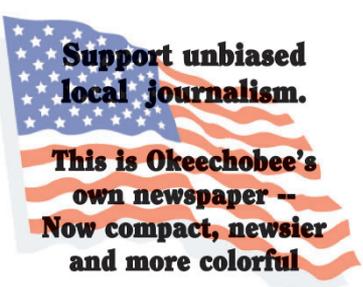


OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 100 No. 152

Sunday, December 20, 2009

75¢ Plus tax



Community plans holiday events ... Page 6

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Lake Levels

13.64 feet
Last Year: 14.14 feet



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

See page 4 for information about how to contact this newspaper.

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Elderly often target of thefts

Exploiting the elderly may have deadly outcome

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

"The things you can do to an elderly person and get away with -- if you did them to a dog you'd go to prison."

Detective Ted Van Deman, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), made no attempt to hide his disdain of those who exploit the elderly when he made that statement. And while Florida laws dealing with the exploitation of the elderly are among the best in the U.S., the detective feels they still fall short of protecting some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Even though exploitation of the elderly is a non-violent act, it

sometimes ends in a deadly manner.

"A lot of times, when elderly folks become victimized financially, the trauma and stress is so great that many times they see suicide as the only way out," Detective Van Deman pointed out. "Sometimes, they just give up and die."

He then alluded to a recent case in which a 72-year-old man did just that.

In May of 2007 the suspect in the detective's case, a nurse's aide, began going to the man's home to help him with his every day affairs, such as shopping and hygiene. The man's only income was his Social Security check that totaled \$1,118.40 each month.

The aide began 'helping' him with his financial affairs, which was outside her scope of duties, states the detective's report. This 'help' consisted of her filling out his checks for bills then having the

man sign them.

"The victim required this assistance because he was too confused to handle his affairs," said Detective Van Deman.

About a year later, the aide became too ill to work and another aide was sent to the home. When the man asked the new aide to help with his financial affairs, she refused. She told him they were not allowed to do this.

On May 18, 2008, the man contacted his son who lives in Palm Beach County to help him with his finances. It was at this point the irregularities in the man's checking account were found.

After working on his father's checking account for three days, the son and his wife discovered a number of checks that were made out to the first nurse's aide for cash. One of those documents was for \$1,500. There were a number of checks made out to 'cash'

which struck the son and his wife odd since the only cash ever used by the victim was to pay for his haircuts and lawn care.

The son also found where his father's grocery purchases had gone from his normal \$50 a week to nearly \$200 a week.

In all, the son estimated that \$2,825.12 was taken from the man. The man's son and his wife also discovered many other items missing from the victim's home—including cooking utensils, stainless steel flatware and glasses. All that was left in the man's cabinets was just enough for him to use to eat.

These thefts were discovered on a Sunday. Three days later, the victim sat down in his chair and died. Prior to his death, his only physical ailment was diabetes.

See ELDERLY — Page 8

Policeman walks across state for charity

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Pinellas Park Police officer Tracey Schofield walked 200 miles last week across Florida to raise money for the Boys and Girls Club of Pinellas County and the homeless shelter, Pinellas Hope.

The walk began with 40 kids from Pinellas County walking the first mile with him, and ended Saturday with another group of kids meeting him in Ft. Pierce to end the trip.

"It's been awesome," Mr. Schofield said, "We've met some awesome people across the state. A lot of people helped me out."

Mr. Schofield had raised \$25,000 before the walk even began and he said donations are still being

accepted at www.thewalkforhope.com.

Mr. Schofield stayed at the Holiday Inn Express in Okeechobee Thursday night and walked across the county on Friday. He said he averaged 25 miles per day on the eight day excursion.

"My lower legs are ready to go home. I've got 40 more miles to go. I should be able to make it. I'll be sore, but I'm alright," he noted.

The local motel donated the room Thursday night to the charity. He was able to stay in a trailer on portions of the trip that didn't end in a city or near a hotel. He said his goal is to raise awareness that there is something everyone can do to help in these times of

See WALK — Page 15



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Tracey Schofield, Pinellas Park Police officer, walked across Florida this week to raise money for charity. He walked through Okeechobee on Friday.

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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).

- Adam Scott Mowery, 31, N.W. 53rd Terrace, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 15 by Detective Augustin Saucedo on a felony charge of child abuse. He was also charged with the misdemeanors of driving under the influence and driving while license suspended - habitual offender. He is being held without bond on the suspended license charge. His bond on the other two charges has been set at a total of \$20,000.

- Ryan Christopher Bass, 28, Pine Drive, Pompano Beach, was arrested Dec. 17 by Deputy Corporal Aric Majere on a Department of Corrections warrant charging him with violation of probation - giving false information to a pawnbroker - less than \$300. He is being held without bond.

- Katherine Theresa Harris, 32, N.W. 20th

Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 17 by Deputy Cpl. Aric Majere on an Okeechobee County warrant charging her with violation of probation - driving under the influence. Her bond has been set at \$1,000.

- Christopher George Rowe, 26, U.S. 441 N., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 17 by Deputy Cpl. Aric Majere on a Department of Corrections amended warrant charging him with violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- Rinella Billie, 37, Knott's Landing N.E., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 17 by Deputy Cpl. Aric Majere on an Okeechobee County warrant charging her with violation of probation - driving under the influence. She is being held without bond.

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

OCI inmate caught with cell phones

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

An inmate at the Okeechobee Corrections Institution (OCI) has been arrested and charged with trying to sneak two cell phones into the facility.

Jason Spero, 39, was arrested Thursday, Dec. 17, and charged with introducing contraband into a detention facility. After being booked into the Okeechobee County Jail, he was released on his own recognizance and returned to OCI.

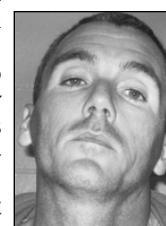
According to an arrest report by Deputy Anthony Kibler, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), he was caught with the phones upon his return to OCI from

his work detail at the Department of Transportation (DOT) yard in Okeechobee.

The report states that Spero stole the phones from the yard and then tried to sneak them into the prison by hiding them in his rectum. Spero reportedly told the deputy that he is paid \$200 for every three phones he brings into the prison.

Deputy Kibler stated in his report that the phones were found by OCI security when Spero activated the metal detector upon his return to the prison.

A records check indicated that Spero was sentenced to five years and one day after being convicted of burglary of a dwelling in Broward County. He was sentenced June 22, 2009.



Jason Spero

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.

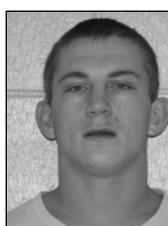
David Thomas Arnold III, DOB 11/21/1984, VOP - Burglary Structure, Grand Theft, No



Marcel Bates



Lisamarie Lorenze



David Thomas Arnold III

Bond.
Marcel Bates, DOB 10/13/1976, Failure of Sexual Offender To Report To DHSMV, Bond \$10,000.

Lisamarie Lorenz, DOB 2/9/1987, VOP - Resisting Arrest with Violence, No Bond.

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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!

Stolen rocks

• Did you see the story in the paper Wednesday—the four guys from West Palm Beach who were arrested for coming over here and trying to steal the rocks from the Nubbin Slough water control structure? They went past the fence and were loading up the rocks in a trailer—they told the cops they planned to use the rocks to build a fire pit. Is there anything people won't try to steal?

• My first thought was "is this really stealing?" But, I guess it is.

• Kind of defines "Dumb as a rock."

• When you have to go past a barrier and a sign indicating the area is closed to the public, I would think that would be a hint. Seems like instead of spending the gas to drive over to Okeechobee from the coast they could have gone to a building supply store to get a load of rocks.

• They came all the way from West Palm Beach to get them. Maybe someone told them "rock" was free in Okeechobee.

• Well, that's how they "roll."

Post office

• Got a letter Dec. 15, that was mailed from Atlanta on Nov. 30. Did it come by mule train? And this is in a P.O. Box. It didn't even have to be sent out of the Post Office.

• With so many complaints against the letter carriers I feel I have to write. Consider these facts:

1. The postal service is incredibly inefficient. It loses millions of dollars each year.

2. Postal management receives bonuses based on how much mail gets through by the fewest number of carriers. Mail going to the wrong box is still mail getting through.

3. Letters carriers have a union. They need one, and I say that even though I am generally opposed to unions. There is a "me and them" attitude in the postal service because letter carriers, even though they are paid well, are treated badly.

4. Most letter carriers want to do a good job, but they are constantly squeezed by management. How often do you see carriers going back to the post office after dark? They don't even have time to file grievances. Management likes it that way.

5. Postal employees generally retire at age 55. They are generally burned out by then.

6. Postal service isn't going to get better. It's going to get worse. Saturday delivery will probably end before long.

7. You can probably confirm these facts with your letter carrier although some may be careful about what they say. Anyway, next time you see your carrier, tell him or her "thank you."

• I am surprised that so many people give so much thought to the post office. Name another service that you get for free. I think it is pretty awesome the amount of mail that is moved through the post office. You only focus on the negative. You remember the one letter that arrived a little late, but do not mention all the other letters that arrive quickly. I put my bills in the mail and within 2 days, they are already being taken out of my checking account. It is pretty amazing that you can put a stamp on a letter and they will mail it to anywhere in the country. As far as "or other resident," they are required to deliver it, or lose their job. I think it is important to respect everyone, especially if they are trying to earn a living, and not lump a few bad experiences and apply it to everyone that works there.

• I am happy to say that my mail carrier is professional and efficient. She brings packages down my long driveway when necessary. I make friends with neighbors so we can take care of each other's mail if needed. If a neighbor was opening my mail, I would take the matter in my own hands, and it would NOT happen again. I wouldn't need the feds to help me there.

Food drives

• It's great that people help with food drives at the holiday times, but the need is not just during the holidays. There is a need for food donations year round. The food they collect during the holiday food drives goes very fast. The sad fact is that many people in our little community do not have enough food to eat. Many of these families are what they call the working poor. They work but can't earn enough to pay the rent and utilities and buy groceries. If you can help out by donating a few cans of food, it would be much appreciated.

Letter to the editor

Raulerson Hospital Annual Holiday Tour of Homes 2009

What a beautiful night. The weather may not have cooperated but the cold rain gave us a true winter-night feeling for the first evening of the 2009 Annual Raulerson Hospital Tour of Homes. There were two ways to travel that night, drive your own car or take the tour on a chartered bus. Our adventure was on the bus.

Our first stop was at the home of Bobbi Poole. The home was set back and candles lit every window. We entered Bobbi's home which smelled of Christmas. She had prepared an unbelievable array of food—meatball soup, homemade old fashioned rice pudding and several plates of freshly baked cakes and breads that melted in your mouth. Bobbi's home was decorated in a comfortable country style which made you feel warm and welcomed. Our stomachs happy, we bid good night and moved on.

As we turned the corner you could see Susan and Kenneth Pilgrim's home from the end of the block with all the lights glowing with Christmas. When you entered the home there were so many different Christmas displays you did not know where to look first. Susan had every room beautifully decorated. You could have gone back a dozen times and you would still have seen something you missed before. I asked how long it took to accomplish this and Susan told me she starts in late October and does it every year for her family. What a lucky family.

With our Christmas spirit high we went to see Linda and Ron Main. They greeted us at the door dressed as Mr. and Mrs. Clause to welcome us into their home. In the living room was an amazing upside down Christmas tree. I had never seen one before and it took me a while to figure out how it was done. The Mains also had every room decorated, right down to the kitchen cabinets, with ribbons and bows.

Stop number four brought us to Anita and David Nunez's Seminole Design office. It is a renovated cracker home and looked like a gingerbread house. Unfortunately the weather knocked out most of the lights, which would have totaled more than 200,000 lights in the display. I was excited to not only see it but the original idea was to roast marshmallows over an open fire, but unfortunately Mother Nature had other plans. We did get to eat Christmas treats and thanked everyone for their hospitality.

Back on the bus we went to location #5, Pristine Properties. The front porch steps were covered in poinsettias and two tin soldiers greeted us. Entering the front door you were swept away to the feeling of being in a country lodge. The fireplace was aglow and every room and hallway was decorated with a different theme. In the Florida room the Peace Lutheran Choir serenaded us with Christmas carols.

Last stop was the Festival of Trees at Hospice of Okeechobee... So many beautifully decorated Christmas trees, wreaths and Christmas decorations to see and bid on. There seemed many more trees than ever before.

On behalf of Raulerson Hospital I would personally like to thank Bobbi Poole, Susan and Kenneth Pilgrim and Ron and Linda Main for allowing us to enter their homes and for the unbelievable work that went into decorating each home as well as for being such gracious hosts. Thanks, also, to Anita and David Nunez from Seminole Design for quickly agreeing when I asked if they would be on the tour. Lastly, a huge thank you to Stephen Jara, Gail Brown, Jeri Wilson, Any Davis, Christine Williams and Victoria Chessler of Pristine Properties who not only were delighted to help, but decorated their business to the hilt knowing they would have to pack up everything and move to their new location the following weekend. With everyone's help The 2009 Raulerson Tour of homes collected \$2,105.00, which will go to The United Way of Okeechobee and the Raulerson Hospital Hope Fund.

Marnie Lauter,
Public Relations/Marketing
Coordinator
Raulerson Hospital



OKEECHOBEE NEWS

To Reach Us

Address: 107 S.W. 17th Street, Suite D
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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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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.
- 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.



Community Calendar

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

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 Senior Singers will meet at 9 a.m. at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 North Parrott Ave. Everyone who enjoys singing is invited to join the group. For information or to schedule an appearance, contact Patsy Black at 863-467-7068.

The **Okeechobee Historical Society** meets at noon at 1850 U.S. 98 N. Join us with a covered dish for lunch, followed by a business meeting. The dues are \$10 per person, per year, and are due in September. For information, call Betty Williamson at 863-763-3850.

Artful Appliquers is a recently formed chapter

in Okeechobee. This chapter meets at the Turtle Cove Clubhouse, 10 Linda Road, in Buckhead Ridge on Mondays from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. All are welcome. For information call 863-763-6952.

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.

TUESDAY

Community Gospel Sing will be held every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Seventh Day Christian Church, next door to Douglas Chiropractic and Fitness Center. The public is invited to participate.

GALs need volunteers

The Guardian ad Litem Program has volunteer opportunities for caring persons to advocate for neglected, abused and abandoned children. Volunteers meet on the last Tuesday of the month at 0 a.m. at Gizmo's on Hwy. 441 in the Publix Plaza.

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 The Lighthouse Refuge Support Group is for women who are hurting,

homeless or been abused. They meet on the first and third Tuesday of every month at First Baptist Church, 401 S.W. Fourth St., and on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. at the Red Cross, 323 N. Parrott Ave. For more information call Donna Dean at 863-801-9201 or 863-357-4447.

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, contact 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.

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 located at 411 S.E. Fourth St. in Okeechobee. Everyone is welcome. For information, contact Enid Boutrin 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 Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast at the

Clock Restaurant, 1111 S. Parrott Ave., for breakfast. For information, June Scheer at 863-634-8276, leave message.

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

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.

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.

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

New Beginnings Narcotics Anonymous meets at The Gathering Church, 735 SW 24th Ave, at 7 p.m. in the youth building behind the church. For information, call Monika at 801-3244 or Rocy at 610-0975. information call 863-357-3053.

Reflections from the Pulpit

By Elder John T. Garner

More 2 Life Ministries

I love to be part of a celebration. Happy people passionate about something or someone and wanting the whole world to know it. That's what celebrating is all about, right? So, I sometimes wonder whether the world around us can tell that we are celebrating Christ's coming down to earth to bring salvation to mankind during this time of year. Oh yes, there always are those who wear buttons that say things like "Jesus is the reason for the season" or "Don't take Christ out of Christmas." All very clever and true statements but I wonder how much we really live up to those words. I mean where's the passionate display of the real truth of Christmas?

The fact is that we can get a whole lot more excited about "The Grinch who stole Christmas" than we can about the Christ who "brought" Christmas during this time. There's certainly an overabundance of nativity scenes, Christmas music (some radio stations start playing Christmas music 24/7 even before Thanksgiving), lights and all the trappings that go with the season, but where's the passion? We seem to lack a real passion for getting about it, you can bet that the world around us will do what it does best in the absence of any real passion on our part. It will offer up substitutes for the truth of why Christ came and make it all look like nothing more than a great time to give gifts and to incur a lot of debt. And, like the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas, the world will succeed if we don't show them that Christmas, just maybe, means a whole lot more.

Maybe we lack passion because of how we view the Christmas story. Somehow, we have made the Christmas message the warm fuzzy of the Christian faith. The facts of the Christmas pageant have been so toned down that anyone can embrace the sweetness of the little baby laid in the manger without having to deal with the real reason why He came in the first place. We hear

about angels who pronounced His birth to the lowly shepherds out in the fields, the couple who travelled to Bethlehem for the census and are given a stable to stay in, the wise men who came to visit and we lose sight of what it all means.

We lose sight of the courage it took for the wise men to travel the great distance to find the Messiah and then to reject Herod's edict to return to him with news of where He could be found because they were warned by God not to. We minimize the guts it took for Mary to carry the Christ in her womb while willing to endure the taunts and suspicions of those around her, even her husband to be, Joseph. We almost completely overlook Joseph's resolve to follow God's direction to accept Mary and the truth of the child that she was carrying. What ridicule must Joseph have had to suffer to be the man God was calling him to be?

So, allow me to set the record straight. Christmas is not about Santa Claus, giving and receiving presents, family gatherings, elaborate decorations, preparing of meals and on and on. (All fine things if kept as secondary issues but disastrous if allowed to take the center stage) Christmas is about the courage it takes to make a commitment to follow God's will no matter what it might cost you. It's about the power of the Almighty God resting in the birth of a fragile child who would one day pay the price of salvation for a fallen world. It's about all mankind coming to grips with the fact that they must all embrace this child, this long-awaited Messiah, as the Lord and Master of their life.

So, Christians, celebrate this time of year with all that you have within you. Let the world see that you are passionate about the Christ. Declare boldly that Jesus is more than just the reason for the season but that Jesus is the Savior for all the world. Shout to all who will listen that Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth, the only life. Purposely reject the juletide hype of Father Christmas and passionately embrace the eternal hope of the Prince of Peace.

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Holiday Happenings...

It's honey baked ham time!

Okeechobee Main Street is once again offering Honey Baked Hams for Christmas. Spiral hams, boneless hams, whole smoked turkeys or turkey breast, side dishes and desserts are available. Order yours today at Syble's Flowers and Gifts, 119 South Parrott Avenue or at the Main Street Office 111 Northeast Second Street. Orders must be placed by Monday, Dec. 21, for pickup on Wednesday, Dec. 23. For more information call 763-2225 or 357-6247

Order turkeys and smoked pork for the holidays

The Okeechobee Masonic Lodge is taking orders for Whole roasted Turkeys and Smoked Pork Butts. Orders must be made and paid for by **Dec. 22**. Orders can be picked up on Christmas Day from 9 a.m. until noon at the Masonic Lodge. Place orders at Porter's Cleaners, 1700 S. Parrott Ave. Roasted turkeys are \$30 each and Smoked Pork Butts are \$25. Cash, check and charge are accepted. Proceeds will benefit Okeechobee Youth Activities.

Christmas Around the World

The annual celebration of Christmas Around the World will be celebrated outdoors on Sunday, **Dec. 20**, on the grounds of Sacred Heart Catholic Church from 5 until 7 p.m. There will be a live nativity pageant and performances by different cultural groups, culminating in the appearance of Santa Claus with gifts for all the children present. The following cultural groups will take part in this year's celebration: Irish Dancers, Filipino performers, Mexican dancers, Ecuadorian Troubador, Chobee Steelers Band.

Children's Christmas party

On Sunday, **Dec. 20**, from 2-4 p.m. the Fraternal Order of Eagles #4137 will hold their Children's Christmas party. Children must be on sign-up sheet by Sunday, **Dec. 13** to receive a gift from Santa. Refreshments will be provided. For further information, call 863-763-2552.

Okeechobee Christian Church plans service

Christmas Eve, **Dec. 24**, Candlelight Service at Okeechobee Christian Church, 3055 S.E. 18th Terrace at 6 p.m. For information, call 863-467-7858.

Church presents open air performance

The Church of God of Prophecy will present an Open Air Christmas Performance - A King is Coming to Town. Church of God of Prophecy, Open Arms Ministry at 102 N.W. 10th Street, is having a live outdoor Christmas Program on **Dec. 20**, beginning at 6 p.m. The church will present from the birth of Jesus through his ministry up until his return. The Church of God of Prophecy's goal is to reach Okeechobee and the surrounding community with the real meaning of Christmas. There will be seating for all outside of the church, and special treats for all who attend. Let us all put Christ back in Christmas and let our children and grandchildren know the real reason why we celebrate this special day.

Chobee Steelers Steel Drum Band to perform

The Chobee Steelers Steel Drum Band will present a Holiday Musical on Saturday, **Dec. 26**, at 6 p.m. at the Freshman Campus Auditorium, behind the Golden Corral. There will be guest appearances by the Boys and Girls Club of Indian Town Steel Drum Band, Preston Wiggins First Missionary Baptist Church of Dean's Court Praise Dancers, Mr. Carlton Lambert, Pannist and Dr. Shaheed Kollo, Violinist. A donation of \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids will help to provide help for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. All proceeds benefit Martha's House Domestic Violence Services. Give a gift - receive a gift. For more information, please call Shirlean Graham at 863-763-2893.

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.

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.

Eagles plan New Years Eve party

On Thursday, **Dec. 31**, the Fraternal Order of Eagles #4137 will hold a New Years Eve party. The \$5 donation at the door includes party favors and breakfast. Entertainment begins at 8 p.m. Proceeds go to 2009-2010 Snowball Charities. For further information, call 863-763-2552.

Oakview Baptist Church services set

Oakview Baptist Church will be having a Christmas Eve Service, including the observance of The Lord's Supper, on Thursday, Dec. 24, at 5 p.m.

Local Forecast

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 64. North northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 36. North northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 63. North northwest wind around 5 mph.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 36. North northwest wind around 5 mph.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 71. North northwest wind around 5 mph.

Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 47. East northeast wind around 5 mph.

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.

Jesse Raymond Watson Jr., 82

OKEECHOBEE — Jesse Raymond Watson Jr., passed away Thursday, December 17, 2009, in Raulerson Hospital. He was 82.

Born July 26, 1927 in Miami, Fla., he had been a resident since early 1980.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Sylvia Watson; and sister, Bobbie Kennedy.

He is survived by his son, John Watson of Pahrakee, Fla.; daughter, Cheryl Andrews of Franklin, N.C.; and two grandchildren.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service time of 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 21, at the Buxton Funeral Home Chapel.

Interment will follow at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 22, at the Dade Memorial Park Cemetery, 1301 N.W. 136th St., Miami, FL 33167.

All arrangements are under the direction and care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 N.E. 5th St., Okeechobee.

On-line condolences may be made at www.buxtonfuneralhome.com.

Register and Pay for IRSC online

Indian River State College students can use the convenience of the web to register and pay for their classes for the Spring Semester while the College is closed for Winter Break.

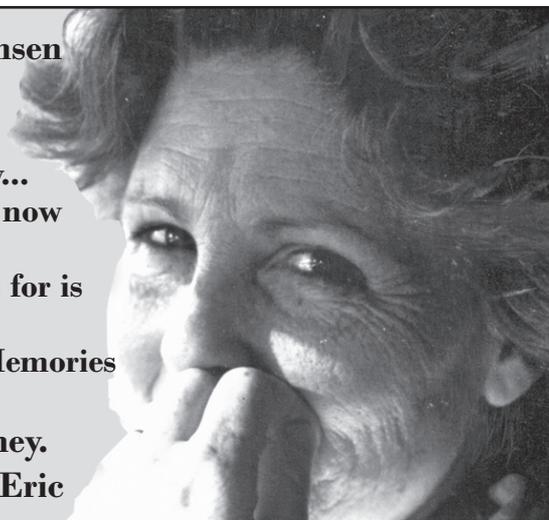
The College closed for Winter Break on Friday, Dec. 21 and will reopen on Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. Classes for the Spring Semester start Jan. 6. The last day to pay for classes and avoid a late fee is Jan. 4. For more information about IRSC and to register and pay for classes, visit www.irsc.edu.

Lotteries

The Florida Lottery: Numbers selected Thursday in the Florida Lottery are: Cash 3: 3-9-9; Play 4: 2-2-2-3; Fantasy Five: 5-7-9-13-33. Numbers selected Friday in the Florida Lottery are: Cash 3: 2-8-6; Play 4: 7-0-6-4.

Roberta "Bobbi" Christensen
Merry Christmas Honey,
I miss you so much...
Last year we were so happy...
Where our tree sparkled is now empty...
Our Home we worked hard for is sitting empty.
All I have left are Happy Memories

Merry Christmas My Honey.
I Love You "More" Love Eric



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Special to the Okeechobee News/Teresa Chandler

Shooting team

Seacoast National Bank team including John Purvis, Becky Posey, John Macchia and Teresa Chandler support the Highlands County Citrus Grower's fun shoot at Quail Creek on Dec. 21.



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Okeechobee Livestock Market Report

December 14 and 15, 2009			Med #1	Steers	Hfrs	450-500	84-89	70-75
Cows			200-250	115-125				
Breaking	\$47.50	\$51.00	250-300	120-135	95-110			
Cutter	\$39.50	\$48.00	300-350	115-125	89-100			
Canner	\$30.00	\$38.50	350-400	106-118	86-94			
Bulls			400-450	104-113	78-90			
1000-1500	\$52.50	\$50.50	450-500	95-108	78-85			
1500-2000	\$53.00	\$63.50	550-600	84-94	73-80			
			600-650	80-90	72-80			
Monday			Med #2	Steers	Hfrs			
Calves	641	865	200-250	100-117	85-105			
Cows	133	274	250-300	100-115	90-100			
Str	14	22	300-350	92-115	73-92			
Hfrs		51	350-400	87-110	75-86			
Bulls	23	40	400-450	80-104	65-79			
Yrlngs	49	48	Small #1 Steers			Hfrs		
Mix		51	250-300	92-110	75-90			
Total	860	1351	300-350	107-115	82-92			
			350-400	102-104	75-83			

Slaughter cows and bulls were at least \$1-2.00 higher. Slaughter cow and bull sale on Monday, Dec. 28. Should be a good time to sell. Calves were a little better, especially the better calves, they were up \$2-3.00. Raulerson and Sons, Jacksonville topped the calf market with a high of \$1.55, bought by Curt Wilson Co. R-Buckle Ranch, Sebring topped the cow market with a high of 51.00 bought by Brown Packing. We appreciate your friendship and wish you the best year you have ever had!

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• TEAKA VODKA 1.75L \$16.99	• MILAGRO TEQUILA 1.75L \$39.99
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ELDERLY

Continued From Page 1

Detective Van Deman said he, as well as the victim's family, believe the stress and trauma led to the man's death.

"The problem is," said the detective, "these people are dependent upon the people who are ripping them off."

Even though he was upset about what happened to the elderly man, Detective Van Deman was even more frustrated that if the victim had lived just one more day it's likely he would have arrested the aide.

Shortly after the man's death, the aide left the area.

Stay involved

"It's important for families to stay involved and educated in preventing exploitation of the elderly," said Alison Bryant, a statewide elder abuse coordinator with the Department of Elder Affairs. "It's also important for the elderly to be aware. Understand what you're signing. If you're not sure what you're signing ask for outside help."

In the case of home health care, Ms. Bryant said prior to hiring someone to come into your home, check with the state's Agency for Health Care Administration.

If the care giver is a private individual, he or she is not required to have a state license. However, she continued, for a small fee the family can do a background check through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

Suicide is not the answer

Detective Van Deman said many times a senior citizen who has been conned out of their last dollar will see suicide as their only way out. Fellow OCSO detective Sergeant Brad Stark ran into just such a situation earlier this month.

On the morning of Saturday, Dec. 12, he was summoned to a travel trailer in the southeast section of the county. When he walked into the one-room trailer there, lying on the bed, was a 71-year-old man with a .45 caliber handgun pointed at his head.

"The gun was in his right hand and the hammer was cocked back. He was very emotional," said Sgt. Stark.

Sgt. Stark said the man was distraught because he had been conned out of \$59,000 by a man he trusted. Now, continued the detective, the man was broke.

"He came into a situation where he was borrowing money to survive and now he couldn't pay it back," said Sgt. Stark. "He had borrowed around \$7,000 and felt the thing to do was extract himself from that situation." A suicide note, as well as his last will and testament, were found in his vehicle.

"He said at 12 o'clock (noon) he was going to do this. It's now four minutes until 12 and I'm thinking 'he's going to do this'," recalled the detective.

Sgt. Stark then began to worry that the man was wanting to commit suicide by cop. After talking with the detective for nearly two hours, the man finally dropped the fully-loaded magazine from the gun. But, he still had one round in the gun.

"I relayed the message to the other depu-

ties that there was only one bullet in the gun. I then told him, 'If you shoot me, they're going to come in here and tackle you and take you to jail, so there won't be any suicide by cop,'" Sgt. Stark said.

Finally, the man gave Sgt. Stark his gun. He was then taken to an area hospital for evaluation. When he is released, Sgt. Stark said he will meet with him to see if criminal charges can be filed against the man who bilked the U.S. military veteran out of his last dollar. Sgt. Stark said criminal charges could include exploitation of the elderly, which is a felony, as well as fraud and passing a worthless check. The suspect in this case gave the man a \$31,000 check that was written on a closed account. Unfortunately, said the detective, no matter what he does he can't get the man's money back.

Who exploits the elderly?

While anyone can bilk the elderly, figures from the Department of Children and Families Adult Protective Services Program (APS) show that it's often a son or daughter doing it. Care givers may also take advantage. In Florida in 2008-09, 35.30 percent of the cases investigated were perpetrated by institution employees. These employees include those who work in nursing homes, assisted living centers and hospitals.

APS figures also show that 6,932 complaints were received in 2004-05 and that 596 were verified as exploitation cases. In 2005-06, there were 7,901 complaints and 717 were verified. In 2006-07, 8,049 complaints were received and 703 were verified. In 2007-08 the number of complaints jumped to 9,323 with 828 being verified. In 2008-09,

the totals dropped to 7,082 with 626 of those complaints verified as exploitation cases.

And while these numbers indicate a problem, it's really only the tip of the iceberg.

"Only 1-out-of-25 cases are reported," said Ms. Bryant.

What can be done?

While being aware and asking questions are important, seniors and their families should not hesitate to bring in an expert to help. "Anybody who has a family member incapable of handling their affairs should have an independent auditor come in and check out their finances every year," offered Detective Van Deman. "Any accountant can do this."

If you feel you, or a family member, are being exploited call the Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (800-962-2873).

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2007 3/2 HOME. The home has a nice porch that goes across the front of house. **SHORT SALE.** **MLS #203503, \$104,500.**

2/2 DWMH with fenced in yard on a corner. Laminate floors in 3 rms. Wood cabinets in kitchen. Two Possible roof leak at peak. **MUST SEE TO APPRECIATE AND PRICED TO SELL!!!** **MLS #203197, \$49,900.**

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Big O Teen Anglers participate in tournament

The Big O Teen Anglers November tournament was held on Nov. 21, at Okee-Tantie.

We had 14 anglers take to the water catching 44 fish for a total of 70.18 lbs.

In the 11-14 age group the winners were:

1st place - Ryan Edwards, 11.16 lbs and big fish 3.69 lbs.

2nd place - Luke Farmer, 5.84 lbs.

3rd place - Tyler Brenner, 2.18 lbs.

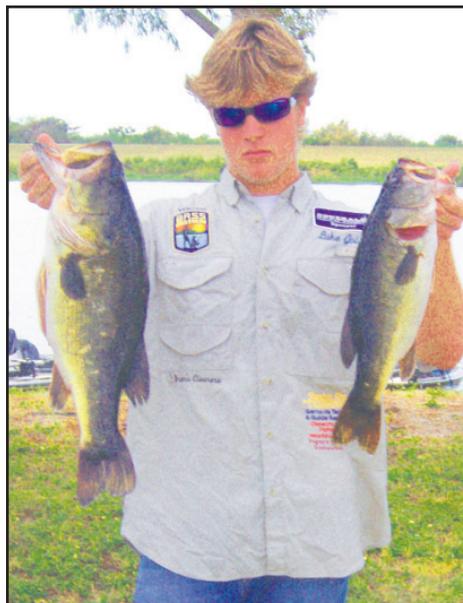
In the 15 - 18 age group the winners were:

1st place - Luke Joles, 12.94 lbs. and big fish 6.42 lbs.

2nd place - Garrett Folbrecht, 7.77 lbs.

3rd place - Garrett Farmer, 6.80 lbs.

We'd like to thank our boat captains: Leroy Bauer, Ernie Johnson, Mike Jones, Ken Hall, Skip Jeslowski, David Straight, David Pearce, Kenny Farmer and Mike Zubricky.



Photos special to the Okeechobee News
Luke Joles, was first place in the 15-18 age group with 12.94 lbs. and big fish.



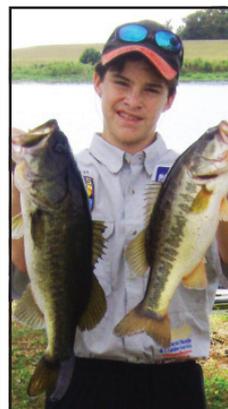
Garrett Farmer took third place in the 15-18 age group.



Tyler Brenner took third place in the 11-14 age group.



Luke Farmer took second place in the 11-14 age group.



Ryan Edwards took first place in the 11-14 age group.

Orchid/Garden Club to meet, all welcome

The Okeechobee Orchid Club and Garden Club will hold their annual Christmas party on Monday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. at the Extension Office, 458 Highway 98 N. Please bring a finger food. Drinks and utensils will be provided. Bring an orchid to show. Eat and be merry with your local orchid lovers. Lots of orchid chat. For more information please call the extension office at 863-763-6469.



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Special to the Okeechobee News/OMS

Students of the Week

Santa Claus has already been good to teachers at Osceola Middle School! They are thrilled to have these students who have been good all over campus, doing their work, being polite, helping others, and a whole list of other good things. Congratulations to these students for being chosen as OMS Students of the Week! The faculty and staff at OMS wish students and their families a very Merry Christmas and look forward to more learning for the New Year! (Thanks to Domino's for donating pizza for these fine students!) Seated, left to right: Jaen Torres, Amanda Tinsley, Ariel Burgos, Reece Lamb. Standing, left to right: Gino Catalano, Michael Daniel, Kim Hernandez, Laneous Dutcher, Tim Saylor.

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Special to the Okeechobee News/Fran Mechlin



Special to the Okeechobee News/Okeechobee Xplosion

O.L.G.A. results

Ladies of the Okeechobee Ladies Golf Association played their annual Christmas Scramble followed by a Christmas party in the clubhouse on Dec. 17. Two teams tied for first place. Pictured left to right: Joyce Huffman, Nancy McAlinden, Fran Dierig, Jerry Ellsworth and Nancy Haldeman. Not pictured is Saba Curren. For information about O.L.G.A. please contact Okeechobee Golf & Country Club at 863-763-6228.

Mini-champs

Okeechobee Xplosion All Star Mini Team placed third at the Central Florida Open Championship Competition in Lakeland. We are very proud of our girls! From Left, Kassidee Cloud, Andy Vivar, Kasey Maguire, Saryna Boone, Maddy Jewel, Yamila Lopez, Morgan Hancock, Abigail Kerestes, Madison Hancock, Veandria Meyes, Keyleigh Jones. Not Pictured: Elle Thomas, Leilani Burton.

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Special to the Okeechobee News/NES North Elementary's Student Council recently participated in a shopping spree purchasing Christmas gifts for 77 lucky students. On Thursday, Dec. 17, Santa made a surprise visit delivering these presents at a delicious holiday breakfast!

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City seeks help with drainage

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

If the state legislature grants the city's request, residents in the southwest part of the city might stay drier.

Recently the city requested \$650,000 from the Okeechobee Legislative Delegation for a stormwater retrofit. While the term "retrofit" might make this sound like a new project, it is something the city has been working on for two or three years. It involves the area along SW 21st Street between SW Second Avenue and SW Seventh Avenue. As a result of Hurricane Wilma, that area received extensive flooding. The project would chan-

nel storm water to the SW Seventh Avenue ditch. The completed project would help residents north and south of SW 21st Street as well as alleviating flooding at the Walmart intersection.

This is a project that has the blessing of South Florida Water Management District and ties in to the county's southwest drainage project.

It is hoped that because this project affects the plans of several other agencies, the state legislature will look more favorably on funding it.

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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Special to the Okeechobee News/Parks and Rec
The Parks & Recreation Department completed their last Saturday of youth soccer games this past weekend, Dec. 12. For the 10 & Under Division, Morgan's Inc. clinched the title and finished the season (8-1-1). Congratulations to players, coaches and parents!



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It's census time again in the county

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

"It's safe, easy and important."

That's what Melissa Serrano of the U.S. Census Bureau said of the 2010 census. She was addressing a group of civic leaders on Thursday, Dec. 4 concerning plans for the upcoming census.

It is safe because the information is confidential. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement agencies. The form does not ask for a social security number or the legal status of a respondent.

It is easy because the form, which will be mailed out in March, is very short and simple this time with only 10 questions. It is estimated that the form can be completed in 10 minutes. Most respondents will be able to return the completed form in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Local assistance centers will be set up for those needing help.

It is important for funding and for representation in Congress, among other things. Local governments use census information for evacuations and planning purposes. There are at least 50 ways census data are used.

It's like voting, explained Ms. Serrano, "It's a civic duty."

At the last census only 54 percent of the forms sent out in Okeechobee County were returned, according to Ms. Serrano. She said the goal this time is 75 percent.

As for winter residents. Ms. Serrano said they should be counted where they eat and sleep most of the time. People who spend six months in one place and six months in another or who are permanent RVers will be counted where they are on April 1, National Census Day.

Only one form will be mailed to an address. Ms. Serrano said that if more than one family lives at an address, the additional families should contact the local assistance center and each fill out a separate form.

The census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution and has been conducted every 10 years beginning in 1790. Since this is the first census in this century, Ms. Serrano stated that it should be as accurate as possible. In the last census children 5 and under were significantly under counted.

The Census Bureau is looking for census workers. This would be a part-time, short-term job lasting anywhere from 5 weeks to 5 months. The starting salary is \$14.75 an hour. Applicants must pass a 30 minute test. For more information, including a practice test, go to www.2010censusjobs.gov or call toll free 1 866 861 2010.

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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Okeechobee News/Diana Whitehall

Kiwanis luncheon

The Thursday, Dec. 10, Kiwanis Meeting which was held at the American Legion Building in Okeechobee. From left to right are: Lieutenant Gary Bell, of the Okeechobee Sheriff's Department and one of the speakers; Jim Vensel, president of the Kiwanis Club; Michele Bell, speaker and criminal investigator of the Okeechobee Sheriff's Department and Noel Stephen, Under Sheriff, and Kiwanis member who presented the speakers. Noel asked the Kiwanis members to watch a slide show about the Special Olympics and the symbolic Law Enforcement Torch that is carried. The Okeechobee Sheriff's Department would like to organize a Special Olympics in May 2010 with two goals in mind, to raise money for the athletes and to achieve the visibility of the local law enforcement personnel running together, with the Law Enforcement Torch leading the way for this very worthy cause. Michele is actively promoting this special event by selling t-shirts and hats.

S.A.L. plan steak dinner

The Sons of the American Legion will sponsor their monthly steak dinner on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the American Legion Post 64, 401 S.E. 2nd St. Okeechobee. Dinner includes steak, baked potato, salad, roll, dessert, iced tea or coffee and entertainment. The public is welcome and donation is \$12.

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WALK

Continued From Page 1

need. "It's an honor to walk across the state for the kids and the homeless," he explained. "We've raised some money for them and that was the key to this thing, to get them help, that's what we were trying to do."

The charity accepts checks, money orders or even pay pal, an internet service for consumers.

The Boys and Girls Club in Pinellas Park ran up against some tough luck as they lost their roof and the building was no longer

suitable for their needs. The homeless shelter currently serves about 250 adults in Pinellas County and that number is growing.

Mr. Schofield said he hoped to get people around the state rallied to these causes.

Mr. Schofield said people can make a difference in this world, perhaps not by walking 200 miles, but by doing other things and volunteering their time. "You can do something. Maybe you can't do this but there are other things you can do. The boys and girls club and the homeless always need donations. The Boys and Girls Club needs mentors. These organizations need help especially during these times. Just reach out and ask what you can do."



Okeechobee News/Linda Bridges

Rotary luncheon

Rotary Past President, Kristy Crawford-Riverside National Bank welcomed Bruce Swinford-Big Lake Missions Outreach (BLMO) who spoke about the upcoming Old Men Riders Bike Ride on Dec. 5. The Ride will benefit Big Lake Missions 15th annual Christmas Toy Drive. BLMO services the homeless and needy in our community, including, in 2008, Homeless Hot Meals 9,085; Food Pantry (families) 4,220; Clothes, Household, Personal Items 1,388; School Supplies 137; 14th Annual Toy Give-a-Way 348 Children Served with 1,155 toys, food baskets & gifts; Local Charities, Churches & Schools helped from BLMO 87. To contact Bruce & Mary Anne-his wife, call 863-763-5725. For more Rotary information, call 863-763-1120.

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Contractors help repair skate park

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee skate board park got an early Christmas gift this year as several members of the Okeechobee Contractors Association helped them repair one of their boxes at the community facility.

Director of Communities in Schools and the Police Athletic League Jill Rogers said several

workers donated the time to make the repairs which might have cost the non profit group thousands of dollars.

"I'm certain it would have been expensive. That's the good thing about living in Okeechobee. There are so many people willing to give back to the community. We all pitch in to do things," she added.

Tony Stark, John O'Connell, the Okeechobee Contractor's Association, Okeechobee

Parks and Recreation and Jakes's Welding all donated time to the project.

"The great thing was we didn't have to close down the park and the boys who use the park are so appreciative," Ms. Rogers said.

Wear and tear over the years damaged the box and left huge holes in it. With finances tight this year, Rogers said it would have been awhile before the repairs were made. The county purchased the materials and about eight volunteers spent two days working on the project.

"It was very labor intensive, it was a lot of work and we just wanted to be sure these men got the praise that they deserve," she noted.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Christian Buck, Joshua Powers, and Kevin Pineda enjoy the improvements made to the skate park thanks to local contractors.

New online Sports Network features Okeechobee teams

The Okeechobee News invites you to check out the innovative new Okeechobee Sports Network on the internet at <http://fl.newszap.com/OkeechobeeSportsNetwork>.

Youth, adult recreation leagues, and school sports teams now have an exciting online sports page and resource they can call their own. This free site is a partnership between the Okeechobee News and Community Sports Desk, a national sports software company.

Team representatives can post their schedules, game stories, statistics, standings and photos on dedicated web pages on the site. This is an invaluable and professional tool the community now has to positively highlight local sports.

There is absolutely no charge for teams and leagues to participate in Okeechobee Sports Network.

The site will be supported by sponsored

web advertising featuring an innovative revenue sharing model, with 20 percent of web advertising sales on the site going back to the participating teams and leagues.

Local businesses interested in finding out how to become a sponsor can contact their local Okeechobee News advertising representative or call Judy Kasten at 863-763-3134 or by email at jkasten@strato.net.

Interested teams and leagues can contact Renee Hawley by e-mail at rhawley@communitysportsdesk.com. to participate and find out how your team can win a free pizza party!

Okeechobee Sports Network will also be giving away a \$25 gift certificate from the Ultimate Gamer for the best local sports photo posted on the site by Jan. 31.

Call Renee toll free at 888-853-7904 for a demonstration or to get started right away.

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WEDDINGS
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. ILLUSTRATION

Joseph Wayne Example and Jane Ann Illustration were married on Jan. 1, 2009, in a local church. Their ceremony was officiated by the reverend. The couple was joined by friends and family members. The bride wore a beautiful gown and the groom wore a tuxedo. The ceremony was held at the local church. The bride and groom were joined by friends and family members. The ceremony was held at the local church. The bride and groom were joined by friends and family members. The ceremony was held at the local church.

BIRTH
SUSAN A. EXAMPLE

Susan Ann Example was born at 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 15, 2009, in a local hospital. She weighed 7 pounds, 10 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long. Her mother is Jane A. Illustration and her father is Joseph W. Example. Her maternal grandparents are Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Example of Fort Pierce. Her paternal grandparents are Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Example of Fort Pierce. Her mother and father are both employed by the local business community.

ANNIVERSARY
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. EXAMPLE

Joseph W. Example and Jane A. Example celebrated their wedding anniversary with family and friends on Oct. 15, 2009. The celebration was held at the local restaurant. The couple was joined by friends and family members. The celebration was held at the local restaurant. The couple was joined by friends and family members. The celebration was held at the local restaurant.

ENGAGEMENT
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. EXAMPLE

Joseph Wayne Example and Jane Ann Illustration announced their engagement to their family and friends. The couple was joined by friends and family members. The announcement was held at the local restaurant. The couple was joined by friends and family members. The announcement was held at the local restaurant.

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Job Advertisement
708 N Parrot Ave
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Employment Full Time

Lead Cook/Kitchen Manager

Seeking Creative Individual to Lead Kitchen at a New Restaurant in Okeechobee

- Knowledge of local market
- Demonstrate ability to deal with food vendors and food/supplies ordering
- Ability to schedule staff and control labor
- Ability to train all kitchen positions
- Emphasis on quality food, freshness and presentation
- Emphasis on kitchen security and safety
- Above all: the ability to maintain a clean and orderly kitchen with emphasis on Public Health
- Salary: DOE

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Seeking highly motivated mid level Accountant for busy agricultural dealership in Belle Glade, Florida. Accounting degree required. Resumes will be evaluated on a qualitative basis and interviews will be scheduled with our organization. Please fax resume to 561-996-8367, Attn: Comptroller

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Employment Full Time

Lead Cook/Kitchen Manager

Seeking Creative Individual to Lead Kitchen at a New Restaurant in Okeechobee

- Knowledge of local market
- Demonstrate ability to deal with food vendors and food/supplies ordering
- Ability to schedule staff and control labor
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- Emphasis on quality food, freshness and presentation
- Emphasis on kitchen security and safety
- Above all: the ability to maintain a clean and orderly kitchen with emphasis on Public Health
- Salary: DOE

Email resumés to earrieta@sdbteam.com or fax to 863-467-0610 • EOE

The Department of Health has an opening for an Accountant I. Annual salary range \$24,580 - \$32,000. Minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in accounting. Equivalent accounting experience can substitute on a year-to-year basis for the required bachelor's degree. Please apply on-line at: <http://jobs.myflorida.com>. Refer to requisition number 64054115. Only State of Florida applications will be accepted - no resumes, please. Date closes 12/24/09. EO/AA/VP Employer. For questions, please contact Chaka at 462-5786.

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SANTA'S HELPER - Let me run your Christmas errands Call Dee (863)484-0532 Reasonable

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Some 800 and 900 telephone numbers may require an extra charge, as well as long distance toll costs. We will do our best to alert our reader of these charges in the ads, but occasionally we may not be aware of the charges. Therefore, if you call a number out of your area, use caution.

How do you find a job in today's competitive market? In the employment section of the classifieds

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ROOM MATE WANTED- Beautiful place, available immediately in BHR. Call (954)553-6966

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For Sale: Utility trailer 6' x 12' Tandem axles (Heavy duty two loading ramps) 863-634-9604.

RV/MOBILE HOME
TRAILER '79 - 33'L x 12'W all appls #700 neg (863)484-2436

Vans
CHEVY ASTRO Van '93, runs great, cold air, asking \$1,500 or Best Offer. (863) 467-7528

Okeechobee High wrestling team on a roll

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee High School Brahman wrestling team had an excellent week as they finished second in the Big Lake Wrestling Classic on Dec. 12, and defeated Sebring and Vero Beach in dual meets on Tuesday, Dec. 15, and Wednesday, Dec. 16 at their home gym.

Coach Bruce Jahner praised all of his wrestlers as everyone on the squad has played a role in the teams recent run of success. Okeechobee is now (10-3) on the season.

The Big Lake Classic attracted 10

schools to the Brahman gym last Saturday. Melbourne took team honors as they finished 4-0. Okeechobee finished second as they won three of four matches.

Okeechobee defeated Avon Park 54-27, Sebastian River 58-21, and La Belle 60-21.

Okeechobee's only loss was a tight match with Lakeland, 41-36.

Okeechobee defeated Sebring 41-37 on Tuesday and 54-24 over Vero Beach on Wednesday.

Coach Jahner said the Sebring game was a tight match with some surprising results, "We had some upsets where kids that were expected

to win didn't," he said. "I don't know what happened. Other kids picked it up and came through and we won the dual. We are off to a nice start this year."

The Vero Beach match was a close one on paper. Jahner said Josh Gruber's win in the 130 pound weight division was a key for his team, "He wrestled a tough kid, when we won that match it kind of swung the tide in our favor and we picked up the win."

Gruber has only lost three matches so far this year and he looks forward to earning another district title and a trip to the state tournament.

"I feel great. That kid beat me last year," he said. "Tonight I

came back and took over. My whole attitude was different. I wanted to go out there and win it."

Coach Jahner said the team will continue to practice during the Christmas break. He said the two week period is often a make or break period for wrestling teams, "We are starting to come around. The kids are starting to pick it up. We still need to keep working on conditioning."

Jahner will award kids gifts if they make each practice during the Christmas break.

Okeechobee will host a junior varsity wrestling tournament on Saturday.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Donald Bryan (left photo) pinned Brett Cameron of Vero Beach Wednesday. Ryan Meigs (center) pinned Ricardo Ibanez in a competitive match Wednesday. Alex Buck (right photo) lost a tough match, 9-7, in Okeechobee's dual with Lakeland during the Big Lake Classic.

Girls soccer team improves play

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee High School's girls soccer team defeated Boynton Beach 3-0, and lost to Lincoln Park Academy 6-1 in matches played earlier this week.

The girls (3-7) enter the Christmas break playing perhaps their best soccer of the season, Coach Julie Bohannon maintains, "We are really meshing as a team, we are communicating and passing the ball much better. We were having our moments individually and now we are having our moments together as a team and its working out."

Crystal Garcia continues to do well for the Brahmans. She scored two goals Monday in the Brahmans victory at Boynton Beach. Emily Raulerson scored the third goal. LeAnna Cotton and Jenna Mullis had assists against Boynton Beach.

Against Lincoln Park, Okeechobee trailed only 3-1 until late in the second half. Coach Bohannon said she was glad to see her team hang in the match against a quality opponent, "They are a great team. We came out and held our own. It was 3-1 for quite awhile. We played a strong game maybe our best game of the season."

Garcia scored the Brahman goal with an assist by Cotton.

Lincoln Park, (6-2-2) got two goals apiece from Holly Schrader and Taylor Witkowski. Victoria Agramonte and Madison Washington combined for four saves in the Lady Greyhounds net.

Coach Bohannon said she looks forward to the second half of the year and predicted continued improvement for the Lady Brahmans, "We keep talking on the field and we are working together. We have changed our lineup and set up on the field in order to improve. We tell the girls to go play and they do it for us."



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Goal keeper Megan Clements and her teammates continue to improve as the season progresses.

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- ACROSS**
1 Late-night name
4 Sharp-witted
9 O. Henry's "The Gift of the ___"
13 Prop extension?
14 Taunts
15 Key that often sounds gloomy
16 Windy City superstation
17 Toxic defoliant used in Vietnam
19 Charlie Parker's instrument
21 Novel type
22 Sings, so to speak
23 Philosopher ___-tzu
25 "As I see it," in e-mail
27 1930s Fred Astaire partner
32 Rowlands of "Another Woman"
35 Place for a stud
36 Tribute with a wink
37 Siouan speaker
38 Study of rock groups?
40 Old touring car
41 2005 horror sequel
43 Artist who worked on Hitchcock's "Spellbound"
44 O.K. Corral name
45 Show runner
48 Certain, for sure: Abbr.
49 LAX tower gp.
50 Golden ___
54 Actress Cusack
56 Don hastily
58 "Adam Bede" novelist
62 Red-and-white supermarket logo
63 Perplexed
64 "Lovergirl" vocalist ___ Marie
65 Rapa ___: Easter Island
66 Yegg's thousands
67 Letter appearing only in down answers; its opposite appears only in across answers
68 Glue is one
- DOWN**
1 Scold
2 Billiards player's consideration
3 Streisand title role
4 Tennis great who retired in 2006
5 Prefix with hertz
6 Alpine goat
7 Sportscaster Berman
8 More than -er?
9 Address to a pal, in Pamplona
10 "Archie Bunker's Place" costar
11 Satanic nation in Revelation
12 Anger
15 Hosp. scanner
18 Skunk's defense
20 '70s Olympics name
23 Matt of "Joey"
24 Anatomical ring
26 "Mr. Triple Axel" Brian
28 Marlin's div.
29 Skilled in
30 Access ending
31 End

- 32 Tenet's CIA successor
33 French states
34 "When pigs fly!"
38 Donate, in Dundee
39 Club appearance
42 Overlooks country: Abbr.
44 Logician's connector
46 Nape growth
47 Livestock identifier
51 "Dallas" name
52 Antisocial elephant
53 Slow mollusk
55 ___ Khan
56 Level
57 Tegucigalpa's country: Abbr.
58 Comical bit
59 Summer in the cite
60 Ordinal suffix
61 Meadow

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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By Don Gagliardo
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High school soccer team wins district matches

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee High School Brahman boys soccer team defeated Boynton Beach 6-1, and Lincoln Park 4-0 to revitalize their season this week.

Monday Okeechobee overwhelmed their hosts with a dominant offense. Eddie Guerrero had two goals and two assists and Hunter Pritchard had a break out match with two goals.

Okeechobee also got a goal and an assist from Erick Garcia, and a goal from Ricardo Herrera.

Serafin Espinoza had four saves in the Brahman net.

Coach Lonnie Sears said his team did make some mistakes against Boynton Beach, "We had a couple of mental break downs on defense, but we put the ball in the net. We are getting chances and were finish-

ing with goals. When you have easy chances you have to put the ball in the net."

Wednesday the boys played a tough and physical match with Lincoln Park Academy at Brahman stadium. The referees allowed the boys to play aggressively and that resulted in several yellow cards being handed out in the second half.

A couple of players also were shaken up with minor injuries in the second half.

Okeechobee continued to play well on offense as they scored four goals, two in each half of play. Adrian Leon, Oscar Garcia, Eddie Guerrero and Javier Garcia had goals. Erick Garcia had two assists. Christian Toribio added an assist.

"The referees let them play and kind of let it get out of control. They were a good team, it was a good physical match and that was good hard soccer. You like to see hard games like that," Sears said.

Coach Sears praised his team for finish-

ing off the match and playing mistake free on defense. He also praised them for making smart, accurate passes, "I've been working nine years to see that. We have watched our game grow from playing kick ball to short passing. We have a better team now than we have ever had because everybody on the field can pass well."

Javier Garcia said he felt Okeechobee has raised their level of play in recent matches because they are playing together and making smart passes, "We played well against Lincoln Park. We got the shutout. It was a

tough game but we did our thing and what we are supposed to do. We played with discipline."

Okeechobee improved to (6-4 overall and 4-2 in district play). Okeechobee traveled to Clewiston on Friday. The soccer team also hosts a Christmas tournament next Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 21-22.

Okeechobee hosts John Carroll on Monday at 7 p.m. Port St. Lucie will battle Suncoast at 5 p.m. Monday at Brahman stadium.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Eddie Guerrero has scored three goals this week to get the boys soccer team back on track.



Javier Garcia #19 (left) and the Brahman defenders worked well in a shutout of LPA Wednesday.



HOLIDAY DEADLINES

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Seitz wins 2009 Classic

Taylor Creek Bass Club member, Bill Sietz took top honors on Lake Okeechobee, at the Taylor Creek Bass Club of Okeechobee Classic Tournament which was held on Dec. 12-13.

Sietz brought in total of 25.61lbs. to the scales for a great win on a tough fishing day.

Runner up spot was Jack Harrison with total weight of 22.82lbs. Danny Norton finished in third place with 19.37lbs. Ernie Johnson finished in fourth place with 18.88 followed by Mike Zubricky in fifth place with 16.88lbs.

Joe Smith took the Big Fish award with his 7.44lbs. catch.

The Taylor Creek Bass Club meets at the Buck Head Ridge VFW Post 9528 on the second Thursday of each month. Tournaments are held the following weekend. New boaters and (especially) non-boaters are welcome. For information call Dave Stout at 863-467-2255.

The club also sponsors and presents the annual Lee McAllister Memorial Kid's Fishing Festival.



Bill Seitz took top honors at Treasure Creek Bass Club Tournament, Dec. 12 & 13 with 25.6 lbs.



Photos Special to the Okeechobee News (left) Ernie Johnson, placed fourth, while, (right) Mike Zubricky placed fifth.



(left) Runner up in the TCBC Classic was Jack Harrison. (right) Danny Norton took third.



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