



OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 102 No. 156

Friday, December 30, 2011

50¢ Plus tax



SFWMD experts volunteer to help in Haiti
... Page 3

Officer honored for undercover work ... Page 12

Lake Levels

13.70 feet

Last Year: 12.44 feet



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



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

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Trio thwarts abduction of child

Family friends hang onto moving vehicle to prevent non-custodial parent from fleeing with 4-year-old

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

The wife of an off-duty Clewiston police officer was injured as she, her husband and the child's father ignored their personal safety to prevent the abduction of a 4-year-old boy by his birth mother.

William Harvey Gulkis, of Vero Beach, and Nancy Lynn Smith, Okeechobee, were ar-



Nancy Lynn Smith

rested Tuesday, Dec. 27, and charged in the case. Gulkis, 24, was charged with the felonies of aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer, three counts of child abuse, two counts of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, resisting a law enforcement officer with violence and leaving the scene of an accident with personal injury. He was also arrested on misdemeanor charges of reckless driving and leaving the scene of an accident with property damage.

Smith, 26, is charged with three counts of felony child abuse and one misdemeanor count of driving while license suspended with



William H. Gulkis

knowledge. Okeechobee County Jail records show that Gulkis is being held in lieu of \$233,000 bond, while Smith is being held on \$30,500 bond.

An arrest report by Deputy Joe Gracie, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), stated that Smith went to an Okeechobee home around 3:35 p.m. Tuesday to see her 4-year-old son who lives with his father and his stepmother. While there, she grabbed her son and jumped into a waiting van.

The van, it was learned later, was reportedly

See ABDUCTION — Page 2

Local man still active at age 100

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

"I've had a good life," said Merle Hathaway who celebrated his one hundredth birthday Thursday, Dec. 29, at the Okeechobee County Senior Services Center.

"The only thing I regret is that I can't drive any more," he said. That is because Mr. Hathaway is legally blind. However, one would never know that by watching him. He gets around unassisted and is able to recognize people even though he cannot see well enough to read. He said the secret of his long life is "hugging the women."

On a more serious note Mr. Hathaway offered the following advice for long life: "Be happy and don't worry about stuff, let the Lord take care of it." He is a faithful member of Oakview Baptist Church.

Living a long time seems to run in his family. His mother lived to be 90 and his father 87. He had an aunt who lived to be 107.

Mr. Hathaway was born on

a farm in Ohio in the horse and buggy days. As a small child, he remembers running between the table legs to keep his mother from whipping him. While some students walked to school or rode in a horse drawn wagon, Mr. Hathaway rode a bicycle two miles to school. He also rode a pony to school. For the first and second grade he attended a one-room school, then a bigger school was built. He said he never received a whipping in school, but, just in case, he wore two pairs of pants so it wouldn't hurt so bad.

Mr. Hathaway remembers his first car, a Model T Ford.

When he was about 20, Mr. Hathaway met his wife at a Sunday school party. "There is the girl I am going to marry," he said when he saw her. His buddy told him he could not marry her because she was high society. However, he did marry her in 1931. She passed away 14 years ago, just two months short of their 65th

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Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda
Merle Hathaway celebrated his one hundredth birthday at a surprise party held at the Okeechobee County Senior Services Center on Thursday, Dec. 29.

Steve Hoskins

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Practice fire safety as temperatures drop

TALLAHASSEE—Florida Division of Emergency Management officials urge residents and visitors across the state to practice fire safety when using indoor heating sources when temperatures dip into cooler range. By taking basic safety precautions, residents can reduce the risk of fire, property damage or any potential loss of life.

All residents and visitors are encouraged to practice cold weather safety, especially around indoor heating sources that may

pose a potential fire hazard to family and property. Floridians should remember the "Five P's during cold weather safety. The "5 P's" are: Protecting People, Protecting Plants, Protecting Pets, Protecting Exposed Pipes, and Practicing Fire Safety.

To stay cozy and safe during cold weather, remember these safety tips:

- Stay indoors and use safe heating sources.
- When outdoors, stay dry and wear mul-

iple layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing.

- Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets. Use of extension cords may lead to circuit overload and cause a fire.

- Keep space heaters away from drapery, furniture or other flammable material. A good rule of thumb is to keep space heaters at least 36 inches from anything flammable.

- Do not leave space heaters unattended.

- Do not use a stove or oven as a heat source. An open oven door or lit stove burners can be dangerous and are ineffective as a heat source.

- Never use grills as an indoor heating source. Charcoal and propane emit carbon monoxide gas and are not suitable for indoor use.

- Candles are unsafe and ineffective as a heat source. Never leave candles lit in an unattended room or when going to sleep.

- When using a fireplace, make sure it

is properly vented and that the chimney is cleaned periodically to avoid flash fires.

- Do not burn anything in the fireplace other than firewood and do not leave a fire burning when going to sleep.

- Install smoke detectors and make sure they work.

- Install a carbon monoxide detector if you have any gas appliances.

- Review and practice your family's fire escape plan.

For more information on cold weather safety and the Florida Division of Emergency Management and to GET A PLAN!, please visit: www.FloridaDisaster.org.

Raulerson Hospital offers health classes and programs

Raulerson Hospital will host free Freedom From Smoking Classes for anyone ready to quit smoking on Wednesdays from 5-6:30 p.m. in Raulerson Hospital's In-Service Classroom. The new year, is a great time for a new start. Register at 1-800-449-8642.

Raulerson Hospital hosts a Better Breathers Support Group for COPD sufferers and others with respiratory conditions, on the first Wednesday of each month (beginning Feb. 1) in the Raulerson Hospital's In-Service Classroom. To register or for more information, call 1-800-449-8642.

ABDUCTION

Continued From Page 1

being driven by Gulkis. It was also learned that two other small children belonging to Smith were in the 2004 Nissan van.

As Smith jumped into the van, Officer Adam Baker, of the Clewiston Police Department (CPD), apparently ran to the driver's side of the vehicle and identified himself and showed Gulkis his badge. The officer then reached into the van and tried to turn off the vehicle's ignition.

Officer Baker and his wife, Roberta, were visiting with the child's father and stepmother.

With the both the large sliding door on the passenger side and the driver's side door open, Gulkis then pressed the accelerator and tried to escape, stated the deputy's arrest report. As the Clewiston officer hung onto the steering wheel and was being dragged,

Smith repeatedly hit him in the face in an effort to get him to turn loose, continued the report.

The report said Officer Baker was dragged about 100 feet.

After Gulkis allegedly ran into a mailbox, Officer Baker turned loose and jumped away from the vehicle just as Gulkis reportedly slammed the transmission into reverse. By this time, stated the report, the child's father had reached the van and grabbed on to the vehicle.

Deputy Gracie said it was at this point that Officer Baker saw his wife lying on the ground with serious injuries. The deputy's report stated that as Mrs. Baker was holding onto the sliding side door her shirt became entangled and she was dragged an undisclosed distance and then thrown from the vehicle while it was still moving.

As she lay injured, she saw the driver of the van begin to back up and she had to protect herself by rolling out of the way of the oncoming vehicle, Deputy Gracie stated.

he and his wife decided to move to West Palm Beach. In 1956, he sold his house and bought a truck for the move.

In 1965, he and his wife bought a lot in Kissimmee River Estates and in 1970 they moved there. For a time he operated a store in the neighborhood. He sharpened saws and scissors until he got to where he could not see well enough.

These days Mr. Hathaway stays busy helping out in the senior services center doing "anything there is to do." Because of his volunteer work at the senior services center, in 2010 Mr. Hathaway received the Mangrove Bay Service Award to Seniors awarded by the Area Agency on Aging. He received this award over nominees from senior service organizations in Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie and Palm Beach counties.

Currently, Mr. Hathaway lives with a daughter and son-in-law. He has numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

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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anniversary. They had three children.

"We got along pretty good," Mr. Hathaway said of his wife. "We never went to bed mad at each other." While he conceded that they did argue, he said they soon forgot what they were arguing about.

In 1927 Mr. Hathaway began work at a steel mill. He only worked a short time until the Great Depression hit. Then he worked for a wholesale grocer for 28 cents an hour. He said he was able to keep his job when many others lost theirs because people had to eat.

Mr. Hathaway did not serve in the military during World War II because he worked in a critical industry making parts for tanks. He drove a truck for a number of years and, as a justice of the peace, performed many wedding ceremonies.

In later years, Mr. Hathaway's son was in the Air Force stationed at West Palm Beach. After visiting his son three or four times,

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Weather forecast for Okeechobee County from the National Weather Service

Local Forecast

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 76. Calm wind becoming southeast around 5 mph.

Friday night: Clear, with a low around 48. Calm wind.



Extended Forecast

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 77. Calm wind becoming north northeast between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 51. Northeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

New Year's Day: Sunny, with a high near 78. Calm wind becoming north around 5 mph.

Sunday night: Partly cloudy, low around 52. North northwest wind around 5 mph.

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SFWMD experts volunteer to help in Haiti

Water managers at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) are using their expertise to help provide clean drinking water to struggling areas of Haiti.

Hydrogeologist Steve Krupa and technical supervisor Rick Miessau have been on three volunteer missions to Haiti together and are returning next month to improve the water

supply at a school and an orphanage, and conduct additional tests on nearby wells.

"It is humbling to see the condition adults and children in Haiti are living with and it serves as a reminder how important the clean water is that we enjoy every day," said

Miessau. "Water is a critical resource in South Florida and throughout the world. Parts of Haiti don't have the infrastructure to provide basic drinking water and people are getting sick as a result."

A 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010. The District's extensive network of groundwater monitors in South Florida picked up the underground tremors from more than 600 miles away.

Health officials in Haiti responded to an increase in illnesses following the earthquake – including a devastating and deadly cholera outbreak – attributed to contaminated water. The earthquake exacerbated poor water quality that includes high salinity levels and bacterial contamination, which sicken people on a daily basis in Haiti.

"In some of the poorest places of Haiti, much of the day is spent collecting water for basic needs and often that water is contaminated," said Miessau. "Clean water is essential to the region's recovery, just as it is a basic necessity to maintain our lives."

Hydrogeologists at the District have decades of experience in water supply development. Impoverished regions of Haiti do not have access to clean water and simple technology such as a working hand pump has the potential to provide significant improvements to the quality of life.

On their upcoming trip that begins Jan. 14, Krupa and Miessau are installing equipment at a school in Verrettes, Haiti, that will

eventually provide the only running water for 5 miles around. They will also repair the back-up hand pump at an orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, which is needed so that water can be retrieved during frequent power outages.

Krupa and Miessau use their vacation time organizing these relief efforts for Haiti. The work is not funded or sponsored by the District, but their efforts show the kind of dedication many employees have to the cause of clean, sustainable water. During a recent bake sale to raise money for their efforts, \$2,000 in donations were collected from District staff.



Special to the Okeechobee News
The crew of volunteers tests water quality at various rudimentary wells in Haiti.

Brahman Theatres III

Fri., Dec. 30TH - Thurs., Jan. 5TH

For Info, Call 763-7202

THEATRE I: "SHERLOCK HOLMES"
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**

THEATRE II: "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4"
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**

THEATRE III: "ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00, Sat., Sun., & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00, Mon. 3:00 & 7:00 **G**

Movie Tickets: Adults - \$6.50 • Children 12 & under - \$5.00 • Senior Citizens - \$5.00 all movies • Matinees - \$4.50



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2 PC. DARK DEAL

- 2 pc. chicken* (drumstick & thigh)
- 1 individual mashed potatoes with gravy
- 1 biscuit

\$3⁹⁹

Offer expires 1/31/12 • *Available in Grilled Recipe, Extra Crispy, Grilled or Mixed

8 PC. MIXED MEAL

- 8 pc. chicken* (white/dark)
- 1 large mashed potatoes with gravy
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- 4 biscuit

\$14⁹⁹

Offer expires 1/31/12 • *Available in Original Recipe, Extra Crispy, Grilled or Mixed

BREAST DEAL

- 1 breast piece of chicken
- 1 individual side
- 1 biscuit
- 1 medium drink

\$3⁹⁹

Offer expires 1/31/12 • *Available in Original Recipe, Extra Crispy or Grilled

10 BUCK VALUE MEAL

- 7 pcs. of chicken* (drumstick & thigh)
- 1 large mashed potatoes with gravy
- 3 biscuits

\$10

Offer expires 1/31/12 • *Available in Original Recipe, Extra Crispy or Grilled

Celebrate the New Year in Florida with free Crapemyrtle

Residents of Florida can ring in the New Year by receiving five free crapemyrtle trees by joining the Arbor Day Foundation any time during January 2012.

"These small flowering trees will provide any landscape in Florida with a splash of color for much of the year, from pink and red flowers in the spring, to green in the summer to red, orange and yellow in the autumn," said John Rosenow, chief executive and founder of the Arbor Day Foundation.

The free trees are part of the nonprofit Foundation's Trees for America campaign. The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for planting, between Feb. 1 and

April 30, with enclosed planting instructions. The 6- to 12-inch tall trees are guaranteed to grow, or they will be replaced free of charge.

Arbor Day Foundation members also receive a subscription to the Foundation's colorful bimonthly publication, Arbor Day, and The Tree Book, which includes information about tree planting and care.

To receive the free trees, send a \$10 membership contribution to 5 CRAPEMYRTLES, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by Jan. 31, 2012. Florida residents can also join online at arborday.org/january.

Okeechobee blood drive dates changed

Over the winter holidays, blood donors are still needed to help provide a safe blood supply for area hospitals. The Big Red Bus bloodmobile will be in Okeechobee on the following dates:

- Friday, Dec. 30 - Blockbuster Video, 1-6 p.m.
- Saturday, Dec. 31 - Wal Mart, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 6 - Blockbuster Video, 2 p.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 7 - PhilFiesta Celebration, times TBA.

The Okeechobee News will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2, 2012



HOLIDAY DEADLINES

Display Advertising

Friday, December 30 @ 3 pm for Wednesday, January 4

The Staff Of The Okeechobee News Wishes Everyone A Safe & Happy New Year

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!

Lake level

• I see a letter to the editor in the Wednesday paper from someone who is unhappy the Corps is letting water out of Lake Okeechobee in pulse releases to help the coastal estuaries. I agree that the coastal area should stop relying on the lake to solve their problems. The way that nature set up the system, the lake was not even connected to the Caloosahatchee, except through a series of marshes, and the river went nearly completely dry every year. Old timers remember wading across it. The estuaries were fine then. If they now need water to keep the estuaries healthy due to all of the man made changes to the river, then they should put in some water storage areas north of the river so they can feed water to it when necessary, instead of pumping water from Lake Okeechobee in a direction that nature did not intend it to flow.

Supermarket closed

• There is a sign on the door of U-Save. It has been seized by the Tax Collector.

• They must have the same person doing their taxes that did the chamber of commerce's taxes.

• This seems odd as the new owners have not owned the stores for that long, unless they bought up the bad tax debt with the buyout. Seems like the old owner would have settled it when they sold out.

• From the story in the paper, it looks like the new owners had already started shutting it down and the county tax collector wanted to make sure they didn't just leave town without paying the taxes currently due. It appears to just be 2010 taxes that are overdue so not really much for a business to owe. Other businesses also owe this and have not been seized. But when the store had the power already shut off and they appeared to be moving stuff out ... so the tax collector took steps to try to get the money owed the county before there is nothing left.

• Might be a good location for the new re-constituted Chamber. Parade starts there anyway. Twinkies for all. Keep business development away from the vacuum cleaner isle.

• Prayers to everyone without a job...

Health care

• I don't see why a person should have to be employed full-time by a company to have affordable health insurance. It makes it difficult for the under-employed and the self-employed. And medical bills can break a person.

Football coach

• I don't think they'll ever have a successful football team or athletic program under the current administration. I don't think they understand that sometimes success in athletics also breeds academic success as well as school spirit.

• Back in the 1980s there were at least 50 to 60 kids on the team. Now you are lucky to get 30. I don't blame the coaches because these kids don't want to be involved in sports because there are better things to do with their time -- Xbox, Playstation. I know several young teens who are very talented but to get them to go outside and do something is like pulling your own teeth. Oh, and we didn't have FCAT either so if you had a C average you could play. So it does not matter who coaches a team, when the defense and offense are the same, how long can you last in a game?

• It is such a terrible thing if the kids no longer care about football? I see we do better in other sports like soccer, baseball and swimming. And we have a terrific band. Maybe the community should get behind the teams that are doing well, show up and support the kids. What difference does it make what sport or activity they are involved with as long as the kids are learning, having fun and getting involved? So what if we never win another football game. It's not really that important.

• Unfortunately, football as a sport affects athletics as a whole at the high school. The football team's performance affects the Gold Seat ticket sales, gate ticket sales and the band concessions. Attendance at the games and how well the team does during the game has a direct impact on other organizations who depend on the fans for their revenue. I am not here to debate the status of the coach, as I respect him, but I also respect what the administration feels they need to do, as they see the impact the team's success or failure has on other sports and clubs in the school.

Resolve to quit smoking in 2012

Stick to your New Year's Resolution with Help from Tobacco Free Florida

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—If resolutions were as easy to keep as they are to make, there would be more than one million fewer cigarette smokers in Florida.

Seven out of 10 adult smokers report that they want to quit completely. Last year, about half of them tried to quit. Yet, few (6.2 percent) were successful.

As 2012 approaches, Tobacco Free Florida is encouraging smokers in the state to use the program's free and convenient quit resources to start the year smoke-free and increase their chances of staying smoke-free for good. Evidence-based cessation counseling and FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies (NRTS) provided by the program can double to triple your chances of successfully quitting.

Nicotine is one of the most addictive chemicals. The current design and contents of cigarettes make them more attractive and addictive than ever before. Today, cigarettes deliver nicotine more quickly from the lungs to the heart and brain. Poor preparation and a quit plan that's not entirely right for you can make quitting even harder. While quitting is difficult, it is not impossible. In fact, there are more former smokers in Florida than current smokers.

"Every year, many Floridians try to go it alone as they resolve to quit smoking," said Dr. Frank Farmer, Florida's State Surgeon General. "While quitting cold turkey may work for some, every day there is mounting evidence that counseling and medication have been proven effective and can greatly increase your chances of not just quitting, but staying tobacco free for good."

If you weren't able to quit in years past, do not be discouraged. Most former smokers made several attempts before finally quitting permanently. The average smoker attempts to quit between eight and 11 times before succeeding.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease and premature death in the U.S. Cigarette use results in an estimated 28,600 deaths in Florida each year. Despite the known dangers of smoking, more than 2.5 million Floridians, or 17.1 percent of the adult population, are current cigarette smokers.

Tobacco Free Florida offers a number of free and convenient resources to help Floridians quit using tobacco.

• Phone: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.

• Online: Enroll in the Web Coach®, which will help you create your own web-based quit plan that's right for you, visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida>.

• In-person: Visit the Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network's website, <http://ahectobacco.com>, to locate your local AHEC and sign up for Quit Smoking Now group classes.

Tobacco Free Florida re-launched its website, www.tobaccofreeflorida.com, to help Floridians quit tobacco. The new comprehensive website aims to provide tobacco users with the most updated and useful information on why to quit and how to quit.

In early 2012, Tobacco Free Florida will expand the website to include sections on helping others quit, tobacco-related issues in the state, information for teens, and much more.

Tobacco Free Florida (TFF) is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. The program is managed by the Florida Department of Health, specifically the Bureau of Tobacco Prevention Program. Smokers and smokeless tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a quit coach. To learn about TFF and the state's free quit smoking resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida> or Twitter at twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

Pregnancy Center offers free services

Free Pregnancy tests are available at the Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee, located at 500 N.W. 6th Street. Call the office at 863-467-8748. Free Parenting Classes available for mothers (and fathers) to be or those already with babies on Tuesday nights at 6 p.m. Call the office at 863-467-8748. Find out about the Baby Boutique!

KEECHOBEE NEWS

To Reach Us

Address: 107 S.W. 17th Street, Suite D
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Website: www.newszap.com

To Submit News

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

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

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

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

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Our Purpose...

The Okeechobee News is published by Independent Newspapers of Florida. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent's mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community's deliberation of public issues.

We Pledge...

- To operate this newspaper as a public trust
- To help our community become a better place to live and work, through our dedication to conscientious journalism.
- To provide the information citizens need to make their own intelligent decisions about public issues.

- To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.
- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

MEMBER

OF: FLORIDA PRESS



Take time to reflect on Florida's natural beauty

By Bob Wattendorf
FWC

As many of us prepare to hang a calendar for the new year and we flip the pages to glance in awe at photographs featuring nature's beauty – from wild habitats to fish and wildlife or outdoor recreation – it is a good time to reflect on what it takes to make those glorious images.

Ask any passionate angler, hunter or outdoors person what he or she loves about nature and getting outdoors, and key points come up, including a love of connecting with nature, being able to relax and spending quality time outdoors with friends and families.

To help them enjoy their experiences, people say they want protection for habitats and public access, and education to help make sure the next generation cares about and understands the importance of fish and wildlife conservation and appreciates the joy and benefits conservation provides.

Each state has an agency dedicated to fish and wildlife conservation and providing fishing and hunting opportunities to the 88 million Americans over the age of 16 who fish, hunt or enjoy other wildlife-related recreation (2006 National Survey). In Florida, that is the responsibility of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Throughout 2011, the FWC made huge inroads to address those concerns through enhanced education, out-

reach and communications efforts. In previous Fish Busters' Bulletins, we've discussed Get Outdoors Florida! (www.GetOutdoorsFlorida.org) and the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (www.FYCCN.org), which have gotten off to amazing starts but still need your support to reach Floridians about the benefits of enjoying active, nature-based recreation.

This column is about the FWC's education and outreach. In October 2010, FWC staff joined educators from 37 state fish and wildlife agencies for a North American Conservation Education Strategy Training Academy, which stressed core concepts in education and outreach (including outdoor skills, hunter education and aquatic education programs) to provide more valuable and relevant messages to Americans of all ages.

Training was fully funded by a grant from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and included understanding the association's core conservation concepts, formulating benchmarks, implementing a K-12 education process, and integrating outdoor skills-based education into state education standards, among other topics.

The FWC's core concepts for conservation education have been refined and will be part of a consistent messaging effort in Florida and nationally. These ideas communicate what every citizen should know and understand about fish, wildlife and their conservation and management:

Concept 1: Fish and wildlife belong to us all, and the FWC manages and protects these resources on our behalf.

Concept 2: Regulations are sometimes necessary to conserve natural resources for generations to come and to keep people safe, whether they are harvesting or observing wildlife.

Concept 3: All living things benefit from a healthy and diverse environment.

Concept 4: Fish and wildlife conservation and management are solidly rooted in science and balance the needs of people with consideration for maintaining healthy populations of fish and wildlife, as well as their habitats.

Concept 5: Fish and wildlife habitat conservation provides human-health, recreation, aesthetic and economic benefits.

Concept 6: The future of Florida's fish and wildlife depends on citizens and partners working together with the FWC.

Concept 7: Fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating are appropriate recreational uses of Florida's natural resources; participation in these activities contributes revenue, harvest information and increased public support to fish and wildlife management.

Concept 8: Everyone has the opportunity to participate in fish and wildlife recreation. That opportunity implies a responsibility to take care of nature's resources, stay safe and respect the rights and property of others.

Concept 9: The FWC uses a variety of

funding sources to manage Florida's fish and wildlife resources for everyone. Floridians should know that when they buy licenses and permits, register their vehicles or buy and sell property they help support fish and wildlife conservation.

Concept 10: Fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, boating and other nature-based activities provide people with millions of days of outdoor recreation and generate nearly \$15 billion for Florida's economy each year (2011-12 Programs of the FWC).

Concept 11: Habitat management, protection and restoration help sustain and conserve ecosystems and benefit Florida's fish, wildlife and human populations.

Concept 12: Enforcement of conservation and safety laws requires an educated, coordinated and consistent effort.

It is the FWC's hope that as people attain a greater understanding and respect for these core concepts of fish and wildlife conservation, we will all work together with a greater sense of purpose to provide outstanding recreational opportunities for generations to come.

Instant licenses are available at MyFWC.com/License or by calling 888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). Report violators by calling 888-404-3922, *FWC or #FWC on your cell phone, or texting to Tip@MyFWC.com. Visit MyFWC.com/Fishing or scr.bi/Fish-busters for more Fish Busters' columns.

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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.

Maria Concepcion Romero, 77

OKEECHOBEE — Maria Concepcion Romero, of Okeechobee, passed away Thursday, December 29, 2011, at her residence.

She was born November 24, 1934, to Guadalupe Bustos and Leonarda Leyva in Mexico. She came to Okeechobee in 1980 from Mexico and was a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

She is preceded in death by her daughter, Berta Romero Becerill.

She is survived by her loving husband of 58 years, Pedro Romero of Okeechobee; daughter, Victoria Lagunas (Martin) of Ft. Pierce; son, Pablo Romero (Elpidia) of Okeechobee; sister, Petra Cruz and brother Abel Serrano both of Mexico; 13 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

The family will receive friends on Friday, December 30, 2011 from 5 to 8 p.m. in the Buxton Funeral Home Chapel, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee. Service will be held on Saturday, December 31, 2011, at 10 a.m. in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church with Father Duffy officiating. Interment will follow in Evergreen Cemetery.

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee. On-line condolences may be made at www.buxtonfuneralhome.com.

Roy D. Lundy, 84

MOORE HAVEN — Roy D. Lundy of Moore Haven, passed away Tuesday, December 27, 2011, at his home in Moore Haven.

Roy was born March 23, 1927, in Moore Haven. He is the son of the late Paul Edger and the late Amy (Surgnier) Lundy.

Roy was the Sheriff of Glades County from 1956 to 1981. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Moore Haven and a 50 plus year member of the Moore Haven Lodge 61 F. & A.M.

He is survived by his two sons, Roy D. Lundy, Jr. (Sandra) of Moore Haven, and Jack E. Lundy (Janice) of Moore Haven; grandchildren, Scott Lundy (Nicole), Brad Lundy (Leslie), Jaelyne Pollard (Dwayne); great-grandchildren, Garrett Lundy, Katelyn Lundy, Carolanne Lundy and Aubrey Pollard.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Irene Scott Lundy in 1989; and two grandchildren, Samuel David Lundy and Amy Elizabeth Lundy.

The funeral service is being held today, Friday, December 30, 2011, at First United Methodist Church Of Moore Haven, 300 Avenue L. S.W., Moore Haven, FL. Rev. Charlie Watts officiating. Interment will be in Ortona Cemetery, Moore Haven.

Arrangements by Akin-Davis Funeral Home - Clewiston.



Community Events

Applications for Miss Rodeo Okeechobee queen accepted

Applications are being accepted for the 2012 Miss Rodeo Okeechobee Pageant. Queens will be chosen in four age categories: Miss, Miss Teen, Princess and Sweetheart. For an application, stop by Eli's Western Wear or Southern Style for pageant. For more information, email Audrey@missrodeookeechobee.org, call 863-801-5258, or visit www.missrodeookeechobee.org Deadline is Dec. 30

Photos of past Okeechobee Rodeo queens being sought

The Okeechobee County Cattlewomen's Association is looking for past rodeo queens and their pageant photos for their website. Please call Audrey 863-801-5258 or email: Audrey@missrodeookeechobee.org with your name, title, year and photo.

Eagles North plans New Year's Eve dance

Dec. 31, Eagles North is having a New Years Eve Dance and Music by Our own Cabbage Patch Boys. Food throughout the evening, all you can eat, and a Midnight breakfast for a \$5 donation per person, No take outs on the food. Proceeds from the food go to the Ladies Auxiliary Community Benefit Fund.

Faith Farm hosts New Year's prayer and worship service

Faith Farm Ministries of Okeechobee, invites all who would come, to a time of praise/prayer/worship on New Year's Eve, **Dec. 31**, at 7 p.m. The facility is located at 7595 N.E. 128th Ave. All area ministers are welcome to come pray for our county and country as 2012 begins. Refreshments will be served. Dress is casual. For info: 863-763-6987 or 863-763-4224.

VFW Ladies Auxiliary to host two New Year's Eve parties

MARDI GRAS NEW YEAR! The Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 4423 will be sponsoring their annual (2) New Year's parties. Party 1 is from 2 until 5 p.m. Party 2 is from 8 p.m. until close. Music provided by XXL (Dennis), Mystery entertainers, door prizes, party favors, some Cajun cookin' & other food. Please join us for either party or both.....NO COVER CHARGE or reservation. Be colorful for welcoming 2012. The Post is located at 300 N.W. 34th St. 863-763-0818.

Cypress Hut Eagles hosting New Year's Eve party

Saturday, **Dec. 31**, the Cypress Hut Eagles will be ringing in the New Year! Music will be by Bo Glover starting at 8:30 p.m. Thew will be finger food and fee champagne but no cover charge! The public is welcome!

ConKerr Cancer "sit & sew"

ConKerr Cancer's mission is to provide children with cancer or other life changing illnesses a feeling of warmth, love and a smile through the simple gift of a pillowcase. The next ConKerr Cancer "sit & sew" will be held on Tuesday, **Jan. 3**, from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Join us at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church, 312 N. Parrott Avenue. Bring your sewing machine (or serger) and fabric and sew with other ladies in our community who want to help make a difference to a sick child. For more information, please call Joan at 863-467-0290.

Sign up now for hoop league

The deadline to register for Parks & Recreation's Youth Basketball League is Friday, Jan. 6. Sign-ups are being held Tuesday-Friday, this week from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at 640 N.W. 27th Lane (in the Sports Complex). The office will be closed Monday, **Jan. 2**. The fee is \$40 per child and will require a birth certificate at registration. The league will consist of boys and girls in three age divisions: 10 & under, 12 & under and 14 & under. For more details, call 863-763-6950.

PhilFiesta 2012 slated

The Philippine-American Cultural Foundation invites you to PhilFiesta 2012! Everyone is welcome to enjoy family fun, Philippine food, music and songs, cultural performances, arts and crafts, exhibits and the Philippine Martial Arts. Join Miss PhilFiesta on Saturday, **Jan. 7**, 2012, from 9 a.m. to sunset. Admission is free; parking is \$3 per vehicle. This event will take place at the Philippine Heritage Enrichment Complex and Gardens, 5154 S.W. 16th Avenue, Okeechobee. For further information, vendors or advertisers contact Dr. Trini Garcia at (863) 763-6429, Anje at (772) 285-0274, Sid at (863) 610-0515, Edwin at (561) 371-0825 or Joel at (954) 449-3494. To join Miss PhilFiesta contact Maria at (786) 281-9800.

Sporting clay fun shoot set

Think you can out shoot a CattleWoman? Farm Credit challenges you with a bounty drawing if you can. Join us at the Sporting Clay Fun Shoot at Quail Creek Plantation, Okeechobee on Saturday, **Jan. 7**, at 8:30 a.m. Registration forms on-line at: www.floridacattlemen.org/fcw.html. There will be a drawing for a new Winchester Super X 12 gauge pump shotgun SXP Camp Combo (synthetic stock/28 inches barrel and 18 inches defender barrel/3 chokes) Don't miss your chance to win this shotgun. Only 200 tickets will be sold at just \$10 each. The drawing will be held during the Fun Shoot. Need not be present to win but it is more fun to be there. Drawing for the shotgun is sponsored by Larry and Debbie Swindle. The gun transfer will be donated by Quail Creek Plantation. You must be eligible to own a gun in the state of Florida to win the prize. Proceeds benefit Florida Cattle Women educational/youth programs and scholarship fund. For information call: Wendy Petteway - 863-781-3986; Melissa Montes De Oca - 863-634-7712 or Melissamdo@earthlink.net; or, Quail Creek Plantation - 863-763-2529.

Memory screening offered

The Alzheimer's Association will hold free memory screenings on Monday, **Jan. 9**, by appointment. Time: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Visiting Nurse Association, 208 S.E. Park Street. If you are any age, and concerned about memory loss, call 1-800-861-7826, Ext. 501 and make an appointment.

Coffee with the commissioner

Coffee with the Commissioner will be hosted by Commissioner Margaret Helton on Tuesday, **Jan. 10**, 2012, from 10 a.m. to noon, and will be held in Commissioner Helton's office at the Okeechobee County Courthouse, 304 N.W. Second St., room 261. Citizens wishing to participate are encouraged to call 863-763-6441 to schedule an appointment.

Health and Safety Expo set

The fifth annual Okeechobee Family Health and Safety Expo is looking for vendors. Vendors can choose booth space inside the Agri Civic Center or set-up outside to share their health and/or safety related service with the community. Booth space is free, but you must register! The Expo will be held Saturday, **Jan. 28**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center. For more information or to pick up a registration form, please call 863-462-5000 ext. 257.

Library will be hosting Broadway programs

Ian R. B. Nairnsey is presenting a series of talks in January and February on "Broadway Musicals Decade by Decade." The programs are held on Wednesdays at noon at the Okeechobee County Library, 206 S.W. 16th St. Admission is free. The programs last about 75 minutes and are illustrated with slides and musical selections. Those attending are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch. The **Jan. 11** program covers the 1920s and 1930s.

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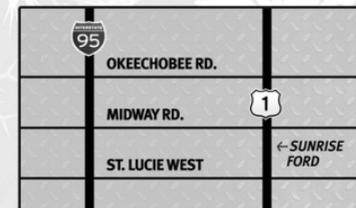
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Broadway comes again to Okeechobee library

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

It's that time of year again when Broadway comes to Okeechobee. As he has been doing for over 10 years, Ian R. B. Nairnsey once again brings his wealth of knowledge of Broadway to the Okeechobee County Library, 206 S.W. 16th St.

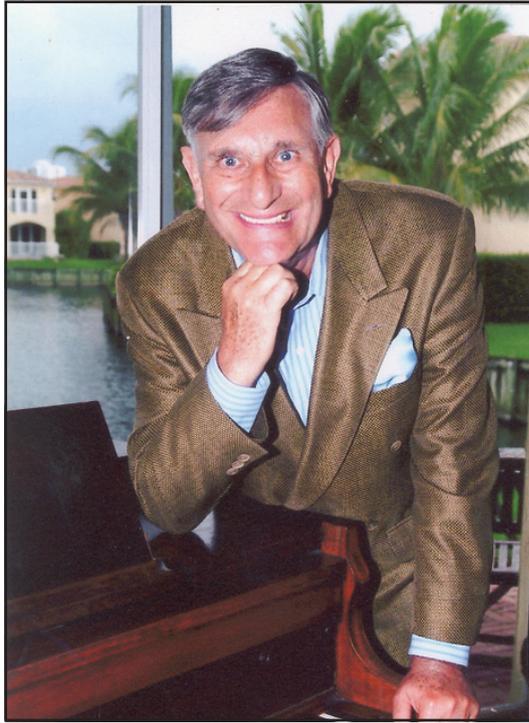
Mr. Nairnsey will present a series of five, free Wednesday noontime talks. Each talk will last about 75 minutes and will be illustrated by slides and musical presentations. Mr. Nairnsey suggests that participants bring brown bag lunches.

"America's musical theater is America's gift to the world," said Mr. Nairnsey.

This year he wanted to do something different. Previous presentations have featured various artists. Thus year, except for the last talk in the series, each talk will cover a 20-year time period. The first talk, on Jan. 11, will cover the 1920s and 1930s and will include such familiar tunes as "Tea for Two," "With A Song In My Heart," and "Old Man River." The Jan. 18 talk on the period of the 1940s and 1950s will include the favorites, "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun," as performed by Ethel Merman, "How Are Things In Glocca Morra" and "Hello Young Lovers."

On Jan. 25 the Broadway musicals of the 1960s and 1970s will be covered. Those attending will hear, among other things, "Bye, Bye Birdie," by Dick Van Dyke, "Camelot" by Richard Burton, and "People," by Barbara Striesand. The Feb. 1 talk will feature the musicals of the 1980s and 1990s. Song heard will include S'Wonderful" by Twiggy and Tommy Tune, and "Beauty and the Beast," with Angela Lansbury. The last program, on Feb. 8, will be the backstage story of "My Fair Lady."

Mr. Nairnsey's interest in musical theater began many years ago when he saw "South Pacific" on Broadway. His fascination continued as he practised law in England for over 30 years. He has amassed an extensive



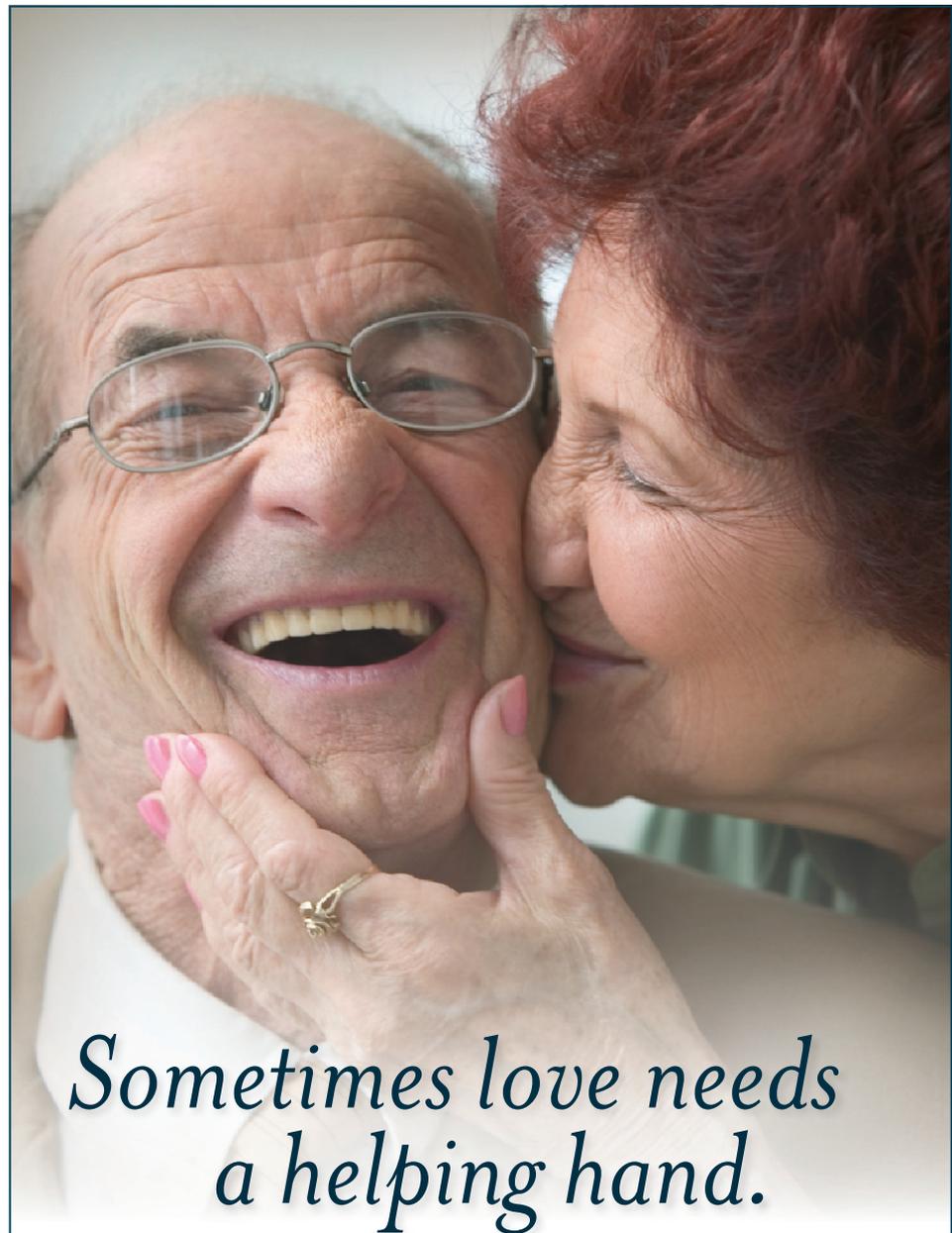
Courtesy photo

Ian R.B. Nairnsey will host a talk program series featuring Broadway history lectures.

collection of recorded music.

Those interested in learning more about Broadway may wish to attend Mr. Nairnsey's series of lectures "Broadway's Greatest Lyricist: Their Contribution to Musical Productions" at the Boca Raton campus of Florida Atlantic University as part of the university's Lifelong Learning Society. The lectures are from 3:45 to 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24 at the Barry and Florence Friedberg Auditorium. The series will include, among other subjects, lectures on Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Johnny Mercer and Alan Jay Lerner. There is a charge to attend this lecture series. For more information on the Florida Atlantic lectures, call the Life Long Learning Society at 561-297-3171.

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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SFWMD installs deep exploratory wells in Central Florida

Test wells will help evaluate the aquifer 2,700 feet below ground

POLK COUNTY — To support and sustain the water supply in Central Florida, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is currently drilling test wells up to 2,700 feet deep in previously unexplored portions of the Lower Floridan Aquifer.

“The Lower Floridan Aquifer in this area is largely uncharted territory, and its potential for boosting regional supplies is not yet known,” said Terrie Bates, Director of the SFWMD Water Resources Division. “This could be a significant and viable alternative source to meet water needs in future years.”

The SFWMD Governing Board approved a contract for additional well drilling and testing, a continuation of an overall exploratory program initiated earlier this year. Drilling sites include locations in Osceola and Polk counties.

Traditional water supplies, especially from shallow aquifers, are limited in many parts of the region. Alternative water sources, such as the deep Lower Floridan Aquifer, are being explored for potential use to meet future public water supply demands.

Data from the wells will be provided to the Central Florida Water Initiative, a partnership of utilities, stakeholders, the South Florida Water Management, St. Johns Water Management and Southwest Florida Water

Management districts. The goal of the initiative is to gather additional information on alternative water supply that will potentially increase regional water supplies and improve the ability to protect natural systems.

The drilling operation is a meticulous, time-consuming effort. When drilling half a mile below ground, it takes 50 minutes for the excavated rock to reach the surface.

In Florida, much of the public water supply comes from groundwater. Florida’s aquifers, which supply more than 8 billion gallons of water each day, are among the most productive in the world.

The Floridan Aquifer System is the main source of groundwater in the Kissimmee Basin. It is comprised of multiple layers of rocks overlain by unconsolidated sediments. Some of these rock layers are porous and hold water, while others impede its movement.

The permeable zones of the Upper Floridan aquifers are the main portions used for water sup-

ply. Much less is known about the deeper portions of the aquifer.

Research currently under way on the Lower Floridan will help determine the aquifer’s

depth, water quality and other factors that will help identify its potential, long-term sustainability as a water resource.

By compiling and evaluating data from the test wells, the SFWMD and partner agencies will have a clearer picture of how the Lower Floridan Aquifer operates and how to better manage and protect the region’s water.



Courtesy photo/SFWMD

Test wells being drilled by SFWMD in Polk County are as much as 2,700 feet deep with the hopes that a significant water source can be secured for future years.

In the military...

OHS grad completes basic training

Army Pvt. Dylan W. Ellis has graduated from basic infantry training at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga.

During the nine weeks of training, the soldier received training in drill and ceremonies, weapons, map reading, tactics, military courtesy, military justice, physical fitness, first aid, and Army history, core values and traditions. Additional training included development of basic combat skills and battlefield operations and tactics, and experiencing use of various weapons and weapons defenses available to the infantry crewman.

Ellis is the son of Donald Ellis of Okeechobee.

He is a 2011 graduate of Okeechobee High School.

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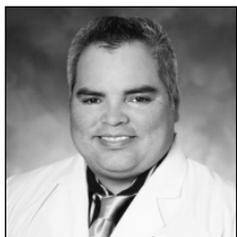
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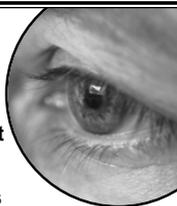
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Undercover officer honored for OHS drug arrests

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

An undercover St. Lucie County Deputy who helped crack down on drugs at Okeechobee High School last year was recently recognized as Detective of the Quarter for the St. Lucie County Sheriffs Office.

The now 27-year-old officer helped expose drug activity at the school which led to more than 20 arrests on a variety of felony charges.

The unnamed officer said he did his best to intermingle with the school population and didn't have a lot of trouble recognizing where the drugs were.

"It was in plain view. I didn't have to look for it," he said in an interview earlier this month.

The officer took on a fake identity with fake parents and a fake residence in Okeechobee County as part of the operation. Only four people knew he was on campus conducting the operation. He said the biggest obstacle was acting younger, wearing new styles and fitting in with student mannerisms and their modern vocabulary.

The officer also admitted school was pretty tough as he took tests and did homework. He continues to work undercover in St. Lu-

cie. More than 40 alleged drug purchases were made during the OHS operation and 22 students pled guilty or were convicted in court following the operation.

The officer said he felt the investigation did a good job in taking drugs off the campus and offered hope that it would make students think twice about drug activity. He said it was vital that someone from out of town pose as the student because it wouldn't have worked otherwise.

St. Lucie Sheriff Ken Mascara said they conducted a similar operation nine years ago in St. Lucie Schools with another deputy. When he spoke to Okeechobee Sheriff Paul May to reminisce about the success of that operation, the two men worked out the Okeechobee operation.

"I think this officer was a great actor. He has taken on personas over a full spectrum. This guy can do almost anything," he added.

Mascara said law enforcement realize that the battle against drugs will continue. Nine people die daily in Florida due to drug abuse.

"One of the best results of the operation in St. Lucie schools was not just the arrests but every freshman class that starts school now comments about it. You never know

who will be in class with you and that kids think twice about doing things on our school campuses," he added.

Sheriff Mascara said his deputy was proud of the work he did, but pointed out the vast majority of kids at OHS, were well behaved and law abiding. He said he was also proud of his academic achievement

while in school.

"He was proud of the fact that he did pass an algebra test," he quipped.

Okeechobee law enforcement said drug operations in schools will continue and they expressed confidence that this operation did reduce drug activity.

Faulty electrical outlet blamed for mobile home fire

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

Buckhead Ridge volunteer firefighters got hands-on training earlier this week when they had to leave a training session to battle a mobile home fire on Linda Road.

According to Glades County Public Safety Director Bob Jones, firefighters responded to the singlewide mobile home around 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 27. The fire, he continued, apparently started in an electrical outlet in a bathroom at the back of the home.

"The people just came here from Kentucky," he said, adding that they had only been here one day.

Mr. Jones said while there was little flame damage the older model mobile home suffered heavy smoke damage, es-

pecially to the back of the trailer.

He estimated damage to the home and its contents at \$35,000.

"It would take a lot to go in and fix it," he said. "It was 50 to 75 percent destroyed."

Firefighters from Lakeport and the Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue Department also responded.

Because the firefighters were training, Mr. Jones said they were able to respond quickly and had the fire under control in 15 to 20 minutes.

"If not for that, the trailer would have been fully involved," he said.

Mr. Jones went on to say that there has been a "marked improvement" in response time by volunteers with the Glades County East District due to their Firefighter 1 training and their now being certified.

Local man accused of 'touching' child

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

An Okeechobee man was arrested Christmas Eve in Pahokee after he was accused of allegedly inappropriately touching a 7-year-old girl.

Juan Prado, 47, was charged with one count of lewd and lascivious molestation. He was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail under a \$75,000 bond.

An arrest report by Detective M. Sclafani, of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO), stated that the incident apparently occurred outside a laundromat on East Main Street.

According to the report, the victim told



Juan Prado

her mother that "the ice cream man" had just touched her through her clothing. The incident was then reported to PBSO deputies, who spoke with Prado and took him to PBSO offices where he was interviewed by Detective Sclafani.

The detective's report goes on to state that Prado had touched the child twice—once inside the laundromat and once at his vehicle that was parked outside the business. The report does not indicate why Prado and the child were at his vehicle.

Prado reportedly denied having ever touched the child before.

PBSO booking reports only listed Prado's address in Okeechobee as "at large" and did not give a specific address.

Eyelids feeling heavy? Pull over

You fight to keep your eyes opened, your head up. You have stopped for coffee because you just have to get to your destination as soon as possible. Then before you have time to react, you are wide-awake enough to see oncoming traffic, since you'll have veered into it! All too often the scenario is real on Florida's roadways.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that each year driver fatigue results in 100,000 police-reported crashes, 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

According to NHTSA, drivers in the following three groups pose the highest risk of falling asleep while driving:

- Young people (ages 16 to 29), especially males;
- Shift workers whose sleep is disrupted by working at night or working long or ir-

regular hours; and

- People with untreated sleep apnea syndrome and narcolepsy.

Regardless of a driver's vocation, age, sex, health condition or other characteristics, any driver can become overconfident and fail victim to drowsy driving. Measures that drivers can take to stay alert behind the wheel are:

- Catch some Zs. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours.
- Bring a buddy to share the driving.
- Take a break. Stopping to get out and stretch your legs every few hours or even to catch a quick nap will help you recharge your battery;
- Drive sober. Alcohol and driving never mix. Also, heed prescription medication labels and any warnings that say they may make you drowsy.

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).

- Christina Jo McMahan, 28, Brinkerhoff Lane, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 24 by Deputy John Hazy on a charge of driving under the influence. Her bond was set at \$500.

- Matthew Rod Taylor, 22, S.E. 86th Blvd., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 26 by Deputy Corporal Aric Majere on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with fraudulent use of a credit card. His bond was set at \$2,500.

- Oscar Segura, 19, S.E. 21st Court, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 27 by Deputy Steven Pollock on a charge of aggravated (domestic) battery on a pregnant person. His bond was set at \$1,000.

- William Norris Richbourg, 36, U.S. 441 S.E., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 27 by Deputy Troy Garrison on a charge of domestic battery by strangulation. His bond was set at \$1,000.

- Ronald Milner, 33, Bridlewood Drive, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 27 by Deputy Corporal Paul Ferrell on a felony charge of battery on a law enforcement officer. He was also arrested on misdemeanor charges of disorderly intoxication and resisting a law enforcement officer without violence by Deputy Heath Hughes. His total bond was set at \$5,750.

- Benjamin Leevy Hernandez, 23, Tucker Ridge Road, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 28 by Officer Lawrence Parzygnat on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with worthless check. His bond was set at \$1,000.

- Eric Jon Degroot, 37, 13th Place, Vero Beach, was arrested Dec. 28 by Deputy Anthony Kibler on a charge of armed trespassing. His bond was set at \$2,500.

- John Saxon Jr., 36, Willow Road, Hendersonville, N.C., was arrested Dec. 28 by Deputy Anthony Kibler on a charge of armed trespassing. His bond was set at \$2,500.

- Kandice Lyann Reeves, 24, N.W. 32nd Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 28 by Officer Chad Troutman on a Pasco County warrant charging her with dealing in stolen property. Her bond was set at \$10,000.

- David Edward Farmer, 45, S.W. 28th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 28 by Deputy Brian Cross on a felony charge of possession of a controlled substance without a valid prescription and a misdemeanor charge of possession of a prescription outside its proper container. His bond was set at \$5,500.

- Herman Wayne Martin, 52, N.W. 39th Circle, Okeechobee, was arrested Dec. 28 by Deputy Robbie Lamb on a charge of driving under the influence. His bond was set at \$500.

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.

Local coffee shop provides serenity



By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The recently opened Serenity Coffee Shop at 601 S.W. Park Street is the place to enjoy a cup of coffee in a quiet relaxing atmosphere.

"It's brand new to us," said Curtis Tyson, who along with his wife, Jeannie, own the business, "We've never had a coffee shop. We're growing and learning as we grow."

When asked why they opened a coffee shop Mr. Tyson, replied "God." He went on to say, "God laid on our hearts a coffee shop." While he said he and his wife are Christians, he emphasized that Serenity was not a Christian coffee shop. While it is a place where Christian counseling and Bible study groups meet, Mr. Tyson said no one would be preached at and everyone was welcome.

Serenity Coffee Shop serves a wide variety of coffee and other drinks at reasonable prices.

They have their own house blend and also serve espresso, latte, cappuccino, mocha, blended beverages, hot chocolate, iced coffee, iced tea, hot tea and smoothies. In addition, they serve Danish pastries, muffins and doughnuts.

The coffee shop has internet access and there is a shelf of inspirational books that can be enjoyed over coffee or borrowed to take home to read.

The hours are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. In the future they hope to stay open later on the third Saturday of the month and feature music.

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Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda
At Serenity Coffee Shop the husband and wife team of Curtis and Jennie Tyson strive to provide an atmosphere that lives up to the name of the shop.

Time for financial resolutions

Once again, it's time to make New Year's resolutions. In addition to hitting the gym, learning that second language and getting better organized, Sharon A Ming, an Edward Jones financial advisor in Okeechobee, says, "Why not also consider making a few financial resolutions?"

Money doesn't grow on trees. Therefore, making smart financial decisions is a huge contributing factor to a successful life for individuals, as well as their immediate families, according to Ms. Ming. "This is the perfect time of year for local residents to make decisions that will help them take better control of their financial and investing life. We recommend going into the year 2012 with a brand new perspective about your investments and get a positive head start with your finances," said Ms. Ming. What types of financial resolutions might one consider? Ms. Ming suggests:

- Contribute more to your retirement accounts. A new year means that you are one year closer to retirement. To help yourself build resources for the lifestyle you've envisioned as a retiree, try to boost your contributions to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. You can do this if you get a salary increase and devote at least part of it to your 401(k). At the same time, try to "max out" on your Individual Retirement Account (IRA). For 2012, you can

contribute up to \$5,000 to an IRA, or \$6,000 if you're 50 or older.

- Reduce your debts. Look for ways to cut down or consolidate your debts.

- Build an emergency fund. If you don't already have an emergency fund containing between six and 12 months' worth of living expenses, start building one soon. Keep the money in a liquid vehicle one that's separate from your everyday checking and savings accounts. Without such an emergency fund, you may be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for unexpected costs, such as a major car repair, a new furnace or a large medical bill.

- Don't overreact to volatility. In 2011, the financial markets have been volatile, with big gains followed by big drops. Try not to let large, short-term price movements influence you. Many factors that cause jumps or declines are not that relevant to long-term results.

- Be aware of different types of risk. For many investors, "investment risk" strictly means the possibility of losing principal when the value of an investment drops. Consequently, to cut back on their risk in the face of a volatile market, they may sell off stocks and load up on certificates of deposit (CDs), bonds and other so-called "safer" investments. But each investment actually carries its own type of risk.

Happy New Year!

May your homes and hearts overflow with love, peace and prosperity.

~ Lori, Holly, J.D., Sherry, Mandi & Kendra

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Taylor Creek - 1/1 Condo unfurnished on ground floor. Includes utilities and boat ramp and dock. Move in special only \$600 call 863-634-0663.

When doing those chores is doing you in, it's time to look for a helper in the classifieds.

Houses - Rent

AFFORDABLE - New Houses, 3/1/1 = \$900, 3/2/2 = \$1200, Large yards. Bring pets. Jacuzzi tub included. Call 561-723-2226

OKEECHOBEE - 3BR, 3BA, on 1.5 acres, NW 144th Dr., \$850 mo., 1st, last & sec. (863)634-3650.

Rooms To Rent

OKEECHOBEE - Looking for 2 roommates to share 4 br house. All appliances including Washer & Dryer. Located at Four Seasons. \$300/mo Call (863)634-4771

Real Estate

For more listings,
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www.newszap.com

Houses - Sale

Owner Financing - 3 bdrm 2 bath house on 1 acre \$3,500.00 down \$931.42 a month. Call Beverley 863-634-2820

Land - Sale

OKEECHOBEE 5 Acres \$2,000 down. Park your own trailer or house, owner financing \$49,000. 863-763-6358

Mobile Homes

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Mobile Home Rent

Buckhead Ridge - 4/2 with fenced yard and fire place.
Treasure Island - 3/2, New carpet no pets. Move in now \$600 includes lawn service call 863-634-0663.

For Rent
Mobile Homes
1bd/1ba & 2bd/1ba
Call for more information
863-610-1386

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

Okeechobee



Jeep



RAM

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