

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!

Does a candidate's weight matter?

• My ideas on it are that it shows a terrible weakness from a person who always tries to project the opposite, with his mouth. This guy is fighting a losing battle if he thinks he can control public statements enough so that his kids won't hear them.

• I think comments about 'worrying someone will die in office' are often just a way to pretend you are concerned about the person while planting doubt in the minds of others about that candidate. They did the same thing during John McCain's campaign, saying due to his age, he would be more at risk.

• I don't know about the success chances of the obese, but they better not stop to take a drink of water during a speech. CNN calls it a career ender.

• Is ANYONE who is able to form a cogent thought taking the lapdog alphabet media seriously?

• The mainstream media freaked out over a thirsty guy taking a drink of water. Yet I can't help but remember that four years before he ran for president, Bill Clinton gave a long, confusing, rambling speech at the Democratic National Convention that many television commentators said was a "career ender." And as I recall, the public didn't care what the TV talking heads thought about the speech, or about Bill Clinton's BMI.

Give credit where credit is due

• It's good to see some of our snowbirds have taken it upon themselves to refurbish the signs into their neighbourhood, Kissimmee River Estates. It is nice since this is your home away from home here in South Florida. The same pride you have in your "up North" neighbourhood is being shown in your "down South" neighbourhood. Way to go snowbirds!

State Road 70 traffic

• Crazy drivers are everywhere. Those drivers that drive 5 mph under the posted speed limit also create a problem. It forces those that drive or intend to drive the posted speed to pass. Drivers forced to drive under the speed limit for no reason except a slow driver tend to lose their patience and make a bad decision.

• Maybe our northern friends come down here and think the speed limit is in kilometers not miles per hour. That means that they are going slower than the speed limit.

• Maybe their speed is related to the speed that they feel they can safely handle their car. Or, maybe they are looking for a place to pull off and spend their money.

• I don't mind the slow drivers—so long as they don't pull out right in front of me. But what really gets me is the ones who stop on the Kissimmee River Bridge to look at the river, not caring that there is a line of cars behind them trying to cross that bridge.

Mixed drink ban

• As a person who enjoys the occasional cocktail, I resent the city council implying that my morals are somehow lesser than those of the folks who drink beer. Because I would like to enjoy a margarita on a Sunday afternoon, how does that make me of lower morals than the guy who is drinking a beer? Alcohol is alcohol and it's time the city council woke up and realized how foolish they are for not lifting the ban on mixed drinks on Sundays. It makes Okeechobee look silly.

• There was a restaurant in Okeechobee that did not serve alcoholic beverages because they were catering to the church crowd. They went out of business.

• How is allowing beer and wine but banning mixed drinks taking the moral high ground? The city council seems to think that people who liked mixed drinks are somehow more sinful than people who drink beer or wine. There is no "hard liquor" and "soft liquor." Legally and chemically it is all alcohol. If restaurants want to make a little more money by selling mixed drinks—let them. People are not going to get any more intoxicated on mixed drinks than they already do on beer. They might actually drink less because the mixed drinks are more expensive.

• The idea of making a concession by allowing beer and wine is not too smart. Either you are selling alcohol or not.

Reflections from the pulpit

By Mark Mayers, LMFT, CAP
Real Life Children's Ranch

Technologically our world continues to make light years of progress each decade. These advances have made our lives easier in countless ways. The problem is, easier is not always better. Morally we are not necessarily improving. In fact in many ways our nation is losing the integrity and ethical standards that our forefathers worked so hard to instill in our nation's fabric. Perhaps one of the greatest areas of our moral decline that our nation's recent generations are experiencing is a lack of respect for authority.

Although the authorities in our lives are not perfect—no human being is—they have been placed in their positions by God. Romans 13: 1-7 says, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of

God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed."

God wants each of us to be subject (or submit) to the authorities in our lives. Unless they ask or demand that we do something contradictory to His word we are to submit to the authorities in our lives. After all, God tells us that He has established them to protect us. By submitting to the authorities in our lives we are really submitting to God. There is no greater protection than this. Finally, we must remember that submission is also a matter of the heart. Following the directions of those who are in authority over us should come from a loving heart. In reality only the Jesus can produce this. One of the greatest truths we can teach our young people is to submit to and respect authority. The best way we can teach them this Godly principle is with our choices. St. Frances of Assisi said it best when he said, "Preach the Gospel always. If necessary use words."

Bloodmobile will be in town

If you are in good health and at least 17 years old, you can help save lives by giving blood. For information, visit a blood drive and speak to the medical professionals there. Blood drives are planned for:

- Sunday, Feb. 17 – Golden Corral, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 21 – High School (inside), 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 21- High School (outside), 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 22 – Big O RV Park, Hwy 78W, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Correction

The article headlined "Teen not a bully, mom tells officials," contained an error. The article stated, "She also quoted an unnamed teacher who allegedly encouraged her son to strike the victim." This should have been: "She quoted an unnamed teacher who encouraged students in his six hour class to strike her son." We regret the error and any confusion that it might have caused.

Okeechobee Forecast

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Today: Clear. High of 59F. Winds from the North at 10 to 15 mph.

Tonight: Clear. Low of 37F. Winds from the North at 5 to 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Monday: Partly cloudy in the morning, then overcast. Fog early. High of 72F. Winds from the ENE at 10 to 15 mph.

Monday Night: Mostly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 52F. Winds from the East at 5 to 10 mph.

Tuesday: Overcast. High of 79F. Winds from the SSE at 5 to 15 mph.

Tuesday Night: Clear. Fog overnight. Low of 57F. Winds less than 5 mph.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

To Reach Us

Address: 107 S.W. 17th Street, Suite D
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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.

