

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 101 No. 19

Friday, February 12, 2010

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Boy accused of sexual battery stays in custody ... Page 3

Index

Classifieds.....	18-19
Community Events.....	6
Crossword.....	19
Obituaries.....	6
Opinion.....	4
Speak Out.....	4
Sports.....	5, 16, 19, 20
Weather.....	5

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Audit finds problems with fund raisers at schools

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

An independent auditor found that three Okeechobee schools, North Elementary, Yearling Middle School, and Okeechobee High School did not complete student activity reports for fundraising activities during the past year.

The audit from Wicks, Brown, Williams and Company was presented to the Okeechobee School Board at their meeting Tuesday night. The report said these financial reports are important to determine the accuracy and completeness of cash receipts at the schools.

The audit found that there were numerous instances at Okeechobee High School where receipts collected were not deposited within five working days. The delays in these deposits varied from 10 to 34 working days.

School Superintendent Dr. Patricia Cooper said these were significant deficiencies.

"We want to correct the things that are wrong especially in internal funds because that is money that comes from the public directly that goes to activities and events for the students," she said. "We want to be sure that were doing it right."

Dr. Cooper pointed out that

See AUDIT — Page 12



Free Fair shut down

State law prohibiting carnival rides at other local events within 30 days of county fair forces American Legion to close annual Free Fair four days early ... see page 13.

County says 'YES' to teen program

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

Teenagers age 15 to 18 may now have a summer program patterned for their special needs.

At their meeting on Thursday, Feb. 11 Okeechobee County Commissioners gave their approval to the Youth Engaged in Service (YES) Program proposed by the department of parks and recreation. Commissioners also heard good news concerning the four-laning of State Road 70.

Josephine O'Mallan of the parks and recreation department explained the program that will help youth serve the community. "Our objective is to connect students with local service organizations,"

See COUNTY — Page 12



Special to the News/Janelle Folk

Festival Royalty

Briley Osceola is Tiny Mr. Speckled Perch. See more pageant photos inside.



Hanging ten ...

This 'boatmobile' will be among the entries in the 2010 Speckled Perch Festival Parade. For more ... see Page 14

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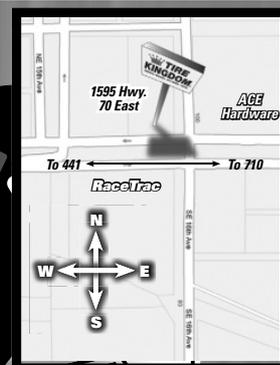
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Boy accused of sexual battery stays in custody

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

A 12-year-old boy accused of molesting five young boys will remain in a Fort Pierce juvenile detention center for the time being, County Judge Jerald Bryant ruled Thursday.

Defense attorney Jonathan J. Kirschner and his 12-year-old client went before Judge Bryant and asked Thursday, Feb. 11, that the boy be released into the custody of his parents until his trial. And even though the judge said he doesn't like to hold juveniles in detention this long, he denied the release motion.

"I'm not really comfortable keeping a child in custody five months while getting ready for trial," said Judge Bryant. "(But) at some point in the future I may consider some sort of release."

The juvenile was arrested Dec. 16, 2009, and charged with seven counts of sexual

battery and six counts of lewd and lascivious molestation. The alleged victims are other boys between the ages of 8 and 11.

Judge Bryant did, however, grant Mr. Kirschner another continuance even though his client's trial was set to begin Thursday. In granting the continuance, the judge ruled that he will hold a status review hearing on Friday, March 26, to check on the progress of the case.

Assistant State Attorney Ashley Albright told the judge that even though he was prepared and "ready for trial" he agreed to the continuance so the juvenile can undergo psychological evaluation.

As Judge Bryant stated his denial of the release motion, family members of the alleged victims breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Prior to the ruling, Mr. Albright had several families speak to the judge in open court.

All of those who spoke told Judge Bryant that their sons or grandsons were now terrified and, in some cases, withdrawn because of what had allegedly happened to them.

"I don't think there is any way he should be released," said one grandmother about the accused. "He (the defendant) took the spirit out of my grandson."

As she struggled with her emotions and the tears flowed, she said her 8-year-old grandson is still so afraid that he "doesn't want to sleep in his own bed."

The father of that boy said his son is still "petrified" even though the alleged incidents took place many months ago.

According to an arrest report by Detective Rosemary Farless, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), in at least four of the reported incidents the accused boy forced the victim to the ground, pulled down their pants and either committed sexual battery or attempted to sexually batter the victim.

The detective went on to state in her report that the boy apparently told the victims not to tell anyone or "... he would choke them."

The mother of an 11-year-old victim told the court that her son doesn't sleep and that "he is a changed child."

She told Judge Bryant that parents do all they can to warn their children about adults who prey on young children.

"But," she continued, "how are we supposed to protect them from someone their own age? Please, do not release this child."

"I would like to thank Jeff Fadley, Attorney at Law, for his amazing help with my mother's case. Words cannot express how amazing you are. You are the best!"
— Sue Thomas, on the behalf of her mother, Katherine Wheeler

Okeechobee Arrest Report

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

- Delaneo Wayne Pryor, 22, N.W. Seventh St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 4, by Deputy Justin Akins on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with failure to appear - possession of cocaine. His bond on that charge was set at \$5,000. He was also arrested on a second warrant charging him with failure to appear - driving while license suspended. He is being held without bond on that charge.

- James Janata, 28, N.E. 28th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 5, by Deputy Lieutenant Keith Murrish on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- Lorenzo Rivera, 22, N.E. Fourth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 5, by Deputy Robbie Lamb on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with violation of probation - battery. He is being held without bond.

- Emily Kline, 49, C.R. 630 E., Lake Wales, was arrested Feb. 5, by Deputy Lt. Keith Murrish on an Okeechobee County warrant

charging her with violation of probation - petit theft. Her bond was set at \$5,000.

- Timmy Barnett Sellers, 41, N.W. 364th Road, Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 5, by the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with trafficking in methamphetamine and the sale of marijuana (two counts). His bond was set at \$350,000.

- Kerrie Michelle Howard, 34, S.W. 12th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 5, by Deputy Brian Cross on an Okeechobee County warrant charging her with criminal use of personal identification information. Her bond was set at \$2,500.

- Hivan Rolando Medrano, 24, S.E. Sixth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7, by Trooper Thomas B. White on a felony charge of habitual traffic offender. He was also arrested on misdemeanor charges of driving under the influence and resisting a law enforcement officer without violence. His bond was set at \$3,250.

- Jesse Dirke Zipperer, 23, S.W. Ninth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7, by Deputy Brian Cross on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with possession of a controlled substance. His bond was set at \$10,000.

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.

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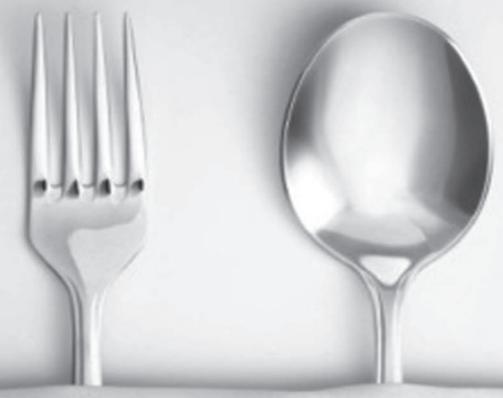
THEATRE I: "WOLFMAN"
Fri. @ 7:00 & 9:15, Sat., Sun. & Wed. @ 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:15, Mon. @ 3:00 & 7:00, Tues. & Thurs. @ 7:00 & 9:15 [R]

THEATRE II: "VALENTINE'S DAY"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00, Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00, Mon. 3:00 & 7:00 [PG-13]

III: "PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS"
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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!

Teen pregnancy

• There is plenty of free birth control in this town, yet it is not utilized. 99 percent of the teen moms I know are very casual about it. They sign up for Medicaid, food stamps etc. But yet, there is no mention of the fathers financial responsibility. I know a lot of teenage moms in Okeechobee and I can count on my hand the number of ones who became responsible, took it seriously and actually care for their children. The rest of them basically use the baby as a pawn to try and keep the boyfriend (father) and by the time the baby is one year old it seems the novelty has worn off. I think it's the cuteness factor, and that by the age of one you can't sit on the sofa anymore and parent your child. You actually have to get up and be a parent! I must also say, I see very little concern from the majority of fathers.

• I too read the article about teen pregnancy in this Sunday's paper, it really wasn't all that shocking. But in response to not taking advantage of the free birth control, most girls don't know about it, or even have the faintest clue as to where the health department is located. And while I agree that sex education should begin at home, the point is that it's not.

• OSAC or Okeechobee Substance Abuse Coalition also meets regularly. Substance abuse is only one of many issues we deal with. We also deal with teen pregnancy. Meetings are open to the public. Feel free to call me, Detective Bill Saum, at 763-5521 if you have questions.

• Interesting article in the Okeechobee News Wednesday from the March of Dimes. Their statistics show that babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to DIE in the first year of life than babies born to mothers in their 20s and 30. There are a lot of risk factors involved in teen pregnancy. Maybe the high school could get the March of Dimes to send them some guest speakers.

Undercover

• Did anyone else watch "Undercover Boss" after the Superbowl? I loved it when the one landfill supervisor fired the Waste Management Chief Operations Officer because he could not handle the job of picking up litter on the edges of the landfill.

Easy to get drugs

• Sad truth is it is very easy in this community for anyone who wants drugs to obtain them. Many just go to their doctor and make up a complaint to get some pain pills -- and their health insurance even pays for it.

• At some point a doctor has to take responsibility. The back area is so subjective in regards to "pain." When I had my back surgery last year, all my doctor could promise was "50 percent of the pain will be gone." He was right. The problem is when you have doctors that just allow you to walk in with an MRI and it shows nothing. All the druggies know this ... There are MANY options prior to surgery, sure not all are pleasant, I had everything possible done to my back before I agreed to surgery. But the drug sellers? They have a game for everything and how to get around it.

• Unfortunately I used to be addicted to drugs. And yes it is just that easy to get them in this town. I was on xanax and also did blues as well. All it takes is one phone call and you could have multiple people calling you back telling you what they have. Still to this day I can point out everyone that is involved in drugs, but I enjoy my life just a little too much to even think about selling them out. I've seen what happens to the people that have sold them out, it ain't pretty. I have been clean now for 2 years and I would just rather stay out of it.

Snowbirds

• When there is a speed limit sign try to abide by its directions. If something off the side of the road looks appealing, don't slow down. Pull over or take a picture to remember the intense feeling of curiosity. Try to make your visit here enjoyable enough to want to come back because at the end of your day I doubt you feel good about yourself after hearing honking horns or rude remarks. Leave your "at home vibe" at home and adapt to the environment while you're here.

Unfair

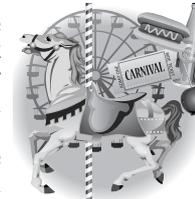
• It is not right that the state fair inspector is making the American Legion Free Fair shut down early because they violated a state statute that no one can operate amusement rides within five miles and 30 days of a county fair. The Legion fair was to end Feb. 14 and the county fair opens March 12. They should let the free fair stay open.

• The American Legion fair has been here far longer than the county fair, and the county fair should immediately and permanently let it be known that it waives its rights under that law. In my opinion, the state inspector goofed by not going to the county fair association first and getting their response, rather than going to the American Legion and causing so much doubt and confusion, and making it their responsibility to go to the county. 54 years versus 3 years -- doesn't that mean something to the county?

• This law was passed long before either of these events existed. It was enacted to prevent these fly-by-night carnivals from coming to a county immediately before their fair and taking the peoples' money out of the county. It is a state law, not local and I'm sure the bureaucrats were in fact looking out for the locals when this was passed. It's just a rarity that there are two local events scheduled at the same time and in the same county.

• This is so wrong! The American Legion fair has been here longer than that county fair that charges money just to get in! I would rather see the American Legion fair stay open than have the county fair come. Also, the more money they take in the more scholarships they can give.

• My problem with the county fair is that they make you pay twice. If you buy the unlimited ride bracelet you should not also have to pay to get in the gate. Other county fairs sell the ride bracelets at the gate and if you buy one then you don't also have to pay the gate fee. Kids want to just go and ride the rides. They don't care about the exhibits. Parents should not have to pay for them twice. If people don't want to go on the rides and just want to walk around and look at the exhibits, then let them pay the gate fee to get in.



• I don't know who messed up, but the American Legion Fair was originally advertised for this year as starting on Jan. 28 and ending on Feb. 7. Then that was changed. I don't know if the dates were changed or if the person who put out the original notices was just mixed up. But I do recall that back in the 1980s the Free Fair used to be the first week in February and it would open on a Monday and close on the following Sunday. It used to be a one-week event. I have not been to the free fair in many years so I don't know when they started keeping it open longer than one week.

'Friend' the sheriff

• Okeechobee Sheriff Paul C. May has authorized his agency to open accounts in common social networking sites to help prevent children from becoming victims of Internet predators. The sites on myspace, Facebook, and Twitter are computer social networking sites commonly used by children to meet and communicate with other people. Many Internet predators use these networking sites to victimize children. The parent or child can make the sheriff No. 1 on their list of friends in these networking sites. It will let others know that the child's parents are involved and monitoring the child's activities and secondly, it will let any Internet predator know the child and his family have a direct link to the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office. Merely having the Sheriff on the friends list will deter most predators from attempting to victimize an Internet user.

• That is awesome. I wonder how many kids will do it though. Our youngest was not allowed to have a myspace till she was 16, and even then for like the first six months we had her password. I would like to see an article on the resources that the local cops use to gather information from the social networking sites. Most large departments have a specific department for this. But, something tells me all the detectives myspace snoop to gather information.

• It's about time. I've been trying to get the Sheriff's Office to do more to help our community when it comes to internet predators for almost two years now. At least it's a step in the right direction.

• Anything that is posted online has no expectation of privacy. It amazes me what some teenagers post and then are surprised that their parents find out about it. I am glad the sheriff's office is doing more online.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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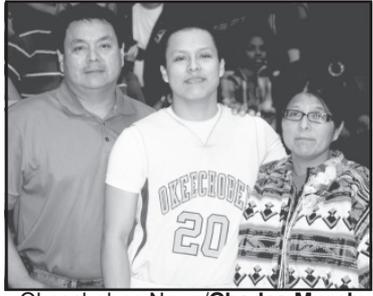
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- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
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- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.



OHS boys basketball senior night



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Ryan Osceola is flanked by Stacy Jones and Mitch Osceola.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Aaron Suarez is joined by his mother Sandy Bryner.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Jonathan Hudoff was joined by his parents Candace Pope and Lary Hudoff at Senior night.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Ricky Nieto was joined by his mother Linda Nieto and his grandmother Faye Godwin at Senior night.



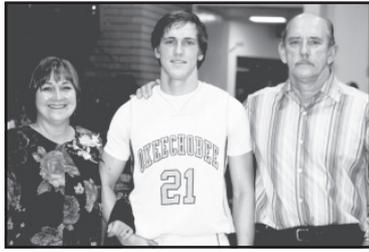
Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Duelle Gore was joined by his mother Claudia Gore at Senior night.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Brian Rose is flanked by his parents Augustus and Patti Rose.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Matt Skipper was joined by his parents Mike and Debbie Skipper.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Troy Harper was joined by Mariana Harper (left) and Josephine McDuffie (right).



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Chris Shanks was joined by his mom Theresa Davis.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Austin Willard was joined by his parents Shelly Batton and Jeff Willard.

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. Anyone interested in a sensible approach to losing weight and becoming a part of a caring group is 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. This is an open meeting.

A.A. meets from 8 until 9 p.m. at the Church of Our Saviour, 200 N.W. Third St. This is 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. 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.

Restoration Ministries meets the second Friday of each month to help with addictions, depression, etc., at 7 p.m. For more information call Miss Kathy at 863-357-9083.

Saturday

Worship in Song at the Living Word of Faith Church of Okeechobee, 1902 S. Parrott Ave., on the second Saturday of the month

beginning at 6 p.m. There is no charge to attend and all Christian singers and musicians are welcome. For information, contact the church at 863-763-6869; Pastor Lee Minton at 863-763-3373; or, Sister Yvonne Price at 863-467-6657.

Teen Talk from 6 until 8 p.m. at the Jesus Holy Ghost Crusade Mission, 1401 N.E. Park St. Every teen is invited. Call 863-634-9340 or 863-357-6248, for information.

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

The Society of Young Magicians will meet from 10 until 11 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Avon Park. For information, call Dick Laneau at 863-467-9540 or 727-345-4323.

Barnyard Buddies meets from 10 a.m. until noon at the County 4-H Extension office at 458 U.S. 98 N. Everyone who would like to be part of the Barnyard Buddies is invited, or you can sign up at the Okeechobee County 4-H Extension office Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. For information, call the extension office at 863-763-6469.

The Living Word of Faith, 1902 S. Parrott Ave., gospel music sing at 6 p.m. For information call 863-763-6869.

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.

Okeechobee Forecast

Today: 90 percent chance of rain, mainly after 1 p.m. with a high near 67. Winds will be from the northeast at 5 to 15 mph becoming south and could gust as high as 20 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy with a low around 45 and a 30 percent chance of showers before midnight. Winds will be from the northwest between 10 and 15 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 62. North northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Saturday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 33. Winds will be from the north northwest around 5 mph becoming calm.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 66. Winds will be calm becoming north northeast between 5 and 10 mph.

Sunday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 39 and calm winds.

Lotteries

Florida Lottery — Here are the numbers selected Wednesday in the Florida Lottery: **Cash 3:** 5-9-3; **Play 4:** 0-3-8-5; **Fantasy 5:** 2-4-6-11-26; **Mega Money:** 34-39-42-44 MB 21; **Florida Lotto:** 16-19-25-39-48-52 X 2; **Powerball:** 5-8-29-37-38 PB34 x5. Numbers drawn Tuesday, **Cash 3:** 5-4-5; **Play 4:** 1-6-7-5.



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Community Events

Valentines Dinner and Dance

A dinner-dance is planned to celebrate Valentine's Day on Saturday night, **Feb. 13**, from 6-8 p.m. at the Fraternal Order of Eagles, 9985 Hwy. 441 N., Okeechobee. The dinner will be an Italian feast and includes, choice of spaghetti, stuffed shells or lasagne, salad, garlic bread and desert for a donation of \$8 for each. Entertainment will be provided by Michaels Memories. For further information, please call 863-763-2552.

Drama Club to present dinner show

OHS Drama Club presents BINGO Spells Murder, an interactive dinner show. The show stars Kyle Foster, Emilie Lege, Emma Marshall, Zadoc Simmons, Judson Harris, Isabella Penido, Nathan Steen, Saturday, **Feb. 13**, at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria. For tickets please call Debbie Raulerson at 863-462-5025 ext. 8011.

Obituaries

James Lamonte Barron Law, 46

OKEECHOBEE — James Law, age 46, of Okeechobee, passed away Feb. 7, 2010, at his home.

Born Sept. 16, 1963, in West Palm Beach to Leo Franklin and Ann Tankersley Law, he was the owner-operator of a landscaping business. He attended Believers Fellowship.

Mr. Law was preceded in death by his father, Leo Law; and his brother, Leon Van Law. He is survived by his wife, Monica Law; daughter, Tonya Law; two brothers, Larry Law and Leo Law Jr.; grandparents, Harley and Dorothy Green; two stepchildren, Paige Robinson and Kenny Jones; his mother and stepfather, Ann and Bernie Garcia; and stepmother, Patty Law.

Visitation will be 1 p.m. until service time at 3 p.m. today, Feb. 12, 2010, at Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery.

Ruth E. Morey, 79

OKEECHOBEE — Ruth E. Morey, age 79, of Okeechobee, passed away Feb. 9, 2010, at the Hamrick Home.

Born Aug. 26, 1930, in Rochester, N.Y., to Thomas and Edna Blackburn she came to Okeechobee from Rochester, N.Y., 13 years ago. She was a good mother and homemaker.

Ms. Morey is survived by her companion, Howard I. Morey of Okeechobee; three sons, Anthony Depasquale of Rochester, N.Y., Robert Morey of Batavia, N.Y., and Douglas Morey of Okeechobee; daughter, Donna Richardson of Springwater, N.Y.; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and sister, June Enright of Macedon, N.Y.

Services will be held at a later date. Memorials may be made to Hospice of Okeechobee, P.O. Box 1548, Okeechobee, FL 34973.

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.

Lip Sync show Saturday

The Okeechobee Moose Lodge will host a Lip Sync Group Show on **Feb. 13**, from 2 until 4 p.m. Take some great music, add a taste of vaudeville and you end up with two hours of unforgettable entertainment. The cast will entertain you as they portray some familiar and not so familiar artists. Parking and admission are free. Refreshments will be available. The Moose Lodge is located at N.W. 36th Street.

Valentines Day Breakfast

The Okeechobee Chapter No. 128, Order of the Eastern Star will host an All-You-Can-Eat-Breakfast on Sunday, **Feb. 14**, at the Okeechobee Masonic Lodge, 107 N.W. Fifth Avenue. Served 8-10 a.m. Menu will include scrambled egg, hash brown casserole, grits, ham, biscuits and sausage gravy, orange juice and hot coffee. Donation of \$6/person. For information, contact Rick Ellsworth, Worthy Patron at 863-467-2096.

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.

Emily Adelle Marcerum Morski

LANTANA — Emily Adelle Marcerum Morski, age 89, of Lantana, passed away February 5, 2010 at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center in Fort Pierce.

She was born Nov. 13, 1920, in Columbus, Ga., to Zack Bennett Herring, Jr. and Maudie Blanche Wynn. She came to Lantana from Birmingham, Ala., in 1958. She was a homemaker who enjoyed sewing, cooking, and gardening. She was a member of the Baptist faith.

Mrs. Morski was preceded in death by her first husband, Zack C. Marcerum. She is survived by her husband of 36 years, John Morski; daughters, Betty Burg (Hans) of Lynchburg, Va., Linda Brown (Fred) of Atlanta, Ga. and Susan Smith (John) of Okeechobee; grandchildren, Steven Burg (JoAnn) of Califon, N.J., Heidi Gondi (Gautham) of Lynchburg, Va., Jennifer McCarron (Mike) of Hopkinton, Mass., Kara Smith of Atlanta, Ga., and Zack Smith (Whitney) of Okeechobee; great-grandchildren, Erik, Alex, Ashton, Taylor, Gillian, Grayson, Jace, Gavin, Meghan and Madison.

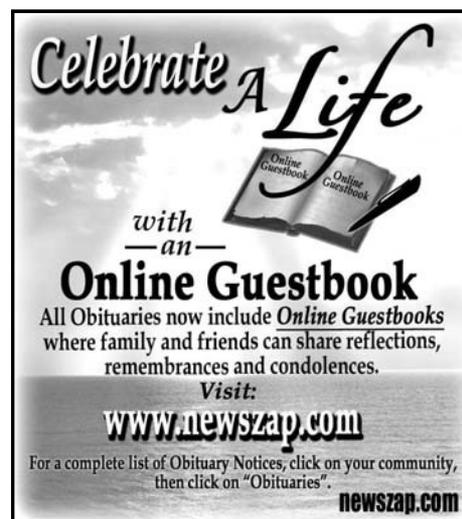
No services or visitation will be held.

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.

Easter Cantata rehearsals to begin on Sunday, Feb. 14

The Okeechobee Community Choir, in its 12th year under the direction of Sandy Perry, will begin rehearsing for the Easter Cantata, Praise the God of Resurrection on Sunday, **Feb. 14**, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Church of Our Saviour, 200 N.W. Third St. Nineteen area churches were represented at the Christmas cantata and all interested singers are invited to participate. Singers should be able to match pitch and read music a little. Rehearsals are fast-paced and loads of fun. The cantata will be presented Palm-Sunday weekend, March 26, 27, and 28th at the First United Methodist church. For more information, call Sandy at 863-634-7714.



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To the Community of Okeechobee

We, the Moore Family, would like to thank everyone for the niceness and kindness during the time of bereavement on behalf of David L. Moore. Special Thanks to Sheriff Paul May and his staff. May God Bless each & every one of you is our prayer.

-The Family of David L. Moore

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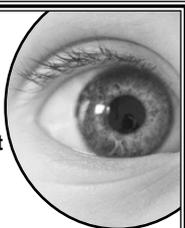


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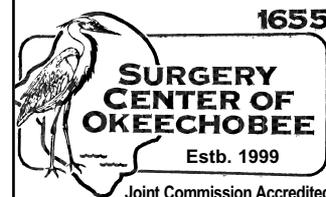


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Special to the Okeechobee News/Bobbi Poole

Little Miss Speckled Perch

Skyler Varnadore (center) was crowned Little Miss Speckled Perch at the 2010 festival pageant on Friday. Isabelle Cruz (right) was first runner-up. Cherylynn Bohannon (left) was second runner up.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Janelle Folk

Speckled Perch Festival Princess

Cere Elliot (center) was crowned Speckled Perch Festival Princess in the pageant held Feb. 5 at the Okeechobee Freshman Campus Auditorium. Kimberly Shaw (right) was first runner-up. Macey Lamb (left) was second runner-up. The pageant winners will ride on the Chamber of Commerce Float in the Speckled Perch Festival Parade, at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, in downtown Okeechobee.

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Special to the Okeechobee News/Bobbi Poole

Junior Miss Speckled Perch

Taylor Pearce (center) was crowned Junior Miss Speckled Perch at the festival pageant on Feb. 5. Apolonia Nunez was first runner-up. Sierra Weaver was second runner up.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Janelle Folk

Tiny Miss Speckled Perch

Olivia Campbell (second from left) was crowned Tiny Miss Speckled Perch at the festival pageant on Feb. 5. Lindsey Hall was first runner up. Emma Raulerson was second runner up. Also in the Tiny Miss pageant were Kaylee Jayde Hickman and Myra Lynn Cruz.



Special to the News/Janelle Folk

Little Mister Speckled Perch

Michael Cruz was crowned Little Mister Speckled Perch in the festival pageant held Feb. 5, in the Okeechobee Freshman Campus Auditorium. The Speckled Perch Festival Parade will be on Saturday at 10 a.m. in downtown Okeechobee. The parade starts near the U-Save on Parrott Avenue, travels north to State Road 70 and then West to the end of Flagler Park.

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COUNTY

Continued From Page 1

she said. The five week summer program includes team building, character building and career skills development. Students would pay a fee to offset administrative costs with major funding to come from a grant from Childrens Services Council. Students will be working with local organizations such as the American Red Cross or Arnold's Wildlife Sanctuary and will have a career day to visit local employers. Participants can earn up to 40 hours of community service. About 25 percent of the time will be involved in community service projects which are required in some scholarship programs. There will also be a visit to a college campus. The pro-

gram includes various recreation and learning activities and guest speakers.

"This program has more grounding than some programs considered by the Childrens Service Council," said Commissioner Joey Hoover who is a member of that organization. "All they are doing is adding another age group that we haven't had a program for before."

Jim Threewitts, deputy county administrator, said that the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) officials might be at the next commission meeting to discuss possible options for constructing intersections in connection with the four-laning of State Road 70 in the area of the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center and the South Florida Water Management District Field Station. He said DOT officials believe stimulus money will soon be available for these

AUDIT

Continued From Page 1

four schools did not have any findings this year. They included Central Elementary, Seminole Elementary, Osceola Middle School and the freshman campus. She said for the most part school book keepers do an excellent job. "They're very much aware of the things they need to work on. We have a manual that they must follow and we have reminded them of that," she added.

Most of the problems involved fundraisers, and athletic events. The report said a fundraiser financial report was not completed at North Elementary School for PTO T-shirt sales, as required by school board policy. The auditor recommended a tracking system be put in place to ensure that the report is completed for every fundraiser. The system would provide for accountability and control over these activities and emphasizes a sound business policy, the audit said.

Yearling Middle School completed an inaccurate financial report for a FFA Beef Stick sales fundraiser. The auditor had to summarize all invoices from the vendor, analyze all FFA sales, and trace transfers made to other classes or clubs. The auditor recommended that each class or club purchase the products for resale directly and that the sponsor review the financial report closely to ensure accuracy.

Okeechobee High School had numerous activities for which fund raiser financial records were not completed. They recom-

mended a tracking system be put in place identical to the one recommended at North Elementary School.

On the bank deposit delay issue at OHS, the auditor found the receipts were deposited as night drops at local banks after evening activities like sports events. The money was not entered into the accounting system. The auditor had to spend time at the bank to review their night drop logs to determine the frequency of the night drops and determine whether the monies collected for the fiscal year were entered in a proper period. The auditor asked that all policies that involve cash collections and deposits in the school red book manual be sent in writing to appropriate school personnel.

projects. Current plans call for sidewalks on both sides of that section of State Road 70.

Donnie Oden, capital projects manger for the county, reported that the completion of the restoration of the courthouse has now been pushed back to the first of April. The cold weather delayed painting and plaster work 16 days and unexpected repairs on the plaster ceilings in the stairwells took up another unanticipated 7 days. However, the project is still under budget.

In other action, the board:

- held an executive session concerning pending litigation with American Drilling and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection;
- rejected all bids for fuel, oil and lubricants received Jan. 27 due to technical inadequacies of the bid specifications and autho-

rized staff to revise bid specifications;

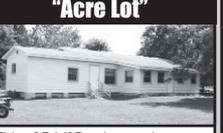
- approved an agreement between the county and Hammer Construction arising from insurance claims for hurricane repair work in which the construction company agrees not to seek additional compensation from the county above what the insurance company pays;
- amended the HHRP Program Funding Agreement with Neal Long Construction to eliminate the requirement for professional liability and garage keeper's insurance which were not necessary; and
- approved one-year extensions to agreements with Craig A. Smith & Associates, Kimley Horn & Associates, BCI Engineers & Scientists, Inc., and Keith Schnars, P.A. for special assessment infrastructure projects.

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American Legion Free Fair shuts down early

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

Wednesday, Feb. 10 was the last day of operations for the American Legion Free Fair.

The fair had been scheduled to run through Sunday, Feb. 14.

It seems that the American Legion Post 64 was in conflict with a state law. Florida Statute 616.13 states that amusement rides are prohibited "within a 5-mile radius of and within 30 days before or during any public fair or exposition being operated by a fair association."

This year's Okeechobee County Fair is scheduled for March 12-21. The last weekend of the free fair would have come within 30 days of the county fair.

There has been some confusion over fair dates ever since the first county fair in 2007. Paul Patridge, commander of the post, thought the free fair was grandfathered in since they had been operating around the first Sunday in February for over 40 years.

The Okeechobee County Fair Association contends the law does not allow for "grandfathering."

A letter dated Oct. 17, 2006 from Terry Burroughs, treasurer of the fair association, to American Legion Post 64 stated: "This letter serves as written consent as required by Florida Statutes 616.13; the Okeechobee County Fair Association, Inc., has no problem with the American Legion Post 64 conducting the American Legion Free Fair during the month of February, 2007."

Linda Syfrett, president of the fair asso-

ciation, said that the free fair was approved for 2007 only, which was the first year of the fair. At that time the county fair had another vender under a different contract. The contract with the current vendor, according to Mrs. Syfrett, specifically calls for the fair association to protect the ride operator by not allowing any other type event within 30 days and 5 miles of the county fair.

"We're trying to put on the best fair we possibly can," said Mr. Syfrett.

In 2008 and 2009 there was no conflict in dates. In 2008, the Free Fair opened on Jan. 31 and closed on Feb. 10. In 2009, the free fair opened Jan. 28 and closed on Feb. 8.

To add to the confusion, some local organizations were advertising Jan. 28 through Feb. 7, as this year's free fair dates. Mr. Patridge claims those dates were never considered for this year and said any notices with those dates were in error. If those dates had been correct for this year, there would have been no conflict with the county fair.

"They are infringing on our dates and we can't allow it," said Linda Syfrett, president of the fair association.

Joe Sheldon, American Legion member and amusement ride vendor who has been bringing rides to the free fair since 1958, said the American Legion will lose \$10,000 due to the early closing and the vender will lose \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Mr. Fennell said this loss of funds would cause the American Legion to have to cut funds to the VA Hospital, Boys State, the Boy Scouts, grad night and the scholarship program.

The fair association decision was by

made by the association board of directors.

"I have no hard feelings against the county commissioners," said Mr. Patridge. He urged people to go to the county fair to show support for the county commissioners.

The Okeechobee County Fair Association, Inc. is a chartered corporation that operates independent of the county commission. County Commissioners do not appoint members of the fair association. They do appoint members to the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center Advisory Committee, a completely separate organization.

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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WEDDING
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. ILLUSTRATION

Joseph W. Example and Jane A. Illustration were married on Jan. 1, 2009, in Local Church. The bride, Jane Illustration, wore a beautiful gown and the groom, Joseph W. Example, wore a tuxedo. The ceremony was officiated by Pastor John Example. The bride and groom were accompanied by their parents and friends. The reception was held at the County Club. The bride and groom were surrounded by family and friends. The celebration was a joyous occasion for all.

BIRTH
SUSAN A. EXAMPLE

Susan A. Example was born at 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 1, 2010, to Nancy Example. She weighed 6 pounds 10 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. She is the daughter of Joseph and Jane Example of Your Town.

ANNIVERSARY
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. EXAMPLE

Joseph W. Example and Jane A. Example celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary on Jan. 1, 2009. The celebration was held at the County Club. The bride and groom were accompanied by their parents and friends. The celebration was a joyous occasion for all.

OBITUARY
JOSEPH W. EXAMPLE & JANE A. EXAMPLE

Joseph W. Example and Jane A. Example were married on Jan. 1, 2009, in Local Church. The bride, Jane Illustration, wore a beautiful gown and the groom, Joseph W. Example, wore a tuxedo. The ceremony was officiated by Pastor John Example. The bride and groom were accompanied by their parents and friends. The reception was held at the County Club. The bride and groom were surrounded by family and friends. The celebration was a joyous occasion for all.



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'Boatmobile' to be in parade

By Katrina Elsen
Okeechobee News

Gregory Troy is on a voyage. The self proclaimed "Captain Cosmos" says his "boat" is a work in progress. The inside is a 1995 GMC half ton cargo van. Fiberglass and wood have been added to make the vehicle look like a boat. Someday, he said, he hopes to make it a true amphibious vehicle that can travel on land or water.

Captain Cosmos is in Okeechobee this week to participate in the Speckled Perch Festival Parade.

The Michigan native travels around the United States, supporting himself by doing carpentry, yard work and other odd jobs, "any kind of manual labor." His mission: To spread joy.

"When I'm driving on the highway, about 75 percent of the other drivers are so focused on getting where they are going that they don't even notice they are passing a boat that is not being pulled by a car. But the ones who do notice smile and wave and I wave back. I love to see their faces light up."

During his seven "voyages" around America, he thinks, "about 100,000" people have taken his picture and his vessel has been featured in more than 50 newspaper articles. He even had 15 seconds of fame on the Letterman show.

He was on his way to Key Largo when he stopped in Okeechobee.

"I heard about the Speckled Perch Festival Parade and I decided I had to go," he said.



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda
Gregory Troy and his 'boatmobile' will be in the Speckled Perch Festival Parade on Saturday in downtown Okeechobee.

Along the way, he raises money for charities. He is currently working on a plan to raise money for the Make A Wish Foundation. He said the Stichin' Post in Okeechobee will sell T-shirts with a photo of his boat, the "I'm Possible." Profits from the T-shirt sales will go to the Make a Wish Foundation. He said several local businesses have also agreed to sell the shirts.

Someday he hopes to write a book about his travels and adventures.

"My whole life is about doing the best I can to bring joy to the world and smiles to the people," he said.

ENGAGEMENT

**KAYLA HINTON &
MICHAEL WISE**

Michael and Julie Shook, along with Lamar Tindall of Okeechobee, announce the engagement of their daughter, Kayla Hinton to Michael Wise, son of Leroy and Michele Wise, also of Okeechobee. Grandparents of the bride are Charles and Shelva Breland and the late Barbara Breland, along with the late Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Tindall, all of Okeechobee. Grandparents of the groom are Sally Sanzo of West Palm, Fred and Shirley Devin of Fellsmere, and Mary Wise of Okeechobee. The bride to be graduated from Okeechobee High School in 2006. Her fiance graduated from Okeechobee High School in 2005. The couple is planning a March 12, 2011 wedding to be held in Okeechobee.



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School Board honors Raulerson and Reno

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee County School Board honored former Superintendent Phoebe Mrs. Raulerson and Director of Human Resources Julie Reno for earning the Mutual of America Foundation Community Partnership Award when they met for their monthly meeting Tuesday night.

Mrs. Raulerson was instrumental in the Florida Institute for Advancement of Teaching program with Florida Atlantic University.

Thirty-one teachers were hired by Okeechobee Schools that were involved in that program. Mrs. Raulerson told the board that during that time Okeechobee had a shortage of teachers and were also experiencing a boom in student enrollment. She said students at FAU were allowed to teach in Okeechobee Schools while still in school in an internship program. She said it worked well for both the teacher and the system.

"I'm thrilled with this award. It means FAU was recognized, and our school system was recognized. We are making the right moves and we are at the head of the curve," Mrs. Raulerson said.

The FAU students taught one semester in Okeechobee Schools with the help of a mentor. In return the district paid FAU what they would pay a first year teacher. Part of the money went to pay for the mentor and the teacher/student also received a stipend. Mrs. Raulerson said the teachers were hired by the school system for the next school year after the internship.

"The teacher was well prepared and got about two years worth of experience. They were that much farther ahead when they came to work for us, it worked for everyone," she added.

Mrs. Raulerson said she is enjoying retirement. She recently took a trip to Australia to attend her youngest son's wedding.

The school system also sent out report cards for the second nine week grading period and the first semester from Okeechobee High School Wednesday. The district changed to a new program called Skyward and that resulted in some delays and glitches.

Superintendent Dr. Patricia Cooper said the district just wanted to make sure the information in the report card was accurate. "The high school was the one we were most

concerned about. We let parents know and they have been pretty patient."

In business actions, the Board expelled an eighth grader at New Endeavor High School for the remainder of the school year for defiance of authority, possession of a weapon on campus, and fighting or battery.

The board expelled a seventh grader at New Endeavor for the remainder of the school year for defiance of authority and inappropriate conduct. They also voted to expel an 11th grader at New Endeavor for the remainder of the school year and the first semester of next year for defiance of authority and assault or battery on a school board employee.

The board also honored School Bus Driver

Annetta Hardy upon her retirement. She had worked nine years for the system but was forced to retire by health problems. A large contingent of family, friends and co workers were on hand to honor Hardy.

School officials also learned that enrollment is up about 30 students when compared with the 2008-2009 school year.

The annual Regional Science Fair will be held on Feb. 17, at the Brighton Indian Reservation. The Award ceremony will be held at the Brighton School Cafeteria on Feb. 18, at 7 p.m.

The board also approved proclamation for Black History Month and for school breakfast week which is scheduled from March 8-12.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Superintendent Dr. Patricia Cooper, former Superintendent Phoebe Raulerson and Human Resources Director for Okeechobee Schools Julie Reno (L-R) share in their award presentation.

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Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Bus Driver Annetta Hardy was honored after she retired following nine years of service to the school system.

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OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Community Service Through Journalism

Brahmans win at district tourney

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

The Brahman boys basketball team didn't want their season to end Wednesday and it showed as they rallied from an eight point halftime deficit to defeat Suncoast, 63-54 at the District 14-4A tournament in Fort Pierce.

Okeechobee (14-8) advanced to meet the host team, Fort Pierce Central, on Friday night in the semifinals. Jensen Beach meets Westwood in the other semifinal game.

"It was a good competitive game. We trailed the whole game and had to come back," Brahman Coach Bryan Van Camp said, "Suncoast really caused us some problems in the first half with their aggressive defense."

Duelle Gore had a huge night with 17 points, 10 rebounds, and eight blocked shots. Van Camp said Suncoast didn't even try to drive into the lane late in the game because of Gore's defense, a factor in the Brahman comeback.

Gore had five free throws in the final quarter as Okeechobee sank 10-11 from the line down the stretch. Okeechobee outscored Suncoast 24-10 in the final quarter. Matt Skipper was 4-4 at the line, and Aaron Suarez hit both of his free throws.

Okeechobee had trailed 30-22 at the half to the Chargers, who finish the season at (11-12). James Fullwood had 13 points for Suncoast.

Van Camp said the team did a good job of moving the ball around and getting good shots even when they struggled in the first half. Okeechobee hit only 4 of 15 free throws in the first half which contributed to their struggles.

Okeechobee had lost in a blowout at Suncoast in December. Van Camp said his team is much different now. They run two five-men rotations, get everyone involved, and they are more confident.

"We knew this would be a really tough game and that we were in for a battle. We've had the experience of coming back from slow starts so we knew we could still win the game."

Ricky Nieto had 12 points, which included two three-point baskets, and Troy Harper had eight points and eight rebounds for Okeechobee. Deforest Shanks and Jonathan Hudoff both had seven points.

Okeechobee lost to Fort Pierce earlier in the season, 54-43, but Van Camp said his team will be confident when they take the floor on Friday night. The Cobras (16-5) haven't played in a week, and there last game was a loss to their rival Westwood in a low scoring affair 28-25. The Cobras top scorer is Trevor Banks.

"We didn't want the season to end last night; we wanted one more shot at the best team, Central. Motivation won't be a problem on Friday night, its what the kids have looked forward to all year," he added.



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CLASSIFIEDS

Speckled Perch Festival starts Saturday, Feb. 13

Okeechobee's annual Speckled Perch Festival, sponsored by the Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, starts Saturday in Flagler Park.

A variety of arts and crafts booths will open in Flagler Park Saturday morning. The Speckled Perch Festival Parade will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13.

The parade starts at the U-Save Supermarket on Parrott Avenue, travels north to State Road 70 and then travels west to the end of Flagler Park.

The newly crowned Speckled Perch Festival Royalty will be in the parade.

Entertainment in the park will be provided by talented local residents. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket to sit down and enjoy the show.

No festival activities take place in the first park at the intersection of Parrott Avenue and State Road 70. This park is the home to the Veterans Memorials. Festival goers are invited to visit the memorials, but are asked to show proper respect.

On Saturday in Park #2, the Okeechobee Steelers will perform. This award-winning steel drum band is made up of local young people.

Park #3 will feature Phil Eddings and the Cripple Creek Band with Wes and Debbie



Special to the Okeechobee News/Janelle Folk
The 2010 Miss Speckled Perch is Jilian James.

James. In Park #4, local gospel singers will perform.

On Sunday, Feb. 14, the arts and crafts festival continues in Flagler Park. In Park #2, the Harmon Brothers (Gerry and George) will perform. Park #3 will feature "Lisa and Friends." Park #4 will host local area gospel singers.

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Your Price **\$399.00**

Full Sized Sofa Bed
Sugg. Retail \$1,599.00
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Queen Anne Window Bench
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Chaise Lounger
Sugg. Retail \$1,099.00
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Trading Post Flea Market
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Announcements

Important Information: Please read your ad carefully the first day it appears. In case of an inadvertent error, please notify us prior to the deadline listed. We will not be responsible for more than 1 incorrect insertion, or for more than the extent of the ad rendered valueless by such errors. Advertiser assumes responsibility for all statements, names and content of an ad, and assumes responsibility for any claims against the Delaware State News. All advertising is subject to publisher's approval. The publisher reserves the right to accept or reject any or all copy, and to insert above the copy the word "advertisement". All ads accepted are subject to credit approval. All ads must conform to Delaware State News style and are restricted to their proper classifications. Some classified categories require advance payment. These classifications are denoted with an asterisk *.

For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Garage/Yard Sales

OKEECHOBEE - 5145 SE 82nd Circle, 2/13/2010, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. PIONEER ESTATES YARD SALE. Furniture, small appliances, clothes, baby things, kitchen items, etc. Something for everyone.

1799 S. PARROTT AVENUE - Behind Brantley's Junk Yard, Storage Stalls 398-403, 2/12-2/13, 8a.m. - 3p.m. Rain or Shine. Huge Multi Stall Yard Sale. Furniture, tools, household. Too much to miss.

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

Employment

For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Need a Job? Want a Career?

Okeechobee Health Care Facility is offering Certified Nursing Assistant training to those who qualify. Once you complete the training and pass the required test, we put you to work starting at **\$9.00 per hour.**

If you are interested, please complete an application at our business office, located at 406 NW 4th St.

Employment Medical

PATIENT CARE ASSISTANTS and PTA's Physical Therapy Assistant

Raulerson Hospital has immediate openings for Pt. Care Assistants & PTA's (FT,PT & PRN), applicants must have FL certification and current CPR certification. Please log on to www.raulersonhospital.com to complete an online employment application. Raulerson Hospital, 1796 Hwy. 441, N., Okeechobee, FL 34973

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Get a quick response to any item you may be selling with a classified ad.

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QUALITY CONTROL
Earn up to \$100 per day. Evaluate retail stores, training provided, No experience required. Call 888-615-5249

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Help Wanted: Part time weekends; appointment setter. 9-12 Sat; 12-4 Sun. \$10 hr plus bonus. 863-357-5757

X-RAY TECHNOLOGIST PT, Registered, hours flexible, with 1 year experience preferred. Please call (863)467-7084 or fax resume to 863-467-6833

The classifieds are the most successful salesperson in town.

Financial

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Shop here first! The classified ads

Business Opportunities

NOTICE

Independent Newspapers will never accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is. If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 772-878-2010 for previous complaints.

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.

Services

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Excavation

CLEARING & HAULING
Dump Truck, Back Hoe & Bobcat Services... by Jason Summerford (863)634-7771

One man's trash is another man's treasure. Turn your trash to treasure with an ad in the classifieds.

Top Soil

JACK'S TOP SOIL
Fill Dirt/Shell Rock & Bob Cat work. Call 863-467-4734

Merchandise

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Miscellaneous

NEW TODAY!

3 BEDROOM 2 BATH REMODELED CBS HOUSE FOR RENT - 3 BEDROOM 2 BATH ALL NEW TILE AND CROWN , NEW BATHROOMS IN DIXIE RANCH ESTATES WITH MOTHER -IN-LAW ENTERANCE \$800.00 PER MONTH PLUS \$800.00 SECURITY MOVES YOU IN, NO DOGS PLEASE!! CALL 561-596-1344. (561)596-1344

Rentals

For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Apartments

For Rent: 1bd efficiency apartment; utilities included. Good location. \$350 mo. 812-989-3022.

Condos/Townhouses Rent

Taylor Creek Condo 2/1, furnished. Pool, Dock. \$875/mo + 1st & sec. Avail 2/15/10 (863)634-8757

Houses - Rent

AFFORDABLE NEW HOUSES - 3/2/2 and 3/1/1, tile floors, jacuzzi tub, Bring Pets, Large Yards (561)723-2226

CLEAN 2/1, Lg. yard w/Oak trees. \$650 mo. 1st, last, \$400 sec. (561)261-0077

Houses - Rent

For Rent: Dixie Ranch Estates, 3/2 CBS, corner lot, 1/2 acre, new tile,new bath, doors, crown and new drainfield & pump, with laundry room. Small pet okay. \$800 mo.First, last & \$500 security. Call 561-596-1344.

NEW DUPLEX - 3/2, in the city limits, Avail Immediately, \$900/mo + 1st, & deposit. (863)465-0053

TREASURE ISLAND - 2/2, CBS, waterfront, lake access, tiled floors, screened patio, all appls, \$800/mo No deposit. (954)610-5345

Office Space Rent

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT (863)763-8565

Real Estate

For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Houses - Sale

OKEE. - Huge 1 Bdrm. Apt. Tile throughout. Screen porch. \$435 mo. + utilities. 1st, last & \$200 sec. dep. No dogs. 863-801-1739

Lots - Sale

Orange Blossom Ranches Block 9, lot 1 & 32 cleared, \$20,000 ea 863-357-2928

Real Estate Wanted

Single Veteran looking for home in Okeechobee. 3bd/2 ba; No pets, no children. Preferably on a canal. With lease option. 635 Water Street; #21; Biloxi, MI 39530 Call Eddie 228-365-2115.

Mobile Homes

For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Mobile Home Rent

Adorable 2/1, Ancient Oaks, + 55, completely furnished, with boat ramp, gated community, incl. water, cable, lawn care & w/d, annual \$595, seasonal \$850 or for sale \$39,000 FIRM, inclds electric Available immediately, sec dep, 1 small pet okay (863)801-9027

BUCKHEAD RIDGE - Dbl. Wide 2 BR, 2 BA, C/Air. \$600 mo. 3 BR, 2 BA, C/Air. \$700 mo. No pets. \$300 sec. dep. (863)763-4031

FOR RENT: 3/2 and 2/1 Cottages. Newly remodeled. 12 miles north of Okeechobee on beautiful ranch. Water, trash & lawn maintenance included. NO PETS! M-F. (863)467-2982

FT. DRUM AREA - furn., older mobile home, 1.5 br, 1ba, \$425 dep., \$425 mo. rent (912)925-2147/ (912)224-4658 or (734)637-2697

LARKEE LAKES- 2BR/1BA, \$550 month & \$300 sec. dep. or for sale \$35,000 Call (863) 467-2156

OKEECHOBEE - 2br, 1ba with large back porch & front porch on large scenic, wooded, fenced lot, W/D \$700 mo. Call 863-634-3451

Mobile Home Sale

BANK REPO'S MOVE TO YOUR LAND Mobile Home Angels 561-721-2230

Shop from a gift catalog that's updated regularly: the classifieds.

Mobile Home Sale

For Sale: Park Model w/Fla. Room in Blue Cypress. With lots of extras. Reduced \$55,000 or obo. Call 863-532-9222 or 863-610-0218.

Factory went out of business 4br/2ba, 32x80, 2400 sq ft mobile \$20,000 below retail. Cost \$69,900 on your lot. Has fireplace, large kitchen, glamour bath & family room. Never priced this low again. 863-3574849

For the lowest prices on factory direct custom built Jacobson Homes. Call 863-357-4849 and ask for Larry or Sandy

LARKEE LAKES - 2br, 1ba, you own land, lg screen porch, \$30,000 (863)467-2156

New 3br/2ba double-wide only \$44900 setup & a/c included \$2000 down or trade for down payment, very easy credit 863-357-4849

Okeechobee mobile home dealer selling all remaining inventory at near factory invoice to make room for 2010 models. Call Sandy or Larry 863-357-4849

Trade ins wanted. No money down when you trade-in your old mobile home. 3 & 4 bedroom doublewides at excellent price. Call Larry or Sandy at 863-357-4849

Reading a newspaper helps you understand the world around you. No wonder newspaper readers are more successful people!

Your next job could be in today's classifieds. Did you look for it?

Buying a car? Look in the classifieds. Selling a car? Look in the classifieds.

Girls softball team optimistic about 2010 season

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

Okeechobee High School's girls softball has become used to winning, so last year was a bit of a surprise when the Lady Brahmans missed out on the post season.

Coach Kim Hargraves said this year's team doesn't have any plans of finishing their season early.

"We have a strong team coming back and I feel we will be contenders for our third title in four years. The girls have that kind of ability," she said.

The Brahmans didn't lose any seniors to graduation and added three freshmen Erena Billie, Jaryca Baker and Sarah Davis to the mix.

The team also has four senior leaders in Katarina Suarez, Megan Clements, Emily McCullough, and Frances Bosworth.

Coach Hargraves said so far the girls have looked good with strong attitudes and work ethics, "This is my favorite time of year. The girls have worked hard in the offseason. We have a veteran group. They've worked hard so far, were pretty excited."

Coach Hargraves said Suncoast came from nowhere to surprise Okeechobee and Jensen Beach last year. She noted Suncoast has done well with their travel ball team and continue to be a factor in the district. Jensen returns all nine starters and will be a tough team to beat.

Hargraves said last year nine of her 13 players suffered injuries and that curtailed

their efforts to win the district championship. She said the team seems fairly healthy so far this year and she hopes that trend continues.

Okeechobee also suffered a blow when Taylor Douglas was lost to an illness. Her status for the coming year is still unknown but the team will hope for the best. Hargraves admitted that Douglas is a huge asset behind the plate with her defense. She also is a power hitter from the left side of the plate.

"We are hoping and praying that she comes back strong and is an asset this season," she said.

At first base Clements will share time with LeAnna Cotton and Courtney Wilson. Wilson and Ashtyn Brown will be the primary second basemen. Naomi Stephens and Victoria Blevins should see time at shortstop. Cotton and Clements will play some at third base.

With Douglas unavailable, Brown and Baker will see the bulk of the playing time behind the plate.

The outfield will feature Emily McCullough, Blevins, Taylor Kinman, Billie, and Samantha Harrell.

The featured pitchers will be Harrell, Suarez, and Wilson. Some of the younger arms also have potential to see time on the mound. Heather Gillis returns as assistant coach while Darryl Allen and Tyrone Smith will handle the JV team.

Hargraves said pitching really isn't the team's main concern. She said offense will

tell the tale of whether Okeechobee returns to glory, "We have good consistent pitchers. The biggest thing is to get the bats alive. Were not a power house hitting team like in the past, we'll rely on running the bases more.

The Lady Brahmans split two games this past weekend at a Preseason Classic at Jupiter High School. Okeechobee lost to the host school 3-0 in the first game but rebounded to defeat a tough Palm Beach Gardens squad, 2-0, in the second game.

The annual softball fundraiser will be held today with a golf ball drop from a helicopter starting festivities at about 5:45 p.m. The balls are dropped over second base. The ball closest to the base earns the winner \$1,500. The second closest ball earns the owner \$600, and the third closest earns \$400. The ball that lands the furthest from the bag earns the owner free season passes to all softball home games.

Each ball costs \$10 and can be purchased from players and coaches. There will also be a fund raiser dinner with barbecue pork, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, ice tea and a desert for only \$6. For more information on the fundraiser, call Coach Hargraves at 863-634-6322.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Courtney Wilson will be one of the key pitchers this year for the Lady Brahmans.

**Hey,
Okeechobee!**

50 Fans = \$50 gift certificate

- Each of the first two teams with 50 registered fans by February 28, will receive one \$50 gift certificate from Domino's Pizza. Must be actively reporting game scores, photos, etc. on the site to participate (1 certificate per team)



1. Have your family and friends locate your teams on the Okeechobee *SportsNetwork*.

2. Click the "Become a Fan" icon  and provide an email address.

3. They have now "Become a Fan" of your team and will receive updates as the stories are posted to the site.



"To visit Okeechobee Sports Network online, go to newszap.com, click on the Okeechobee homepage, then click on the Sports tab in the upper right part of the page"

