has sponsors like Gambler Lures. He also praised Steve Broughton Construction of West Palm Beach for their support.

"He's been a big help, whatever fees I can't cover at tourna-

See Angler — Page 2



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
 Kyle Monti poses with some of the trophies he's won as a fisherman.

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Angler

Continued From Page 1

ments, he helps out," Monti said.

Monti also praised Margaret Helton, the staff, and even the customers of Garrard's Bait and Tackle in Okeechobee, for their support and advice over the years.

He also thanked Bill and Charlie Hays

who started the Big O Teen Anglers program in Okeechobee. "That got me started. They are really good local people."

Monti was a gifted athlete, but a leg injury curtailed his football career. He had played for Glades Day School and Okeechobee on the gridiron before the injury.

Monti intends to turn professional but also wants a college education. He said that many colleges now have fishing teams that compete for national titles and also offer

scholarships. He said the University of Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University and Auburn were three of his top college choices.

Monti also does well in the classroom as he has carried a 3.3 grade point average in school. He was also a member of the Brahman golf team this year.

Monti also intends to compete in a January BASS Open on Lake Okeechobee planned for January.

"I try to fish against the pros when I can.

This event will bring a lot of people to the community and really help out."

Monti also thanked his parents, Tonya Stamm of Okeechobee and John Monti of Belle Glade for their support of his fishing career. "My dad taught me the basics, and my mom would drive me to Okeetantie at 4:30 a.m. to fish, and then drive me to all of the tournaments. She really helps out with everything."



Special to the Okeechobee News/Teresa Chandler

Help for local families

The Church of God of Prophecy helped several families this season with a Thanksgiving dinner. The church donated seven complete meals to the American Red Cross for families in need and two meals to CASTLE (Child Abuse Services, Training & Life Enrichment.) The church donated 40 meals total to families in Okeechobee. For more information, please contact the church at 863-763-4654. Julie Shook/American Red Cross, Candy Nelson/Church of God of Prophecy Community Outreach Coordinator and Debbie Riddle/American Red Cross Branch Manager.



from *Happy Holidays*

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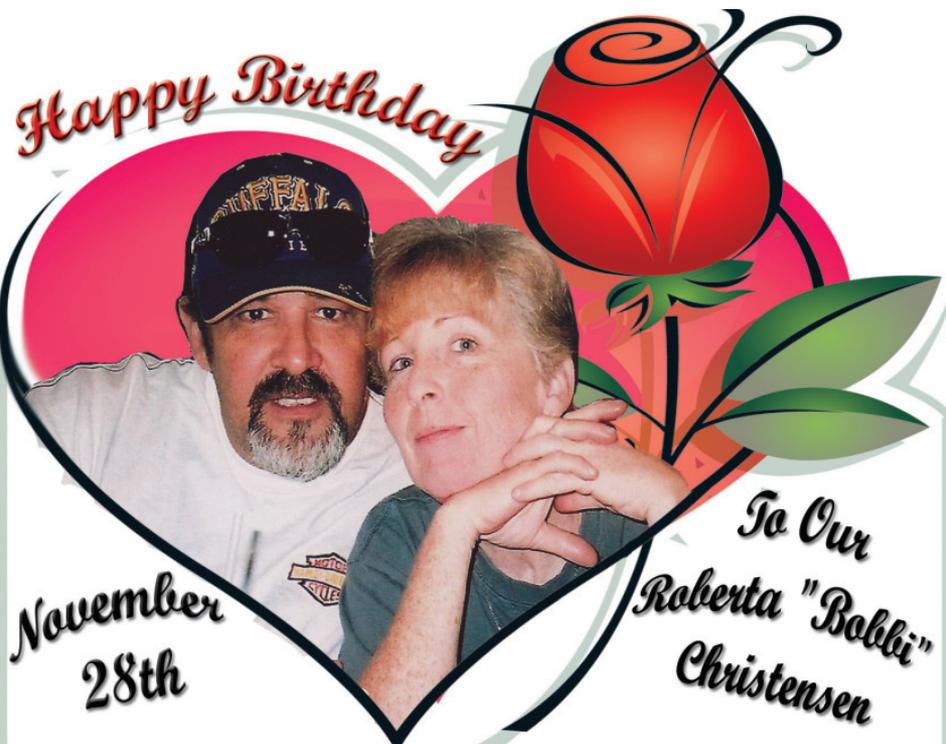
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November 28th

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 I Love You Honey. Happy Birthday.. Your Family Misses you so Much...
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Local woman loses \$4,000 in telephone scam

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

It's happened again: a local woman was bilked out of over \$4,000 by a scammer telling her she had just won \$2.5 million in a lottery she never entered.

However, when a second lady received a similar call from a scammer she was able to quickly get rid of him.

"She kind of laughed at the guy and told him 'I'll go for your little scheme, so why don't you meet me down at the police department?' He hung up," recounted Detective Bill Saum, of the Okeechobee City Police Department.

The investigator declined to release the names of the two women and would only say that they both live in Okeechobee.

While the two outcomes were different, the scam was the same: both ladies were told they had just won a lottery. Now, all they had to do was send money to take care of different fees and taxes to an address in Jamaica.

In the first woman's case, she was con-

vinced that she had won and was willing to send money. In fact, she sent money via Western Union on 15 different occasions and ended up losing \$4,481.82, said Detective Saum.

The victim was also told that she had won a brand new Mercedes and that some of the money would be used to get her new car to the U.S.

She made the first payment of \$243.40 on Sept. 4.

"She was convinced that the man from Jamaica had spent the night at a local motel in preparation of giving her a check for \$2.5 million—right after she was to send \$700 more to seal the deal," the detective said of how the scam came to an end for her on Nov. 18. "She did not send it and came to me."

Still, she was convinced that the scammer would be at the bank waiting for her.

"The whole thing was just so sad," said Detective Saum. "She wanted me to go to the bank with her 'just in case it's real,'" he said. "I followed her to the bank and we

walked in, but there were no men in there at all. This poor lady was just lost."

Luckily, he added, the loss of over \$4,000 did not wipe out the 70-year-old woman's checking account.

He then went with the lady to change her cell phone number. While doing that, the woman learned she had 28 voice mails from the scammers from the day before. Detective Saum said this number does not reflect the times she actually spoke with them.

"We got her phone number changed, as well as her bank account," the detective pointed out. "However, we just don't know what information she gave them."

Detective Saum said both scams were being conducted by the same people because the same names were used—Richard Richman, Josh Carter, Romaine Minto and Rajio Reid. He said both women talked to a Richard Richman.

"They are real people talking, but the names are most likely made up for the scam," he said.

Another similarity between the two cases

was that the victims were told to send their money to a Western Union at 102 Main St., Montego Bay, West Indies, Jamaica. Detective Saum did a search and found there is no such address.

Scammers often times use Western Union or money grams instead of the post office so they can avoid investigations by the United States Postal Service.

"And all you have to do is show an ID to pick up the stuff," pointed out the detective.

Although the message has become repetitive, Detective Saum again offered these suggestions to avoid losing money to scammers: if it sounds too good to be true, it is; if you have any doubt about the veracity of the caller or the deal they're offering, hang up; and, if you win a legitimate lottery you won't be asked to pay any taxes or fees.

"The sad part is, when these people are from outside the United States we cannot touch them," he added.

Pedestrian arrested on drug charges

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

An Okeechobee woman was arrested on felony drug charges after she was found walking in traffic in front of a bar on N.W. Park Street.

Amber Lee McClure, 24, S.E. 35th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Friday, Nov. 20, on three felony counts of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

She was also arrested on a misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

McClure was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail under a bond of \$20,500.

An arrest affidavit by Officer Belen Reyna, of the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD), states that he found McClure walking in the area of S.R. 70 W. in front of Kahootz Draft House and that she appeared to be intoxicated.

OCPD Officer Kelley Margerum was called to the scene and during a search of McClure's person she reportedly found a clear pipe with wire mesh concealed in the woman's clothing.

Officer Reyna stated that he then searched the woman's purse and found five hydromorphone pills, seven alprazolam pills and three temazepam pills.

Hydromorphone is a schedule II narcotic, while alprazolam and temazepam are both schedule IV narcotics.

The officer's report stated that the pills were taken to a certified pharmacist for identification.

Radio Club hosts Hamfest in the Woods

Okeechobee Amateur Radio Club will host a Hamfest in the Woods on Saturday, Nov. 28 at Freedom Ranch, 11655 U.S. 441 SE. Enjoy a \$6 breakfast of eggs, sausage, gravy, biscuits and coffee. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. a cracker cowboy meal of roast beef, mashed potatoes, beans, slaw, dessert and drink will be served for \$10. In addition to the hamfest, at 10 am. Gordie Peer, former western movie stuntman, will be entertain-

ing with whip and rope tricks. There will also be bluegrass music.

All proceeds from entry fees go to the Okeechobee Amateur Radio Club. Proceeds from campers and food sale go to Alpha Ministries.

For more information email w4qjp@sstowers.com or call 863-763-9800. For more information on Alpha Ministries visit www.alphaministries.org.

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When Seconds Count, Count on Us

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Medical Directory: <http://specialsections.newsrap.com/SS/Page.aspx?&secid=59786&pagenum=1>

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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!

Forum online

I can't seem to get on your online forum since you changed it. What's wrong? Isn't it working? Editor's note: The updated forum has been back in service since Nov. 14. You may have to create a new computer shortcut to reach it. Go to www.newszap.com. Click on "Okeechobee." On the Okeechobee page, you will see a small box with a map of Florida. Under it are the words "Local issues post your opinion." Click on that and it will take you to the forum. If you have not used the forum before, you will have to register for a login and password. To register, all you need is an email address.

Millions to repay tax credit

I hate to say I told you so, but ... More than 15 million taxpayers might owe the government \$250 or more because of how the IRS last spring set up President Obama's tax break that was designed to help consumers spend the U.S. economy out of recession. Individuals with more than one job and married couples in which both spouses work may have to repay the government \$400, either through a smaller tax refund or a larger tax bill, according to a report released Monday by the Treasury Department's inspector general for tax administration. Social Security recipients who also earn taxable wages might have to repay \$250.



The tax break that Bush gave had to be repaid every year that he gave it out too. I thank God everyday for the good, God fearing Americans that put Obama in power. He's the best thing that has happened to this country. The Lord helps those who help themselves.

Power outages

You know usually we have more of the brown outs on the hot summer days then we did this summer. Now it's fall and as our population begins to increase this flickering power problem surfaces for some users? I haven't experienced this...at least not yet. We're just north of Okeechobee City and on FPL.

Power outages are really common in Florida. Many of the lines are above ground because the water table is so high. Lines are hit by trees. They even had some lines messed up with a bird with a large wingspan touched two lines at the same time. Then there's the problem with squirrels and snakes that get into the transformers. I think FPL does a good job keeping the lights on, all things considered.

People who don't like the power company could switch to solar power. Put the panels on your roof and generate your own power. Of course, you probably would still want FPL service for nights and stormy days.

Remember. It's Florida flicker and flash!

What are you thankful for?

I am thankful that I still have a job, even though I am making less money than I did last year. I am thankful that my family has so far been able to make the mortgage payments so we still have a house.

I am thankful that a few years ago when we were looking for a new house, I did not listen to the Realtor who tried to convince us that we should buy a big house. Instead my spouse and I bought a smaller house that we were comfortable we would be able to make the payments on even if one of us should lose their job. Had we bought that big, expensive house we would now be homeless.

I am thankful that I know how to cook because my family cannot afford to go to restaurants anymore.

What am I thankful for? I am thankful for my children. I tell them that every day. Hug your kids every day and tell them how much you love them.

Parade

We are getting ready for the Christmas parade in a couple weeks and there is something I would like to bring up now. When the color guard comes by in a parade, with the American flag, everyone along the sidelines is supposed to stand to show their respect. In other towns, you see people stand up for the flag. Okeechobee people say they respect the flag and get all excited about a flag pin. So why don't we see them all standing up for the flag when it goes by in the parade?

Letter to the editor

Culvert or ditch care?

About six years ago, the County Commission voted to pave the north/south roads in Country Hills Estates. Each home owner, on those roads faced east/west, were charged a rate for their road frontage and some paid double the rate of others. Lots with 17 foot frontage were charged the same price as those who had 330 feet frontage and when brought to the attention of a couple of commission members, the reply was more or less, "too bad." Each lot owner paid some \$2,300 for the road in front of their property. Once they began the construction some number of new culverts was installed, say 100. As this process continued I asked if the culverts were being laid at the correct evaluations and sizing and if I could see the proposed plans. Whoops, not one elevation had been taken prior to the setting of the culverts. The culverts were also laid with many larger sized culverts north—smaller ones to the south. The problem is a drop of some 15 feet in elevation from the north to the south end of roads in Country Hills. The first major rain washed out many of the cross road intersection and had to be repaired and some additional culverts were installed under the crossroads to help relieve the volume of water at the intersections. Any developer is required to produce site plans for drainage and elevation for such drainage, not for county though.

Once the construction was under way, the county took over the culverts and ditches and was to be maintained by them. Herein lies the problems in Country Hills. When

the county comes out and mows, they use a mower that cannot cut down into the ditches for the most part, only the top, road side of the ditch and not the bottom or back side. The cleaning out and around the culverts are also much neglected at driveways and intersections. The solution from what I have observed is just spray weed killer on the problem. The only problem is those grasses just die and end up further blocking the culverts.

So, you may ask, why not just go down and clean out your culvert and ditches yourselves? To answer, some of the properties are just vacant lots and some are owned by elderly and disabled individuals. But the real answer is taxes are paid for this required service. The county has the equipment (millions of dollars worth) to do the job if they would just do the job. If they would just do it correct, not just cosmetic.

The county just made a major improvement in drainage at the end of one street, NE 14th Avenue. Just so happens one of our commissioners lives at the end of this street. New culverts, concrete slopes and paving of the drive entry, something no other property owner has received. Who paid this extra? I'm not going to waste my time to find out because the proof is in the results I see. I do however, want to see some of what I am writing about so I have included some photos.

Would you, the County Commissioners, please do your jobs and see we, the taxpayers, get what we paid for, please!

Tom Murphy, Tax payer



Special the Okeechobee News/Tom Murphy (left) These are the new culverts. You can also see the paved drives. All of these locations are from SE 14th Avenue South of 131st Street. (at right) Fully blocked culvert and there are ditches with weeds higher than the road, just one section of road in front of three properties.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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



Letters to the editor

Impressed with Raulerson Hospital procedures

In the past several months, I have had the perhaps dubious pleasure of having the opportunity to compare our Okeechobee Raulerson Hospital with an ultra modern and highly regarded hospital in Orlando. I was hospitalized in each case for one night and drove myself home from the hospital the next morning. Both surgical procedures involved my heart.

The Orlando visit came first and there were no pre entrance procedures of note. I simply presented myself, went straight to pre op where I was checked in and received the normal procedures of getting gowned, blood drawn, IV needle, site shaved, etc. and then straight to surgery.

The hospital was squeaky clean and all of the doctors, nurses and staff were very professional, competent and caring in their taking care of my medical and personal needs and seeing that I was very well taken care of. An excellent cardiologist did the needed work without any problems either during or post op.

The biggest difference I found at our Raulerson Hospital was their pre admission standards aimed directly at the safety of

the patient, me. Last week, I was required to attend a pre admission interview three days before admission with a wonderful registered nurse who took all the time in the world to carefully go over all the things a surgical patient needed to do or know prior to admission. I have never had this privilege before, these things usually being hurriedly gone over by my doctor, if at all. I didn't even have to ask a question because Nurse Jones was very good at explaining everything.

She got all my paper work necessary such as insurance, med list, and history for required hospital records and then we got to the really impressive part. We went over the medical history in detail, as well as the medicines I'm taking, explaining everything we were doing as we went along. Blood was drawn for a full workup; Pacemakers were carefully explained in detail and she showed me an actual one and explained the post op regimen I would have to follow.

Then we got to my only fear about being in a hospital—MRSA—commonly known as "staph" and what our Raulerson Hospital and its medical team is doing to protect their patients from infection and from this now ubiquitous and very hard to cure germ infection that goes hand in glove with any surgery, anywhere, for four reasons: overuse of common antibiotics has made MRSA

resistant or immune to almost our entire pharmacopoeia of antibiotics; our outer body may be a carrier of germs without it making us sick; surgery involves making an open wound in our body for possible entry, and the reason for or the act of surgery may weaken our normal immune system.

Nurse Jones explained to me that a common and convenient place to test for the MRSA or staph germ is our nose. She lightly ran a swab around inside each of a nostrils and put it in a sterile tube for lab testing. She explained that if it came back positive, I would be given a "super antibiotic" prior to and after surgery. If negative, a common antibiotic.

The night before admission, I was to follow certain procedures, all of which involved using fresh and clean from the washing machine towels, clothing from socks to underwear, and sheets on my bed. Just before going to bed, I was to take what we used to call a "Navy shower." Wet down, shut off the water and then scrub my whole body for five minutes with a surgical antibiotic soap she provided; rinse off and dry, and go straight to bed.

In the morning, just before going to the hospital for admission, I needed to take another identical shower and scrub, put on all clean clothing as above, and go straight to pre op at the hospital.

Next, I was given all of the above information and more in written form and advised if any questions occurred to me after I left to please call her. What a nice lady she is.

At pre op the next morning, all the usual things were done as well as two more things new to me that were aimed at my safety. They drew more blood to double check on my blood type just in case something went wrong during surgery that would require an emergency blood transfusion and they supplied me with a pair of half socks for my feet so I wouldn't be bare footed if I had to get out of bed before I got dressed in my street clothes. A really sensible and necessary precaution against possible infection. My nose swab for MRSA was negative.

Insertion of the pacemaker was done by Okeechobee cardiologist Dr. Shakoor Arain without any problems before or after.

I am so impressed with our Raulerson Hospital and so glad it is here. I send my sincere thanks and appreciation for the outstanding care I received to the Hospital's CEO and Chief of Nursing, Chief of Staff, Chief Dietician for the outstanding and extensive menu of good food, and all of the wonderful nurses, doctors, technicians and everybody at the hospital who took such care to make my short stay safe, successful and comfortable.

God bless you all for putting patients first at Raulerson hospital.

Sincerely
Ed Miller, Okeechobee County
Judge/Sheriff, Retired

Community Calendar

Friday

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 Morgret 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.

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

A group class in **ballroom dancing** is being offered in Okeechobee at Church of Our Saviour Parrish 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.

A.A. meeting from 8 until 9 p.m. at Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 N. Parrott Ave. It will be a closed discussion.

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.

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.

Okeechobee Forecast

Today: Sunny with a high of 66. Winds will be from the north northwest around 10 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear with a low around 40. Winds will be from the northwest around 5 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Sunny with a high near 72. Winds will be from the northwest around 5 mph.

Saturday night: Mostly clear with a low around 49. Winds will be from the north northeast around 5 mph.

Sunday: Sunny with a high near 78. Winds will be from the east northeast around 5 mph.

Lotteries

Florida Lottery — Here are the numbers selected Tuesday: **Cash 3:** 6-4-2; **Play 4:** 6-7-9-8; **Fantasy 5:** 2-9-21-30-31; **Mega Money:** 7-8-13-35 MB 8; **Florida Lotto:** 11-12-15-29-36-42 X 2; **Powerball:** 7-26-36-49-58 PB4 x5. Numbers drawn Wednesday, **Cash 3:** 7-8-0; **Play 4:** 3-7-6-1.

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Holiday Happenings ...

Hospice hosts Festival of Trees through Dec. 5

Hospice of Okeechobee (411 SE Fourth Street) will host the annual Festival of Trees starting Friday, **Nov. 27** through Sunday, Dec. 6. Open daily with no charge for admission. Hours are noon - 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 27, followed by noon-4 p.m. on the weekends and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on weekdays. While you are there enjoying all the many gloriously decorated Christmas trees, do not forget to shop the Christmas Country Store. Funds raised will benefit patient care, including services at The Hamrick Home. For information call 863-467-2321.

Annual tree lighting ceremony

The annual tree lighting ceremony will be held on **Dec. 1**, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall Park, the Okeechobee County School's Chorus group will be participating in this year's event. Santa will also attend.

Santa at City Hall Park

Santa will be available for pictures in City Hall Park on **Dec. 1-3**, 8-10 and 14-15, from 6 until 8 p.m.

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.

Arthur Gerald Williamson, 66

OKEECHOBEE — Arthur Gerald Williamson, age 66, of Phil Campbell, Ala. and formerly of Okeechobee, passed away Sunday, Nov. 22, 2009, at his home.

He was born Sept. 12, 1943, in Michigan to the late Albert and Della Williamson.

He is survived by his wife, Norma Williamson of Phil Campbell, Alabama; children, Kimberly Williamson Arnold (Glenn), Arthur D.B. Williamson and Tonya Williamson Eisenbrey (Charlie) all of Okeechobee; brother, Robert Edmundson, (Maryanne) of Michigan; sister, Shirley Snipes (Bill) of Smithville, Tennessee; four grandchildren, Paige and Preston Arnold and Brittany and Weston Eisenbrey; and two great grandchildren, Jetta and Clayson Osceola.

Visitation will be 4 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, at Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home, where funeral services will be 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29. Interment will follow at Basinger Cemetery.

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 ST, Okeechobee, FL 34972.



Christmas bazaar planned

Buckhead Ridge Christian Church, 1167 Linda Drive, will be have their Annual Christmas Craft Bazaar and Book Fair on Saturday, **Dec. 5**, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. There will be homemade crafts and baked goods. Lunch will be available. If you have any questions please call Suelynn Richardson at 863 357-6500.

Bike Run to benefit Big Lake Missions Outreach

The Old Men Riders is having a 125 mile bike run around Lake Okeechobee on **Dec. 5**, and is asking businesses, individuals and churches to sponsor each participating bike. All bikes and rods are welcome. The money raised will go to Big Lake Missions Outreach. Participants will meet at the movie theatre parking lot at 8 a.m. For more information call Gene Rodenberry at 863-634-1723.

OKMS to hold annual window decorating contest

Okeechobee Main Street invites you to join in on our annual Holiday Window Decorating Contest. Get your window decorated soon! Winners will be announced on Saturday, Dec. 12. If you would like to participate please send your business name and address, contact person and phone number. First place winner will keep our winners plaque in your place of business all year. Email: okms@mainstreetokeechobee.com or call 863-357-6246 for more information.

Annual Christmas Parade

The Chamber of Commerce annual lighted Christmas parade will be held on **Dec. 12**, at 5:30 p.m. along with craft show in Flagler Parks #2 and 3.

Pictures with Santa

The Kiwanis Santa will be available for photos in Flagler Park #4 on **Dec. 12**, 16-19, and 21-23 from 6 until 8 p.m.

The Meaning of Christmas

Oakview Baptist Church, 677 SW 32nd St., will present a Christmas music celebration "The Meaning of Christmas" on Sunday, **Dec. 13**, at 3 and again at 6 p.m.

Celebrate A Life

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All Obituaries now include **Online Guestbooks** where family and friends can share reflections, remembrances and condolences.

Visit:
www.newszap.com

For a complete list of Obituary Notices, click on your community, then click on "Obituaries".

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Annual toy drive under way

The Big Lake Missions Outreach is sponsoring their 15th annual Christmas toy drive for the underprivileged children in Okeechobee County. They are celebrating 15 years of proven ministry, reaching out to the poor and needy in Okeechobee. They are in need of gifts and toys for children one day to teen. They will accept gift certificates, checks made payable to BIG LAKE MISSIONS OUTREACH and cash. Volunteers will then purchase the items needed. Receipts and pick-up are available if needed. Also, foods are always accepted through Dec. 21. For more information call 863-763-5725 or 863-697-6433.

Holiday craft fair planned for Dec. 12 in BHR

Buckhead Ridge Women of the Moose will host a craft fair on **Dec. 12**. Reserve table for choice of indoor or outdoor space. Food, fun, attendance prizes will be available. Advertising provided. New - Destashers - Swap or sale of unused craft supplies, fabrics, tools, patterns. Clean out your craft stash - call Bonnie at 863-357-1556 or Sandooone at 863-357-0060

Shrine club holds New Years event

The Shrine Club will have the "Country Tradition Band" with Ted, Sonny, Fred and Charlie to play music on New Years Eve. Tickets will be \$20 each or \$35 per couple. Tickets include dinner and music. For information call 863-763-3378.

Christmas Cantata planned

The Okeechobee Community choir, in its 11th year under the direction of Sandy Perry, will begin for the presentation of the Christmas Cantata, "A New Birth - A New Beginning" and other seasonal favorites. Last year, 65 singers representing 19 local churches participated. The cantata will be presented the weekend before Christmas, **Dec. 18**, 19 and 20. For more information, call Sandy at 863-634-7714.

Santa is coming to the American Legion

Come one, come all. Veterans and their children are invited to visit Santa at the American Legion Post 64 from noon to 4 p.m. for dinner and toys on **Dec. 19**. Toys for veterans will be available Dec. 19-24. Open registration to qualified veterans, both male and female, will be held during Santa's visit. V.A. Reps will be on hand as well, from Palm Beach V.A. Hospital. For more information call 863-763-2950.

Main Street window decorating contest

Windows for the Okeechobee Main Street Fourth Annual window decorating contest will need to be decorated by **Dec. 10**, this year. Judging will take place on Dec. 12. The winner will receive a plaque. For information call Okeechobee Main Street at 863-357-MAIN.



Blessings of the season

May this holy time of year renew your spirits and deliver an abundance of peace, joy and prosperity to you and yours. For your friendship and support, we feel truly blessed.

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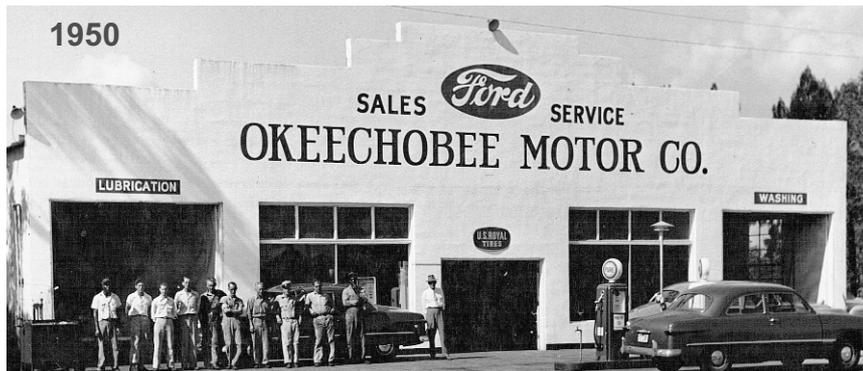
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^{**} Star ratings are part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safercar.gov program



Okeechobee News/Judy Kasten

Business move

Lincare has relocated their offices to 107 S.W. 17th Street, Suite B. The move was made so the facility could expand to meet Okeechobee's needs, according to Angel Huergo, center sales manager. From left to right are: Angel Huergo, Kristina Land, Mickey Albisa and Cindy Warren. Not pictured Keith White. Lincare, a national home respiratory company, has over 1,000 locations nationwide and offers services 24/7 including holidays and weekends. They offer oxygen, nebulizers, nebulizer medications delivered to your door, CPAP/BIPAP therapy, wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, external feeding and in-home patient education. Se habla Espanol.

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ABUTMENT	\$595.00											
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Glades Electric Cooperative, Inc., in our continuing efforts to provide the best possible electrical service to our members, is beginning construction on the transmission line which will feed our new Taylor Creek Substation.

An important step in the construction of this line is the preparation of the right-of-way. People traveling on 441 north of Cemetery Road will soon see land being cleared to accommodate the new line. A 60' wide easement will be cleared from 441 eastward to Cemetery Rd. The north side of Cemetery Road will also be cleared beginning near the entrance of Okeechobee Utility Authority's sewer plant to the north end of Cemetery Road. This clearing will include approximately 30' in the County right-of-way and 30' on the adjacent property owner's land. The transmission line structures will be positioned approximately 40' from the northern edge of Cemetery Road.

We are excited with the progress being made with this project and the improvements to our members' service that we anticipate upon its completion. Glades Electric is proud to be "Neighbors Working for Neighbors".

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Special to the Okeechobee News/Teresa Chandler

Teen Dance at Shrine Club

Teresa Chandler coordinated another teen dance this month to benefit the Shriner's children's crippled/burn center. Young people enjoyed music by DJ Productions/ Mr "S", played the tissue paper game, limbo and hoola hoop. A big thank you goes out to the volunteers, American Red Cross, Shrine Club, Seacoast, Dominos Pizza, Ding-A-Ling Deli, Publix, DJ Productions, East Coast Signs, Dr. Wemmer, WOKC and Okeechobee News.

(At left) The American Red Cross staff volunteered to man the registration for the Shrine Club teen dance on Nov. 21. Volunteers helping out at the dance included, Debbie and Frank Riddle, Julie Shook and Kayla Hinton.



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Walk for Hope to benefit boys and Girls Club

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

A hike has been defined as a walk with a purpose. By that definition Sgt. Tracey Schofield of the Pinellas Park Police Department is definitely planning a hike. His purpose is to walk a mile in the shoes of the homeless and to help the children of his area. He is planning "The Walk for Hope," a walk across the state of Florida from Panellas Park on the west coast to Fort Pierce on the east coast as a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club of Pinellas Park and Pinellas Hope, a homeless shelter that houses 380 people in Pinellas Park.

Sgt. Schofield is planning to make the 200 mile walk in 7 days, walking about 8 hours a day. He will start in front of the Boys and Girls Club at 7 a.m. on Sunday Dec. 13. He will make his way to U.S 19 and follow that highway to S.R. 70, arriving in Ft. Pierce on Sunday, Dec. 19. The route will take him through Okeechobee on the 18th.

The 21 year police veteran said he has contacted police departments and sheriff's offices along the route to see if they have any local charities they would like to promote in conjunction with his walk. Here in Okeechobee, Chief Denny Davis has appointed Lt. Brian Hagan to assist Sgt. Scofield any way possible. Most nights will be spent in hotels along the way. However he said there are some stretches of the road where there are no lodgings. He has a friend who will bring a camping trailer for those stretches.

So far he has collected over \$20,000 for the two charities. He said the idea came to him earlier this year while he was out exercising. At first he thought about walking across Pinellas County, Then he thought about walking across Florida. At that point, he did not even know how far that was. However, he decided he could do it if he trained enough.

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

Douglas Park hosts community event

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The second, "Serve the Community Day" was held on Thanksgiving Day at the Alderman Complex in Douglas Park.

Coordinator Skip Roberts said they expected to serve 150-200 elderly and needy residents at this year's event.

The event is highlighted each year by a flag football game that features current Brahman players against former stars. The game has gone on for at least 12 years.

John Grace, Curtis Jones, Myron Jackson and Nate Pollard were among the former

Brahman greats that were scheduled to appear Thursday.

"Last year approximately 300 people showed up and we served 150 dinners," Roberts said.

"It is always good to have a lot of people come out and support an event like this. It isn't sponsored by any big names. It's a chance to give back to the younger generation."

Roberts said the older Brahman alumnus really enjoy meeting the younger generation and to provide positive role models for the next generation.

Legislative Delegation Public Meeting planned for Dec. 2

The Okeechobee County Legislative Delegation will hold a public meeting from 1 to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 2 at the Okeechobee County Health Department Auditorium, 1728 NW 9th Ave. The delegation will be entertaining concerns and ideas for potential legislation. Members of

the community, as well as local and county government may address the delegation at this time.

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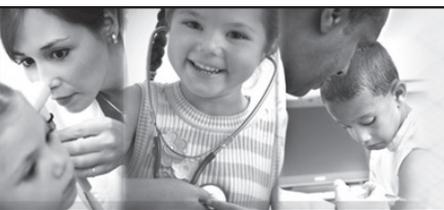
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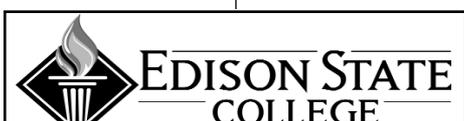
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Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO.: 47-2009-CA-000005

GMAC MORTGAGE, LLC, Plaintiff, vs. R.A. ALMAY, AS TRUSTEE OF THE BRINDABAN TRUST, et al, Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: R.A. ALMAY, AS TRUSTEE OF THE BRINDABAN TRUST
4630 Southeast 27th Street, Okeechobee, FL 34974
Also Attempted At: 316 Wood Dale Dr., Wellington, FL 33414; 180 Royal Pine S circle, Palm Beach, FL 33406; 11924 W Forest Hill Blvd., #22-164, Wellington, FL 33414, and 8124 Northboro Ct., Apt. B, West Palm Beach, FL 33406
Current Residence Unknown

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property:

LOT 5, BRINDABAN FOREST, UNIT 4, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 6, PAGES 2 AND 3, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TOGETHER WITH THAT CERTAIN 1987 ZIMM DOUBLEWIDE MOBILE HOME IDENTIFIED BY VIN NUMBERS: ZZF1525BAC AND ZZF1525AAC.

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it, on Marshall C. Watson, PA, Attorney for Plaintiff, whose address is 1800 NW 49TH STREET, SUITE 120, FT. LAUDERDALE FL 33309 within 30 days after the first publication of this Notice in the THE OKEECHOBEE NEWS and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) disabled person who, because of their disabilities need special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact not later than seven (7) days prior to the proceeding Court Administration at 250 NW Country Club Dr., Fort. St. Lucie, FL 34980. Phone: 772-807-4370; 1.800.955.8771 (hearing impaired) or 1.800.955.8770 (voice impaired). WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court this 13th day of November 2009.

Sharon Robertson
As Clerk of the Court
By: Arlene Nealis
As Deputy Clerk

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The classified ads

FPL assistance programs highlighted

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Florida Power and Light discussed the many energy assistance programs they provide to the area and United for Families discussed the services they provide when the Okeechobee Community Collaborative Council held their November meeting on Tuesday.

Dianne Verner said Florida Power and Light has several energy assistance programs for the elderly, the low income, special needs clients, and the disabled.

She told the group to have their clients contact FPL first, and to investigate the many resources that are available in the community. She said they should also visit FPL.com to find out about these services and to always stress energy conservation.

"In this economy, people who thought they would never ask for help are asking for help," she said.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, a federally funded program, provides help for the disabled, elderly, and homes with small children, when they have trouble paying their electric bills. The household must meet certain income guidelines.

The Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program provides services to those 60 and over in Okeechobee if they have trouble paying their monthly bill. This is for residents who are facing an energy related crisis. The crisis could be impending cut off of utility services, a lack of fuel or wood, a broken heating or cooling system, or other problems. A recipient may receive financial assistance up to twice a year, once during the cooling season, and once during the heating season.

Sheila Miller with Okeechobee Senior Services said there has been an increase in the number of Okeechobee residents that have requested assistance this year.

"People are coming in droves," she said.

The FPL Care to Share program is designed to provide emergency service to customers who are in a crisis situation and unable to pay their electric bill. It is funded through FPL corporate contributions, FPL employee donations, and customer contributions.

Verner said FPL has provided \$11 million in assistance over the past several years and

have served 55,000 households.

There is a local office for the LIHEAP program at 1798 NW Ninth Avenue.

Lea Tate, a representative of United for Families, discussed their programs. United oversees child welfare, foster care, and adoptions in the four counties in the Treasure Coast.

The program serves all children known to have been abused or neglected on the Treasure Coast, and designs, coordinates and oversees child welfare through several local agencies like the Children's Home Society, Family Preservation Services, the Hibiscus Children's Center and Castle.

Tate said her program cannot turn people away, regardless of their economic situation. She said there are approximately 1,200 children on the Treasure Coast served by their programs. That is a reduction of 2,000 kids a few years ago, "We have made it a more



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Lea Tate of United for Families explains their local programs to the CCC Tuesday.

manageable and successful program."

In other actions the Community Collaborative Council reported that the Community Services Council provided a \$1,000 grant to purchase educational board games for needy Okeechobee residents. Florida Power and Light also provided a generous gift card to purchase additional toys. My Aunts House representatives predict they were serve approximately 300 Okeechobee children this holiday season. The CCC also learned that 10 Okeechobee families will be provided Thanksgiving Dinners thanks to a \$500 donation from the St. Patrick's Church of West Palm Beach, and a separate donation from Indian River State College.

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Brahmans disappointed by loss to Clewiston

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Impatience breeds mistakes and that might best sum up Okeechobee High School basketball team's opening night loss Monday to Clewiston in boys hoops.

Okeechobee turned the ball over 25 times and lost in front of an energetic, spirited crowd, 55-54, to their arch rival Tigers.

"Obviously we gave this one away tonight. We had every opportunity to win. We didn't execute in the final minute of the game," Coach Bryan Van Camp said.

He said he was proud his team played hard to the final horn and said despite the loss, he saw a number of positives in the team's effort.

Okeechobee got 20 points from Ricky Nieto, and 10 points apiece from T.J. Allen and Duelle Gore.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Duelle Gore, #32, has been a key performer for Okeechobee this year. He had 10 points against Clewiston.

Allen said he didn't expect this tough a game from Okeechobee, "We had to fight hard and play defense," he said. "If we keep playing defense we'll be good. It's a big rivalry. We played them in a tournament. It was good to beat them." Neither team shot the basketball particularly well. Clewiston led 12-10 after the first quarter despite a nice dunk by Okeechobee's Troy Harper. Okeechobee got it going in the second quarter as they build an 11 point lead, 25-14 after a three pointer by Nieto. After that Clewiston took control as Okeechobee repeatedly took poor shots and turned the ball over. Okeechobee led 29-23 at the half.

Nieto said his teammates got him the ball in good positions, and that was why he shot

well, "I had the hot hand tonight and they kept giving me the ball. Turnovers were our biggest issue tonight. We fought hard. We wanted to get the win tonight, but we'll fix our mistakes and come back better."

After Okeechobee took a 45-39 lead on a bucket by Gore, Clewiston went on a 9-0 run over a four minute period to take a 48-45 lead. Okeechobee had numerous opportunities to score but couldn't get good looks at the basket. The Brahman JV defeated Clewiston 44-26.

Okeechobee is off until Tuesday when they travel to Lincoln Park for their district opener. The Brahmans next home game is Tuesday, Dec. 8, against Suncoast.

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TAX CREDIT EXTENDED TO 4/30/2010!!!!

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	3000-H: Lake access home in Treasure Island. Has detached room that can be used as an extra/guest room. Chain link fenced. \$69,900 MLS# 203427		3004-H: 3/2 home in Treasure Island. Attached garage, pave driveway, large porch. Needs some work. \$75,000 MLS# 203368
	4004-H: Buckhead Ridge Lake Access home on a large cul-de-sac Lot with a lot of potentials. Water on both sides, partial seawall. \$89,000 MLS# 202218		5014-H: North Country Estates 2 story with sitting room, new appliances & tile. 2 car garage & balcony, large mature shady trees. \$165,000 MLS# 203111

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