

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 104 No. 3

Sunday, January 6, 2013

75¢ Plus tax

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Free Fair starts
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uneven rainfall
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accused of code
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Lake Levels

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

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Special to the Okeechobee News/Sandra Pearce

Pryor is Orange Bowl MVP

Okeechobee's Lonnie Pryor was named the Orange Bowl's Most Valuable Player after scoring on touchdown jaunts of 60 and 37 yards as the Seminoles tamed the Northern Illinois Huskies 31-10 Tuesday night. Pryor, an OHS graduate, ran for a career-high 134 yards on five carries and caught three passes for 17 yards. For more on the story, see page 7.

Rare sparrow could face extinction

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Wildlife advocates fear the grasshopper sparrow found at the Kissimmee Prairie State Preserve in Okeechobee County could be extinct within two years unless federal officials approve an emergency effort to capture and breed them in captivity.

The population at the preserve has dwindled in recent years, possibly due to invaders like fire ants that have damaged their habitats

and nests.

Biologist Paul Miller invited readers and ranchers to contact him at the Preserve to discuss when fire ants became a problem in Okeechobee and techniques they use to try and control the ants.

Each year surveyors at the preserve count the male sparrow population and the population has fallen from near 150 males in 2002 to

See SPARROW — Page 5

New power plant to be fueled by eucalyptus

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

There may soon be a new electric generating plant in the county that is ecologically friendly. On Dec. 14, 2012, U.S. EcoGen, LLC announced that its wholly owned subsidiary, U.S. EcoGen Okeechobee, had signed a 30-year contract with Florida Power & Light (FP&L) to provide electricity to FP&L from a U.S. EcoGen-owned generating plant to be located in Okeechobee County. The electricity would be generated by a plant fired by eucalyptus wood pellets.

The contract is now pending approval by the state's public service commission.

The company has signed similar contracts with FP&L for power plants in Martin and Clay counties. They already have a contract to supply Progress Energy with electricity generated from a Polk County plant fired by eucalyptus pellets. That plant

See POWER — Page 5



Special to the Okeechobee News/FWC
Florida Grasshopper Sparrows nest in Okeechobee County.



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The ear canal's job is to funnel sound to your ear drum. Sometimes the canal becomes **plugged with wax**, which mimics a hearing loss because it blocks sound from reaching your eardrum. Use of a cotton swab will pack wax even more. We will check for impacted wax with a video ear camera and remove it so sound can reach your eardrum.

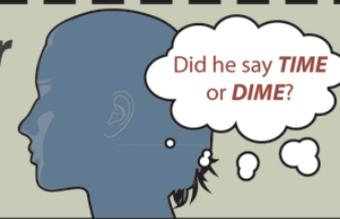
Hearing Problem #3

The cochlea is a snail-shaped organ containing thousands of living hair cells called stereocilia. A condition known as **Sensorineural hearing loss (nerve type hearing loss)** occurs when any of the hair cells become damaged.

About 90% of hearing loss is this type. A new hearing computer has now been released that is programmed specifically for the frequencies of hair cells that are damaged, resulting in improved speech understanding.

Auditory Cortex of the Brain
Nerve To The Brain
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New Hearing Computer Brings In The Talk, Screens Out The Noise



Free Demonstrations: January 7th - 18th



Hearing correction has just been revolutionized due to a tiny new device that can be programmed to amplify only missing consonant sounds, stimulating the high-frequency hair cells and ignoring the rest.

The brain of the hearing computer is a chip that analyses and clarifies sound according to its frequency. Using a technology called Live Speech Mapping, the clinician adjusts the high frequencies until fricative sounds, like F, S, Th, Sh, T, P, and K are restored. The prescription is set as you watch and listen.

The hearing computer was displayed at the 2012 American Academy of Audiology Symposium. It is available in Florida from Audibel Hearing Care Centers.



The hearing computer is virtually unnoticeable when worn. Demonstrations for citizens of Florida are scheduled for:

January 7th - 18th. Call for appointment.

A special manufacturer incentive of \$800 per system has been made available to Florida citizens during this event.



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2012 was successful year for students and educators

TALLAHASSEE—A national leader in education reform, Florida is making progress when it comes to educating students. A number of test results reported in 2012 show students in every demographic segment are making strides toward becoming better readers, more skilled at math, and better at science. In fact, students in Florida outperformed many students, both nationally and globally, in several subject areas in 2012.

The schools providing this learning are also excelling. Four of the top 10 magnet schools in the nation are located right here in the Sunshine State. More schools across the state are encouraging students to take Advanced Placement exams to give high school students an advantage when they graduate.

State colleges are also making their mark when it comes to garnering attention for boosting student success. Right now, multiple state colleges are vying for a coveted national recognition prize of \$1 million for providing a quality education to children to prepare them to enter the workforce.

At the heart of these accomplishments are educators who are working diligently each day to ensure our children can one day graduate and find a career. Florida teachers were recognized in 2012 by being awarded the highest grade in the nation for educator quality—a testament to their continued efforts to positively influence students lives.

“We know we have some of the best teachers in the nation working with students across our state,” said Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart. “They are the reason we continue to see higher test scores, higher graduation rates, and the reason Florida continues to be recognized nationally and globally. We appreciate their dedication to shaping the lives of those who will one day run our nation.”

Highlights from 2012:

Students are internationally competitive: Florida students outperformed many of their national and global counterparts on both the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The reports compared the performance of U.S. fourth-grade students in reading, mathematics, and science, and eighth-grade students in mathematics and science to their peers internationally.

Students excel in vocabulary: In the first report of its kind, fourth and eighth

graders excelled on the vocabulary portion of The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The report showed fourth graders in Florida outpaced the nation. This included students with disabilities and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Florida's eighth-grade Hispanic students outperformed students in their demographic nationally, as did students with disabilities and students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches.

Common core takes off: Florida College System teacher educator programs are the first in the nation to voluntarily commit to a system-wide implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The new standards will be embedded in the teacher preparation program curriculum throughout the college system so new teachers who enter the classroom will be ready for the more rigorous standards. The standards are benchmarked to international standards and establish clear, consistent goals for learning in order to prepare students for college and careers. In addition to training new teachers, the Florida College System is uniquely positioned to offer essential Common Core training to current teachers.

Test scores improve: Florida ranked second in the nation for education test-score gains. The Education Next report examined international and U.S. state trends in student achievement growth using mathematics, reading, and science data from 1992 to 2011. Florida is second only to Maryland in test-score improvement between 1992 and 2011.

Magnet schools rank in Top 10: Four Florida high schools were recognized as being in the top 10 magnet schools in the country. The 2012 U.S. News and World Report Best High Schools report named the schools in recognition of a school's ability to successfully educate its student body across a range of performance indicators and the degree to which they prepare students for college-level work.

Quality educators make the grade: The National Council on Teacher Quality awarded Florida the highest grade in the nation for educator quality. The state also received high marks for making progress in policies and practices that govern the teaching profession.

State colleges stand out: Florida is one of only two states in the nation to have multiple finalists in the top ten schools vying

for the 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Broward College and Santa Fe College were named finalists for the highly esteemed prize that recognizes outstanding outcomes in learning, completion rates for degree and certificate programs, minority and low-income student success, and employment after college. The winner and finalists with distinction will be named in March 2013.

Minority graduation rates grow: Florida's Hispanic and African-American students outpaced the national graduation rate average. Florida ranks third in the nation for the largest increase in graduation rate during the past decade.

Reading initiative is national model: Through Just Read, Florida!, the state has implemented one of the most comprehensive literacy initiatives in the nation with efforts to ensure teachers deliver data-driven reading instruction, monitor student prog-

Okeechobee Forecast



Today: Mostly cloudy with a chance of rain. High of 81F. Winds from the SE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 40%.

Tonight: Overcast with a chance of a thunderstorm and rain. Fog overnight. Low of 61F. Winds less than 5 mph.

Chance of rain 60% with rainfall amounts near 0.3 in. possible.

Extended Forecast

Monday: Overcast with a chance of rain. Fog early. High of 77F. Winds from the NNE at 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 40%.

Monday Night: Overcast in the evening, then partly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 52F. Winds from the ENE at 5 to 15 mph.

Tuesday: Partly cloudy with a chance of a thunderstorm and rain in the afternoon. Fog early. High of 81F. Winds from the ESE at 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 40%.

Tuesday Night: Clear. Fog overnight. Low of 61F. Winds from the ESE at 5 to 10 mph.

ress, and develop intervention strategies for students who are behind. Numerous states across the country are considering legislation that would mirror Florida's policies for third-grade promotion and assistance to struggling readers. Florida's groundbreaking legislation was introduced more than a decade ago and data show large reading achievement gains among students who received literacy support.

Graduates score better on college entrance exams: Florida's graduating seniors increased their scores in every SAT subject area in 2011-12.

PAID CONTENT

Keith Bass & the Florida Bluegrass Express performing LIVE

Keith Bass & the Florida Bluegrass Express will be performing LIVE at the Okeechobee KOA - January 12th

@ 5:30. This will be the only show they will have at the KOA this season. Tickets are \$10 per person 12 years old and younger is free. Get your tickets at the door. Concessions available. For additional information contact Darlene Bass @

863-634-5815 or Keith Bass @ 863-781-2376



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City Code Board to meet Tuesday

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board faces an agenda of six cases at its first meeting of the new year on Tuesday.

Federal National Mortgage Association, owner of property at 1003 S.W. 11th Ave, Wanda Page, owner of property at 803 N.W. 11th St., Gail Adams Peterson, owner of property at 907 N.E. 5th St., Fosler LLC, owner of property in the 1000 block of N.W. 5th Ave., and Lewis and Betsy Beebe, owners of property at 1380 S.E. 21st St., will have to answer to charges of public nuisance and general cleaning and beautification. Big Lake Painting and Pressure Cleaning has

If you go ...
What: City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board
When: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 8
Where: City Council Chambers, Okeechobee City Hall, 55 S.E. Third Ave.

been cited for operating a business without the proper license.

Turning to other business, the board will elect a chairperson and vice chair.

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

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Reflections from the Pulpit

When shall these things be?

By Calvin Fryar, pastor
Brighton Baptist Church

Matthew 24:1—"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

As the disciples showed Jesus the temple, perhaps they were thinking, Wait a minute, Lord. Yes, the scribes and Pharisees are foolish and hypocrites, but look at this temple! Surely there's something good here. The temple was indeed an incredible building. The gates were brass. The courts were marble. The furnishings were gold. The stones were huge. The chipping and carving of these stones was done in a rock quarry miles away so that during construction not a sound was heard on the temple mount (I Ki. 6:7). Since chiseling and shaping took place

in the quarry, when the stones arrived at the temple mount, they fit together perfectly. But remember Peter tells us we are living stones (I Pet. 2:5). All of us will fit together perfectly in heaven. So guess what this world is. It's the rock quarry. Do you ever feel like you're being hammered on? Worn down? Chipped away? Welcome to the rock quarry. The Lord is smoothing us and preparing us here so that when we get to heaven, the sound of a hammer will not be heard."—J. Courson's Application Commentary.

The disciples asked three questions: (1) "When shall these things be?"—when one stone would not be left upon another; (2) "What shall be the sign of thy coming?"—The answer to this question is found in verses 23–51; and (3) "What shall be the sign . . . of the end of the world [completion of the age]?" The answer to this question is found in verses 9–22. The Lord Jesus is going to answer these three questions, and we call His answers the Olivet Discourse because it took place on the Mount of Olives.

They probably thought, "IT CAN'T BE!—not this beautiful temple!" This would seem impossible in the minds of the disciples. After all, the stones Jesus was talking about were massive in size, measuring twenty feet

high, twenty feet wide, and forty feet long. But guess what happened. Less than forty years after Jesus spoke these words, the Romans stormed Jerusalem and, although Titus commanded his soldiers not to desecrate or harm the temple, one of them threw a torch into it. The ensuing fire became so hot that the gold inside began to melt and run down the walls between the rocks. When it cooled and solidified, the Roman soldiers began to pull down the stones of the temple in order to get to the gold hidden in the crevices. They didn't quit until they had managed to pull down every single stone. Exactly as Jesus had prophesied, not one stone remained upon another. That is why if you go to Jerusalem today, all you will see is the Wailing Wall, a part of the temple foundation. It's a massive wall, but small in comparison to what the temple had been.

BUT IS HAPPENED! The end did come—and it will come again, ready or not. The end came for the temple in A.D. 70. The signs were everywhere but they could not see them! It will happen again! The temple will be rebuilt. Antichrist will cause it to be rebuilt for himself (See 2 Thess. 2:4). J. Vernon McGee wrote: "When I was at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem several years ago, the

tour director tried to call my attention to the way the stones had been worn away by the people who had come there over the years to weep. That was certainly worth noting, but the thing that impressed me was that the wall was constructed of many kinds of stones. History tells us that the Wailing Wall was made up of stones which came from different buildings in different periods. At the pinnacle of the temple, which evidently was the corner of the temple area, recent excavations reveal the same thing—there are all kinds of stones from different periods. What does that mean? My friend, that means that not one stone was left upon another—the builders had to go and pick up stones from different places because in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman really destroyed that city!—McGee, J. Vernon: Thru the Bible Commentary.

And so shall it be again—the prophecy has its fulfillment based upon "As it was, so shall it be" (Lu. 17:26-28). Even though the temple is even now being prepared to be rebuilt, it will be completely destroyed at the Lord's coming. And all who are not looking for His return will find sudden destruction coming upon them.

Public Forum/Speak Out

Speak Out has moved online, where it is quicker and easier to share your ideas and converse with others. Go to www.newszap.com, click on the community name and your local or state Public Forum. There, you can create new topics or comment on existing topics. What follows is a sampling of some of the discussions currently taking place. Thanks for participating!

Guns don't kill; people kill

• Exactly, it's not the guns that kill. Perhaps we should, instead of trying to drum up yet another knee jerk law, amend the mental health care issue!

• It's basically the good ol' "guns don't kill people, people kill people" rhetoric. As if someone is suggesting guns sprout little arms and legs and walk up to their victims and fire bullets out of their faces. Certainly people kill people . . . guns (particularly semi-automatics) just make it a lot quicker and easier and allow for people to kill many

more in a short period of time. It's why you hear about mass shootings and not mass stabbings or mass stranglings.

• Passing strange how I've had a loaded pistol beside my bed for the last ten years, yet never once has it attacked nor shot anyone. I know that the antigun folks want to just ignore that silly Constitution.

• Wonder if back in the day someone said "I know that the anti-slave folks just want to ignore that silly Constitution." Like it's never been changed before. But I'm not opposed to common sense safeguards rather than banning. There are already restrictions in place for owning weapons (licenses, etc). Why not extend the automatic gun ownership restrictions to semi-automatics?

• Why penalize or restrict a law abiding citizen the right to enjoy an exotic weapon? There are no laws that actually control behavior, nor should there be attempts to control behavior. Restricting a law-abiding citizen from something that he/she enjoys is not going to happen. Heck, look at the drug trade. All those laws banning narcotics, yet

the nation is still full of narcotics in fact some medications are easier to get on the street than legally. If I walk outside and wipe out ten people with a sword, are people going to try to ban swords? What about cross bows?

• According to the FBI annual crime statistics, the number of murders committed annually with hammers and clubs far outnumbers the number of murders committed with a rifle. In 2005, the number of murders committed with a rifle was 445, while the number of murders committed with hammers and clubs was 605. In 2006, the number of murders committed with a rifle was 438, while the number of murders committed with hammers and clubs was 618. In 2011, there was 323 murders committed with a rifle but 496 murders committed with hammers and clubs.

• You realize that a rifle is a very small category of guns, right? Also, talking about just crime takes out gun deaths such as those that occurred by accident. In actuality 31,000 people were killed by firearms in 2005. About 12,400 of those were gun-

related homicides. Are you suggesting that we would be safer if we banned handguns and other firearms aside from rifles? I agree.

Marijuana

• From my side of the aisle I prefer to deal with people who are not dazed and dumbed down. Folks need all their sharpest wits about them to make sensible decisions, and many are not too sharp in the first place or they wouldn't be using drugs. I will defer to the doctors who are knowledgeable about the opinion of gateway drugs or not. My opinion is still "who needs it?" Save the drugs for people who are sick and need medicine. Don't be doping up when all you likely need is some conscious lifestyle changes to make things better for yourself. Whatsamatter, you can't stand to be with your pot-smoking friends unless you get into an altered state of mind? Get some new friends, who are going in the right direction with their lives.

KEECHOBEE NEWS

To Reach Us

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To Submit News

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

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

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

We Pledge...

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

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



OCI officer accused of selling prescription pills

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News



Douglas
Bain

A corrections officer at the Okeechobee Correctional Institution (OCI) has been arrested on charges of selling prescription pills during an undercover drug operation.

An Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force detective stated in an arrest report that Douglas C. Bain, 45, S.E. 14th Court, Okeechobee, twice sold oxycodone pills to a confidential source during the operation.

Bain was arrested Thursday, Jan. 3, on

two felony counts of sale of oxycodone and two felony counts of possession of oxycodone with intent to sell. He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail on a bond of \$40,000. Jail records show he has been released on bond.

Records at the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) show that Bain also worked as a corrections and road patrol deputy on three separate occasions.

Bain was first hired as a corrections officer at the sheriff's office on Jan. 6, 1992. He resigned that position on May 28, 1995. He was rehired on Feb. 7, 1997, as a corrections officer but was terminated on Feb. 8, 2000, by then-sheriff Ed Miller for untruthfulness,

conduct unbecoming an officer and insubordination. He had become dual certified and was working as a road patrol deputy when he was fired.

Bain was then rehired by then-sheriff O.L. Raulerson as a road patrol deputy on Jan. 2, 2001. He resigned on Jan. 2, 2002.

A spokesperson for the Department of Corrections (DOC) said Bain was hired as a corrections officer at OCI on March 2, 2007.

That spokesperson went on to say Friday afternoon, Jan. 4, that because of Bain's arrest: "Extraordinary termination has been approved and he is being notified of his dismissal."

According to the detective's arrest report

the confidential source twice bought oxycodone 30mg pills from Bain.

During his interview with task force detectives Bain reportedly said he had been "... selling prescribed medications for about two years." He also allegedly told detectives he did not have a prescription for the oxycodone tablets.

While the arrest report does not indicate how many pills were purchased by the confidential source, Bain allegedly admitted to the detectives that he was paid \$150 on both occasions.

"He knew it was wrong and blames no one but himself," added the detective's report.

Inmate charged with having false SS number

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News



Ruben
Hernandez

A man being held in the county jail on a charge of attempted murder has been arrested by a state investigator for allegedly using a fraudulent Social Security number.

Ruben Romero Hernandez, 30, S.W. 11th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Thursday, Jan. 3, on a felony charge of obtaining employment with a fraudulent Social Security number. His bond on that charge has been set at \$1,500.

Hernandez was arrested by Detective William Hill, from the Department of Financial Services/Division of Insurance Fraud, after he reportedly used the bogus information to gain employment at Coco Sod Farms on May 3, 2012.

According to the detective's arrest report the man's name is actually Ruben Hernandez Romero and he purchased the false identification documents five years ago in Okeechobee County from an unknown individual.

The detective stated in his report that Hernandez has "... never applied for nor has been assigned a resident alien or Social Security number."

However, his employment packet at the sod company contained a permanent resident card with his photo and a Social Security card. These documents lists the man's name as Ruben Hernandez.

He was also using the name Ruben Hernandez when he was arrested Dec. 23, 2012, by Detective Bettye Taylor of the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD) for reportedly shooting another man during an argument.

Hernandez, who also goes by the name "El Ratoncito" (Little Rat), and the victim were apparently sitting around a fire pit when the argument began.

In her arrest report, Detective Taylor stated that Hernandez claimed he found a 9mm shell on the road and when he threw it into the fire it exploded and the round struck the victim as he sat on a crate by the fire.

However, continued the report, the bullet struck the victim just below the neckline on the left side of his chest. The round then traveled in a downward angle and exited about midway down the left side of the man's body. This path, stated the OCPD investigator, was not consistent with the victim sitting by the fire and the bullet exploding from the fire pit.

According to Okeechobee County Jail records Hernandez is being held without bond on the attempted murder charge.

POWER

Continued From Page 1

is expected to begin operations in either 2014 or 2015.

This will be FP&L's first use of electricity that is generated by wood pellets, according to FP&L spokesperson Sarah Gatewood. She said that when fully operational the Okeechobee plant will supply electricity for 15,000 to 20,000 homes. She said electricity could be generated by this ecologically-friendly system without an increase in rates.

SPARROW

Continued From Page 1

just 14 last year. There was a healthy population at the nearby Avon Park Bombing Range 10 years ago but the bird is functionally extirpated, from that facility. The largest population is found at the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area north of Kenansville.

Mr. Miller said while he suspects the fire ants are the main problem for the ground nesting bird, they have not been able to pinpoint the reason for the bird's decline. "We have theories. A big reason is the prairie landscape over the years was converted to citrus, agriculture, and houses and the bird lost a lot of its habitat. Most of them are now on a few state-managed lands and some local ranches."

Mr. Miller said the preserve does good habitat management and sprays chemicals on the fire ants after they conduct prescribed burns in the spring and summer months.

"We try the best that we can to go after these ants to give the birds a chance to nest," he added.

Mr. Miller noted in a large parcel of land, it is a real challenge to battle fire ants with limited resources. His prediction is that the bird could be eradicated in this area if things don't change.

"The current trends state that within five to 10 years they could possibly blink out," he added.

A working group of experts in the field have worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife about a captive breeding program to save the bird. They meet twice per year to discuss the issues and what can be done.

Other problems faced by the bird are

U.S. Ecogen, with offices in Florida and Maryland, is dedicated to building and owning electrical generating facilities fueled by renewable and clean energy and operating timber plantations and wood pellet producing facilities. The eucalyptus trees are grown on large plantations. They reach maturity quickly, and when harvested will regrow from the original tree stump.

At this time it is not known where the plant will be located or how many people it will employ.

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

drought, our rainy periods that might have flooded some nests, disease, and a loss of genetic diversity due to the small population.

Mr. Miller noted that the count is not a population estimate. They can survey about 10 percent of the property and do so in April, May and June. They count only the males they spot in the spot surveys.

"We'd like to assume it is a one-to-one ratio with females but we can't prove that," he added.

The bird is also found in South America and in California. They feed mostly on grasshoppers and insects and have to compete with the fire ants for food. The bird is listed as a species of special concern by the federal government and is listed as threatened in Florida.

Federal officials have debated whether to try to breed them in captivity because there is no guarantee it will be successful and the fact that taking them out of the wild would reduce the population there and could do more harm than good.

One plan would take a few birds and raise them in cages and gradually increase the population while keeping at least 100 birds in the wild.

Mr. Miller said he would like to talk with ranchers and others in Okeechobee who have experience dealing with fire ants. He can be reached at 863-462-5360.

Visitation at the Preserve continues to increase. Star gazing remains one of the most popular activities. The preserve is noted as the darkest sky on the peninsula of Florida. Another attraction is the purple prairie in October and November created by wildflowers.

YOUNIFIED youth event planned

All youth from sixth grade to 12th grades are invited to attend the YOUNIFIED youth event, on **Jan. 11**. There will be over 50 FREE door prizes given away including two lap tops, two iPads, two X-box 360's, iPods, "Beats" headphones and a more! There will also be great speakers and when the event opens at 5:30 p.m. it will open up with a great rap group called "authentic" out of Miami that the youth are going to love!! The doors open at 5:30 p.m. and there will be another rap group at that time as you come in, visit the booths and get some free food!! "3:Thirty" will also be singing. The night will be action packed with food, music and truth. Don't miss this!!!! Friday, Jan. 11 at Osceola Middle School. Doors open at 5 p.m. Event is 5:30-9:30 p.m. For more information please call 863-634-6523.

Community Events

American Legion 64 Bingo

American Legion 64 will host Sunday night Bingo on **Jan. 6**, at 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. The American Legion will be closed on Jan. 13 and Jan. 20 due to the free fair being here and will resume on Jan. 27. The kitchen will offer a limited menu. Pay-offs will be determined by player attendance. All proceeds to benefit the American Legion veterans' programs. The event is open to the public.

The Women of the Moose

Buckhead Ridge

The Women of the Moose, Buckhead Ridge will be hosting a "Darling" fried chicken dinner on Sunday, **Jan. 6** from 2-6 p.m. Dinner includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and cole slaw for \$7. All proceeds collected benefit Moose Charities.

Cypress Hut Eagles Host

Sunday dinner

This Sunday, **Jan. 6**, the Cypress Hut Eagles will host a southern fried chicken dinner starting at 1 p.m. for a \$6 donation. All proceeds will go to the Childrens' Diabetes Research Foundation. Dine in or take out and public is welcome.

OCRA Gearing up for 2013

Baseball/Softball Season

OCRA is currently planning the upcoming season of Baseball/Softball. Sign ups will be held the first three Saturdays in Feb. from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the score tower at the Sports Complex. All children between the ages of 4 and 14 (15 for girls) are invited to sign up. Sponsors, coaches, umpires, and volunteers are needed. Please call 863-643-0515 for more information or to help out. The first monthly meeting of the new year will be held on Monday, **Jan. 7**, at the score tower at 7 p.m. Interested citizens are invited to attend.

Coffee with the Commissioner to be held Jan. 8

Coffee with the Commissioner will be hosted by Commissioner Frank Irby on Tuesday, **Jan. 8**, from 10 a.m. - noon, and will be held at the Brown Cow Sweetery, 103 S.W. Park Street. Citizens wishing to participate are encouraged to call 863-763-6441 to schedule an appointment.

Quit Smoking Now program

Raulerson Hospital will host a free Quit Smoking Now Program beginning Wednesday, **Jan. 9**. The class will meet on Wednesdays in the Raulerson Cafeteria at 3 p.m. for six weeks. Participants will be eligible to receive free nicotine replacement therapies. For more information or to register call 877-819-2357.

Okeechobee Shrine Club Spaghetti Dinner

The Okeechobee Shrine Club will resume the weekly Spaghetti Dinners on Tuesday, **Jan. 8**. You are invited to join your friends and neighbors for delicious homemade food and great fellowship. Serving is from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. and reservations are not required. The Shrine Club, located at 1740 S.W. 53rd Street (Hwy. 78W) is pleased to offer smoke free dining. For your listening and dancing pleasure, music is provided 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. The complete dinner is available for a donation of only \$6. Proceeds benefit Shrine Charities. For more information on the activities of the Okeechobee Shrine Club, contact Kip Gardner at 863-357-0427, Randall Mims at 863-763-9200 or the Shrine Club at 863-763-3378.

ConKerr Cancer "sit & sew"

ConKerr Cancer's mission is to provide children with cancer or other life changing illnesses a feeling of warmth and love through the simple gift of a pillowcase. Our next "sit & sew" will be held on Tuesday, **Jan. 8**, from 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church on Parrott Avenue. Bring your sewing machine and fabric and sew with other ladies in our community who want to help make a difference to a sick child. All of our pillowcases will be donated to St. Mary's Hospital, Palms West and Lakeside Hospital in Belle Glade. We will be making flannel pillowcases this month and we have kits available to sewn. If you have child-friendly cotton fabric you would like to donate please call Joan at 863-467-0290.

Drug Court Graduation planned

Okeechobee County's Drug Court Graduation will be held Wednesday, **Jan. 9**, at 3 p.m. in court room D at the Okeechobee Judicial Center. Please come join us, for more information, please contact Hon. Jerry Bryant County Court Judge at 863-763-3193.

Diabetes program available

On Wednesday, **Jan. 9** at 10 a.m. Living With Diabetes. Presented by Wanda Haas, RN CDE. Grand Oaks Assisted Living Community 203 S.E. 2nd Street Located in the Activities Room Offered by the Visiting Nurses.

Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted to the Okeechobee News by e-mailing obits@newszap.com. Customers may also request photos and links to online guest books. A link to the obituaries is available at www.newszap.com

Cecil E. Perrine, Jr

OKEECHOBEE — Cecil E. Perrine, Jr. died at home on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013.

A native Floridian, Cecil spent most of his life in Okeechobee. He served his country as a member of the US Army.

Cecil is survived by three sons, Cecil III, Bradley, and Jason.

Friends may send online condolences to www.buxtonseawinds.com

Arrangements are under the care of Matthew and Paul Buxton of Buxton-Seawinds Funeral Home, 3833 SE 18th Terrace, Okeechobee, Fla.

Kenneth K. Stinson, 88

OKEECHOBEE — Kenneth K. Stinson died peacefully at home with his wife by his side on Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012.

Kenneth relocated from Texas to Okeechobee in 1988. Kenneth was a true and dedicated Marine that loved his country and served on the following beach heads during World War II; Saipan, Tihian, Okinawa, the Marianas Islands, and the Ryukyu Islands. He was the recipient of the Purple Heart. Kenneth enjoyed sailing and diving for over 20 years. He also found enjoyment as a black belt martial arts instructor.

He is survived by his loving wife of 41 years, Rosalie Stinson of Okeechobee; a son, Patrick Stinson; and a daughter, Teresa (Paul) Brooks, both of Arkansas.

A memorial service will be held at noon on Friday, Jan. 11, 2013, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Friends may send online condolences to www.buxtonseawinds.com

Arrangements are under the care of Matthew and Paul Buxton of Buxton-Seawinds Funeral Home, 3833 SE 18th Terrace, Okeechobee, Fla.

Nancy Basham Phelps, 69

OKEECHOBEE — Nancy Basham Phelps passed away Dec. 4, 2012, at her home in Okeechobee, Fla.

Nancy, formerly of Lynchburg, Va., is survived by her son Rick and daughter-in-law, Patty.

She was predeceased by her parents; two brothers; and a sister.

Nancy's legacy will be her easy smile, quick wit, generosity, and passion for life.

A memorial is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2013, at the Thomas Road Baptist Church Tate Chapel in Lynchburg, VA. A reception will follow at Moose Lodge, 715 on Lakeside Drive. In lieu of flowers, please make a charitable donation to the American Lung Association. Services handled by Buxton Seawinds Funeral Services.

Russell D. Waytovich, 62

OKEECHOBEE — Russell D. Waytovich passed away Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2013 in the Hamrick Home Hospice.

He was born Oct. 15, 1950 in Logan, W.Va. He was a correctional officer, handyman and a painter. Mr. Waytovich was a member of the Masons, coached OCRA Basketball and was a coin collector.

He is preceded in death by an uncle, Paul Waytovich of St. Augustine, Fla.

He is survived by his sons, Russell Paul Waytovich (Corinnie) of Portage, Ind., Joshua Robert Waytovich of Chesterton, Ind.; three grandchildren, Jordan, Brandon and Shelbie; mother, Josephine Spinks of Alexandria, Va; sisters, Doris Ayers (Frank) of St. Augustine, Fla., Karen Spinks, Janice Fero, Anne Spinks all of Alexandria, Va.; and a host of family in St. Augustine and West Virginia.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2012 from 4 p.m. until service time of 7 p.m. in the Buxton Funeral Home Chapel, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee, FL. Pastor Cary McKee of the More 2 Life Church will be officiating. On-line condolences may be made at www.buxtonfuneralhome.com.

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee, FL.



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Pryor wins MVP award in FSU's 31-10 Orange Bowl win

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Lonnie Pryor saved his best for last as he won the Most Valuable Player Award at the Bowl Championship Series Orange Bowl in Miami on New Year's night as he rushed for 134 yards and two touchdowns to lead Florida State to a huge win over Northern Illinois, 31-10.

Pryor flashed the old form he showed numerous times at Brahma stadium in the first half as he plowed through a hole in the Huskies defense and ran untouched for a 60-yard touchdown run to give FSU a lead they would not relinquish. Pryor put the game away with a 37-yard touchdown jaunt in the second half. He added a first half-pass reception.

"I was talking to myself the whole way to the end zone. I just said no, no, no, don't let anyone catch you," he explained. "It was a great way to go out and it felt good to end my last FSU game in that way."

A large group of Okeechobee fans attended the Orange Bowl to enjoy Pryor's final college game. He will be eligible for the NFL draft this spring.

Pryor capped off his college career with 380 yards rushing during the regular season as the Seminoles won the Atlantic Coast Conference Championship. He also caught 13 passes this year for an additional 117 yards.

He played on special teams this year for the Seminoles. Pryor also earned accolades for his blocking at fullback, his leadership for the younger running backs and teammates, and his positive and infectious personality while at FSU. While at FSU the Seminoles won four straight bowl games.

Pryor also played in legendary coach Bobby Bowden's final game, a win in the Gator Bowl over West Virginia during his freshman year. FSU finished 12-2 this year and should finish in the Top 10 in the final polls to be released next week.

Pryor said he adjusted to the position of fullback after a record-shattering career for Okeechobee High School. He remembered wanting to cry when running back coach Dexter Carter suggested he change positions. He called coach Chris Branham and had a long talk, talked with FSU coach Jimbo Fisher, and accepted the change. He said it turned out to be a great move.

"They wanted me to get more playing time and a chance to showcase my skills.



Florida State fullback, and Okeechobee High School grad, Lonnie Pryor (with football) separates himself from Northern Illinois defensive backs during the Seminoles' Orange Bowl win. Pryor was named the game's Most Valuable Player.

I knew my coaches wouldn't lead me the wrong way," he added.

Pryor's advice to younger players was to work hard and dedicate yourself to the sport. He maintains whatever effort you put in, you will get back.

"I want to thank everyone in Okeechobee for all the love and support. Young kids, if you have a goal and a dream, make sure you chase it and never give up," he added.

Pryor was invited to play in the Texas versus Nation college all-star game.

"It was always a dream to come to Florida

State, play football and get an education. The next dream is to go pro and play in the National Football League. I'll train for that, and

hope everything works out. All it takes is for one team to give me a chance to show what I can do."



Okeechobee's Lonnie Pryor looks in at the quarterback during Tuesday's game.



Lonnie Pryor, #24, celebrates with a teammate after scoring one of his two touchdowns in FSU's Orange Bowl win over the Northern Illinois Huskies.



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Special to the Okeechobee News/OMS

Students of the Week

Mrs. Garcia was sprayed with the Student of the Week soda- Strawberry Fanta! Her pants will never be the same, but the Students of the Week loved it! Here they are making fun of her and pink splotched attire! Congratulations to: Justin Comfort, Brighton Bauman, Keith Davis, Daniel Serrano- not pictured, Luis Terrazas, Rachel Helfinstine, Jonathan Mansfield, Madelyn Hubert and Sarah McNitt. Not pictured, Candace McGlamory.

American Legion Free Fair opens Jan. 12

The American Legion Free Fair will include cooking, talent and beauty contests.

The 57th Annual Okeechobee American Legion Free Fair, will be held Friday, Jan. 12-22 at the American Legion Hall grounds off State Road 70 in downtown Okeechobee. J & J Amusements will provide the carnival rides. The midway will open at 5 p.m. week-days. On Saturdays the midway will open at noon and Sundays it will open at 1 p.m.

Contests for the fair include:

• Kids baking contest, Jan. 12, judging at 7:30 p.m.

• Adult baking contest, Jan. 14, judging at 7:30 p.m.

• Talent contest, Jan. 15, judging at 7:30 p.m.

• Miss American Legion pageant, judging at 7:30 p.m.

• Chili contest, Jan. 18, judging at 7:30 p.m.

Ribbons and cash prizes will be given to first, second and third place winners. Entry blanks can be obtained at the American Legion Lounge.

This is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Special to the Okeechobee News

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Make sure you're aware of all of the ways you can prevent cervical cancer and understand what the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and regular Pap testing can do for you.

What causes cervical cancer?

HPV is a sexually transmitted virus that rarely causes infection. It often produces no symptoms, but when HPV does lead to an infection, gynecological cancers can form. These can develop up to 15 years after the virus was contracted. According to the Centers for Disease Control, as many as 12,000 women develop cervical cancer and 4,000 die from it in the U.S. every year.

Preventing cervical cancer

Cervical cancer can be reduced or prevented when you:

- Get the HPV vaccine;
- Practice abstinence;
- Have as few sexual partners as possible;
- Use a condom;
- Quit smoking;
- Get your annual Pap test every year, starting at the age of 21. This valuable tool detects abnormalities on the cervix.

How does the vaccine work?

The HPV vaccination is the most powerful preventive measure available today. It

is recommended for all girls 11 to 12 years old, before they have become sexually active. However, it can be administered to sexually active women up to 26 years of age. There are two types of vaccines, commonly known as Cervarix and Gardasil. With either vaccine, the patient receives three doses via shot over a six-month period. Young men can also benefit from the vaccine, which can protect them from certain cancers and other conditions.

Screening for cervical cancers

The Pap Test (Pap smear) is one of the most reliable and effective cancer screening tests available (it only screens for cervical cancer). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pap smear is recommended for all women. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life. Early on cervical cancer may not cause any signs or symptoms, so see your doctor annually for a Pap smear and follow up on any results that are not normal.

Gynecological procedures, including minimally invasive procedures, are performed at Raulerson Hospital by the Surgical Services team. For more information about Raulerson Hospital, call them at 763-2151 or visit their website: RaulersonHospital.com. To schedule an appointment or ask a health question, call Raulerson Hospital's free, 24-hour Consult-A-Nurse service at 863-763-9228.

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For more information about the surgical services available at Raulerson Hospital, visit our website at RaulersonHospital.com. Our website also includes a health and video library to help you understand and become educated about the conditions that are important to you.



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December brought scattered rainfall to South Florida

Special to the Okeechobee News

Water Management District (SFWMD).

December proved to be a month of contrasts where rain fell across the South Florida

Jupiter experienced a nearly 10-inch rainfall event on Dec. 11, while Palm Beach, Bro-

ward and Miami-Dade counties were more than an inch below average for the entire month. The Southwest Coast was slightly above average, while the East Caloosahatchee Basin was slightly below average.

representing 102 percent of average, or 0.04 inches above average.

The Lower Kissimmee Basin experienced the most rainfall for an entire basin, with 3.60 inches, representing 202 percent of average, or 1.82 inches above average. Eastern Miami-Dade County was among the driest areas, with 0.59 inches, representing 31 percent of average, or 1.32 inches below average.

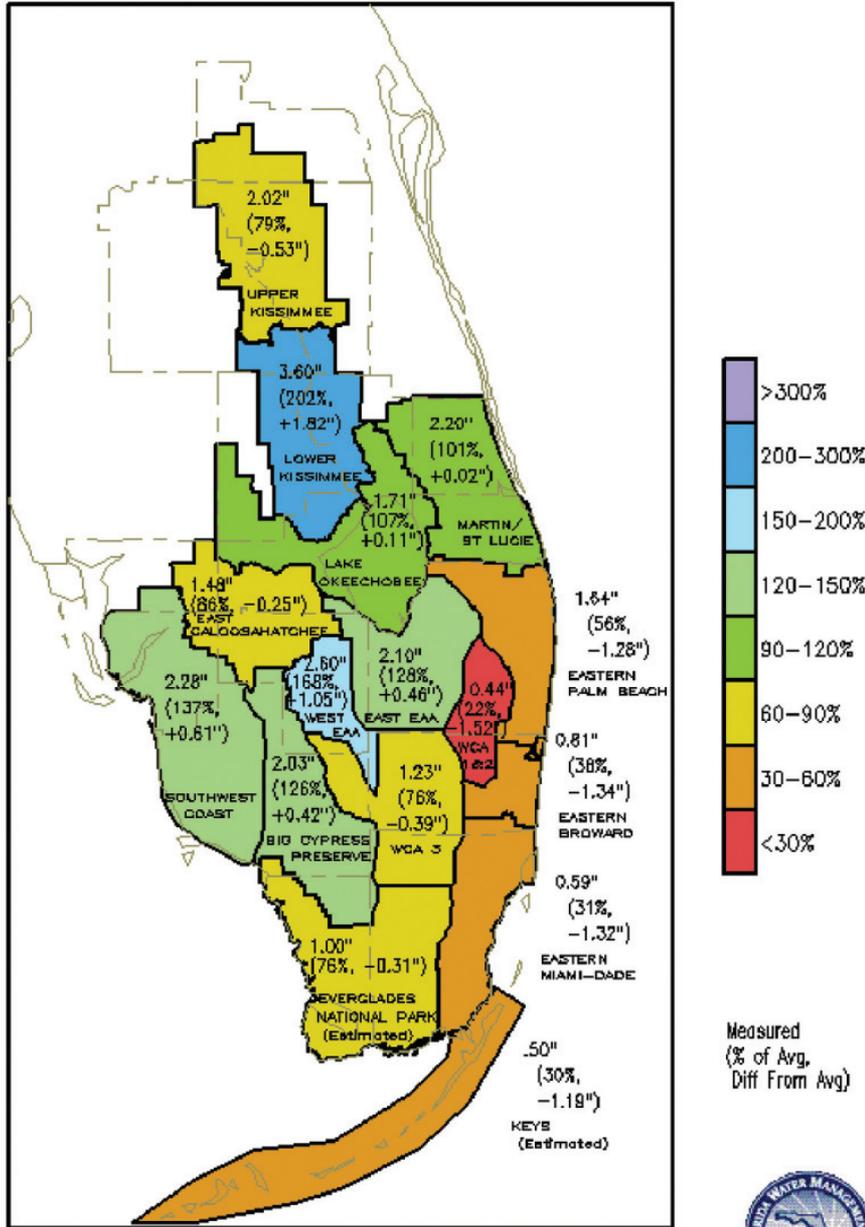
"This variability of where the rain fell across the District shows the challenges we face in estimating where we will be later in the dry season," said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau.

"Fortunately, water levels in most areas remain well positioned at this point in the dry season."

For the month, an average of 1.93 inches of rain fell across the District's 16 counties,

Lake Okeechobee stood at 14.97 feet NGVD Friday, which is 0.23 inches above its average for this time of year. The lake stood at 15.08 feet NGVD a month ago.

SFWMD Rainfall 02-dec-2012 to 01-jan-2013



DISTRICT-WIDE: 1.93" (102%, +0.04")



BIRTHS

CASEN JOSEPH PLATT

Michael and Theresa Platt announce the birth of their son, Casen Joseph Platt. He was born on Dec. 19, 2012 at St. Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach. He weighed 8 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 inches long. Casen was welcomed home by his brothers, Cavin and Cambell; and his sister, Andelyn.

Maternal grandparents are Wayne and Sharlene Moats, of Buckhead Ridge. Paternal grandparents are Frank and Reba Platt, of Okeechobee. Maternal great-grandmother is Emma Moats, of Alexandria, Va.



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Health Expo open to vendors

The Sixth Annual Okeechobee Family Health and Safety Expo will be held Saturday, Jan.

26, 2013 at the Agri-Civic Center. Vendors, please sign up now to secure booth space at this

event. Vendors may set-up at no cost to share health or safety related information or to provide

free screenings or demonstrations. The 2012 Expo hosted over 120 vendors and attendance

was over 2,000. For more information call Sharon Vinson, Shared Services Network,

863-462-5000 ext. 257 or Donny Arnold, Okeechobee County Fire Rescue, 863-634-6464.

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Start a real estate or insurance career

Indian River State College will offer the pre-licensing courses for the Florida Real Estate Sales Associate License and the Property and Casualty Insurance License beginning in January.

“Real Estate Principles and Practices,” REE1040, will teach the theoretical, practical and legal aspects of real estate to prepare students for successful completion of the licensing examination to become a Florida Real Estate Sales Associate. The course will meet on Thursday evenings from 6 to 10:15 p.m. beginning Jan. 17 through April 30 in Building B, Room 209 at the Main Campus.

“Property and Casualty Insurance,” RMI2600, is the state required “220” pre-licensing class. Topics include auto, fire and property insurance, liability, workman’s compensation and security bonds. The course will be held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. from Jan. 30 to May 13 in the J Building, Room 208 at the IRSC Main Campus.

Registration is now underway. The IRSC Main Campus is located at 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Fla. For more information, call toll-free 1-866-792-4772.

Folic Acid should be part of a healthy diet

By Katie Sebris, NE

The month of January emphasizes Folic Acid Awareness; but it should be part of a healthy diet everyday. Your body uses it to stay healthy and strong and as the New Year begins make your health a priority by ensuring your daily intake of folic acid.

Some foods you eat contain folic acid, as a substance called Folate, but it is hard to get all that your body needs, naturally present, in these foods; supplementing with a multivitamin will help you stay healthy and strong. Everyone needs it to enable healthy growth and development and it is essential for women during pregnancy. It is used during the growth and developmental processes of an infant, particularly the neural development; when an infant does not get enough folic acid, in pregnancy, serious birth defects can occur. These are called neural tube defects (NTDs) and the most common defects are Spina Bifida, the spinal column does not fully close, and Anencephaly, the brain is not fully developed. Women that may become pregnant and women that are pregnant should take at least 400 mg of folic acid every day to

help reduce the chances of NTDs.

The Florida Department of Health, Okeechobee County WIC Program works to educate mothers on the benefits of folic acid. The WIC program recommends taking a multivitamin along with fortified foods and eating a healthy diet.

This January be aware of your health and make changes this year towards healthy eating along with a healthy lifestyle. Change does not happen immediately but it is the end result of a series of choices. This January, remember folic acid is important, and bring awareness to those around you; to increase the health of the state of Florida to be the healthiest state in the nation.

Here is a useful list of websites focused on Neural Tube Defects and folic acid: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/ntds/Pages/default.aspx>, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/index.html>, <http://www.folicacid-info.org/> Call the Okeechobee WIC program today for more information. Contact us at: 863-462-5824 or 863-462-5809 para espanol.

Sour Orange Festival hosts dessert cook-off

The Lakeport Sour Orange Festival and Quilt Show will be held Saturday, Feb. 9, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lakeport Community Center, 1239 Red Barn Road in Lakeport (off State Road 78, between Moore Haven and Okeechobee.)

The Sour Orange Festival Dessert Cook-Off will be held during the festival. Win a ribbon and have some fun just by using your imagination and preparing something with sour orange in the recipe. All entries will be judged on appearance, aroma, texture, taste and originality. (You can use something from the sour orange cookbook.) Make sure that your recipe has enough sour orange juice in it to be able to taste the flavor.

Contest organizers ask you to prepare two of the same recipe—one for the judges to taste and one to be auctioned or sold. Bring two copies of the recipe (do not put your name on the recipe) and have your entry there by 9:30 am. Judging will begin promptly at 10:00. The festival begins at 8 am. Prizes will be \$50, \$25 and \$10.

If you don’t have sour oranges, NO PROBLEM, they will get you some. Please contact contest organizers and let them know if you plan to enter. This will help them to prepare a better cook-off for you to enjoy—and better prizes too. For more information and details, call Jean Jacobs 608-345-1324.

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Lake Istokpoga nursed to be a 'lunker locker'

Fish Busters Bulletin

Lake Istokpoga's 28,000 acres in Highlands County, just south of Sebring, is turning into a top lunker producer, as evidenced by the lake's early prominence in the Trophy-Catch angler-recognition program. Recent angler surveys estimated more than 1,000 bass, over 8 pounds, were caught there in less than a year.

Early in November, Don Hatcher documented, with all the required photos, an 8.8-pound bass that was 23 inches long to qualify for a Lunker Club (8-9.9 pounds) entry into the TrophyCatch program. His fish qualified him for not only a certificate and decal but also a free T-shirt from Bass King Clothing and a drawing for a \$50 certificate from Bass Pro Shops, Dick's Sporting Goods or Rapala, and the right to proclaim "My Trophy Swims in Florida!"

Lynn Ogle topped that fish a month later with a Trophy Club (10-12.9 pounds) entry that tipped the scales at 10.25 pounds and was 27 inches long. Besides bragging rights and the great feeling of knowing she'd released her trophy to grow and fight another day, she'll receive a long-sleeve T-shirt from Bass King, and two \$50 gift cards, plus a framable certificate and window decal.

The next day it was Charles Beatty pushing "oh so close," as he said, to the Hall of Fame club, with a 12.4-pound, 26.5-inch beauty that he caught on an artificial lure. Beatty was thrilled that he qualified for the Trophy Club, but had the fish exceeded 13 pounds and been certified, he would have received a free (\$500 value) fiberglass mount of his fish from New Wave Taxidermy and a commemorative display with a 3-D Fish Photo Replica of his fish mounted above a "Sportsman on Canvas" image of his catch. Hall of Famers also earn a custom Pro Line fishing rod with U.S. Reel bait caster, a Glen Lau DVD, \$150 in gift certificates and entry into the Bass Hall of Fame at the Florida Bass Conservation Center.

The good news is the fish was released. With a few more ounces of pre-spawn fattening, it may still be a Hall of Fame inductee when the next lucky angler catches and releases it.

The best way to participate and to see what's being caught where is to go to TrophyCatchFlorida.com. By registering in advance and learning the rules, you will know what equipment (camera, scales and measuring device) to have with you. Once you catch and release your qualifying bass (8-12.9 pounds), or call the FWC to certify a 13-pound plus hawg, you'll just need to log in, upload the photos and spread the word to your network of friends. You don't have to register in advance, but registering makes you eligible for a drawing for a Phoenix bass boat powered by Mercury.

Quality trophy bass fishing in Istokpoga is no fluke. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) worked long and hard with local anglers and businesses to bring the lake back. In the early 1960s,

water-level stabilization began limiting water fluctuations, resulting in excess vegetation and organic build-up. This is bad for habitat rejuvenation and flushing of Florida lakes.

These lakes historically experienced droughts that allowed muck to dry out and blow away, exposing sand that holds aquatic plants and provides bedding areas for bass and other sunfish. Subsequent high water levels would extend into the floodplain, allowing exceptionally strong year-classes of fish to develop.

Now, to ensure adequate water for irrigation, navigation and drinking water during droughts and to prevent flooding during high-water periods, mankind intervenes to preclude these extreme fluctuations. As a result, the FWC and other environmental partners must use alternate means to rejuvenate lakes.

From March through July 2001, Istokpoga benefitted by a drawdown and mechanical muck removal. A total of 1,308 acres were scraped from 21 miles of shoreline.

To maintain quality habitat, herbicide treatments and mechanical harvesting are used annually, targeting tussocks and plant monocultures to improve habitat. This reduces muck buildup and lessens the chance of plant die-offs, which cause fish kills.

By 2003, scraped areas had eelgrass, a highly desirable native aquatic plant. By 2009, quality fish habitat covered 33 percent of the lake. Twenty percent to 40 percent aquatic vegetation is ideal.

Stakeholders are actively engaged. In 1997, Lake Istokpoga became a fish management area, and the Lake Istokpoga Management Committee was formed at the request of Highlands County commissioners. The committee includes county and FWC staff and representatives from local user groups (e.g., fishermen, guides, fish camp owners, homeowners associations, Audubon). The committee discusses management ideas and provides input. In addition, Friends of Istokpoga, a nonprofit group, discusses management activities quarterly, including hydri-rilla treatment and habitat restoration plans.

The FWC has also used regulations to help create a trophy fishery. A 15- to 24-inch slot limit for bass and a three-fish daily bag limit (of which only one bass may be 24 inches or longer) have been successful. The FWC conducts annual angler surveys and supplements that information with nonlethal electrofishing surveys. The 2012 surveys documented the highest largemouth bass success rate (0.82 fish per hour) since the drawdown.

Lake Istokpoga is a stellar example of the FWC using a variety of management techniques and soliciting public input to provide an exceptional fishery. However, it isn't close to being the only one. To see the top bass lakes for 2013 and get quarterly regional forecasts, visit MyFWC.com/Fishing and under "Freshwater Fishing" click "Fishing Sites and Forecasts."

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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).

• David Dewayne Coleman, 45, S.E. Fourth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 3 by Detective M.D. Faulkner on felony charges of grand theft and defrauding a pawnbroker. His bond was set at \$10,000.

• Jody Crum, 41, S.W. Rucks Dairy Road, was arrested Jan. 3 by Deputy Leland

Schoonmaker on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with the felony of possession of a counterfeit payment instrument (27 counts). His bond was set at \$54,000.

• Cole Anthony Underhill, 29, N.W. 33rd Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 3 by Deputy Heath Hughes on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with the felony of failure to appear - giving false information to a pawnbroker. He is being held without bond.

• Rodney Lee Rutherford, 27, S.E. 74th Way, Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 3 by Detective Susan Morrison on felony charges of grand theft and dealing in stolen property. His bond was set at \$12,500.

• Teresa Lynn Hite, 44, S.E. 14th Terrace, Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 3 by Deputy Mark Margerum on a felony charge of child abuse. Her bond was set at \$2,500.

• Bryan L. Walburn, 19, S.W. Third St., Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 4 by Deputy Patricia Massung on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with the felony of burglary of a conveyance (four counts). His bond was set at \$10,000.

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

OCSO Investigations

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office investigated reports of the following crimes last week:

ASSAULT

- 4400 block of U.S. 441 S.E.
- 6800 block of N.E. Fifth St.
- 3700 block of N.W. 167th Court

BURGLARY

- 34900 block of N.E. Fourth Dive
- N.E. 28th Ave. (vehicle)
- 900 block of N.E. 342nd Trail
- 2400 block of N.E. Sixth St.
- 6900 block of N.W. 151st Terrace

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

- 400 block of N.W. 102nd St.
- 900 block of N.E. 28th Terrace
- 1900 block of S.W. Second Way
- 2000 block of S.E. 33rd St.
- 20300 block of U.S. 98 N.

THEFT

- 4100 block of U.S. 441 S. (wallet)
- 700 block of N.W. 106 St. (mail box)
- 600 block of N.W. 106th St. (mail box)
- 400 block of N.W. 106th St. (mail box)
- 10100 block of N.E. 25th Lane
- 19200 block of N.W. 80th Drive (license tag)
- 2000 block of S.E. 27th St. (license tag)
- 500 block of N.W. Fourth St. (identity)

VANDALISM

- 2400 block of U.S. 441 S.E.

Veteran's widows eligible for benefits

Two of the benefits they may be entitled to are Death Pension or Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC). The Death Pension is an income-based program through the Department of Veterans Affairs. To be eligible for a widow's pension, the veteran must have served at least 90 days active service with at least one day during a war-time period and received a discharge under other than dishonorable conditions. Also, eligible widows in a nursing home or assisted living facility may also apply and a family member can assist in the application. The other benefit, DIC, is not income based, but is a monetary compensation provided to the widow for the death of a veteran from a service connected disability, or in some instances whose death resulted from a non-service connected injury or disease and was rated 100% service connected from the VA. Widows or family members who think they may be eligible for a widow's pension or DIC (even if not sure if death is service related) should contact the County Veterans' Service Officer Betsy Grin-slade at 863-763-6441, ext. 5.

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5020-M: Kissimmee River Estates Singlewide MH with additions, storage shed and carport all on 4 clean lots. In move in condition. \$29,900 MLS #206474



5000-M: Deer Park (Ft. Drum area) 3BR/ 2BA on 5+/- acres with large shed, large covered back porch, fenced & crossed fenced, three wells and more. Short Sale. \$99,000 MLS #206394



5003-H: Lazy 7 Estates 3/2/2 on 1/2 an acre, 2022 total sq ft/1290 under air. Many upgraded features. Two wells, irrig system and much more. ~~\$159,900~~ NOW \$155,900 MLS #206138



5040-H: Foreclosure J&S Park 3BR/2BA house on 2 lots. Large eat-in-kitchen, has front, side and back porches. 1438 SF under air. Make offer! ~~\$46,500~~ NOW \$39,900 MLS #206168

LAKE ACCESS



4000-H: Buckhead Ridge Wow!! Water w/lake access. Boat slip, concrete seawall. Ready to move into condition. ~~\$445,000~~ NOW \$98,000 MAKE OFFER MLS #205694

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Public Notice

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF INSTALLATION OF A USED DWELLING UNIT
NOTICE: A PUBLIC HEARING will be held before the Okeechobee County Board of Adjustments and Appeals on **Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Health Department Auditorium, 1728 NW 9th Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida to consider a PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A USED DWELLING UNIT in an Agricultural(A) zoning district. The property owner and applicant is Brittany Wynn. The property address is 19733 NW 300th Street and is more particularly described as follows:
The East 1/2 of the West 1/2 of the South 1/2 of the South 1/2 Tract 3, Section 16, Township 34 South, Range 33 East, Okeechobee County, Florida, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 4, page 3A Through 3D, inclusive, Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida.
In the event that all items scheduled before the Board are not heard, the hearings shall be continued to Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Health Department Auditorium, 1728 NW 9th Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida.
ALL INTERESTED PARTIES SHALL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AT THIS PUBLIC HEARING. Any person deciding to appeal any decision by the Board of Adjustments and Appeals with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made and that the record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal will be based. Planning and Development tapes are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the department.
William D. Royce, Planning Director
Petition # N-2012-0297
434004 ON 1/6/2013

LEGAL NOTICE
A public auction will be held at BMJ Towing, Inc. Lot at 414 South Parrott Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida 34974 on Friday the 18TH day of JANUARY 2013 from 10:00-11:00 A.M. Pursuant to Florida statute 713.78 for unpaid towing and storage. Year, Make, Model & Vin's as follows
2009 GRAY TOYOTA COROLLA 2T1B040E39C042990
1993 GREEN JEEP CHEROKEE 1J4FT67S8P1643596
1997 TOYOTA COROLLA DARK GREEN 1NXBA02E0VZ507832
1988 CHEV CAVALIER 4 DOOR SADAN 1G1JCS249W7103046

Terms of sale are cash and no checks will be accepted. The seller reserves the right of final bid. All sales are final. No refunds will be made. Said automobiles will be sold in "AS IS" with no guarantees. 434040 ON 1/6/2013

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Public Notice
PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE WILL HOLD A REGULAR BOARD MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2013 AT 3:30 P.M. IN THE BOARD ROOM OF THE BEN L. BRYAN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ON THE MAIN CAMPUS OF INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE AT 3209 VIRGINIA AVENUE, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA 34981-5596. NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT AT 9:00 A.M., TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2013, AN AGENDA MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM OF THE BEN L. BRYAN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ON THE MAIN CAMPUS, 3209 VIRGINIA AVENUE, FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA 34981-5596. ANY PERSONS WISHING TO PLACE BEFORE THAT BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION ARGUMENTS CONCERNING ISSUES OF LAW OR POLICY OR PRESENT EVIDENCE OF ANY PERTINENT FACT THAT MAY BE IN DISPUTE MUST NOTIFY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE AT LEAST SEVEN DAYS BEFORE THE SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. ANY PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAL THE DECISIONS OF THIS BOARD WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE. 433993 ON 1/6/2013

Public Notice

Public Notice

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS
1 Pale
4 Mozzetta wearer
9 Sat
14 "Exodus" hero
15 Intimate
16 Key scene for bursting bombs?
17 Biopic about a time-traveling composer?
20 "... like ___ buzzing in blind fury": Pyle
21 Go after
22 Traveling, in a way
23 Builder's options
25 ___ avis
27 Biopic about a composer who is unrecognized in public?
34 Heavy
35 Rondeaux, e.g.
36 Go astray
39 Switch words
41 Political pacifier
42 Ruled quarters?
45 Devised, with "up"
48 Biopic about a composer from a WWII hero's perspective?
53 Absorbed by
54 Legendary luster
55 Tiny amount
57 Sting
62 Zilch
63 Biopic about a composer fighting his inner demons?
66 Grenoble's river
67 Put to the test
68 Former transp. regulator
69 Itzhak Perlman choice
70 Takes to the cleaners
71 Canadian LPGA golfer Dawn ___ Jones

DOWN
1 Indiana county or its seat
2 Where Mecca is
3 Civilized feature
4 Put-on
5 Alliance
6 This and that
7 Pub. of a "Distracted Driving" brochure
8 Some shirts
9 More, in music
10 Where London is
11 Some links
12 Limerick land
13 "The Sopranos" actress ___ de Matteo
18 Doesn't ignore
19 Spore producer
24 Cat lead-in
26 Old Egyptian symbol
28 Abbas's gp.
29 He appeared in eight consecutive U.S. Open finals
30 Love overseas
31 Figure
32 Ins. plan
33 1/48 cup: Abbr.
36 Yearbook sect.
37 Games org.
38 Historic game

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

PODS PEP H ARDC
RIOT HEAR ANERA
OSTE ERSE STAYS
DEEPBLUESEA SGT
SR I STBASIL
O O S ACID HELENE
NAPS ARAL ELS
ALITTLEBITFISHY
N AW SAME EEE
ABATES TADA DRS
VALENCE ELI
ISTINTINYBUBLES
ATARI DEEM MAYI
TEPEE UTES PREP
ESSES PIT CADS

xwordeditor@aol.com

By Mark Feldman
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COUNTY OF OKEECHOBEE FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013 NOTICE OF BUDGET AMENDMENT HEARING

The Okeechobee Board of County Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing on January 10, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as possible, at the Okeechobee County Courthouse, 304 NW 2nd Street, Okeechobee, Florida, for the purpose of adopting budget amendments to the Fiscal Year 2012-13 Budget for Okeechobee County to reflect prior fiscal year encumbrances and adjust cash balances for same.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

FUND DESCRIPTION COUNTYWIDE FUND	REVENUES (SOURCE)			EXPENDITURES (USE)			AMENDED BUDGET FY 2012-13
	CURRENT BUDGET FY 2012-13	Brought Forward	Operating Revenues	Designated Reserves	Operating Expenditures	Total	
General Fund	28,817,090	42,323	0	28,859,413	4,333,595	24,525,818	28,859,413
Transportation Trust Fund	8,074,908	805,484	0	8,880,392	3,575,468	5,304,923	8,880,392
Public Safety Fund	477,560	299	0	477,859	259,002	218,857	477,859
Unincorporated Service Area	1,636,277	6,228	0	1,642,505	348,933	1,293,571	1,642,505
Fire Rescue Fund	8,559,429	202,993	0	8,762,421	1,751,593	7,010,829	8,762,421
Community Development Block Grant Fund	694,680	44,734	0	739,414	177,571	561,843	739,414
Impact Fees Trust Fund	1,227,571	6,000	0	1,233,571	1,227,571	6,000	1,233,571
Special Grants Fund	3,859,245	614,453	0	4,473,698	732,574	3,741,124	4,473,698
Solid Waste Management Fund	2,149,978	903	0	2,150,881	1,844,189	306,692	2,150,881
Capital Improvement Projects Fund	9,504,377	205,092	0	9,709,469	3,813,256	5,896,213	9,709,469
Okee-Tantie Enterprise Fund	424,424	11,183	0	435,607	9,507	426,100	435,607
	65,425,538	1,939,692	0	67,365,230	18,073,259	49,291,971	67,365,230

PUBLISH: January 6, 2013

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA

Bell named to lead county sheriff road patrol

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

Gary Bell had just finished serving his country 25 years ago when he was hired as a road patrol deputy and was rewarded for his service to the county when he was picked to oversee that division of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office.

"He has worked his way up from a deputy on the road patrol to a corporal in charge of the motorcycle unit, to a sergeant in charge of a shift, to a lieutenant in charge of several shifts and now to captain in charge of the road patrol," said Sheriff Paul May in announcing the promotion Wednesday, Jan. 1.

Capt. Bell is replacing Bud Slay, who retired after spending nearly 33 years with the Florida Highway Patrol and eight years heading up the OCSO road patrol. Mr. Slay officially retired Dec. 18, 2012.

"Since I've announced this (promotion), I've not had one person who didn't think it was the right thing to do," added the sheriff. "Gary is respected by the people and the people who work for him."

Capt. Bell joined the OCSO in 1987 after serving five years in the U.S. Army and four

years with the U.S. Coast Guard. He was hired by Sheriff O.L. Raulerson.

Of the promotion, Capt. Bell simply said: "I'm happy, and I've got a lot to do."

He went on to say he wants to do all he can to get OCSO deputies whatever they need to carry out their duties and protect the citizens of Okeechobee County, while staying within the framework of the sheriff's budget.

Even though the promotion creates an open lieutenant's slot in the road division, Sheriff May said he doesn't plan on filling that position at this time.

"With the budget we're facing, we'll hold off on that for a while," he said. "We'll keep the lieutenant's position open and see how the financial situation goes."

The road patrol unit currently has two other lieutenants, Joe Ortega and K.J. Ammons.

Sheriff May went on to say this most recent promotion is only the second time he has replaced a member of his command staff during his eight years as sheriff.

Capt. Bell and his wife Michele, who also works for the sheriff's office as the public information officer, have been married for 30 years and have one daughter, Megan.



Courtesy photo/OCSO

Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Public Information Officer Michele Bell (left) pins gold bars on her husband Gary Bell in honor of his recent promotion to captain. Capt. Bell, who will head up the OCSO road patrol division, is replacing Bud Slay who retired last month.

Real Life Children's Ranch Yard Sale

Real Life Children's Ranch Yard Sale will be having a sale next week on **Jan. 9** and Jan. 11. Fill a bag for \$1. Come on out for great bargains. Our hours are 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

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1. Anyone who has held a checking account with MIDFLORIDA in the past year will not qualify for the \$77 incentive. In addition to opening a new checking account, you must accept and open online banking, online bill payment, eStatement, eNotice, direct deposit (\$500 minimum which must post within 30 days of account opening) and a debit card. For RT4T checking accounts, you must make 5 transactions (deposits, withdrawals, etc.) in the first 30 days in lieu of the direct deposit requirement. The \$77 will be deposited to account after the qualifications have been met and for RT4T accounts, after the account has been open for 30 days. Freedom accounts do not qualify for this incentive. Minimum to open Free Checking is \$50. 2. To qualify for the incentive, you must refinance a loan (excluding first mortgages) of \$15,000 or more from another financial institution. Loans of \$5,000 to \$14,999 will receive a \$100 credit. 3. Incentive is offered on new credit card accounts only with a minimum credit limit of \$2,500. The introductory APR is available on non-MIDFLORIDA credit card balance transfers for the first 12 months on new accounts only. A balance transfer fee will apply.



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