



Vol. 103 No. 18

Friday, February 10, 2012

50¢ Plus tax



Christian Team Trail ... Page 12

County may not accept grant ... Page 8

## Lake Levels

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# Former teacher sentenced to prison

By Eric Kopp  
Okeechobee News

Weeping, Elena Huddleston begged Circuit Court Judge Robert Belanger to be lenient when he sentenced her son, Joel, Thursday morning. "Please show mercy, your honor. Please," she sobbed.

With little comment, Judge Belanger sentenced the former middle school teacher and youth minister to 15 years in prison. That sentence will be followed by 15 years sexual offender probation and he will be classified as a sexual offender.

In his comments to the judge prior to sen-

tencing, Assistant State Attorney described Joel Huddleston as a "twisted individual..." and asked that he be sentenced to 45 years.

Huddleston, 29, was found guilty Wednesday evening of lewd and lascivious conduct and tampering with a witness. Judge Belanger

See **HUDDLESTON** — Page 13



Special to the Okeechobee News/Bobbi Poole

## Miss Okeechobee Rodeo

Miss Okeechobee Rodeo representatives were chosen Feb. 4. Left to right, winners are: 2012 Miss Rodeo Okeechobee Kellie Munn, Miss Rodeo Okeechobee Princess McKenna Hickson and Miss Teen Rodeo Okeechobee Sierra Coward. For more on the story, see page 5.

# Task force arrests 3 on meth charges

By Eric Kopp  
Okeechobee News

Three Central Florida women who claimed to be on their way to the Seminole Casino at Brighton only made it as far as the Okeechobee County Jail.

The women reportedly made a scheduled stop at a local convenience store where they allegedly were caught selling methamphetamine to a confidential informant. The alleged buy was recorded by members of the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force and the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office Street Crimes Unit.

Arrested at noon Wednesday, Feb. 8, were: Toni Wyatt-Pryor, 46, Pipes Road, Bartow; Nancy L. Freeworth, 50, Lake Buffum Road,

See **METH** — Page 8



Nancy L. Freeworth

Monda Reed-Gandy

Toni Wyatt-Pryor

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\$5.00 1834 to 1938.....up to.....\$1,000.....\$10,000	
\$5.00 1839 to 1908.....up to.....\$1,500.....\$6,000	
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9AM-4PM



# Historical Society honors Okeechobee fire chiefs

**By Pete Gawda**  
Okeechobee News

The present and all former City of Okeechobee Fire Chiefs were honored Tuesday, Feb. 5, when the Okeechobee County Historical Society unveiled a collection of photographs of fire chiefs at the fire station. About 50 people were in attendance at the program which was presided over by Betty Williamson, president of the Okeechobee County Historical Society. She presented a history of the fire department and honored the present fire chief and former fire chiefs and their families who were present.

Since 1915, when the City of Okeechobee was formed, the city has had 21 fire chiefs. To date, the historical society has only managed to locate 11 photographs. It is their hope to eventually have a collection of photographs of all the chiefs. In the beginning, the chief of police also served as fire chief. While the first two chiefs of police, or town

marshals, Benjamin Hall and J.W. Raulerson, were also listed as fire chiefs, it was the third chief of police, Pogy Bill Collins, whose salary was broken down into \$75 a month for being chief of police and \$25 a month for being the head of a volunteer fire department.

According to city council minutes, on May 9, 1916 the city council bought a "2-barrel fire extinguisher." This was evidently some type of fire truck, because later minutes only refer to a fire truck. On May 29, 1917 Pogy Bill was ordered to build a shed for the fire truck which cost \$11.68. The minutes also record a \$4.45 repair bill for the fire truck.

Pogy Bill served from March 14, 1916 to Nov. 18, 1918 as the city's chief lawman and chief fire firefighter. He had the unique distinction of serving again from Jan. 2, 1923 to Dec. 30, 1924. He later became sheriff. After he left Okeechobee he went to Frostproof as police chief. Pogy Bill was killed when a Frostproof fire truck he was riding en route to a fire overturned.

Some time later the city began hiring full-time fire chiefs who lived upstairs in the city hall. At that time the fire station was in the north wing of the city hall (where the city logo is painted on the building).

The longest serving chiefs were Olen Godwin who served 23 years from Feb. 1, 1955 to Nov. 1, 1978 and Keith Toomey who served 25 years from May 15, 1979 to June 20, 2004. It was Chief Godwin's widow, Pearl, who suggested the photograph collection.

The two shortest serving chiefs were Joe Prescott and Walter Watford, who each served two months in 1945. Walter Watford was the grandfather of city councilman Dowling Watford. The councilman said his father was in the military in 1945 and he did not know until the Historical Society researched the fire chiefs, that his grandfather had served in that office.

Current Fire Chief Herb Smith, who succeeded Chief Toomey in 2004, has been with the fire department for 20 years.

Councilman Clayton Williams recalled serving as volunteer fireman while in high school because answering a fire call meant an excused absence from class.

*Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at [pgawda@newszap.com](mailto:pgawda@newszap.com).*



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

Okeechobee firemen pose in front of fire truck number one which displayed photographs of fire chiefs that were presented to the fire department by the Okeechobee County Historical Society on Tuesday, Feb. 7. Pictured are, left to right, Assistant Chief Bill Douglas, Chief Herb Smith, Firefighter Mike Skipper, Firefighter Josh Sanders, Lieutenant Jeff Baugh, Firefighter Adam Crum and Firefighter Phil Conroy. Fire truck number one is a 1949 Ford that has been refurbished by the firefighters and is still in service. For more photos, see the Okeechobee News page on Facebook.

## Okeechobee Forecast

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Weather forecast for Okeechobee County from the National Weather Service

### Local Forecast

**Friday:** A 30 percent chance of showers, mainly after noon. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 82. Northeast wind around 5 mph.

**Friday night:** A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 62. Calm wind becoming west between 5 and 10 mph.

### Extended Forecast

**Saturday:** A 50 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 70. North northwest wind around 10 mph.

**Saturday night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 42. North northwest wind around 10 mph.

**Sunday:** Partly sunny, with a high near 66. North northeast wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

**Sunday night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 43. Northeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

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Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

Betty Williamson, president of the Okeechobee County Historical Society, recognizes City of Okeechobee Fire Chief Herb Smith for his service to the city. The recognition took place during a Tuesday, Feb. 7, ceremony at the fire station to unveil a collection of photographs of fire chiefs.

## Help available for seniors to help with electric bills

Okeechobee Senior Services is currently taking applications for the EHEAP grant. You must be sixty or over or have someone in the household sixty and over. This grant will pay for electric bills and space heaters. You must have a Final Notice. Call Sheila at 863-462-5180 to find out the documentation you will have to apply.

<i>Brahman Theatres</i>	
<b>Fri., Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> - Thurs., Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> For Info, Call 763-7202</b>	<b>MOVIE LISTINGS</b>
<b>THEATRE I: "HUGO"</b>	
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00, Sat., Sun., & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00, Mon. 3:00	<b>PG</b>
<b>"MAN ON A LEDGE"</b>	
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 9:00, Sat., Sun., & Wed. 9:00, Mon. 7:00	<b>PG-13</b>
<b>THEATRE II: "JOYFUL NOISE"</b>	
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00, Sat., Sun., & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00, Mon. 3:00 & 7:00	<b>PG-13</b>
<b>III: "JOURNEY MYSTERIOUS ISLAND"</b>	
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00, Sat., Sun., & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00, Mon. 3:00 & 7:00	<b>PG</b>
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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](http://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!*

## Okee-Tantie

• There is going to be a town hall meeting hopefully in late February or early in March. Anyone interested in filling out cards will be able to be heard and public input will help the County to design the park so we can do it right the first time and we all will be happy with the end result. If a developer is going to plunk down \$30 to \$40 million dollars to build the park, they must be assured that they can get a return on their money. There are four different concepts to consider and that will be determined by public input. With the current economic climate, leasing the property on a long-term lease is the only way the park can be rebuilt without using public funds, that the county can't expend now and won't be able to for at least 10 to 15 years.

• Sell it! Government, local or state, has no business trying to figure out how to make a campground profitable.

• The property is inside the dike so I don't think they can sell it. There are a lot of environmental issues as well as the fact that it is completely underwater during a hurricane storm surge.

• I have an RV and have roamed the countryside with it. Palm Beach County has two lovely campgrounds which during the winter months are usually filled to capacity. Broward County has five county parks which offer campgrounds, all but Quiet Waters offer sites with full RV hookups. My personal knowledge of Markham Park was that it, too, was usually at capacity during the winter season. The city of Orlando has a lovely park called Bill Frederick Park at Turkey Lake. Again, I found it difficult to "get in" in the winter season. The city of Pahokee went the other way with their facility, using a company called Lake Okeechobee Outpost. That company has gone belly up and the campground, pool and restaurant are closed. The prices at Pahokee were very steep, with an additional charge if you used your RV's air conditioning. The camping sites had location, but were less than ideal.

- What's going to be done is a question as millions of dollars of federal, local, city and county funds have been spent there.

- Don't forget Longpoint in Sebastian run by Brevard County ... nice facility and same fee year round.

- The Military Parks use a "Camp Host." They deal with the camp populace, they take care of the day-to-day business and they get a reduced rate for their stay. Win - Win situation.

- We cannot sell it because there is a reversionary clause that says if we try to sell the campground it would revert back to South Florida Water Management District.

- I really don't see how they can "sell" lots in Okee-Tantie, when the county does not have the right to sell it. Also, you can't put any permanent structures inside the dike unless they are owned by the government (such as the restaurant, bait shop and the OCSO Marine Unit building). If there is a hurricane on the way, any RVs have to be evacuated from Okee-Tantie. You can't let people put park models inside the dike. Did you see the photos from 2005, when the FEMA trailers were at Okee-Tantie? What a mess! Pieces of those trailers were scattered all over the place. Fortunately, the deputies made everyone leave the park before the storm hit.

## Insurance

- I just watched a story on channel 5 about an insurance company forcing people to insure homes for much more than they are worth. My Mom has just had this problem with another company and while trying to find a new company, all others did the same thing. I would love to hear from others with the same story. If you have had the same problem, contact the Insurance Commissioners Office in Tallahassee. Things won't change unless we complain.

- Just had to buy a new policy for my house, switching from a rental liability to homeowner's. The place is insured for \$143,000, the lowest they would go, with 80 percent coverage on contents valued at \$114,000. I'm sure I don't own more than \$25,000 worth of appliances and furniture, all second hand when I bought them. They rattle on about replacement costs etc. Well who says I would replace with brand new?

## Check points

- On the news, I see other counties are setting up Driver's License and Insurance card check points. I wish Okeechobee would set up some check points.

# Letters to the editor

## Re-dedication of monument

Saturday was a day of celebration for Okeechobee. The re-dedication of the Battle of Okeechobee Marker/Monument in our new State Park was a well-attended "Event" within an Event" during the Re-enactment weekend. The Okeechobee Chapter of the DAR was a proud hostess of our community as they shared responsibilities for the ceremony with Cora Stickney Harper Chapter (Ft. Pierce) and Seminole Chapter (West Palm Beach). Dignitaries from DAR attended. Congressman Rooney sent a letter of congratulations and encouragement. Greg Langowski represented Senator Marco Rubio. Former State Representative Richard Macheck commented that the Monument has had many names over the years and especially during the move to relocate it in November. Willie Johns introduced Andy Bowers the Brighton Council Representative for the Seminole Tribe. County Commissioner Bryant Culpepper, Sheriff Paul May, Judge Hendry, Betty and Sonny Williamson were among the many honored guests.

There are many who helped the DAR achieve their goal of moving the Marker/Monument and holding the Re-dedication ceremony. We are most grateful to: FDOT who granted a permit without a fee, Okeechobee Sheriff's Department who controlled traffic and provided work-release inmates to do the digging, Rick's Cranes' Wade Lightsey for his outstanding maneuvering of the crane, Matt Buxton for his work to move what was thought to be "just a large piece of coquina" and his cooperation during the move, Mark Nelson and his staff (Florida Park Service), and Dowling Watford. The thank you list continues for the Saturday ceremony to Gilbert Golf Carts for welcome transportation, Tree Locators for the red cypress trees and potted grasses to beautify the setting, the JROTC of Okeechobee High School presented the colors and Dillon Jones of the OHS Band played Taps. We have an amazing community.

**Sincerely,  
Su George  
Okeechobee Chapter DAR  
Chairperson Relocation and Rededication of Battle of Okeechobee Marker/Monument**

The following letter from Congressman Tom Rooney was read at the dedication of the memorial:

Dear Okeechobee Battlefield Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Re-dedication of the Battle of Okeechobee Monument. Through the hard work and dedication of the Okeechobee, Seminole of West Palm Beach, and Cora Stickney Harper of Ft. Pierce DAR Chapters, the Battle of Okeechobee Historic State Park will soon be opened and well preserved for future generations.

History is a tool to see where we have been, a tool to show how much we've changed and a tool to predict where we are going. This monument sits on the forefront of a battlefield rich in a history that is not just inspiring but educational. The site of the Battle of Okeechobee was a turning point in the Seminole Indian Wars. A battle that had lasting implications and a dramatic story, it is described as the bloodiest fight of the 37 listed engagements, making it a staple in Florida's history not only for what it signifies, but the lessons it continues to teach us today.

As one of America's eleven most Endangered Historic Places, the Battleground of Okeechobee should be admired and revered. It is vital that this piece of history be preserved in order to understand the struggle between a young and expanding United States and the Seminole Indians.

This monument bears a plaque with the names of all those who were killed in this historical battle. It recalls their individual sacrifice and by taking part in today's ceremony, you are commemorating those who risked and those who lost their lives for the prosperity of this area and the state of Florida.

Congratulations on achieving the parks' first permanent installation. The monument opens a new chapter in the history of this park, one where future students, scholars, and the general public can come to learn of our state's heritage. Through your efforts, this battleground will become one of glory and enrichment in our lives. Thank you for your support to the future of the Battle of Okeechobee Park and the significance that comes with it.

**Thomas Rooney  
Member of Congress**

- 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.
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# OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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# City to pursue economic development grant funds

**By Pete Gawda**

Okeechobee news

A possible economic grant that would create 30 jobs was discussed at the Tuesday, Feb. 7 meeting of the Okeechobee City Council.

Nancy Phillips, the city's grant coordinator, discussed the Community Development Block Grant Program. The council conducted a public hearing on the program and voted to move forward with trying to secure a grant which would involve building a west bound left turn lane on S.R. 70 in front of

Appleby's. A second required public hearing will be held at the Feb. 21 city council meeting. Ms. Phillips is then planning to submit the application for the grant before the Feb. 28 deadline.

The code board had recommended that the city begin foreclosure proceedings against a property because of repeated code violations. The vacant 813 S.E. Third Ave. property of Cody Brown was damaged by fire in 2008 and was never repaired. It incurred a fine of \$7,400 in October of 2008 which has not been paid. Since that time there have

been several other code violations and the owner has been declared a repeat violator. After some discussion the council directed staff to see which would be most cost effective foreclosure or nuisance abatement.

Turning to financial matters, the council delegated authority to the mayor, the city administrator and the finance director to sign financial records required by the state. The council also approved a resolution establishing definitions and policies for reserves and fund balances. This resolution defines standard accounting procedures that have not

previously been in writing.

In addition, the council approved temporary street closings throughout the year for Okeechobee Main Street and First Baptist Church activities and conducted an executive session to discuss pending administrative proceedings regarding litigations of Carter Pritchett Advertising, Inc., vs. the City of Okeechobee, and Centennial Builders of Lee County, Inc., vs. City of Okeechobee.

*Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at [pgawda@newszap.com](mailto:pgawda@newszap.com).*

## Licensing board recommends elimination of 'Handyman License'

**By Pete Gawda**

Okeechobee News

The much debated "Handyman's License" or Non Structural Restricted Limited License (NSRL), as it is officially known, could soon be a thing of the past. The Okeechobee County Construction Industry Licensing Board, meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 5, voted to recommend to the Okeechobee

County Commission that such licenses no longer be issued. Those persons holding a NSRL could continue to work under the terms for which the license was granted for not more than one calendar year. Their licenses would not be renewed.

The NSRL as it currently stands is limited to specific kinds of repairs. The license holder may not employ other people or subcontract

their services. The total cost of a job may not exceed \$1,000. While the limited scope of work does not require a building permit, all work performed in excess of \$500 must be registered with the building department. In the past the board has discussed continual abuse of NSRL holders by exceeding the limited scope of work allowed and going over the \$1,000 limit.

## 2012 Miss Rodeo Okeechobee is crowned

Saturday, Feb. 4, marked the Third Miss Okeechobee Pageant. The Okeechobee County Cattlemen's Association hosted the event that brought spectators to the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center from Palm Beach, Ft. Pierce and Okeechobee to support the contestants, enjoy a barbecue lunch and observe the horses.

The pageant commenced with personal interviews for each contestant, followed by the horsemanship division. The Miss and Miss Teen contestants competed in two rounds, with the first round consisting of a set pattern and ending with a "horsemanship" interview. The interview consisted of questions ranging from equine science or basic feed and tack of their horse. The

second round was a free style pattern choreographed by the contestant to show off their best skills in riding position, control of horse and their Queen Presentation run.

After a delicious barbecue dinner, the contestants wowed the audience with their line dance routine. Contestants were then asked to model, while their biographies were read, and then give a one-minute speech on why they felt they deserved their title. Each contestant was required to answer an impromptu question regarding a rodeo event and answer it to the best of their ability on stage. Prior to the pageant, the Miss and Miss Teen contestants were given a 50 question test reflecting on rodeo, equine science and local cowboy facts. The judges had a difficult task set before them.

Coronation was shortly after with the following results: 2012 Miss Rodeo Okeechobee Kellie Munn; Miss Teen Rodeo Sierra Coward; Miss Teen Rodeo 1st Runner up Alexandra Heatley; MRO Princess McKenna Hickson; Top Score for Rodeo Test, Ashalee Dreher, Miss Congeniality, Alexandra Heatley; Miss Photogenic, Morgan Tripp; Best Personality, Courtney McCreary; Best Appearance, Morgan Tripp. The Cattlemen's Association would like to thank the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association, Eli's Western Wear, Jewelry place, Photography by Bobbi and all the pageant program sponsors. For pageant information, please visit [www.missrodeookeebobee.org](http://www.missrodeookeebobee.org). For pageant photos, contact Photography by Bobbi at 863-467-2614, or [www.photographybybobbiokee.com](http://www.photographybybobbiokee.com).

*Robertta "Bobbi" Christensen*



*Happy  
Valentine's Day!*

I miss your smile, your touch, your laugh.  
I miss you, your everything.  
I love you. MORE!  
Love, Eric

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## Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted to the Okeechobee News by e-mailing [obits@newszap.com](mailto: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](http://www.newszap.com).

### Gladys Mae Bowling, 84

OKEECHOBEE — Gladys Mae Bowling, age 84, of Okeechobee, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2012, in the Okeechobee Health Care Facility. She was born March 5, 1927, in Borger, Texas.

Private services will be held.

All arrangements are entrusted to the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee, Florida. On-line condolences may be made at [www.buxtonfuneral-home.com](http://www.buxtonfuneral-home.com).

### Wayne Kendall Fortenberry, 87

OKEECHOBEE — Wayne Kendall Fortenberry, age 87, of Palm Beach Shores and Okeechobee, passed away Feb. 6, 2012.

Wayne was born Feb. 27, 1924, in Lynn, Ark., to Clyde and Minnie Fortenberry. After his father died at an early age, he moved to Pahokee, Fla., with his mother and step-father, Loren Snyder, where he was raised. After serving in WW II as a gunner on a Navy merchant ship, he attended Harding College and graduate school at Florida State University and then at the University of Mississippi, where he received his Masters in Education.

He was a life-long educator, first as a high-school teacher at Belle Glade High and then as a guidance counselor at Forest Hill High School. After they retired, he and his wife, Marjorie (Margie), divided their time between Palm Beach County and Okeechobee, where they loved the fishing life, owning six different homes around Lake Okeechobee. He was an active member of the Church of Christ and stayed involved in education during his retirement years by serving as a director, with several terms as chairman, of the Gold Coast Federal Credit Union.

Second only to having a positive influence on the lives of numerous students, Wayne may well be best remembered for his green thumb and horse-trading. He was a farmer at heart and earned his Master Gardener designation from the Mounts Center. His favorite times were working in his garden, looking at property and going to the cattle auction, where he loved a good bargain.

A devoted family man, he is survived by his wife of 65 years, Margie; a daughter, Joan Smith and her husband, Larry; a granddaughter, Sydney Smith; his and his wife's extended family; many friends, including those from his church and the Okeechobee VFW and American Legion; and his dedicated caregivers.

The family will receive friends today, Feb. 10, 2012, from 5 until 6:30 p.m. at Quattlebaum Funeral Home, 1201 South Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401. A Graveside Service will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012, at Port Mayaca Gardens Cemetery located between Pahokee and Okeechobee on US Hwy 98.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of Palm Beach County, 5300 East Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33407.

## Community Events

### Moose Lodge announces weekend plans

Lots of fun will be happening at the Moose Lodge, 159 NW 36th St. this weekend. Friday, there will be Bingo at 6:30 p.m., with bonanza start at 5 p.m. On Saturday there will be a Fish Fry by Ray starting at 5:30 p.m., with Music By Lisa 7-10 p.m. Sunday's cooked to order breakfast will be 7-11 a.m. for a cost of \$5. Proceeds benefit Moose Charities.

### Weekend plans announced at VFW

The North VFW, 300 NW 34th St. has a weekend of fun planned. Friday, the grill will be open 5-9 p.m. with karaoke by Steve On A Stick 7-10 p.m. On Saturday, there will be bar bingo at 1 p.m., a Fish/Shrimp Dinner at 5 p.m., and karaoke by D & K Karaoke (Danny & Kathy) 7-10 p.m. Sunday Lori will be serving Cabbage Rolls 2-4 p.m., with karaoke by XXL (Capt. Dennis) 6-9 p.m. Proceeds benefit veterans assistance programs. Be sure to stop by and support your local veterans.

### Special Valentines dinner night planned

ON Friday, Feb. 10, a steak dinner will be followed by Valentines Dance at the North Eagles, 9985 Hwy 441 North, Okeechobee. Music will be by Jay, and the "Sho Nuff Band. It's gonna' be a Real Good Time!"

Bring your Sweetheart and Get your picture taken and printed on the spot, An 8 x10 photo for a \$6.50 donation. We will have other goodies also, just ask. For more information, please call 863-763-2552.

### Commemorative Memory Field to open

The Memory Field Flags will be in Flagler Park, Feb. 10-17. A dedication ceremony will be held Feb. 14, at 5:30 p.m. This year 155 Florida Children lost their lives due to child abuse. CASTLE staffers work everyday to eliminate that number -- one family at a time. Community members may sponsor a Blue Ribbon for \$10; Mini Flag for \$25; a Memory Flag for \$100.

### Cypress Eagles to host dinner night

Friday, Feb. 10, from 5:30-8:30 p.m., the Cypress Hut Eagles, will be serving Steak \$12, Fish \$8 or Shrimp \$12 dinners. Music by Wes & Debbie. All proceed go to Community Charity Fund. Public is welcome.

### Calling all scrapbookers!

The Croppin' Crew will meet this Saturday, Feb. 11, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., at the Okeechobee County Library. 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 any card-making projects that you are working on. For further information call Joan at 863-467-0290.

### Knights of Columbus hold dinners in BHR

The Knights of Columbus of St. Theresa Catholic Church, at Hwy. 78 W. and Chobe Loop in Buckhead Ridge, are holding a Mexican dinner on Saturday, Feb. 11. All meals include a dessert and choice of beverage. Dinner served from 4:30-6:30 p.m. (takeout is available). Donation of \$8, adults and \$3 children. Proceeds will go to church projects.

### A Safari Party to be held at Arnold's Wildlife Center

Race to our party! Arnold's Wildlife and Rehabilitation Center is having a Safari Party with entertainment by T-Rex, on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 2 p.m. until. Adults \$25 and Children \$10, which includes barbecue, beer, soft drinks, tours, bounce house and pony rides. The "Best Safari Costume" contest will be held. Pictures with the exotic animals. There will be a grand prize of a helicopter ride for the winner and two guests. Bring your flashlight for the "Creatures of the Night." Silent Auction. Arnold's is located 14895 N.W. 30th Terr. in Okeechobee. See their web site at [www.arnoldswildlife.org](http://www.arnoldswildlife.org). All proceeds go to Arnolds a 501(c)3 organization.

### Eagles North to host Card BINGO night

Saturday, Feb. 11, Eagles North will have card Bingo Starting at 4 p.m. Proceeds go to the F.O.E. 4137, 9985 Hwy. 441 North, Okeechobee.

### B.R.A.T. Club hosts dance

The Building Relationships Among Teens (B.R.A.T.) Club will host a Valentines Teen Dance Party at the Okeechobee Freshman Campus on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 7 to 10 p.m. The dance is open to children ages 12 to 16. Cost is \$7 per child. Admission includes pizza, soda and chips. For more information, contact Teresa Chandler at 863-801-4996.

### Moose Club presents Lip Synch show

The Okeechobee Lip Synch show will be presented on Feb. 11, from 1 until 3 p.m. at the Buckhead Ridge Moose Club on Hwy. 78 South.

### Farm Bureau hosts shoot

Okeechobee County Farm Bureau will host the Fourth Annual, 3-D Archery Shoot will be held Saturday, Feb. 11. Registration is from 7:30-8:45 a.m. or you can pre register at our office at 401 NW 4th street. There will be 30 targets. Two 15 animal ranges. Cost on an individual basis is \$25 per person that includes lunch. Children under 10 will be \$15. Non shooters pay \$5 for lunch. Target sponsorships are \$100 per station. The shoot will be held on 4351 Hwy 441 N, across from ARS Motorsports. Proceeds go to support the Young Farmer and Rancher Scholarship Program. For more information, contact Okeechobee County Farm Bureau at 863-763-3101.

### Church plans

#### 'Island Thyme' party

On Feb. 11, the dining hall of Church of Our Saviour at 200 N.W. 3rd St. wil be transformed into a tropical paradise. The theme of this event is "Island Thyme". The menu has been developed by none other than Kaye Mueller and Pam Rogers of "Nibbles and Bits" catering of Nashville, Tenn. Entertainment will be provided by the Chobee Steelers. Tickets are available for \$10 per person with door prizes. Tickets may be purchased at the church office. For additional information please call the church office at 863-763-4843 or Fransee Malone at 863-357-1713. If your schedule is so busy you can't make it by the office, please call to let them know you will be there.

### Golf tourney planned to help local student

Cambell Platt has been chosen to represent Okeechobee County and the United States as a student ambassador in England and France during the summer of 2012. He is a fifth grade honor roll student at OMS. The Okeechobee Golf and Country Club will be hosting a golf tournament Saturday, Feb. 11, at 8 a.m., to help raise his tuition. The format is a four-person scramble open to teams and individuals. The cost is \$50 per person/\$200 per team. The price includes golf, lunch and prizes. Green or Tee Sign sponsors are available for \$50. All proceeds will be used to pay for Cambell's tuition. You may sign up at the Okeechobee Golf and Country Club or contact Michael or Theresa Platt at 863-763-3941.

### Masonic Lodge to host breakfast

The Okeechobee Masonic Lodge will host Sunday breakfast on Feb. 12, from 8 until 11 a.m. at the Okeechobee Masonic Lodge, 107 NW 5th (Across from Flagler Park). A full breakfast of eggs, bacon, grits, pancakes, biscuits, gravy, juice and coffee for just \$6 for adults and kids 12 and under \$3. The public is welcome and carryouts are available. For more information, please call Fred Alger at 813-468-5128. Breakfasts are held every second and fourth Sunday. Proceeds to benefit Okeechobee youth programs.

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# County commissioners hesitant to accept grant

**By Pete Gawda**  
Okeechobee News

In a day when it seems that local governments are trying to secure all the grant money possible, Okeechobee County Commissioners seem hesitant to accept a grant from the Florida Department of Emergency Management. At their meeting on Thursday, Feb. 8, commissioners discussed at length accepting a \$4,000 grant before tabling the motion in order to receive more information. Public safety director Dave McCain explained that the grant was to be used to update emergency response plans as the result of lessons learned from an upcoming regional training exercise.

Commissioners noted that the grant would not be enough to hire a consultant to rewrite emergency response plans and that the county was not obligated to take the funds. County administrator Robbie Chartier stated that such grants would probably soon be discontinued and she was not convinced

accepting the grant would be a good idea. Commissioner Frank Irby noted that \$4,000 would not cover much. Commissioner Joey Hoover expressed concern that if the county took the grant, it might be spent for a project that would end up costing much more than \$4,000. Commissioners requested that emergency management director Mitch Smeikal present the commissioners with possible projects the grant could be used for and the cost of such projects.

Communications and information sharing within the fire/rescue department and between that department and the sheriff's office and city law enforcement and fire fighting will now be greatly improved due to the purchase of a Spillman Technologies software package for fire/rescue. The good news is that the \$74,795 cost comes from currently budgeted fire/rescue funds and will not require an increase in fire or EMT assessments. At a previous meeting commissioners approved purchase of the Spill-

man Technologies software package for the sheriff's office. The city has had the system for some time. This technology will allow the transmittal of patient information to EMT laptops while in route to the scene. It will also allow transmittal to vehicle laptops of critical fire fighting information such as building plans, hydrant locations and hazardous material information. The software can also track the location of responding vehicles, which Mr. McCain said could be a big help, especially when units are spread out at a brush fire. Necessary information would automatically be transferred to the computers of the sheriff's office and the city police and fire departments.

Turning to other business the board approved a proposal from Craig A. Smith & Associates for professional services for airport improvements, wetland mitigation permitting assistance and environmental services in the amount of \$26,340. They also approved a request for a change in zoning

from residential mixed, residential mobile home, and commercial to light commercial by Doris Entry who owns property at 3585 U.S. 441 N. The property, about 4.5 acres, is in the middle of a developed commercial area and is along an arterial highway. The owner requested the zoning change in order to accommodate the assembly and sale of storage sheds.

Commissioners also proclaimed the week of Feb. 19 - 25 to be National Engineer's Week in the county.

*Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [www.newszap.com](http://www.newszap.com). Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com.*

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## IRSC offers Chinese language classes

Beginning Feb. 17, Indian River State College will offer classes in Chinese, a language spoken by more people in the world than any other and a language becoming increasingly important in business and world affairs.

The beginner's course, Elementary Chinese I, CHI1120, will introduce participants to Mandarin Chinese and provide an understanding of the Chinese language, history and culture. Students will study the Chinese phonological system, practice basic conversation, learn vocabulary and grammar and how to read and write Chinese characters. Class time will incorporate listening, speaking, reading and writing, including enjoyable

exercises learning Chinese proverbs and practicing Chinese tongue-twisters. Students will also complete assignments online.

The course will be offered at the IRSC Public Safety Training Complex, Building 1, Room 106 on Fridays from Feb. 17 through May 1, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The Public Safety Training Complex is located at 4600 Kirby Loop Road, near the IRSC Main Campus in Fort Pierce.

Elementary Chinese II, CHI1121, will continue to build conversational, reading and writing skills. The course will be available through interactive live television at the IRSC Main Campus, Mueller Campus in Vero Beach, Chastain Campus in Stuart, and St.

Lucie West Campus in Port St. Lucie. It will meet on Fridays from 1:45 to 4:15 p.m. from Feb. 17 through May 1.

Registration is now underway. For more information, call the IRSC Information Call Center at 1-866-792-4772.

## METH

Continued From Page 1

Fort Meade; and Monda Reed-Gandy, 57, Valencia Blvd., Bartow.

All three were charged with the felony of trafficking in methamphetamine.

Wyatt-Pryor was also charged with the misdemeanor of possession of drug paraphernalia, and Freeworth was charged with the misdemeanor of driving while license suspended.

As of newspaper deadline, none of the women had gone before a first-appearance judge so no bond had been set. All three are being held in the Okeechobee County Jail.

"These people came all the way from another county to sell their dope here. It is our pleasure to arrest them in Okeechobee County," said Sheriff Paul May.

According to an arrest report by a task force detective, the confidential informant set up a deal with Freeworth to purchase 2 ounces of meth for \$1,800 an ounce.

The detective said the informant was giv-

en money to make the buy and was monitored visually and audibly.

When the women arrived at the pre-arranged site, Freeworth got out of her white Chevrolet truck and entered the informant's vehicle where she was allegedly paid \$3,600.

Once the informant had possession of the drugs, continued the report, detectives and street crimes deputies closed in on the truck. The detective said another gram of suspected meth was found in the truck and Wyatt-Pryor had a glass smoking pipe in her bra that contained some sort of residue.

The seized substance and the residue in the pipe were field tested and all indicated a positive result for the presence of methamphetamine, stated the detective's report.

The total weight of the suspected meth was 57.5 grams, added the report.

Freeworth is currently on probation for fleeing to elude a law enforcement officer and possession of a controlled substance (meth), stated the detective.

None of the women have any apparent ties to Okeechobee County.

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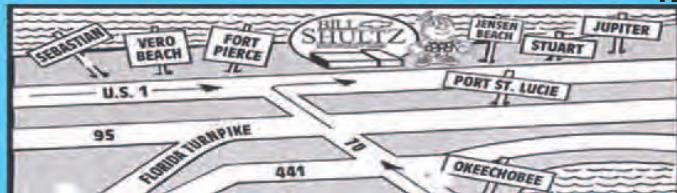
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Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

## Twenty years' service

At the Tuesday, Feb. 7 meeting of the Okeechobee City Council, Mayor James Kirk, right, honored Fire Chief Herb Smith for 20 years' service to the city.



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

## Buying gold

Gary Easmunt of THR & Associates displays some of the items his organization is buying. They will be at Holiday Inn Express, 3101 U. S. 441 S. from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. tomorrow buying coins, gold jewelry, dental gold or anything made of gold. They also buy silver, war items, toys, trains, dolls and other old items.



Special to the Okeechobee News/CES

## Students of the Week

Central Elementary Students of the Week for the week of Jan. 30 were: Mia Castillo, Anthony Mazzucco, Lizzette Escobar, Gaury Duran, Alondra Godinez, JoLee Hill, Selina Denova De Dios, Adam Marsden, Marco Flores, Karianna Sullivan, Hubert Jenkins, Kaliyan Blackmon, Jolina Moreno, Chase Ford, Samia Yamin, Princess Espinal, Aleah Pritchard, Jerett Butts, Anna San Martin, Lynndsy Johnson, Yuliana Licea, Noelia Martinez, Daisy Eunice, Jentry Griffin, Chance Crews, Enrique Garcia, Richard Ayala, Brook Whaley, Orlan Hagins and Rebekah Raulerson.

# Hospice needs volunteers

Hospice of Okeechobee is currently seeking caring individuals to provide volunteer services to our patients and families.

Some of the duties that our volunteers provide are sitting with a patient while their caregiver takes a break, running to the store, taking a walk, having lunch with a friend, or maybe a much-needed nap.

A one-year commitment is suggested, but the rewards are immeasurable.

If you want to truly make a difference, please call us at 863-467-2321.

### BIRTHDAY

#### TAMMY KAY



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Jonathon, and Jenna

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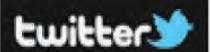
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# Best turnout brings in big fish at February tourney

**Photos by Pat Ziegler**

Special to the Okeechobee News

A beautiful Saturday morning brought out 60 boats for the Feb. 4, Christian Team Trails Fishing Tournament at Okee-Tantie - the largest turnout ever.

Huge fish were being pulled from Lake Okeechobee with the winners of the tourney taking both overall winner status and Big Fish. The big guy weighed in at 7.81 lbs and was brought in by Dick Myers and Brock Stanaland in boat #44. The two hauled in close to 23 lbs., of fish bringing them a big cash haul as well at \$1,560!

Second place winners John Hodgson and Mark Lundgren took home a split of the \$450 prize for their 21.63 lbs., at weigh-in.

Boaters in #51, Mark Hester and Chuck Stamm were the recipients of the \$300 prize

for their third place catch weighing in at 20.72 lbs.

Second place Big Fish went to boaters Larry Steele and Don Jarriel in #16. They were awarded \$240 for their 6.86 lb., bass at weigh-in.

Other cash awards were presented prizes for fourth, fifth and sixth places. Each team received \$150. Seventh and eighth place winners took split of \$120 and teams finishing ninth through 12th place, they shared \$90 each.

Special mention goes to Matt Smith whose 6.81 lb., bass tied for third place Big Fish!

During weigh-in boaters, family and friends enjoyed hot dogs and soft drinks. Some boaters at the tourney were winners in prize drawings of donated items by various businesses in Okeechobee.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Pat Ziegler  
Pastor John Garrison presents a check for \$1,560 to big winners Dick Myers and Brock Stanaland. They took first place overall and Big Fish prizes.



Second place Big Fish winners Larry Steele and Don Jarriel received a cash prize of \$240 for their 6.86 lb., bass after weigh-in presented by Pastor John Garrison.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Pat Ziegler

Third place winners at the Feb. 4, Christian Team Trails Fishing Tourney with a total of 20.72 lbs. at weigh-in were boaters, Mark Hester and Chuck Stamm. The boat #51 team was awarded a cash prize after weigh-in of \$300. Their largest single catch weighed 6.33 lbs.



Second place Big Fish winners Larry Steele and Don Jarriel received a cash prize of \$240 for their 6.86 lb., bass after weigh-in presented by Pastor John Garrison.



Dick Myers, on the first place team with Brock Stanaland shows off the prize-winning catch including the tourney's Big Fish weighing 7.81 lbs.



Boaters, John Hodgson and Mark Lundgren brought in 21.63 lbs., earning them a second place spot and a cash prize.



A very proud young fisherman, Matt Smith, 11 displays his 6.81 lb. Big Fish reeled in earning him a third place tie honorable mention along with boaters Don Van Dyke and Rick Buntenbach.

# HUDDLESTON

Continued From Page 1

sentenced him to 15 years on each charge, with the sentences to run concurrently. He will get credit for the 242 days he has already served in jail.

The former Yearling Middle School teacher and girls basketball coach was arrested May 5, 2011, after his wife took photos of him sleeping with a 12-year-old girl who was nude from the waist up.

Huddleston and his wife Mary were in the process of adopting the girl, even though the biological father and mother are living in Okeechobee County.

The jury, made up of three men and three women, heard testimony during the two-day trial how on that May evening Mary left the couple's home to take a walk. After finishing the dinner dishes, Joel then went to the girl's room and asked if she wanted to watch some sports on the new flat screen TV he had purchased for her bedroom.

As they sat on the girl's canopy bed, he began to rub her back. Then, saying they were in the way, he took off the girl's shirt and bra and continued to rub her back. Sometime thereafter, they fell asleep.

When Mary returned from her walk she couldn't find her husband and the girl. When she tried to open the door to the girl's bedroom, she found it was locked. Using a hair pin, Mary unlocked the door to see her husband and the girl fast asleep. She said

## 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).**

• Melissa Octavia Smith, 29, 23rd Place S.W., Vero Beach, was arrested Feb. 6 by Detective Javier Gonzalez on felony charges of aggravated stalking and aggravated assault. She was also arrested on a misdemeanor charge of driving while license revoked. Her bond was set at \$10,500.

• Eric Daniel Vargas, 14, N.E. 11th Lane, Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7 by Detective Javier Gonzalez on a felony charge of burglary and a misdemeanor charge of petit theft. He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail then released into the custody of a parent.

• Anibal Martinez, 13, N.E. 11th Lane, Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7 by Detective Javier Gonzalez on a felony charge of burglary and a misdemeanor charge of petit theft. He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail then released into the custody of a parent.

• Willie Mack, 63, Center St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7 by Deputy Justin Akins on a charge of aggravated assault. He was released on his own recognizance.

the only clothing the child had on were her panties.

"I was pretty much in shock," she told the jury from the witness stand, adding that they "were sleeping pretty deep."

She then grabbed up her cell phone and took pictures of Joel and the girl. Those photos showed the nearly-nude girl in a fetal position with her back toward Joel, who had his arm under her body and across her breasts.

The next day, after speaking with her minister, she took the photos to the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO).

"I knew I needed something to take to the cops," she told Mr. Albright during his direct examination, later adding that she knew she needed evidence.

Joel and Mary were wed in 2004 and moved to Florida from their home state of Tennessee when they "got the call to minister in Florida." They eventually settled in Okeechobee.

During her time on the stand Mary said Joel was wanting children but she wasn't ready to take care of a baby. Because of that, they started talking about adopting an older child. It just so happened that Joel already had one in mind.

The girl, one of five children born to a dairy worker and his wife, did not like living in the small dairy home and sharing a room with her siblings. When Joel began lavishing his attention on her and buying her things, she was ready to be adopted.

"It was a pretty weird thing—her asking me to live with them," testified the girl's mother. "I guess Mr. Huddleston promised her a better education than we could. It was a hard thing to do."

She and her husband both testified that Huddleston brought them papers to sign.

They later learned that by signing those papers they signed away their parental rights to their daughter. Through an interpreter, the girl's father said he thought they were signing a medical release so the Huddlestons could take their daughter to the doctor if needed.

"Her father didn't know his (Joel) intent was to move her to Tennessee and away from all of this," Mr. Albright told the jury in his closing argument. "He is not a normal parental figure because he's obsessed with a 12-year-old girl."

He went on to say that Joel was obsessed with the child and would communicate with her on Facebook while he was at his parents' home in Oak Ridge, Tenn. He returned to Tennessee after being released on bond from the Okeechobee County Jail.

After learning of the postings between Joel and the girl, OCSO Detective William Suggs got a warrant for the man's arrest on

a charge of tampering with a witness.

In one of those Facebook postings, he tells the girl: "We have the greatest love that ever existed. If only we could sew ourselves together like Siamese twins."

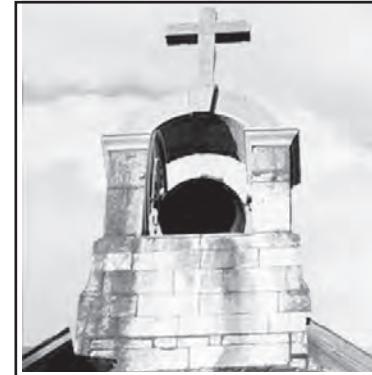
In another posting, he said: "You could say she (Mary) pulled your shirt off. If they talk about your shirt coming off again, put it all on the evil witch (Mary)."

When Mary addressed the judge Thursday prior to her husband's sentencing, she said she will never be able to trust people again.

"I feel like my life will be affected forever," she said. "I don't see any evidence he feels any remorse for the impact on me or anyone else."

When she spoke her husband showed no emotion as he sat at the defense table in his orange and white county jail jump suit, which will soon change to a state-issued jump suit.

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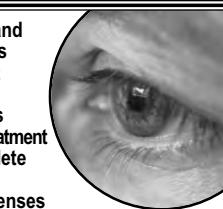
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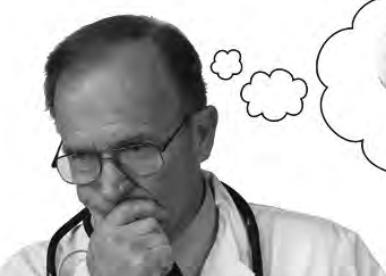
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# OHS tennis team shuts out Westwood

**By Charles M. Murphy**

Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee High School Brahman tennis teams dominated play Wednesday as they opened their season with a shutout victory over the Fort Pierce Westwood Panthers in Okeechobee.

It was so dominating that Okeechobee didn't drop more than two games in any of the singles matches.

For the boys Otto Ramirez began his high

school career in top form with a 6-1 and 6-1 victory over Alex Kee. Cody Walker defeated Jonathan Wright in straight sets 6-1 and 6-1. Lucas Penido defeated Colton Wright in a shutout 6-0 and 6-0. Both Colt Root and Irfan Chaudhary won their matches by default.

In doubles play the team of Root and Chaudhary defeated Kee and Wright 8-3.

On the girl's side, Samantha Rivero got her season off to a strong start with a shutout victory over Mary Kate Hoffman 6-0 and

6-0. Jenna Rath defeated Tramira Lewis 6-0 and 6-0. Vanessa Watt defeated Dominique Diago in the third seed singles match 6-0 and 6-0. Jessica Luna and Dayla Ferneau won their matches by forfeit.

In doubles play the team of Luna and Ferneau defeated Hoffman and Lewis 8-1 and the second doubles team of Alley Lopez and Kayla Orr won by default.

The tennis teams travel to Avon Park on Monday. The next home match is Feb. 28.

**Public Notice**

**Public Notice**

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE PERMIT

The Department of Environmental Protection gives notice that a Draft Permit (Permit Number 0040842-028-UO) has been prepared for Mr. Timothy B. Hawkins, Vice President of the Okeechobee Landfill, Inc., 10800 Northeast 128th Avenue, Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida, 34973. The draft permit is for the operation of one Class I Injection Well, IW-1, with associated dual zone monitoring well, MW-1. The injection well and associated dual zone monitoring well is located at the Okeechobee Landfill, Inc., 10800 Northeast 128th Avenue, Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida, 34973. The Operational Permit application (0040842-028-UO) was deemed complete on November 3, 2011.

Under the proposed permit, the purpose of the injection well will be for the disposal and monitoring primarily of non-hazardous landfill generated leachate concentrate that will be collected from an on-site leachate collection system generated from the Okeechobee Landfill. Future waste streams may be approved for injection if they are compatible with the on-site leachate, the well construction, and the injection and confining zones.

During the routine operation, the injection well will be used to inject up to a flow rate of 7.79 feet per second or 3.16 million gallons per day (MGD) (peak hour flow). The injection well is constructed with a 10.72-inch inside diameter (ID), 0.54-inch thick fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) tubing installed within a 16-inch outside diameter (OD), 0.500-inch thick final steel casing. The completed design includes a packer and a fluid filled annulus between the final casing and the tubing. The center point of the packer is set to a depth of 2,709 feet below land surface (bls); the tubing extends to 2,737 feet bls. The injection well injects through an open-hole interval between 2,723 feet (the base of the 16-inch final steel casing) and the total depth of the well at 3,150 feet BLS. The open-hole (injection) interval is in the "Boulder Zone," within the lower Oldsmar Formation.

The confinement of the injection zone from the overlying underground source of drinking water (USDW) aquifer and fluid movement adjacent to the wellbore of the injection well are monitored by the dual zone monitoring well, MW-1. Monitoring intervals in the MW-1 are 1,790 to 1,830 feet bls (upper monitoring interval) and 1,960 to 2,000 feet bls (lower monitoring interval). The injection well MW-1 is part of the industrial injection system for the injection of nonhazardous industrial wastewater. The injection well fluids consist of the following: OLI landfill leachate, monitor well sampling purge water and compost facility wastewater. For additional waste streams, a written request must be made for approval by the Department.

The Department has permitting jurisdiction under Chapter 403 of the Florida Statutes and Chapters 62-42, 62-520, 62-528, 62-550, 62-600 and 6260 of the Florida Administrative Code. The project is not exempt from permitting procedures. The Department has determined that a construction and testing permit is required for the proposed work.

The Department will issue the Permit with the attached conditions unless a timely petition for an administrative hearing is filed under Sections 120.569 and 120.57 of the Florida Statutes before the deadline for filing a petition. The procedures for petitioning for a hearing are set forth below. A person whose substantial interests are affected by the Department's proposed permitting decision may petition for an administrative proceeding (hearing) under Sections 120.569 and 120.57 of the Florida Statutes. The petition must contain the information set forth below and must be filed (received) in the Office of General Counsel of the Department at 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station 35, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-3000.

Petitions filed by any other persons other than those entitled to written notice under Section 120.60(3) of the Florida Statutes must be filed within fourteen days of publication of the public notice or receipt of the written notice, whichever occurs first. The petitioner shall mail a copy of the petition to the applicant at the address indicated above at the time of filing. The failure of any person to file a petition within the appropriate time period shall constitute a waiver of that person's right to request an administrative determination (hearing) under Sections 120.569 and 120.57 of the Florida Statutes, or to intervene in this proceeding and participate as a party to it. Any subsequent intervention (in a proceeding initiated by another party) will only be at the discretion of the presiding officer upon the filing of a motion in compliance with Rule 28-106.205 of the Florida Administrative Code. A petition that disputes the material facts on which the Department's action is based must contain the following information: (a) The name, address, and telephone number of each petitioner; the name, address, and telephone number of the petitioner's representative, if any; each the Department case or identification number and the county in which the subject matter or activity is located; (b) a statement of when and how each petitioner received notice of the Department action; (c) a statement of how each petitioner's substantial interests are affected by the Department action; (d) a statement of all disputed issues of material fact. If there are none, the petition must so indicate; (e) a statement of facts that the petitioner contends warrant reversal or modification of the Department action; (f) a concise statement of the ultimate facts alleged, as well as the rules and statutes which entitle the petitioner to relief and (g) demand for relief (sought by the petitioner, stating precisely the action that the petitioner wants the Department to take). A petition that does not dispute the material facts on which the Department's action is based shall state that no such facts are in dispute and otherwise contain the same information as set forth above, as required by Rule 28-106.301.

Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means that the Department final action may be different from the position taken by it in this notice. Persons whose substantial interests will be affected by any such final decision of the Department on the petitions have the right to petition to become a party to the proceeding, in accordance with the requirements set forth above. Mediation is not available for this proceeding.

A party to this order has the right to seek judicial review of it under Section 120.68 of the Florida Statutes, by filing a notice of appeal under Rule 9.110 of the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure with the clerk of the Department in the Office of General Counsel, Mail Station 35, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000, and by filing a copy of the notice of appeal accompanied by the applicable filing fees with the appropriate district court of appeal. The notice must be filed within thirty days after this order is filed with the clerk of the Department.

The Draft Permit is available for public inspection during normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, at the Department of Environmental Protection, Southeast District Office, 400 North Congress Avenue, West Palm Beach, Florida 33401. Additional information concerning this project may be obtained by contacting J. Gardner Strasser, P.G., or Joseph R. May, P.G., of this office at (561) 681-6688 or (561) 681-6691, respectively. 409839 ON 2/10/2012



Special to the Okeechobee News/Julie Rogers

**Allyson Trimble and Makenzie Tomlinson compete in Team Roping.**

## Rodeo team works towards finals

**By Julie Rogers**

Special to the Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee High School Rodeo Team has been working hard. They have completed 14 of the 22 rodeos scheduled this season. Many of the Okeechobee competitors are in the running to be able to compete at the State Finals. The State Finals consist of the top 15 student athletes of each event. The State Finals will be held at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center on May 3, 4, 5, and 6. After that, the top four of each event will travel to compete at the National High School Rodeo Association in Wyoming on July 15-21.

After the Bunnell rodeo, the current State standings are as follows:

Dalton Boney is in 5th place for Tie Down Roping and 13th place for Team Roping (Header).

Austen Holmes is in 7th place for Bull Riding.

Josh Keese is in 8th place for Steer Wrestling.

Justin Mills is in first place for Bareback Riding, second place for Saddlebronc Riding, second place for Bull Riding, and in third place for being the Boys All Around Cowboy.

Jerrod Sparks is in 11th place for Team Roping (Header).

Josie Stratton is in 16th place for Barrel Racing.

Nat Stratton is in 1st place for Saddlebronc Riding, 10th place for Team Roping

(Healer), 13th place for Tie Down Roping, and in 6th place for being the Boys All Around Cowboy.

Acealyn Youngblood is in 14th place for Barrel Racing.

The rest of the season schedule is:

- Feb. 17-18, Ocala;
- March 3-4, Williston;
- March 24-25, Okeechobee;
- April 14-15, Kissimmee;
- May 3, 4, 5, and 6, Okeechobee (state finals).

The public is invited to attend any of these rodeos to help support and cheer on these hard working young men and women.



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## **Sports News in Brief**

**By Charles M. Murphy**

## Okeechobee News

- The Brahman baseball staff was encouraged by many of the player's performance Friday in their first competition of the year, the annual Purple White scrimmage. Coach Jeff Blackstone said Tyler Barber pitched two shutout innings and Timothy Farrell added a strong performance on the mound. He also praised JV pitchers Michael Daniel and Ethan Revels for excellent performances. At the plate, Barber had three hits including a double. Trenton Hickman had three hits for the junior varsity which included a double. "We also saw that we have a lot of room for improvement still with execution both defensively and with base running," he said. There was also a large turnout of fans and parents for the scrimmage. This week the Brahmans host their annual preseason classic. John Carroll played North Port last night. Friday night the Brahmans face Glades Day at 6 pm and there is a double header on Saturday with John Carroll against Glades Day at 1 p.m. and Okeechobee versus North Port at 4 p.m.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy  
**Layton Thomas slides in during a pick-off throw during the Brahman Purple White Scrimmage on Friday at OHS. Michael Daniel handled the pickoff throw.**



**Junior Varsity** first basemen Michael Daniel gets a foul pop off the bat of Alex Estremera during the first inning of the Purple White game Friday. The varsity won the game, 7-5.

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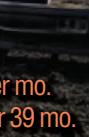
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# Plays, concerts and more ...

## Dinner and *Brigadoon*

BELLE GLADE—On Thursday, Feb. 16, the Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center will present dinner and the theatre. From 5 to 7 p.m., sample all of your favorites at this traditional covered dish dinner which will feature food prepared by the finest cooks in the Glades. At 7:30 p.m. the musical “*Brigadoon*,” will be presented. In the play, a mysterious Scottish village appears for only one day every hundred years. Two American tourists, lost in the Scottish Highlands, stumble upon the village just as a wedding is about to be celebrated and their arrival has serious implications for the village’s inhabitants. Tickets for the dinner and for *Brigadoon* are sold separately. For more information, contact the Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center, 561-993-1160, or see their web site at [www.dollyhand.org](http://www.dollyhand.org).



## *Anything Goes*

FORT PIERCE—The McAlpin Fine Arts Theatre at Indian River State College in Fort Pierce will present the musical “*Anything Goes*” on Feb. 9 and 10, 16 and 17 at 8 p.m. and on Feb. 11 and 18, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce. Music and lyrics are by Cole Porter. Enjoy an amusing “Boy-Meets-Girl” story wrapped around one of Cole Porter’s memorable scores. Songs include: It’s De-Lovely, Friendship, All Through The Night. Romances are sorted out and disaster is averted aboard the S.S. American—the magical ship where Anything Goes! For tickets, call 1-800-220-9915.

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be filled with power struggles, star-crossed lovers, sprites, kings, queens, princesses, sword-play, rhyming couplets, asides, insults, persons in disguise and all that we’ve come to expect from the pen of the Great Bard. Since nothing is planned-out, rehearsed, or written, each play is entirely new. For more information, contact the Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center, 561-993-1160, or see their web site at [www.dollyhand.org](http://www.dollyhand.org).

## The Diary of Anne Frank

OKECHOBEE—The Okeechobee Community Theatre wraps up its 33rd season with this play which won both a Pulitzer Prize for literature and a Tony Award for Best Play. It is the true story of the attempt by two Jewish families to escape the Nazi tyranny in occupied Amsterdam during World War II, based on entries in a diary begun by Anne Frank when she was just thirteen. Besides the obvious tension, the account also includes light-hearted moments, and the beginnings of young love. It is a gripping evening of theatre which is suitable for all ages. Performances are scheduled for March 2, 3, 9 and 10 at 8 p.m. at the theatre on the Okeechobee Freshman Campus, S.W. Second Ave. at Seventh Street, one block west of Golden Corral Restaurant. Advance reserved seat tickets will be on sale beginning Monday, Feb. 13, at 111 N.E. Second Street in Okeechobee. For more information, call 863-763-1307.



## The Bronx Wanderers

BELLE GLADE—Starting out in the Bronx as a family tribute band, The Bronx Wanderers exploded onto the scene in 2008, amassing a loyal following that included celebrities such as Chazz Palminteri, Danny Aiello and Dion DiMucci. On an avenue in the Bronx back in the ’50s and early ’60s, one could hear the liberating sound of doo-wop and rock and roll. The music had heart, soul, purity, and a sound that made you want to dance, harmonies that made you feel good, and lyrics that once in a while even made you cry. The Bronx Wanderers will perform at the Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center on Thursday, Feb. 23, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 561-993-1160, or see their web site at [www.dollyhand.org](http://www.dollyhand.org).



## Hooray for Hollywood

LaBELLE—The Firehouse Community Theatre, 241 North Bridge Street in LaBelle, will present “Hooray for Hollywood: a Musical Revue” on March 2, 3, 4 and March 9, 10 and 11. Productions are Friday and Saturday nights at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Patrons are asked to arrive approximately 30 minutes before curtain time. Produced and directed by Nick Fidanza, the show will feature Firehouse Singers performing the legendary tunes of Hollywood. For tickets or more information call 863-675-3066, email [info@firehousecommunitytheatre.com](mailto:info@firehousecommunitytheatre.com) or go online to [www.firehouseculturalcenterl.com](http://www.firehouseculturalcenterl.com).

## Boston brass, Fanfares!

FORT PIERCE—Boston Brass will introduce its “Fanfares!” project with an original composition on Monday, Feb. 27, at the McAlpin Fine Arts Center at Indian River State College, 3209 Virginia Avenue in Fort Pierce, as part of the IRSC Performing Arts Series. The reception starts at 6:30 p.m.; the show starts at 7:30 p.m. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-220-9915 or visiting the McAlpin Fine Arts Center Box Office.

## February Calendar of Events:



- Feb. 9 - Crooked Hook RV Outing 9 a.m.
- Feb. 12 - Couples Play for 1 round get 1 free Valentine Day Promotion Special
- Feb. 13 - Play all day - Members \$18, Non-Members for \$25
- Feb. 14 - Ladies Golf Assn. 8 a.m. Valentine Day Promotion Ladies 1/2 Price Golf
- Feb. 16 - Twilight Thu Scramble event 4 p.m.
- Feb. 18 - Buy over \$100 in Pro Shop get Free Cart Fees Promotion
- Feb. 19 - Buy over \$100 in Pro Shop get Free Cart Fees Promotion
- Feb. 20 - Play all day - Members \$18, Non-Members for \$25
- Feb. 21 - Ladies Golf Assn. 8 a.m.
- Feb. 23 - Crooked Hook RV Outing 9 a.m., Golf Course Public Meeting 6 p.m.
- Feb. 25 - Third Annual Susan G. Komen Golf Tournament 9 a.m. (Course Closed)
- Feb. 26 - Buy over \$100 in Pro Shop get Free Cart Fees Promotion
- Feb. 28 - Play all day - Members \$18, Non-Members for \$25, Ladies Golf Assn. 8 a.m., Taylor Made Demo Day 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free

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# Win 'Fat Tuesday Cash' to celebrate Mardi Gras every Tuesday in February

**Giveaway of a 2012 Chevy Equinox LTZ Crossover set for Feb. 29**

**BRIGHTON SEMINOLE RESERVATION**—In honor of Mardi Gras, the Seminole Casino Brighton will be giving away \$5,000 every Tuesday in February from 4 to 8 p.m. as part of its "Fat Tuesday Cash Drawings." Also on Tuesdays, visitors 55 and older will get a free bag lunch, while supplies last. The free bag lunch offer is open to new or returning Players Club members.

The casino will also give away a 2012 Chevy Equinox LTZ Crossover on Feb. 29. More casino play during February means more chances to win the new car.

"President's Day Hot Seat Drawings" will help to celebrate President's Day at the Brighton casino on Monday, Feb. 20, from 1 to 11 p.m. with \$2,500 in free play to be awarded.

On Fridays during February, "Sit & Go" slot tournaments will offer players

a share of \$10,000. Fridays also mean free bingo at 3 p.m., with players vying for a share of \$1000 in free play. The casino offers Matinee Bingo sessions every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 11:45 a.m. with bingo packs available for \$18 and \$28.

**About Seminole Casino Brighton:** Seminole Casino Brighton is a 27,000-square-foot casino with 405-slot and gaming machines, a seven-table poker room, high-stakes bingo seats, a full service restaurant and lounge. Its warm and friendly staff, ultra-modern air-conditioning system, clean atmosphere and rewarding casino promotions are a welcome alternative to big city gaming. The casino also recently opened a new area with 30 slots for those who prefer to play slot machines in a smoke-free environment.

The Seminole Casino Brighton is located on the Brighton Seminole Reservation, 17735 Reservation Road, in Glades County (off State Road 721). For more information, call toll-free 800-360-9875 or 863-467-9998; or visit [www.seminolebrightoncasino.com](http://www.seminolebrightoncasino.com).



Special to G.O./Brighton Seminole Casino

**The poker players at table number three at the Brighton Seminole Casino on Jan. 24 split a \$15,705.50 jackpot -- the first "Bad Beat" jackpot ever awarded at the casino.**

## Bad Beat Jackpot hit for first time at Brighton

**BRIGHTON SEMINOLE CASINO**—Number three was one happy table of poker players at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 24 in Seminole Casino Brighton. That's because the Bad Beat Jackpot was hit for the first time, awarding the table \$15,705.50.

John R. of Sebring won \$7,852.75 with his "losing" hand of aces full of kings, beaten by Brian G. of Clewiston, who took home \$4,711.65 with four of a kind queens. The seven remaining players at the table won \$448.72 each.

A bad beat jackpot occurs when a seemingly unbeatable hand of aces full of kings loses to an even better hand. Once it's won, the jackpot immediately resets at \$1,000.

The Seminole Casinos approach to

larger, more frequent bad beat jackpots has now paid players a total of \$7,291,875 in 32 jackpots since it began in December 2009.

The Seminole Casinos' approach to larger, more frequent bad beat jackpots is funded by a \$2 contribution from each pot of \$10 or greater at the poker rooms in six Seminole casinos: Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, Seminole Casino Immokalee, Seminole Casino Brighton, and Seminole Casino Hollywood. Fifty percent of the Seminole Bad Beat prize pool is awarded to the qualifying losing hand; 30 percent to the qualifying winning; and 20 percent divided among the remaining players.

**CROSSOVER**

**CROSSING**

\* May not accurately represent vehicle won.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2012**

**8PM**

**EARN ENTRIES DAILY AND WIN A NEW 2012 CHEVY EQUINOX LTZ!**

**NEW MEMBERS GET \$50 FREE PLAY AND \$10 FOOD CREDIT WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR A PLAYER'S CLUB WILD CARD!**

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**Code: BNM12020N • Valid 7 days a week**

**Expires: 2/29/12**

\*Must bring coupon. Cannot be combined with bus offers. Must be a NEW Player's Club Member  
(Must not be a member in any Seminole or Hard Rock Casino in Florida Player's Club)

Limit one coupon per person. Must be a NEW Player's Club Member (must not be a member in any Seminole or Hard Rock Casino in Florida Player's Club), membership is free to all 21 or over. No purchase necessary. Approved ID will be required for redemption. All offers are subject to availability. Non-negotiable, non-transferable, cannot be combined with any other offer and must be redeemed in person at Seminole Casino Brighton. No cash value. No un-used credit will be returned. Only valid for food service in the Josiah Restaurant. Alcohol not included. Dine-in only, may not be used towards To-Go items. Seminole Casino Brighton is not responsible for lost or stolen coupons and reserves the right to change or cancel this offer without notice. Seminole Casino Brighton employees are not eligible. Alteration or unauthorized use voids this offer. No reproductions allowed. Player's Club members who have been trespassed or banned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida or who have opted into the self exclusion program are not eligible. Management reserves the right to cancel or change the offer at any time based on operational and/or business concern. Other restrictions may apply. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call 1.888.ADMIT-IT.

## NEW NON-SMOKING SLOT AREA!

Highway 721 west of Lake Okeechobee on the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation

**17735 Reservation Road  
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**1.800.360.9875**  
[seminolebrightoncasino.com](http://seminolebrightoncasino.com)

GAMBLE WITH CARE



# Discover South Florida ... on horseback

**F**or a great way to explore the Florida outdoors, consider trail riding in south Florida parks and public lands. Many area parks have equestrian trails and facilities. Some even offer opportunities for overnight camping with horses.

If you don't own a horse, one public area—Frederick Douglas Park in St. Lucie County—has guided horseback tours on the beach. For visitors who need guidance and instruction, trained horses and a tour guide are provided. Scenic beach tours are available on most weekends. Rides on weekdays are possible by special arrangement. Wooded trail rides are also available during the week. Reservations should be made in advance by calling 772-468-0101. For more information visit [www.beachtoursonhorseback.com](http://www.beachtoursonhorseback.com). (The cover photo of this section was taken at Frederick Douglas Park.)

Horseback tours are also available at Forever Florida in Kenansville, about one hour north of Okeechobee. Forever Florida boasts historic trails first used for horseback riding by Native Americans back in the 1500s. Enjoy a one and a half hour adventure through the 4700 acre wildlife conservation area which covers nine distinct Florida ecosystems. Horseback safaris are available daily and can be arranged for riders with varying levels of experience. Horses are matched to each individual's personality and level of riding experience so first-timers are welcome. For more information online see [www.ForeverFlorida.com](http://www.ForeverFlorida.com).

In Okeechobee County, Wagon Wheel Horse Farm offers riding lessons, pony rides, trail rides and overnight camping. For information, call 863-634-6397 or go online to [www.wagonwheelhorsefarm.com](http://www.wagonwheelhorsefarm.com).

In Glades County, American Horse Trails in Muse offers riding lessons, guided trail rides and private parties. For more information, call 877-888-7714 or go online to [www.americanhorsetrails.us](http://www.americanhorsetrails.us).



Courtesy photo/Forever Florida  
Forever Florida offers guided tours on trails that were ridden by Native Americans back in the 1500s. The 4,700 wildlife conservation area is about an hour north of Okeechobee.



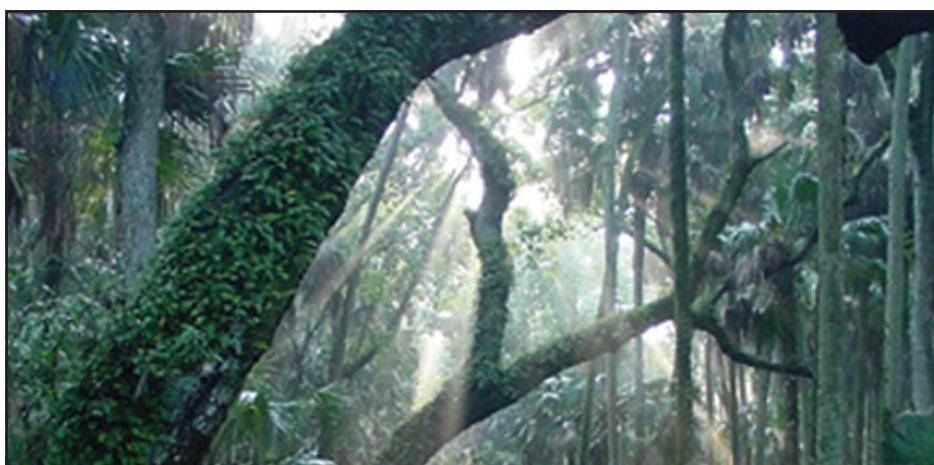
File photo/Going Out  
**Florida's public lands provide a variety of terrains for horseback riding. Many Florida parks have equestrian trails and some even offer equestrian camping facilities.**

Horseback riding is encouraged on many public lands throughout South Florida.

- **Highlands Hammock State Park:** One of Florida's oldest parks, opening to the public in 1931, this park was established when local citizens came together to promote the hammock as a candidate for national park status. During the Great Depression, just prior to World War II, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) developed additional park facilities and the beginnings of a botanical garden. Highlands Hammock offers a full-facility campground, as well as a youth/group tent campground. Visitors can ride horses along 11 miles of firelane trails through remote natural areas. Sur-

prise White-tailed deer, bobcats, and other wildlife as you quietly plod along in the silence. Rest rooms are located a short drive away, self-contained units and generators are welcome in this area. There is room for trailer parking at this area, tie outs and water trough are provided. The park is located at 5931 Hammock Road, Sebring. For more information, call 863-386-6094, or go online to <http://floridastateparks.org/highlands-hammock/>.

- **Jonathan Dickinson State Park:** Located just south of Stuart, this park teems with wildlife in 13 natural communities, including sand pine scrub, pine flatwoods, mangroves, and river swamps. The Loxahatchee River, Flori-



Courtesy photo/ Highlands Hammock State Park  
**Highlands Hammock State Park is one of the state's oldest parks and it offers some remarkable scenery.**

da's first federally designated Wild and Scenic River, runs through the park. The park also offers two full-facility campgrounds and a youth/group primitive campground. Eight miles of multi-use trails start at the Eagles View area, available for horseback riding, hiking and off-road bicycling. Trail maps are available at the ranger station. A five-site, full-facility campground is available for those wishing to camp with their horses. Horses must be tethered overnight to the tieout posts provided, or confined in sturdy portable pens. Portable electric fencing or hobbling is not permitted. The park is located at 16450 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound. For information, call 772-546-2771 or go online to <http://www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/default.cfm>.

- **Savannas Preserve State Park:** Freshwater marshes, or 'savannas,' once extended all along Florida's southeast coast. Stretching more than 10 miles from Ft. Pierce to Jensen Beach, this preserve is the largest and most intact remnant of Florida's east coast savannas. There are over 8.5 miles of multi-use trails available to park visitors and group tours. There is a designated equestrian area for those who trailer their horses to the trails. For additional information and equestrian gate combinations please contact the Education Center (Thursday through Monday) at 772-398-2779 or the Park Office at 772-340-7530. The park is located at 2541 Walton Road, Port St. Lucie. For more information, go online to <http://www.floridastateparks.org/savannas/default.cfm>.

See HORSES — Page 5



Courtesy photo/ Savannas Preserve State Park  
**Great blue herons are among the many types of birds often seen at Savannas Preserve State Park .**

## Tips for the trail ...

• Florida law requires that horse owners carry a copy of the current negative Coggins test for each horse whenever they take their horses off their private property. State parks require the owners show proof of the current Coggins any time a horse is brought into a park. It takes about a week to get the test back from the lab after a veterinarian draws the blood, so check to make sure all Coggins are current before planning a trail ride. An annual Coggins test is required by the State of Florida to prevent the spread of Equine Infectious Anemia.

• State law requires that riders under the age of 16 wear riding helmets while on public land.

• While some parks have access to water, some do not. Check in advance. If the park does not provide water, bring water for your horses. Many horse owners routinely bring their own water because water from different areas may taste different due to differences in

mineral content, and some horses will not drink the water if it does not "smell right." Some riders carry a flavoring such as Gatorade to put in the water.

• In some parks, hikers, bicyclists and equestrians share the same trails. Riders should show courtesy to others on the trail.

• Even the most experienced rider on the calmest horse can have an unexpected problem when horseback riding. Don't ride alone. Carry a cell phone for emergencies, but turn it off or put it on vibrate so that it does not spook your horse or another rider's horse. Some trails may take you out of cell phone service areas. Before you go trail riding, tell someone where you are going, where you will park your trailer and when you should be back.

• Leave gates as you find them. If you open a gate, close it behind you.

• Carry out and dispose of all litter properly. Leave the trail, parking lot and camping areas as you find them.



**South Hutchinson Island is one of the few places in Florida that you can ride horses on the beach. If you want to bring your own horse, you will need to obtain a special permit in advance.**

## Florida Cracker Trail ride challenges horses and riders

Equestrians who want a real challenge can keep history alive by riding the Florida Cracker Trail. The annual 110 mile ride traces the trails ridden by the Florida Cracker Cow Hunters as they took their herds to market. The ride is held the last week in February each year. It begins at a site just east of Bradenton, Fla. and ends in Fort Pierce, traveling an average of 15 miles a day. Riders may ride as many days as they wish, or may elect to ride in the mornings only.

Membership in the Florida Cracker Trail Association is required for all who wish to participate in the ride. The mission statement of the association explains: "Dedicated to Keeping History Alive," by educating through demonstration, the Old Florida Cracker Pioneer ways of agriculture, animal husbandry, respect for the land as well as the hardships and joys of life on the original frontier. The ride serves to preserve the

importance of the role of the State of Florida in the introduction of horses and cattle by the Spanish Explorers into the New World and the birth and continuance of the cattle and horse industries by its future settlers and their descendants and to support related causes. On Nov. 20, 2000, the Florida Cracker Trail was selected as a Community Millennium Trail. Millennium Trails is a partnership between the White House Millennium Council, the Department of Transportation, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the National Endowment for the Arts and other public agencies and private organizations. The goal of Millennium Trails is the creation of a nationwide network of trails that protect natural environment, interpret history and culture, and enhance alternative transportation, recreation and tourism."

For more information online go to [www.crackertrail.org](http://www.crackertrail.org).

## HORSES

Continued From Page 4

• **Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park:** This 54,000 acre preserve protects one of the largest remaining stretches of Florida dry prairie, home to an array of endangered plants and animals. For overnight stays, the preserve has two full-facility campground loops: family and an equestrian campground with paddocks. Kilpatrick Hammock Campground offers Equestrian Camping with 50 amp electrical service and water at each site. One paddock is provided for each campsite. Water is provided in the south western-most paddocks and a central community water source is located near the kiosk at the entry to this camp loop. A composting toilet is provided in this camp loop for campers' convenience. Equestrian campers also have access to the bathhouse in the family camp loop. Pets are allowed overnight in the campground, must be on a 6 foot hand held lease and well behaved at all times. Riding the trails at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park on horseback is one of the best ways to see the real Florida. With more than 100 miles of two-trail roads, horseback riders are apt to see an abundance of wildlife. The trails take you through dry prairie, moist wetlands and cool, shady hammocks. The park is located at 33104 N.W. 192nd Avenue, Okeechobee. For more information, call 863-462-5360 or go online to <http://www.floridastateparks.org/kissimmee-prairie/default.cfm>.

• **Hutchinson Island:** Hutchinson Island is one of the few places in Florida that allows horses on the beach and St. Lucie County's best-known asset is its spectacularly beautiful barrier islands, boasting 21 miles of bleached white beaches edging a cobalt-blue ocean and lined with sabal palms. If you are interested in riding your own horse or horses on St. Lucie County beaches, you must purchase a riding permit prior to participating in the activity. Permit holders must also schedule riding days at least 48 hours in advance as the number of horses allowed on the beach per day is limited. Individual permit holders are not permitted to accept money or charge participants to ride horses on their permit. All permit holders will be issued a gate key which will provide access to the designated vehicle and horse trailer parking for permit holders only. For more information online, go to <http://www.stlucieco.gov/tdc/Horseback.htm>.

• **DuPuis Wildlife and Environment Area:** Managed by the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Wildlife Commission, the John G. and Susan H. DuPuis, Jr. WEA consists of nearly 22,000 acres in northwestern Palm Beach and southwestern Martin



Courtesy Photo/Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

**Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park is a great place to view Florida wildlife.**

counties and adjoins the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area to the east. A visitor center is located at Gate 5 on SR 76. This property was formerly the White Belt Ranch, a working livestock ranch owned by the late John G. DuPuis. Once part of the Everglades ecosystem, the hydrology of the area was altered through drainage. The water management district has restored portions of the land by rehydrating interior wetlands. Today, two-thirds of the area is pinelands, and one-third is cypress swamp and freshwater marsh. An equestrian center at Gate 3 has horse barns, paddocks, campsites, restrooms with showers, a dump station, and a trailhead marking the beginning of 40 miles of equestrian trails. For more information online, go to [fwc.com/viewing/recreation/wmas/cooperative/Dupuis](http://fwc.com/viewing/recreation/wmas/cooperative/Dupuis).

• **Corbett Wildlife Area:** The J.W. Corbett Wildlife area is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. The north entrance is 25 miles northwest of West Palm Beach via the SR 710/Beeline Highway. This entrance is on the south side of the road, just 1/4 miles west of the intersection with SR 706 or Indiantown Road. The south entrance is 16 miles northwest of West Palm Beach on Seminole Pratt Whitney Road, 3 miles north of Northlake Blvd. A Daily-Use Permit is required to enter this area, unless you have purchased a Wildlife Management Area Permit. Entrance Kiosks with area maps and brochures are located at the south entrance off Seminole Pratt Whitney Road and at the north entrance off State Road 710. Horses are allowed on the area throughout the year except from the Sunday 2 weeks prior to the opening of archery season until 8 a.m. the day prior to the archery season. Corbett offers miles of roads and trails for horseback riding. Parking for trailers is available. For more information, go online to <http://myfwc.com/viewing/recreation/wmas/lead/jw-corbett/>.

# Area festivals and special events this month...

## Astronomy Night at DuPuis

DUPUIS MANAGEMENT AREA—Removed from the bright lights of urban South Florida, the expansive DuPuis Management Area, 23500 S.W. Kanner Highway, in western Martin and Palm Beach counties is an ideal spot for exploring the night sky. As part of its ongoing efforts to provide recreational opportunities on public lands, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is partnering with Florida Atlantic University's Center for Environmental Studies (CES) to host galactic tours of the winter constellations. The Treasure Coast Astronomical Society will guide the tours. Telescopes will be set up for observations, but visitors may bring their own. The next tour will be on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 6 to 9 p.m. The Visitor Center entrance is located at Gate 5 on State Road 76 in Martin County, two miles east of Port Mayaca or seven miles west of the intersection with State Road 710.

## Seminole Wind Bluegrass Festival

BRIGHTON SEMINOLE RESERVATION—The Seminole Wind Bluegrass Festival, presented by KD Bass productions, is planned for the Fred Smith Arena at Brighton Seminole Reservation, off State Road 721 in Glades County, Feb. 10-12. For information, call 863-467-6039. On Friday and Saturday the festival performers are scheduled from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday performances start at 10 a.m. and end at 4 p.m.

## Sour Orange Festival

LAKEPORT—The Lakeport Sour Orange Festival will be held Feb. 11, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lakeport Community Center, 1239 Red Barn Road. A \$1 donation is requested for parking. The festival features the traditional sour orange cookoff. An arts and crafts fair will feature local vendors. Music will be by Bill Duran, who plays 50s, 60s and 70s and Rock 'n Roll. A Gospel Music Sing-a-long will



begin at 1 p.m. Plate lunches available will include a rib dinner and seafood gumbo. The festival will also feature a quilt show, Mr. and Mrs. Bubbles the Clown, a historical display, a photography display, children's games, a display by the Lakeport Fire Department and sour orange pies. The sour orange cookoff judging starts at 10 a.m. For information on the cookoff, call 1-608-345-1324. For vendor information call 1-863-227-1074. Festival visitors are encouraged to bring their own chairs as seating is limited.

## Brighton Seminole Field Day

BRIGHTON SEMINOLE RESERVATION—Brighton Seminole Field Day & Rodeo, Feb. 16-18, will showcase Seminole and other Native American arts, crafts, dances and traditions. On Friday, the festival hosts "Kids Day" which



is open to area school children. School buses from all over South Florida transport elementary school children to Brighton Reservation, where they learn how Seminoles once lived in chickees, cooked food over open fires, made their own canoes and weapons and made crafts such as sweetgrass baskets and clothing made from tiny pieces of cloth sewn into intricate patterns. The festival also includes wild animal exhibitions, alligator wrestling and native dances. In more recent years, the event expanded to invite Native Americans from all over the country to participate. On Saturday and Sunday, the festival is open to the general public. The festival weekend also includes a PRCA Rodeo, with rodeo events Feb. 16-18. On Thursday, gates open at 5 p.m. and the rodeo starts at 7 p.m.; on Friday, gates open at 5 p.m. and the rodeo starts at 7 p.m.; on Saturday, gates open at 9 a.m. and the rodeo starts at 3 p.m.; on Sunday, gates open at 10 a.m. and XTreme Bullriding starts at 3 p.m. The festival grounds are next to the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, off State Road 721 in Glades County. For more information call 863-467-6039 or go online to [www.REZRODEO.com](http://www.REZRODEO.com).

## Hendry County Fair

CLEWISTON—The Hendry County Fair and Livestock Show celebrates local agriculture. The event features a parade, livestock show and midway entertainment. The activities also include a beauty pageant and exhibits. The fair will be held this year from Feb. 17-24 in Clewiston. For more information, please call 863-983-9282 or go online to [www.hendrycountyfair.com](http://www.hendrycountyfair.com).

## Okeechobee Mudfest

OKEECHOBEE—Okeechobee Mudfest will be held on Feb. 17-19, at 11705 State Road 70 East in Okeechobee. The event draws thousands of mudders and all kinds of vehicles from all over the country. Camping facilities are available at the Mudfest site. Hotels are available in nearby Okeechobee. For more information online see the Okeechobee Mudfest page on Facebook.

## Megacon

ORLANDO—Megacon 2012 is set for Feb. 17-19, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando. Comic book writer and publisher Stan Lee (co-creator of Spider-Man, the Hulk, the Fantastic Four, Ironman and Thor) will once again be the special guest at this annual convention for fans of science fiction, fantasy, comic books and anime. Also scheduled to appear at the convention are Bruce Boxleitner (star of Tron and Babylon 5), Tia Carrere (of Warehouse 13 and Relic), Tom Felton (Draco Malfoy in

the Harry Potter movies), Peter Mayhew (who played Chewbacca in the Star Wars movies), David Prowse (Star Wars' original Darth Vader), Bret Spiner (Star Trek: The Next Generation's Lt. Cdr. Data); and many other television and movie actors. The convention includes panel discussions, costume contests, video game contests, a Lego pit, dance parties and the popular—and massive—vendor area. For more information online see [www.megaconvention.com](http://www.megaconvention.com).

See EVENTS — Page 7

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MARCH 16-18- MARCH MUD MADNESS!

APRIL 20-22- SPRING BREAK MUDFEST!

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# Events

Continued From Page 6

## Free Astronomy Day (and Night!) Open House

FORT PIERCE—The public is invited to attend a free Astronomy Day – and Night! open house, sponsored by the Indian River State College and the Treasure Coast Astronomical Society (TCAS), on Saturday, Feb. 25, from 2 to 9 p.m. in and around the Hallstrom Planetarium, 3209 Virginia Avenue on the IRSC Main Campus in Fort Pierce. There will be telescopes, guest speakers, handout, mini-planetarium shows, activities for kids, plus guided views of the moon, planets, and stars (weather permitting). For information, call center at 1-866-792-4772.

## Swamp Cabbage Festival

LABELLE—The 2012 Swamp Cabbage Festival is set for Feb. 25-26. The festival is LaBelle's hometown blast. The festival starts with a parade beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday, followed by two days of great entertainment, booths of unique items for sale and great food. Look for the boiled swamp cabbage and swamp cabbage fritters. If you have an adventurous palate, you can also find gator meat and other special treats. Saturday begins with a 5K Swamp Stomp run along a lovely route with glimpses of the Caloosahatchee River. The festival will include a bike show, car show, kiddie rides. On Sunday morning there will be a non-denominational worship at Barron Park, with entertainment and festivities picking back up again after noon. The lawnmower races will be noon to 2 p.m.. For more information online, go to [www.swampcabbagefestival.org](http://www.swampcabbagefestival.org).

## Chalo Nitka

MOORE HAVEN—Moore Haven's Chalo Nitka Festival will be held on the festival grounds at Chalo Nitka Park (across from the Glades County School Board Office). The festival includes midway games, rides, and vendor booths selling food, crafts and jewelry. Events also include a rodeo and the Glades County livestock show. This year the festival is planned for March 2, 3 and 4. The Chalo Nitka parade will be Saturday morning, March 3. The annual Chalo Nitka Rodeo is put on by the Glades County Youth Livestock organization. The rodeo is on Friday and Saturday nights at 7 p.m. and is the biggest fundraiser for the organization which supports youth events and activities throughout Glades County including sports, clubs, and also the annual livestock shows and sale. The rodeo is held at Bronson Arena, across from the Moore Haven Post Office. For more information online go to [www.chalonitka.com](http://www.chalonitka.com).

## Big Cypress Shootout

BILLIE SWAMP SAFARI—Seminole Tribe of Florida will present a re-enactment of the Second Seminole War at the Big Cypress Shootout at Billie Swamp Safari located between Fort Lauderdale and Naples, on the Big Cypress Reservation just north of I-75 (Alligator Alley) Exit 49. The event is planned for Friday, Feb. 24 through Sunday, Feb. 26. The battle reenactments will take place at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday. Friday is an educational day (no reenactments). The battle reenactments honor the Seminole's struggle and sacrifice to remain in their homeland and will feature authentic weapons, soldier and warrior attire and tactics typical of the Second Seminole War. In the 1800s, a total of three wars were fought by the U.S. military against the Seminoles.

These campaigns were the longest, costliest, and bloodiest of all the Indian wars. Although many Seminoles were killed or removed to present-day Oklahoma, they were never defeated, and to this day, more than 3,000 Seminoles are known as "The Unconquered" Seminole Tribe of Florida. The three-day event will also include music, Seminole food, Seminole and pioneer artisans, tomahawk throws, primitive archery competition, authentic Seminole and soldier camps, venomous snake shows and alligator wrestling.

"Period settlers" from around the country will hew wood, iron and silver crafts and depict trading techniques from the Seminole war era. Musical guests include: Okefenokee Joe, Benjamin Dehart (The Cracker Tenor) and Cowbone. For more information, call 800-949-6101 ext. 12125.

## Big Cypress exhibit: Uniting Nature and Culture

BIG CYPRESS—The Preserve is an exhibition which unites the minds of the 15 selected visionary artists who have participated in the Big Cypress National Preserve's artist in residency program since its inception in 2003. The exhibit, free and open to the public, will run through Thursday, March 1, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Oasis Visitor Center, 52105 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee, and Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, 33000 Tamiami Trail East, Ochopee. Both facilities are located on US 41 between Naples and Miami.

THE PRESERVE is comprised of paintings, photographs, woodcuts, pastels, poems sculpture and mixed media. The emerging theme is the concern over ecological implications of man vs. nature.

For more information on the artists and the artist in residence program go to: <http://www.nps.gov/bicy/supportyour-park/artist-in-residence-program.htm>.

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American Spirit  
The New Patriotic Musical  
Nov. 14 at 7:30pm



The 23rd Annual  
Living Christmas Tree  
Dec. 3 at 7:30pm  
Dec. 4 at 3:00pm



Miracle on 34th Street  
Dec. 15 at 7:30pm



Jay Johnson in  
"The Two & Only"  
Jan. 12 at 7:30pm



Guy Penrod  
Jan. 26 at 7:30pm



The Improvised Shakespeare Company  
Feb. 14 at 7:30pm

Brigadoon  
Feb. 16 at 7:30pm



Street Beat, Inc.  
May 11 at 7:00pm



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# HISTORICAL WAR REENACTMENT - US SOLDIERS & SEMINOLE WARRIORS - 1830's ERA

# BIG CYPRESS SHOOTOUT

2ND SEMINOLE WAR REENACTMENT

**February 24 - 26, 2012**

### Educational Day

Friday 11am - 3pm  
(no battle Friday)

### Battle Reenactments

Saturday 11am & 3pm  
Sunday 2pm

### Admission Includes:

War Reenactment, Historical & Cultural Displays,  
Time Period Encampments, Live Entertainment,  
Venomous Snake Shows, Alligator Wrestling, Music,  
Vendors, Crafts, Food, Museum Entrance & More!

**\$9 Adults, \$6 Kids**

The battle reenactments honor the Seminole's struggle and sacrifice to remain in their homeland and will feature authentic weapons, soldier and warrior attire and tactics typical of the Second Seminole War.

The event will also include music, Seminole food, Seminole and pioneer artisans, tomahawk throws, primitive archery competition, authentic Seminole and soldier camps, venomous snake shows and alligator wrestling. "Period settlers" from around the country will hew wood, iron and silver crafts and depict trading techniques from the Seminole war era.

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SWAMP  
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**BCSHOOTOUT.COM**

Located at Billie Swamp Safari, take I-75 (Alligator Alley) to exit 49 (Snake Road), then North 19 Miles to park entrance.