



OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 102 No. 100

Sunday, August 21, 2011

75¢ Plus tax



Doctor sentenced for illegal drug distribution
...see Page 3

100 years old and going strong
.. Page 10



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Local woman avoids elaborate scam

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

When a local woman was notified by "American Publisher's Clearinghouse" that she had won \$495,000 in a prize giveaway, she mentally made plans on how she was going to pay off her bills and get out of debt.

But her hopes were quickly dashed when she realized this was just another scam. And even though it's very elaborate, and even claims to include a U.S. governmental agency, it's still a scam.

The woman, who asked to keep her identity unknown, was first contacted on Aug. 3 by a man calling himself Andrew Perez, a representative with American Publisher's Clearinghouse (APC). Perez told her that the contest had ended in November 2010 and that she

was a winner. "I've entered so many contests, I didn't know if I had (won) or not," she said.

Perez told her that a bonded courier company would deliver her check to her between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Aug. 4. He went on to weave an elaborate tale of how the company had tried unsuccessfully to reach her and, because they had received no response, her money was at the APC claims office in Texas. This contact, he added, was APC's last resort to reach her.

"He said he had one week to reach me and, if he didn't, the money would go to charity," she said.

At this point, this didn't sound like a scam because he did not ask her for any personal information other than her name and address and if she would be home between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Perez did ask if she had a bank in which the money could be deposited, but he did not ask for the name of the bank or her account number. He also told her that the money would arrive in Miami, and then be delivered to her.

"He said nothing was expected of me, other than my signature and a photo ID," said the woman. "He said it's all true. I told him I was very cautious about this and he said I should be. And he said I didn't have to put out any money or anything."

Then, on Aug. 8, she received a call from Michael Richardson who identified himself as an agent with U.S. Customs in Miami. Richardson told her she would need to send a certified check to an insurance agent in Miami.

When she protested and said Perez had

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Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Back to school

First grade teacher Tammy Thomas (center) helps Emma Rodriguez and her brother Jarren get ready for school at South Elementary's open house on Thursday. Okeechobee County students go back to school on Monday. For more Open House photos, see page 9.

Bus drivers can help stop sex offenders

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Sex offenders don't look like the boogie man or a creepy person that can be easily spotted. Most of them look like normal every day human beings. If you can understand them, you can see them and stop them, a famed expert on sex offenders told Okeechobee School bus drivers this week in a special training session at the Indian River State College Williamson Center.

"Bus drivers, our first line of defense against sexual predators," was the featured topic of Duane Dobbert, Ph.D., a professor for Florida Gulf Coast University.

Dr. Dobbert said over 100,000 children and missing and exploited each year. Okeechobee County recently was ranked #1 among Florida counties in our rate of child abuse. With 47,000 registered sex

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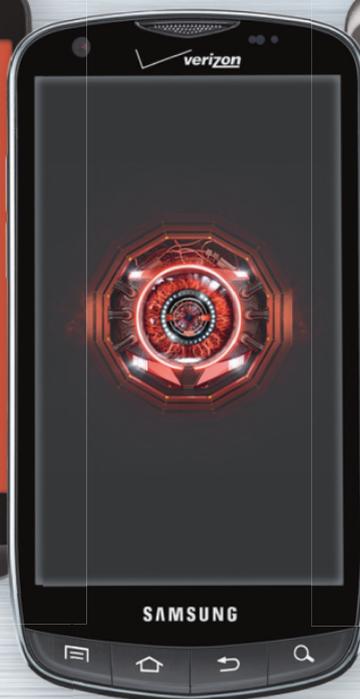
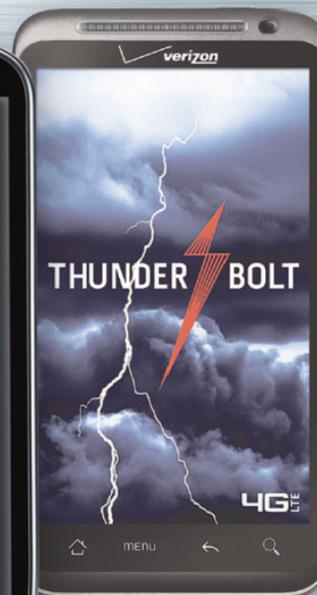
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IN COLLABORATION WITH



City seeks to loosen restrictions for alcohol sales in restaurants

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

It appears that a proposed city ordinance would treat restaurants and bars differently when it comes to Sunday sales of mixed drinks and hard liquor.

Under current city ordinance neither restaurants nor bars can sell mixed drinks or hard liquor on Sundays. However restaurants are allowed to sell beer and wine on Sunday afternoons. The city council is considering an ordinance that would allow restaurants to

sell mixed drinks and hard liquor on Sunday afternoons while still prohibiting bars from doing the same.

The proposed city ordinance also seeks to simplify distance requirements. It sets 100 feet as the maximum distance a business serving alcohol may be located from a school, church or day care center. The current ordinance allows for a longer distance under some circumstances.

It has been suggested that this ordinance was written especially for the new Applebee's that is coming to Okeechobee. However, city attorney John Cook, who drafted the ordinance, said it was not written to favor a particular business. City administrator Brian Whitehall also denied that it was written for Applebee's. He said the developers of Applebee's mentioned the Sunday sale of alcohol in passing, but it was not a requirement

for coming to Okeechobee.

In the county, commissioners simplified the situation by removing the distinction between different types of alcoholic beverages. County ordinance 99-03 states that in the unincorporated areas of the county no alcoholic beverages of any type can be sold between the hours of 2:01 a.m. and 7 a.m. Monday through Saturday and between the hours of 2:01 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sunday. Thus the county allows sales of all types of alcoholic beverages by licensed vendors on Sunday afternoons.

The city council approved the first reading of the proposed ordinance on Aug. 16 and set Sept. 6 as the date for the final public hearing.

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

Brush fire caused by lightning strike

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Crews from Okeechobee County Fire Rescue and the Florida Division of Forestry reported an act of nature sparked a brush fire in northern Okeechobee County Wednesday afternoon.

Paramedic David Kinchen said 40 acres burned in the 20000 block of N.E. 336th Street just before 4 p.m.

The fire report said heavy palmettos and a pine forest were destroyed in the blaze but no homes were threatened. No injuries were reported.

The DOF provided two tractors and plows to help contain the blaze. Three units and eight firemen were on the scene for approximately one hour. A heavy rain storm also helped firemen put out the flames.

On Thursday afternoon, a brush fire off State Road 710 near the Eight Seconds bar burned about five acres before it was contained. Two structures in the area were not damaged according to the Florida Forest Service report. Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue and Florida Forest Service firefighters contained the fire, using State Road 710 as a firebreak.

Commission to consider routine matters

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

When Okeechobee County Commissioners meet on Tuesday instead of Thursday this week, they will face a short agenda of noncontroversial and routine items.

Fishing and boating enthusiasts will be glad to hear that commissioners will consider awarding a contract for the purchase of aluminum floating docks for the Nubbin Slough boat ramp. In a related action commissioners are expected pass a resolution to amend the current budget to receive unanticipated grant funds from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to pay for the floating docks.

Commissioners also will entertain a request from Butch's Red Neck Yacht Club to rent the amphitheater and adjoining field at Okee Tantie Campground & Marina for \$150 for a family fun day.

The board will have the opportunity to settle a long running complicated litigation issue between the county, Hammer Construction Company, Public Risk Management, the county's insurer and various insurers and their adjusters. The action dates back to work done by Hammer for the county to repair damages done by hurricanes, Charlie, Francis and

If you go ...
What: Meeting of the Okeechobee County Commission
When: 9 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 23
Where: Commission Chambers, Okeechobee County Courthouse, 304 N.W. Second St.

Jeanne. The litigation deals with disputes over Hammer's method of billing.

Turning to other action, the board is expected to:

- schedule November and December board meetings,
- consider approval of a contract with CAS Governmental Services to provide legislative services for the county;
- authorize staff to negotiate a contract with the top ranked consulting firm that submitted a bid for an impact fee study; and
- consider the code enforcement special magistrate's recommendation to reduce a lien for a code violation.

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

Podiatrist sentenced for illegal oxycodone distribution

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Mark R. Trouville, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, Miami Field Division, has announced the sentencing of defendant Arthur Carl Haspel, 66, of Boca Raton, FL. U.S. District Court Judge Jose E. Martinez sentenced Haspel to 87 months in prison.

On April 6, 2011, Haspel pleaded guilty to an Information, which charged him with nine counts of distributing and dispensing oxycodone outside the scope of practice, in violation of Title 21 United States Code Section 841(a)(1). Judge Jose E. Martinez sentenced Haspel to 87 months in prison, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. This sentence was imposed to run consecutively to a 21-month sentence Haspel received on Feb. 24, 2011, from U.S. District Court Judge Adalberto Jordan on Medicare fraud charges.

According to statements made in court and documents filed in the case, Haspel was doctor of podiatry, licensed to practice in Florida. For the last three years, Haspel worked as a partner in The Foot Doctors, LLP, located in Okeechobee.

Arthur Carl Haspel, due to a 2001 conviction for illegally trafficking hydrocodone

in the Eastern District of Tennessee, was no longer registered with DEA, did not possess a valid DEA number, and, therefore, was not permitted by law to dispense controlled substances.

While working at Foot Doctors, Haspel wrote at least nine prescriptions between the dates of Sept. 10, 2009, and Oct. 21, 2009, for roxicodone, which is a brand name for oxycodone, a Schedule II controlled substance. Haspel admitted that he used the personalized prescription pad of the other doctor in his practice, and forging that doctor's DEA number and signature. Haspel admitted that he wrote the prescriptions without the permission of the other doctor, without any legal authority, and that he wrote the without a legitimate medical purpose.

Mr. Ferrer commended the DEA for their work in the case. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Carmen Lineberger.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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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!

Elections

- The election is next year but the words are flying. Some words just grab you. They make a good point. They hit on some things that get you to think they are just like you, that they only want what is good for both of you. Then you vote them in and what's good for them might not be good for you at all. Then you are stuck until the next time.

- For the most part, voting, should be an informed decision. Many of the voters choose not to study, or to borrow from the liberal arts, use learned critical thinking. They, (we), fall for the demagoguery, half truths, wishful thinking, and overall bombast. An old saying of what "Plays in Peoria," or more timely, television, the Internet, Iowa and New Hampshire, sets the pace for what we are going to think and do. We want right now a quick sound bite and not a long dissertation, and even more so, to hear what we want to hear. How many conservatives do you know that listen to what the Democrats have to say? Or, Democrats that listen to what the conservatives are saying? We find it easier to listen to Rush Limbaugh or Dusty Rhodes, (is she still around?), who are really entertainers. A lot of people do that, take the opinions of others for their own, I did. At least until I reached my golden years of enlightenment. Add to that the wide differences of the many voters different frame of reference. Environment, religion, age, ethnicity, sex, they all are an ingredient that forms their political opinion. Unless that is, they conscientiously choose to change it. Via open-minded education and research, maybe?

Open House

- After standing in line for half an hour at open house to get my child's schedule, I was a little upset to see people let their friends cut in line ahead of us. I was especially disappointed to see law enforcement officers cutting to the front of the line. What does that example teach the kids ... that the rules don't apply to everyone?

Told you so

- The market crashed. London's on fire. Prepare yourselves. Soon food will be an issue. The rich man who laughed at the poor man shall soon be walking in the poor man's shoes. Will he laugh then or will he wish he treated the poor man better? Food banks are running out of food. You cannot eat gold so start growing some food. If you start going hungry you can blame Obama, but it will be your own fault for not listening when you were told to start growing some food.

- You can't blame Obama if you don't have any food. First thing Mrs. Obama did was put in a garden. Lead by example, I think it is called.

- If you invested in gold or diamonds early, you might consider looking closely at the markets because this is beginning to look like the real estate market a few years back.

- I'm investing in ammo.
- Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. I do have stocks and no I'm not rich. My investments are spread out over a lot of different funds. I hope if one fails the other will carry. That's the plan, anyway.

- I believe in the bullet investment. If London, England had done the right thing and used bullets, their rioting would have been over in one hour.

- Do you not have faith in the American system? Too much money for the money mongers on Wall Street let this happen. They will survive. How about you plant those gardens and watch was happens.

Thoughts to ponder

- How big is bigfoot's foot?
- What was the best thing before sliced bread?

County commission

- I can't believe the nerve of these businesses taking money for "helping people," then turning around and taking money from the people they're helping also. Wake up Okeechobee, this is your tax money too.

- I can't believe one of our commissioners asked what the volunteers do for the Guardian Ad Litem program.

- Watch the county commission meetings online. I just can't believe what some of the commissioners do!

- Sometimes I wonder if the county commissioners realize that people watch the meetings online. The way they act, they must think no one is watching them. But we are as they will find out come election time.

Reflections from the Pulpit

By Rev. Tom Pasquarella

Pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church

Marriage is a beautiful institution created by God and God has a specific purpose for it. Marriage is to be a picture of the church's relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. You might be wondering how this can be. We need to begin with submission. Now I know submission leaves a bad taste in the mouths of both believers and non-believers, because we do not want to be under the authority of anyone else. We want to be our own island. We are not an island in marriage, but we are a union that is a reflection of something awesome.

"Wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22) Wives are to be subject or submit themselves to their husbands, because of Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He Himself being the Savior of the body." Wives are equated in the church by this illustration of a marriage. The church is to be in submission to Christ and so the wife is to be in submission to the husband.

Now please do not shoot the messenger, but please read on. It is sad to say this is not what a marriage is today. There are many that think a woman should not submit or be subject to her own husband, but that is because many have abused this verse. I am not saying wives need to be abused and put down, this is not forced submission, but it is a willful submission. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands because of their love for Jesus. I know that it is hard to willingly submit, but if you think this is hard, wait until you hear the husband's responsibility in marriage.

"Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loves the church and gave Himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25) Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. How much are husbands to love their wives? Well, how much did He (Jesus) love the church? He sacrificed Himself for her and died in her place so that they may be with Him forever.

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

(Philippians 2:5-8) Husbands are to humble themselves for their wives and die to themselves, because it is not about self but about others. Jesus died for you because He placed you first, this means that husbands have to sacrifice not only their lives, but their desires and see what is best for their brides. If husbands could love their wives like Jesus loved the church and died for her, wives would have an easier time submitting to husbands, because they would be loved with an unconditional love. This is what makes a great marriage!

This can happen only when there is a commitment to Christ Jesus, because of what He has done on your behalf. He died in your place taking the punishment for your sin, so you would be with Him forever. I know that if you commit your marriage to God He will bless it and grow it to be a perfect picture of Jesus and His relationship to His church.

Okeechobee Forecast

Today: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 11 a.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 93. Calm wind becoming east southeast between 5 and 10 mph.

Tonight: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 10 p.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 74. East southeast wind around 5 mph.

Extended Forecast

Monday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon. Mostly sunny, with a high near 93. East southeast wind around 5 mph.

Monday night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 74. East southeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Tuesday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 92. East wind around 5 mph.

Tuesday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 74. East wind around 5 mph.

Wednesday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 93. East wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a low around 75. East wind around 5 mph.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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We Pledge...

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- To provide the information citizens need to make their own intelligent decisions about public issues.

- To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.
- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
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- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

MEMBER OF:



Richard Howe selected to lead OHS ROTC

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Recently retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Howe has been selected by Okeechobee High School principal Toni Wiersma to serve as the new Senior Army Instructor for the Brahman's Army Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Program.

The Melbourne resident joins Sergeant First Class Valparisia Gibson to complete the JROTC Instructor team.

Howe served 31 years in the United States Army. His service included duty in the Active component of the U.S. Army Reserve, and the Florida Army National Guard. He held

positions throughout the ranks from Platoon Leader through division staff officer.

Howe said the Army Junior ROTC's goal is to motivate young people to be better citizens and he expressed confidence that the program will continue to grow and excel.

"We make young people better citizens by providing a quality citizenship, charter and leadership development program, while fostering partnerships with communities and educational institutions," he added.

Howe has held assignments with infantry, airborne infantry, special operations, basic training, and organizational staff positions in the United States and overseas. He

is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College, the Command and General Staff Officers Course, the Combined Arms and Services Staff Officers Course, and the Infantry Officer Advanced and Basic Courses.

Howe served in Fort Monroe, Va. with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He holds a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College and a Bachelors degree from the University of Central Florida.

Howe also worked for 10 years as a professional firefighter, driver/engineer, and emergency medical technician with the City of Palm Bay.

Howe said he fully expects a good response for the Junior ROTC program in Okeechobee, "We anticipate increased JROTC enrollment and expanded student participation in a multitude of development programs available to both JROTC students and non-JROTC students."

Downing glad to return to Seminole Elementary

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Tracy Downing said she has learned things from 10 outstanding principals during her 16-year career in education.

Last week she got to join the ranks of principal as she was named to head Seminole Elementary School by Superintendent Ken Kenworthy and the Okeechobee School Board.

The product of Okeechobee schools said Seminole was always in her heart. She had served there as an Assistant Principal under Brian Greseth for four years before moving on to Okeechobee High School last year.

Downing was an English teacher at OHS for three years and a reading coach at Osceola Middle School for seven years before she joined the administrative ranks.

She earned a Masters Degree in Education and Education Leadership from Florida Atlantic University and her undergraduate degree from Florida State University.

Downing said she plans to make Okeechobee Schools her life-long career. She also likes the fact that her children attend Seminole Schools.

"I'm glad to be back and this is like the best of both worlds," she told the Okeechobee News, "I feel very passionate about education and I'm devoted to Okeechobee Schools."

Downing enters a solid situation as Seminole earned an A grade this year. Seminole was among a select group of Florida schools that raised their grade by two letter grades in one year. The school was also able to reach federal adequate yearly progress three years ago, a rare feat for an Okeechobee school in recent years.

Her plans are to develop children academically, socially and emotionally, "We will provide a safe environment where kids feel free to take risks and experiment success. I'm very proud to be here."

Downing said she is very thankful for the level of support she has received from the staff, school system, and parents. She said she always wanted this position.

"I really wanted to come back. The staff here is very dedicated to what they do," she said.

Downing also praised Greseth for his leadership. He left the district in June to take over the Educational System for the Seminole Tribe at the Brighton Reservation. She said her vision is to keep things going in a positive direction.

"I want to stay the course. The morale and the academic performance of our students are high," she added.

Downing said she will encourage her teachers to use research based instructional practices and to use data to drive their instruction. She also believes that teaching

small groups of students is more effective. She urges teachers to change their instruction practices to keep a child's interest. She said a teacher should foster a true love of learning in each child.

Seminole has one first-year teacher this year and three teachers who transferred in from other district schools. The Stallions have a student body of approximately 630 students.

She invited parents and the community to become involved in the schools parent teacher organization and their student advisory committee and attend events at the school on a regular basis.

"There are things going on here that we would love to showcase," she added.



Tracy Downing



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Okeechobee Livestock Market Report

August 15-16, 2011

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Cutter 61.00 67.00	250-300	170-180	135-155
	300-350	155-172	130-147
	350-400	137-160	119-135
Bulls	400-450	125-144	114-125
1000-1500 80.00 87.00	450-500	122-132	112-121
1500-2000 82.00 90.00	550-600	118-127	
Monday Tuesday	Med #2	Steers	Hfrs
Calves 864 1358	200-250	155-170	205-135
Cows 231 299	250-300	145-167	120-130
Str 51 7	300-350	130-150	115-128
Hfrs 24 21	350-400	122-135	110-118
Bulls 15 25	400-450	114-124	105-113
Yrlngs 26 80			
Mix 0 41			
Total 1011 1031			

Our runs were higher this week and prices held on pretty steady. Calves probably a little weaker. If you haven't traded your calves, give us a shot on the Internet. We have a special replacement heifer sale, Sept. 30. McDaniel Ranch of Clewiston topped the calf market with a high of \$2.05, bought by Reynolds. Pelaez & Sons & Miller Ranch topped the cow market with a high of \$79.

See ya next week
Pete

Weight Loss Transformation



Join us as we follow Chief Denny Davis' weight loss journey. He has lost 41 pounds in 6 weeks and he's just getting started! Stay tuned! His journey to be continued...



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Community Events

Ladies Auxiliary to host Sunday breakfast

The Buckhead Ridge VFW Post 9528 Ladies Auxiliary will host Sunday breakfast on Sunday, **Aug. 21**, from 9-11 a.m. Donation for the breakfast is \$5.

Orchid Club to meet

The Okeechobee Orchid Club will meet Monday, **Aug. 22**, at 7 p.m. at the Extension Center, 548 Highway 98 N. Please bring an orchid to show or a problem orchid to discuss. The Garden Club will meet at 6 p.m. For more information, call 863-763-6469.

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.

Joseph Claiborne

'Jake' Borderlon, 83

PALM BEACH — Joseph Claiborne 'Jake' Borderlon, age 83, passed away peacefully at C.W. Gerstenburg (Hospice) in West Palm Beach, on Aug. 10, 2011.

He was born on April 13, 1929, in Simmesport, La., to Clifton and Pearl Bordelon. He joined the United States Air Force at a young age where he served and honored our country. After 25 years, he retired from the Air Force and went on to work in the Palm Beach County School system where he then met his final retirement. He was an elder of his faith at Belvedere Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses'. His passion was spreading the word of the gospel of Jehovah and by informing the community of his word. He also enjoyed reminiscing on years gone by and his "left hook" with his favorite quotation being "I am 82 years old, I have no aches and no pains."

He was preceded in death by his faithful and loving companion of 48 years, Vera Vasquez. He is survived by his daughter, Sandra (Donald) Deck; four grandchildren, Jennifer Deck, Amanda Deck, Dawna Deck Micco (Charlie), and Donald L. Deck III. In addition, he is survived by five great-grandchildren, Damian Deck, Darian Deck, Jaidyn Deck, Zaidyn Micco, and Arliawna Micco, all of Okeechobee.

The family received their friends from 6 until 8 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 19, at the funeral home. A memorial service was 1 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 20, at Belvedere Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses'.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Dorsey-E. Earl Smith Memory Gardens Funeral Home, 3041 Kirk Road, Lake Worth, FL 33461.



August CCC meeting planned

The next meeting of the Community Collaborative Council, a part of the Shared Services Network of Okeechobee, will be Tuesday, **Aug. 23**, at 10 a.m., in the board room of the School Board Office.

Support group meets

Widow and Widower's Support Group meets Tuesday, **Aug. 23**, at The Lodge Restaurant at 8 p.m. For more info please contact Darlene Phanco at 863-467-5351. The group meets each Tuesday of the month.

Martha's House to host yard sale

Martha's House is having a yard sale on **Aug. 25 and 26**, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The sale will be held at 4134 Hwy 441 N. Okeechobee, behind our outreach office. You can call 863-763-2893.

Library Book Club to meet

Everyone is invited to the Friends of the Okeechobee Library Book Club. The group will meet to discuss Swamplandia by Karen Russell on Thursday, **Aug. 25**, a 6 p.m., in the library board room.

If you haven't read the book but would like to come listen and see how the book club works you are most welcome. This event is free and open to the public.

For more information call Jan at 863-357-9980.

Benefit planned for Beard family

A benefit to help the John Beard family will be held Saturday, **Aug. 27**, from 1 until 6 p.m. at the Pier II Motel on U.S. 441 S.E.

The benefit, sponsored by Style Studio Custom Motorcycle Shop, will help raise money to offset expenses incurred by Mr. Beard when his wife of 13 years died unexpectedly.

Barbecue dinners will be sold for \$8 per plate. There will also be an auction, 50/50 drawing, a corn hole tournament, karaoke and firefighters from the Okeechobee City Fire Department will square off against their counterparts from Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue in a relay race.

For information or to-go plates, call 863-697-8644 or 863-634-1055.

OCRA sets final football, cheerleader signups

On Saturday, **Aug. 27**, you can sign your child up to participate.

This will be your last opportunity to sign up.

We will be at the score tower at the sports complex from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please have a **copy** of the child's birth certificate and signup fee.

Cost to play: Football (7-14) \$75; Flag (4,5 & 6) \$45; Cheerleaders (4-14) \$45. For more information, call 863-634-0515.

News in Brief

Main Street announces new Labor Day competition

Okeechobee Main Street needs the community's support for their First Corn Hole Competition. A corn hole game is similar to a bean bag game. Small cloth bags filled with dried corn are thrown through holes in a wooden target at varying distances. The competition will take place during Labor Day weekend at Flagler Park #4. They are looking for teams of two to compete for the Grand Championship at \$10 per team. Teams will play on either Saturday or Sunday until they are eliminated from the competition. The Grand Championship game will be held on Monday, Sept. 5. Okeechobee Main Street is now taking applications for vendors for the 2011 Labor Day Festival in the Parks. The festivities will take place Sept. 3, 4, and 5. Anyone interested in participating, please see Cindy Birdashaw at the Main Street Office, 111 Northeast 2nd St., or call 863-357-6246. There will be no Labor Day parade this year, but new activities are planned in the parks.

Boat ramp closed for maintenance

The Henry Creek Boat Ramp, located in the Lake Okeechobee Rim Canal (L-47) in Okeechobee County, has been closed to improve the ramp surface for the boating public. Boat traffic in the rim canal will not be impacted. The ramp is scheduled to open by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 23. Navigation locks on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee and at the mouth of the Kissimmee River remain closed due to low lake levels in Lake Okeechobee. Access to the lake remains possible at boat ramps located inside the Herbert Hoover Dike. For a guide to recreation sites on Lake Okeechobee, including boat ramps and public parks, please visit the District's website at www.sfwmd.gov.

Kissimmee bridge work planned

The Kissimmee River Bridge on State Road 78 will be limited to one lane of traffic starting on Aug. 22, while the traffic rails on both sides of the bridge are repaired. One lane will be closed from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The contractor, L&S Concrete Inc., will use flaggers for this operation. Work is expected to begin on Aug. 22 and last for 20 days. For additional information, please contact the Public Information Officer, Audrey Clarke, 941-730-1481.

Utility crews working near U.S. 441 N.

During the week of Aug. 22-26 utility crews will be installing fiber optic cable on the east side of the roadway, on U.S. Highway 441, from Cemetery Road to the Osceola County line. No lane closures are expected, but motorists should be aware of construction traffic in the area.

Donald L. Deck Jr. (Duck)

August 17, 1961 - August 17, 2010

It's been a year today that the good Lord took your last breath away.

He seen you struggle and he seen you fight so he decided that it was time for this hard working man to take a flight.

A flight with no ending and a light only to a new beginning.

As hard as it is for us to grasp to this day, we know we are only a breath away.

We know you are watching over us with a big old smile, just to know that you always went the extra mile.

Dad, you could always walk with your head held high, you were a strong courageous man that God didn't want to pass by.

To provide for your loved ones and to take care of your own, it takes a real man to never moan and groan. You were a strong hard working man that never lived in fear all you ever asked for was just a cold beer.

Mom, misses your companionship and your gentle touch, and as for the rest of us...We just miss everything about you, way too much.

Your grandkids are growing up so fast, oh how they missed all of the days cut short from the past.

Once again it leaves us wondering...God, why couldn't you make these days last?



Whether it be camping, hunting, fishing or just watching a race, you always included the family...that's one of the reasons why you could never be replaced.

The greatest husband, father, papa and friend any one could ever wish for. Who could've ever asked for more?

We will never understand the night of June 25, 2007 when God decided it was your turn to rest up for your long trip to heaven.

A fatal crash, a dramatic change, things would just never be the same.

For 3 years, 1 month and 23 days we never understood why God let you lay, all we could do was sit back and pray. Although we prayed for a cure the doctor's just weren't sure.

On August 17, 2010 we went with the intentions of birthday wishes, hugs and kisses. Not to know that we would receive a phone call to say that God has ended it all.

No more struggles and no more pain, for now this would only be for you to gain. Physically you may not be here, but spiritually you will always remain, as we are all left behind to travel down memory lane.

Our lives were left incomplete, but we know in time, we will once again meet.

WE LOVE YOU WITH ALL OUR LIFE AND ALL OF OUR HEARTS
Sandy, Jennifer, Amanda, Dawna, Bubby, Damian, Darian, Jaidyn, Zaidyn & Arliawna

Additional charges filed against fake cop

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

A Miami man being held in the Okeechobee County Jail for allegedly impersonating a federal officer is now facing additional charges.

Vicente Valdes, 41, Washington Ave., Miami Beach, was arrested Wednesday, Aug. 17, on a felony charge of criminal use of personal identification. He was also arrested on misdemeanor charges of petit theft, credit card theft and credit card fraud. Valdes was being held in the county jail on \$25,000 bond. His bond on the new charges has been set at \$4,000.



Vicente Valdes

Detective Ted Van Deman, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), stated in an arrest report that the man's most recent arrest came about when Valdes used a friend's debit card to withdraw \$284.65 from the friend's account.

Valdes reportedly used the debit card at a local convenience store without the friend's permission. When contacted by Detective Van Deman, the friend didn't want to file a complaint against Valdes because they believed he was a federal agent with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

However, when told that Valdes was not a DHS agent, the victim decided to file the complaint.

Valdes was initially arrested July 29 on felony charges of falsely personating a federal officer and possession of cocaine. He was also charged with the misdemeanors of possession of a concealed handcuff key and unlawful lights on a vehicle. Detective Van Deman said flashing blue lights, strobe lights and a siren were found installed on a black 2008 Dodge pickup truck registered to Valdes.

When Valdes was arrested he was also found to be in possession of several semi-automatic handguns, ammunition, handcuffs, fake DHS badges, a handheld police scanner and numerous other items. Then, when Detective Van Deman and other OCSO investigators searched the man's truck on Aug. 2, a veritable treasure trove of law enforcement items were found.

Some of the items found during a six-hour search of the truck included: two AR-15 rifles; a double-barreled, 410-gauge shotgun; a 12-gauge shotgun; a .22-caliber rifle; thousands of rounds of ammunition; a military helmet; a SWAT helmet; bulletproof vests; a tactical vest; a handheld GPS; handheld scanners; many loaded and unloaded ammunition magazines; a parachute; an air mattress and pump; a water purifier; a machete; long knives; a dive suit and swim

fins; and, gas masks. Many of the items were stored in military- and camouflage-style bags that either bore United States Marine Corps (USMC) stamps or DHS insignias.

Detective Van Deman said Valdes has never been in the military and has never been a cop—at any level. “He just wanted to be a cop,” said the detective. “He looked the part and spoke the lingo.”

Some of the seized items will be kept by the sheriff's office if Valdes is convicted. However, added Detective Van Deman, the pickup truck will not be seized because “he owes too much on it.”

The OCSO investigator added that Valdes is also under investigation by the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) for reportedly impersonating a federal officer to a trooper in order to get out of a speeding ticket. Valdes was so good at weaving lies that his mother, girlfriend and co-workers all believed he was a federal agent.

To further illustrate his acumen at lying, Valdes worked at the Okeechobee Shooting Sports gun range where the only employees are either retired or current law enforcement members and he had all of them convinced he was a federal agent, the detective said.

Detective Van Deman first set his sights on Valdes while working a couple of burglaries at the gun range that included the theft of two personal checks. While working the thefts, the detective said he learned that Valdes had deposited one of the checks into his personal bank account.

“The check was for \$295, but it had been altered to \$2,950,” the detective explained.



Okeechobee News/Eric Kopp
Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office Detective Ted Van Deman (left) looks on as OCSO Crime Scene Detective Mark Shireman inspects an AR-15 rifle that was found Aug. 2, in the back of a Dodge pickup truck. The owner of the truck, Vicente Valdes, was arrested on a felony charge of personating a federal agent.

When Valdes was arrested on July 29, he was also found to be in possession of a white powder that, when field tested, indicated the presence of cocaine. Detective Van Deman said the suspected coke weighed 3.6 grams.

Valdes will be arraigned on his July 29 charges by Circuit Court Judge Robert Belanger on Aug. 24.

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).

- Daniel David Chapa, 27, S.E. Elkart Terrace, Port St. Lucie, was arrested Aug. 17 by Deputy Bryan Holden on charges of burglary of a conveyance (three counts) and grand theft. His bond was set at \$20,000.

- Mark Runner, 55, S.E. 27th St., Okeechobee, was arrested Aug. 18 by DOC's Michael White on a charge of violation of parole - attempted sexual battery. He is being held without bond.

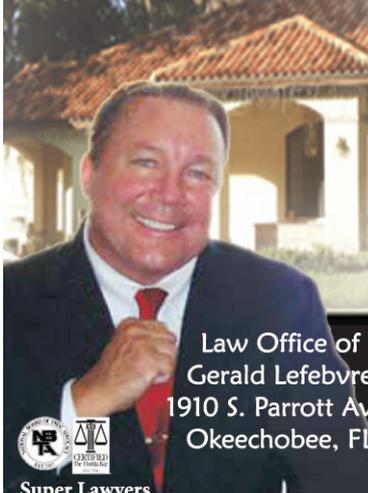
- Robert Frith, 18, S.E. 12th Drive,

Okeechobee, was arrested Aug. 18 by Deputy Greg Popovich on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with felony criminal mischief. His bond was set at \$500.

- Steven Alderete, 23, U.S. 441 S.E., Okeechobee, was arrested Aug. 18 by DOC's Alfreda Hall on a charge of violation of probation - grand theft motor vehicle. He is being held without bond.

- Dean James Koster, 52, N.E. 29th Terrace, Okeechobee, was arrested Aug. 18 by Deputy Jason Hickman on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with resisting a law enforcement officer with violence. His bond was set at \$5,000.

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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Okeechobee Presbyterian Church welcomes teachers

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

First year teachers in Okeechobee Schools not only got a nice lunch when they attended the welcome luncheon at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, they also won door prizes and an abundance of school supplies.

Pastor Loy Mershimer has lived in Okeechobee for three and a half years and has seen first hand the value a teacher can have in young lives.

"I talked to a veteran teacher who said at the end of each school year the students really don't want to go home. The students have structure, safety, and affirmation at school," he said.

Mershimer said his church was the first to hold a welcome lunch for the teachers and the gesture went over so well, other churches have followed suit.

"We have done this for several years and

it has really caught on with other churches. I think we have a whole week of welcome lunches to our county. We have a very welcoming community," he added.

The lunch began with a special prayer to bless the teachers and what they do for young people. Pastor Mershimer said Okeechobee has a number of problems with their young people related to crime, binge drinking, underage drug use and pregnancy, and teachers are really important.

"They are the point person and they can reach a lot of kids in our county. Our teachers offer students a lot and we need to sup-



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Presbyterian Church Pastor Loy Mershimer (photo on left) presents a door prize to first year teacher Katrina Cook. In the photo above from left to right, Sherry Wise will teach eighth grade science while Elizabeth Wagner will teach eighth grade language arts at Osceola Middle School this year.

port them," he noted.

Each teacher that attends receives some kind of award be it information about the community, school supplies, or something related to their career.

Approximately 50 people attended the luncheon on Wednesday. The Churches youth group and other volunteers were there to serve the visitors. The Church holds worship on Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. and is located at 312 North Parrott Avenue.

Croppin' Crew to meet

The Croppin' Crew now meets on the second Saturday of each month at the Okeechobee County Library, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. All levels of scrapbookers are welcome. Check out what other local scrapbookers and cardmakers are doing and share your ideas too. Bring your pictures, scrapbook pages and/or projects that you are working on.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Magi Cable

Newly retired

Okeechobee Retired Educators Association welcomes new members (left to right) Sue Horrick, Verna Van Deman, OREA president; (standing) Gay Carlton, Mary Ann Murray and Dr. Pat Cooper to their organization at the August meeting.



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- Free eStatement
- Minimum 10 debit card transactions to earn \$2

iPhone or Android smartphone required.

A \$5 minimum savings account is required for membership with MIDFLORIDA. Credit approval required. 1. Offer valid as of August 15, 2011 and may be cancelled without notice. To qualify for the \$77 cash incentive, you must open a checking account of any type except Basic, RT4T or On-The-Go. \$50 minimum deposit required. Anyone who has held a checking account with MIDFLORIDA in the past will not qualify for the \$77 incentive. To get \$77 incentive you must sign up for direct deposit (minimum \$500) within 30 days of account opening. \$77 will be deposited to account following first direct deposit transaction. 2. For the account to qualify as On-The-Go Mobile Banking, you must accept and open online banking, eStatement, eNotice and a debit card and requires mobile banking access using an iPhone or Android phone. To receive the \$2 per month incentive, you must complete at least 10 debit card purchase transactions. ATM transactions will not apply.

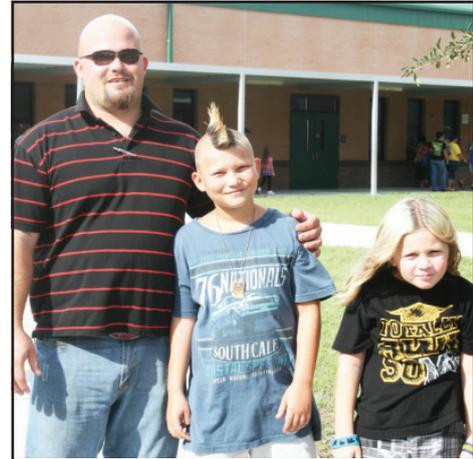


Okeechobee back to school open house events



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

In the photo above, OHS teacher Jeff Blackstone brought his two sons to the Osceola Middle School open house on Thursday, Aug. 18. (L-R) Jeff Blackstone, Jason Blackstone, Ryan Blackstone, and April Blackstone. In photos to the right (Top left) Jazlynn Tarvin (left) is ready to tackle second grade at South Elementary. She was escorted to her open house by her mom Ashley Tarvin. (Top right) (L-R) Bobby Wright Sr., Bobby Wright Jr., and Austin Wright attend the open house held Thursday night at South Elementary. Bobby enters the fifth grade and Austin is in the second grade this year. To the right on the bottom left Starlene Jackson enters second grade, Sharondra Jackson enters the fourth grade, and mom Sharon Barrett is ready for the school year to begin. Bottom right photo Betty Lombera (middle) is flanked by Erica Lombera (left) a fifth grader at Osceola, and Itzel Perera (right) a second grader at South Elementary at the Osceola middle school open house on Thursday.



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Turning 100 years old is cause for celebration



Special to the Okeechobee News/Raulerson Hospital Rehabilitation Department and Wellness Center team celebrate Mr. William "Alex" Roberts 100th birthday at the company's Wellness Center. Mr. Roberts exercises at Raulerson Hospital's Wellness Center three times a week. He was born on Aug. 19. Back row (L-R): Charleen McDonald, Rachel Erwin (Mr. Roberts' daughter), Christine Sanchez and Junne Bacho. In the front row (L-R) are: Techie Benhalid and William "Alex" Roberts.

Raulerson Hospital's Rehabilitation Department and Wellness Center team recently honored William "Alex" Roberts upon reaching this milestone birthday. Mr. Roberts also celebrated with nearly 100 family and friends at a birthday party held last weekend.

Many factors can explain his achievement. Mr. Roberts is a very witty, sharp, motivated man. His interests include traveling, playing scrabble and enjoying his five grandchildren. He also values a good night's rest. Mr. Roberts suggested one key to longevity may be to "think beautiful thoughts about others." He believes that when you think well of others, those kind thoughts come back around.

Mr. Roberts' remarkable physical health is certainly one of the factors that contribute to his success. He has been participating in Raulerson Hospital's Wellness Center since 2008. He attends the Wellness Center to stay active and in good health. Mr. Roberts has been known to inspire many patients, some who are only half of his age, as they work out or endure rehabilitation in the Wellness Center along with him. While at the Wellness Center, he exercises on the NuStep machine (pictured here) to help work through arthritis pain. He also works on his flexibility and balance using the parallel bars. Mr. Roberts uses weight machines for strengthening. He says he has noticed an improvement in his breathing, from exercising at the Wellness Center regularly.

"Think beautiful thoughts about others."

William "Alex" Roberts

The Wellness Center is a non-intimidating atmosphere for people who want to use exercise equipment in the presence of physical therapists. Participants obtain a release from their physician to exercise at the Wellness Center. The Physical Therapists briefly review the participants' relevant health history and then orient them with the equipment. Raulerson Hospital's Wellness Center has much of the same equipment that other gyms have including treadmills, stationary bikes, and weight machines. Mr. Roberts said he chose the Wellness Center because of the facility's outstanding staff.

Participants may utilize the Wellness Center as many times a week as they wish. Mr. Roberts visits three times per week. Raulerson Hospital's Wellness Center is located in the blue-roof, out-patient building just north of Raulerson Hospital. The hours are from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The monthly fee is \$25. For more information, contact Raulerson Hospital's Wellness Center at 863-467-6659.

This article was provided by Raulerson Hospital.

RAULERSON HOSPITAL



For more than 30 years Raulerson Hospital has been your community hospital, providing quality patient care twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Many impactful changes have occurred in healthcare over that time, including: technological advancements in equipment and procedures, introduction of the HIPPA Privacy Rule and even the very pharmaceuticals used to treat patients' needs, have evolved from tedious research studies and trials. One thing that will never change is our commitment and responsibility to provide you and your family with safe, quality health care services in a professional manner.

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Rehabilitation	Including physical therapy, speech therapy, & occupational therapy
Surgical Services	Including colon/rectal surgery, ear nose and throat surgery, endoscopic surgery, general surgery, gynecology, orthopedic, podiatry, stereotactic breast surgery, TIF (for chronic heartburn), vascular surgery and urology

If you have not been to Raulerson Hospital recently for your medical needs, come and experience the quality patient care we provide everyday; because We are Raulerson!

**For a physician referral or health information contact Consult-A-Nurse at 1-800-449-8642
To schedule an appointment contact 877-331-7027.**



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Electric bill assistance for seniors

Okeechobee Senior Services can help pay electric bills, Past due/Final Notice, for low income residents age 60 and over or those who have an elderly person living in the household. The organization is also purchasing window unit air conditioners for those who qualify. Applicants must be FPL or Glades Electric customers living Okeechobee County and be over age 60 or have a 60 year or older person residing in the household. Please call 863-462-5180 for more information and to make an appointment.

Red cross seeks disaster volunteers!

The American Red Cross is looking for Disaster Services Volunteers for this Hurricane Season! There are 4 main areas where volunteers are needed: Shelter Operations, Mass Care Feeding, Damage Assessment, Administrative Functions.

All necessary training is free of charge, and a background check will be required. If you would like to give of your time and talents to help your local community residents in times of disaster, please call your Okeechobee Branch office at 863-763-2488.

SCAM

Continued From Page 1

told her she didn't have to pay anything, Richardson told her that was true but only if she had won less than \$200,000. Since she had won more than that she would have to pay 1 percent of her winnings—\$4,950—to receive her money.

"I told him I didn't have that kind of money and that I'm on Social Security," she recalled.

She then told Richardson she would call Perez to see what APC could do. By the time she placed that call, Richardson had already called APC.

When the potential victim called she spoke with a man who said his name was John Maxwell. Maxwell told her that Perez wasn't available. The woman explained to Maxwell that she didn't have \$4,950. Maxwell then made her a deal—APC would give her 70 percent of that amount and all she would have to do is pay the rest, which comes to \$1,485.

But when she protested and said Perez had told her she wouldn't have to pay anything, Maxwell told her that, unfortunately, the situation got into the hands of U.S. Customs before it got to a bonded agent.

She next called Richardson, who told her to send a certified check to a bonded agent in Orlando. He told her to send the check to Audrey Montserrat at 4881 Cypresswood Drive, Unit 3310.

Instead, she contacted her bank and was told that there is no such thing as a certified check any more. She was also advised not to send anything to anyone.

"I tried to call again Monday, Aug. 15, but the operator said APC wasn't answering at that number right now and to call back later. I didn't try calling back," she said.

She then called U.S. Customs but only got a recording. That recording gave her a personnel directory, and when she asked for Richardson's 2550 extension she was told they didn't have that extension.

And now, as the saying goes, it's time for the rest of the story.

When this newspaper called APC and asked for Perez, the answer was that he was in a meeting and that he would return the call. At press time, the call had not been returned.

The Okeechobee News was able to reach Richardson, who identified himself as an agent with U.S. Customs. At first he said he didn't know the local woman but, after

checking his files, he remembered her.

"We never contacted this lady," he said. But, in the next breath, Richardson said he told her to contact APC.

When pressured as to why the U.S. government would be involved in a sweepstakes giveaway, Richardson came back with, "Why wouldn't it? You have to pay taxes on your winnings."

When asked, he provided Montserrat's phone number. That phone number turned out to be a landline in Hialeah. A call to that number was unanswered. A message was then left on an answering machine but the call had not been returned as of newspaper deadline.

A check with the Orange County Property Appraiser's Office indicated that Unit 3310 at 4881 Cypresswood Drive is owned by a couple whose mailing address is in France.

An Internet check of Montserrat showed that she has also been implicated in another scam, and that someone had actually paid her \$1,465 in fees so that they could receive a package at the Orlando International Airport that reportedly contained \$7.2 million in cash.

That package was supposedly from the Economic Community of West African States.

Then, an internet check of Richardson's phone number, indicated that American Publisher's Clearinghouse is a scam.

Scaminformer.com states that potential victims received a call from APC rep Christopher Irvin, whose phone number is 202-470-3798. Can you guess his extension? It's 2550.

Scaminformer goes on to mention a U.S. Customs agent by the name of Richardson whose phone number is 305-760-4767, ext. 1929, at the Miami International Airport. Although the extension is different, that is the same phone number given to the local woman.

The web site goes on to describe the scam and how APC will agree to "help" winners who can't pay the fee by settling for a percentage of the fee.

Finally, it should be noted that the U.S. Customs hasn't existed since 2003 when its functions were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS consists of three components—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

A public affairs officer with ICE in Miami said his agency does not get involved sweepstakes.

"This is another one of these phone scams," said Nester Yglesias. "There are a lot of different phone scams."

Mr. Yglesias also said he could not comment on whether the APC scam is under investigation.

And when asked if he knew a Michael Richardson, he would only say that "I do not know who that is."

Looking back, the local woman said the giveaway sounded attractive to her, but she was never close to sending APC any money.

"Because I didn't have it," she said. "I realized this was a scam when I talked to a friend who said 'this doesn't sound like it's very good for you.' Then, when I called back but didn't get any answer, that was the final straw."

For more on the APC scam, visit scaminformer.com.

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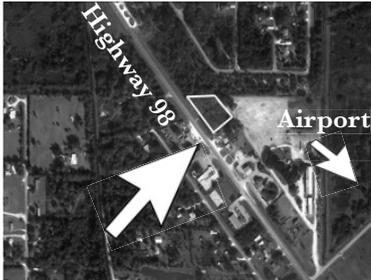
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DRIVERS

Continued From Page 1

offenders in Florida, he explained that law enforcement has their hands full keeping children safe. He told the bus drivers that they can help.

Most sex offenders have a pattern, he explained. They are not all alike. There are the pedophiles that pursue sexual activity with prepubescent children, he continued. hebephiles pursue sexual activity with children who have arrived at puberty.

Dr. Dobbert said these conditions stay with the predators forever as the leopard does not change his spots. He said 87-percent of sex offenders re-offend.

Many of the offenders stalk their victims for weeks and often steal the child's clothing, take their photos, and even film them. Many believe the love they have for the victim is returned.

"They believe there is nothing wrong with it. What is wrong with loving a child?" He told the group.

He said parents should watch their kids but should also watch who is watching their kids. He said sex offenders love to hang out where kids are like schools, parks, and public places.

Dr. Dobbert said bus drivers can be an important de-

terrent to sex offenders because they know who should be on their bus and when.

The offender often identifies his fantasy lover, follows them from bus stops, observes the child get off the bus, follows the child home and patterns the child's activities. Then he plans contact.

Some even call the child's home.

"Bus drivers can see strange vehicles that follow their buses or hang out at bus stops. Often the offender will pull over to the side of the road when kids get off the bus and sit and stare. They physically lean over from the driver's side of the vehicle to watch who gets off the school bus," he added.

Dr. Dobbert urged the bus drivers to acknowledge that the threat is real, know the behaviors of predators, raise their awareness of their surroundings, observe more, and take notes of anything suspicious. He urged them to report these incidents to supervisors but not intervene or confront these individuals.

"You see them a long time before law enforcement. Ask yourself the question... why is this person hanging around watching kids," he added.

He urged the school district to provide a photo lineup of every sex offender in the county to all of their bus drivers. He also urged drivers to purchase a throw away camera to photograph suspicious vehicles. While many

offenders do not stalk or abuse children in the county they live in, they have to register their vehicles with law enforcement. If a bus driver takes a picture of a sex offender near a school bus or school, law enforcement can use it to arrest the offender.

Bus drivers were also urged to be vigilant when picking up kids at school and when they drop them off at bus stops. They might see the same vehicle parked at a bus stop for several days. Other things they can do to make kids safe are observe the school parking lot, and jot down the date, location, tag number and description of a vehicle or person that might look suspicious.

School transportation officials said they have provided a binder with the photos of all registered sex offenders to bus drivers.



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Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION CASE NO. 2011-CP-125

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS (Summary Administration)

TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS OR DEMANDS AGAINST THE ABOVE ESTATE:

You are hereby notified that an Order of Summary Administration has been entered in the estate of LEONA HALFHILL, deceased, File Number 2011-CP-125, by the Circuit Court for Okeechobee County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 312 NW 3rd Street, Okeechobee County, Okeechobee, Florida 34972; that the decedent's date of death was July 20, 2011; that the total value of the estate is \$7,000.00 and that the names and addresses of those to whom it has been assigned by such order are:

Scott L. Halfhill
1307 S. Parrott Avenue, Lot 22
Okeechobee, FL 34974

ALL INTERESTED PERSONS ARE NOTIFIED THAT:

All creditors of the estate of the decedent and persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent other than those for whom provision for full payment was made in the Order of Summary Administration must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE. ALL CLAIMS AND DEMANDS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER APPLICABLE TIME PERIOD, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this Notice is August 14, 2011.

Person Giving Notice:
SCOTT L. HALFHILL
1307 S Parrott Avenue, Lot 22
Okeechobee, FL 34974

Attorney for Person Giving Notice:
Colin M. Cameron, Esquire
Florida Bar No.: 270441
200 N.E. 4th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974
(863) 763-8600
395022 ON 8/14,21/2011

Public Notice

Public Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Okeechobee Utility Authority will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. at its offices at 100 SW Fifth Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida 34974, for the purpose of levying a special non-ad valorem assessment on real properties pursuant to written agreements with the owners of certain properties for the purpose of collecting revenue to be used for paying for the cost of the expansion to the wastewater treatment facility. The geographic depictions of the land to be assessed are the legal descriptions of the parcels referenced below. The parcels to be assessed and amount to be levied against each parcel are as follows:

Parcel No.	Acres	Amount
1-33-37-35-0040-00000-00A0	1.18	\$ 12,562.76
1-33-37-35-0040-00000-00A0	0.37	3,939.17
1-33-37-35-0040-00000-00M0	0.975	10,380.25
00R0 4.09	43,543.82	1-33-37-35-0040-00000-

The assessment will be collected by the Okeechobee County Tax Collector.

BY ORDER OF THE OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY

John F. Hayford
Executive Director
895523 ON 8/21/2011

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL ACTION CASE NO.: 47-2011-CA-000184

BAC HOME LOANS SERVICING, LP
Plaintiff,
vs.
DEBRA J. SCONYERS, et al,
Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: **THE UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF DEBRA J. SCONYERS**
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: 3421 SW 23RD STREET, OKEECHOBEE, FL 34974
CURRENT ADDRESS: **UNKNOWN**

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

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: UNKNOWN
CURRENT ADDRESS: UNKNOWN

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

LOT 19, BLOCK 15, OAKPARK SUBDIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 3, PAGE 3, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses within 30 days after the first publication, if any, on Florida Default Law Group, P.L., Plaintiffs attorney, whose address is 4919 Memorial Highway, Suite 200, Tampa, Florida 33634, and file the original with this Court either before service on Plaintiffs attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or petition.

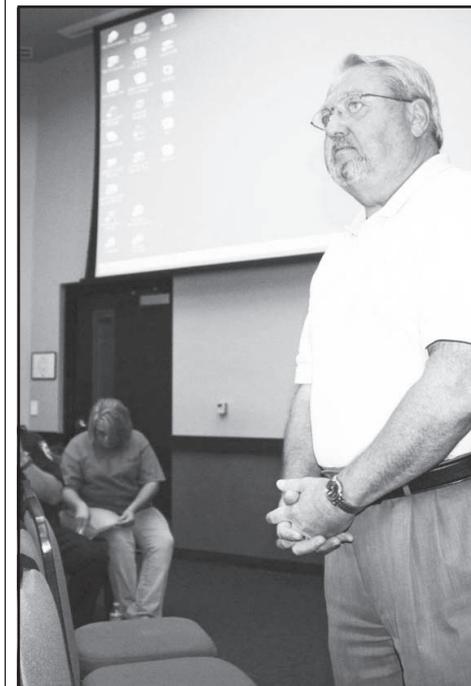
This notice shall be published once each week for two consecutive weeks in the Okeechobee News (Independent Newspapers).

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court on this 8 day of August 2011.

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

**See Americans with Disabilities Act

Florida Rules of Judicial Administration Rule 2.540 Notices to Persons With Disabilities - If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at not cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact Corrie Johnson, ADA Coordinator, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Suite 217, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986, (772) 807-4370 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711. 394826 ON 8/14,21/2011



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Duane Dobbert, Ph.D, speaks to Okeechobee School Bus drivers on Wednesday to tell them what they can do to help protect kids from sexual predators.

Stokes to play at Northwestern Oklahoma

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Brahman alumnus Dustin Stokes was named All-Region as he enjoyed a stellar and healthy sophomore year for Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Okla.

The 2009 graduate of OHS transferred to Northwestern Oklahoma in Alva, Okla. to play for the Rangers this year.

Stokes batted .423 with nine homeruns for the Mavericks this past year. He split time between designated hitter and left field. Stokes only pitched seven innings for the Mavericks.

Stokes said he expects to compete for a starting job and be in the lineup on a regular basis this year, "The Coach said he wants my bat in the lineup. It will be a little tougher

since it's a higher level of play, but I'm in the gym working hard."

Stokes has studied business during his first two years in college. His first year was spent locally at Indian River State College.

The tall burly left-hander stands 6'3" and now weighs 245 pounds and said he still has hope he will be drafted by a major league team.

Stokes pitching career was setback due to a partially torn tendon in his left elbow while he played at Indian River. He said professional scouts tell him they love his bat and advised him to focus on the offensive side of his game.

Stokes had a stellar career at OHS as a four year letterman. His deceptive ¾ delivery to the plate led to some eye-opening statistics as a pitcher. He was also one of



Courtesy photo
Dustin Stokes

the better left-handed hitters on the Treasure Coast during his career. He was named to play in the Treasure Coast Senior All-star game in Port St. Lucie after his senior year.

He also won the MVP award for the Brahman as a senior.

"When I hurt my arm, I continued to move forward. I still think I'm in shape to return to the mound one day. I haven't given up," he added.

Al Morris says his team has something to prove

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

From a very early age you could tell that Al Morris was an athlete.

Morris was among the best baseball players in his age group when he played ball for OCRA. When he played Pop Warner football he was clearly among the best players on his team.

While varsity football hasn't come quite as easy for Morris, he still showed flashes of brilliance last year as a sophomore, catching some touchdown passes, and making some big plays for the Okeechobee offense.

Morris hopes to continue to improve and pulls no punches when he tells people that he has something to prove on the gridiron this fall. While admittedly nervous talking to the press, Morris said he likes to play sports and gets a lot of energy from big plays. He will be a starter at wide receiver and corner back this year.

"Last year was just the beginning of my



Al Morris

career. I feel I really improved this spring. Over the summer I worked harder on different things to become a better player," he said.

Morris hopes to continue his improvement this year as he is expected to be one of the biggest passing targets on the squad. Last year Morris was slowed by a shoulder injury suffered early in the year. He still gutted it out and started most of the games

on offense.

His varsity career sure got off to a good start as he caught a 35-yard pass on the Brahman's first series of the year against Fort Pierce Central. Morris said that gave him the confidence that he belonged at the varsity level.

"I made strides as a sophomore. I worked out all summer so I could be strong and faster than last year," he added.

While Morris admits he was concerned when quarterback Jack Radebaugh went down with an injury, he still devoted himself to learning the Brahman offense and his

routes. He also has tried to help the younger wide receivers learn the play book and do off the field things that improve their play.

"The other wide outs come to me and ask questions a lot. I have tried to stay after practice and help them, look at the drawing board and understand what they are supposed to do," he said.

At 16 years old, Morris appears well on his way to success. He said the Okeechobee community should be impressed, "Come out and watch us this year because this team has something to prove."



Adults and Children come to **Raulerson Hospital's Cafeteria** for a **FREE** and informative evening filled with fun and food!

Registered Dietitian Pat Small and Executive Chef Ron Corrado invite you to **learn** and **sample** some **healthy, affordable, quick** snacks & meals. Then take home easy to follow **recipes** just in time for back-to-school.

August 30, 2011
5:30 PM-6:30 PM

R.S.V.P. at 1-800-449-8642

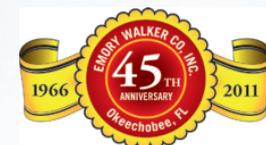


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Special to the Okeechobee News/Seacoast Bank

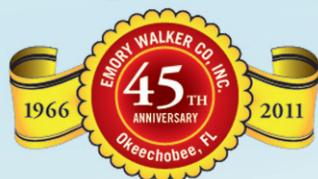
Back to school drive

Seacoast National Bank helped collect school supplies for CASTLE, a local program helping to prevent child abuse. CASTLE representatives are Carmina Parisi, Daron Washington, Sr. and Al Jacks. Seacoast employees are Briseida Ayala, Roxanne Sheffield and Brenda Hans. If you would like more information on CASTLE please visit www.castletc.org.

Okeechobee Youth Soccer sign ups under way

Signups for the Okeechobee County Parks & Recreation's Youth Soccer League are under way through Sept. 1. Parents can register Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Parks & Recreation Office at 640 N.W. 27th Lane (in the Sports Complex). Registration is \$35 and will require a copy of the child's birth certificate. The league consists of divisions: 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 & Under. Age determination date is Dec. 31. For more details, call 863-763-6950. Anyone interested in coaching or sponsoring a team is encouraged to call the office. If you have any outgrown or unused soccer shoes and shin guards, please bring them to the Recreation Dept. so that those who need it can make use of them.

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consultation and let our team create a beautiful smile for you!

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