

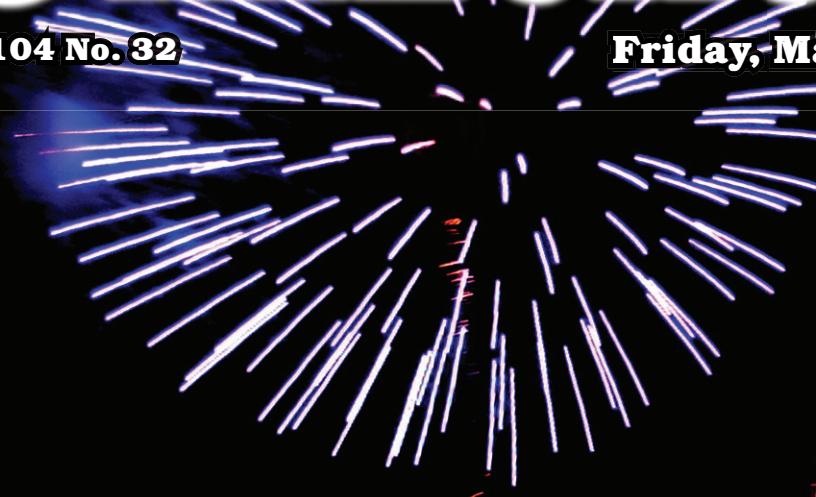


OKEECHOBEE NEWS

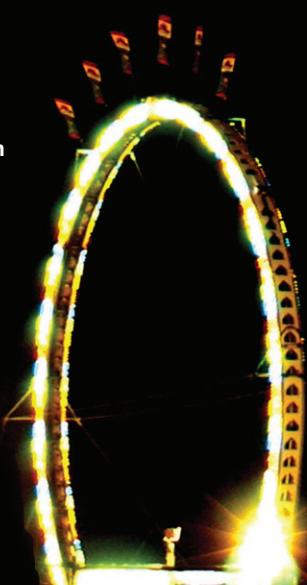
Vol. 104 No. 32

Friday, March 15, 2013

50¢ Plus tax



Fireworks light up the sky on opening night of the Okeechobee County Fair



Okeechobee News/Katrina Elsken
The fair continues through the weekend at the Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center and Fairgrounds, with entrance off State Road 710.



The 'Big O' is back

... Inside

County Fair royalty crowned



... Page 9

Driver's license office to move to health dept.

... Page 11

Rodeo returns to U.S. 441 arena

... Page 5

Lake Levels

14.04 feet

Last Year: 12.84 feet



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Educators learn about 'Ending the Hunger'

Special to the Okeechobee News

Okeechobee Retired Educators had a busy and productive March meeting. One of our guest presenters was Samantha Hord of Okeechobee High School. Ms Hord was sharing with the membership of a need in the community of "Ending the Hunger." Through her leadership at OHS, the National Honor Society has taken on a challenge of trying to ensure that elementary students do not go hungry over the weekends due to lack of food.

Through this "backpack" project, students at OHS will pack a bag of food which will go home with selected North Elementary School students in order to provide nour-

ishment for them over the weekend.

A similar project has been going on at Seminole Elementary through the receipt of a grant and work of the Food Service department.

The NHS students want to expand this project to other schools and chose North Elementary. It costs \$28 a month (or \$280 a year) to provide a student with non-perishable food for the weekends. The OREA members are planning to donate to the fund set up at Okeechobee High School to support this endeavor. If any other service groups or individuals wish to get involved with "End the Hunger," contact Ms. Hord at Okeechobee High School.



Special to the Okeechobee News
Samantha Hord (right), from the Okeechobee High School, spoke to the Retired Educators. At left is Gay Carlton.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Okeechobee Historical Society February Meeting

Attorney Jennifer Williamson was the guest speaker at the February Meeting of the Okeechobee Historical Society. She showed photographs from a newspaper "The Okeechobee Herald," started by her grandfather, Parker Abney and friends. The publication began in the late 1940s. She presented old pictures of that era to the group. Ms. Williamson is the daughter of Faye Haverlock and Jack Williamson and is the wife of Rodney Carden. Shown in the photograph (left to right) Jennifer Williamson, Faye Haverlock and Betty Williamson.

Ask-A-Lawyer session offered

Special to the Okeechobee News

Attorney Glenn J. Sneider and Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. will host a free monthly Ask-A-Lawyer session for the public at the Okeechobee County Public Library, 206 S.W. 16th St., on March 19 from 2 to 5 p.m.

Okeechobee area residents in need of legal information and who do not have a lawyer will have an opportunity to meet Attorney Sneider to discuss their legal matters. With a long tradition of providing pro bono service to the community, Attorney Sneider will meet with individuals who have questions related to specific case types such as Family Law, Criminal, Civil, Domestic Violence, Dependency, Probate and Tenant/Landlord Matters. Please call to register for a FREE appointment. Florida Rural Legal Services 772-466-4766 or 888-582-3410.

Okeechobee Forecast



www.QualityACokee.com 467-1545



Today: Clear. High of 75F. Winds from the NNE at 5 to 10 mph.

Tonight: Clear. Low of 46F. Winds less than 5 mph.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Clear. High of 79F. Winds from the South at 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 52F. Winds less than 5 mph.

Sunday: Clear. Fog early. High of 81F. Winds from the SSE at 5 to 10 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 57F. Winds from the SE at 5 to 10 mph.

Luncheon to benefit

Sgt. Benjamin Casey

A benefit barbecue luncheon will be held for Sergeant Benjamin Casey on Friday, March 15. A pulled pork lunch with two sides and a roll for \$8 a plate will be offered starting at 10 a.m. across from Pizza Heaven. Pre-Orders are encouraged and delivery to local businesses is available. Please call or see Krystal Kemp 863-261-5805 or Captain R. Bryant 863-634-2474 for more information.



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Okeechobee School Board redraws district boundaries

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee County School Board elected to follow the lines of the Board of County Commission districts as they withdrew the boundaries of their five school board districts Tuesday night.

Superintendent Ken Kenworthy said population has shifted from district 5 to district 4 by over 700 residents since the last redistrict effort. The 2010 census showed the slight shift in population. He said there were a few minor changes within the city limits.

The board honored State Science and Engineering Fair representatives from the school system that included Delaenam Aka-

hoho and Savannah Goggans of Yearling Middle School, Seana Flood and Alyssa Purvis of Osceola Middle School, Ryan Daniel and Aubrie Reister of the Freshman Campus and Michael Daniel and Glenn Jarriel of Okeechobee High School. The state science fair is held at the end of the month in Orlando.

The board also honored several athletes who performed well this year. Christina Tinajero qualified for the state finals in girls weight lifting, Ryan Hagan and Allen Leitner qualified for the state finals in wrestling, and members of the FFA Livestock Evaluation Team that won the Florida State Fair Championship last month. They include Hunter Berggren, Jessica Humphrey, Felipe Soto

and Allison Trimble. The team won over 67 other teams in the state. Jessica Humphrey was offered a scholarship to be a livestock judge for a Texas Community College. Sponsor and Coach Roger McWaters said the team will be the top seed at the state championships later this year.

Jill Rogers with Communities in Schools presented the School District with an award to honor their support for their local programs.

After the public session the board went into executive session to discuss the contract impasses with their instructional and classified employees. The board approved the schedule of the executive session during the regular business agenda.

Okeechobee School employees contributed over \$15,600 to the March of Dimes Walk America in Okeechobee last weekend. Mr. Kenworthy said students were involved and really worked hard to help a worthy cause.

The school board recently purchased five new school buses and received many complimentary letters from students. All of the buses have air conditioning and seat belts. Mr. Kenworthy said there are very few buses in the fleet that don't have seat belts.

Mr. Kenworthy went on to say two local schools received perfect audits and administrators will be recognized next month.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Delaenam Akahoho (left) is one of two Yearling students to represent Okeechobee schools at the State Science and Engineering Fair. At right is Superintendent of Schools Ken Kenworthy.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Savannah Goggans (left) will represent Yearling Middle School in the State Science and Engineering Fair.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Seana Flood (left) will represent Osceola Middle School at the Florida State Science and Engineering Fair.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Jill Rogers of Communities in Schools presented an award to the School System for their support of their programs as Undersheriff Noel Stephen (right) and School Superintendent Ken Kenworthy (left) look on.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Alyssa Purvis (right) will represent Osceola Middle School at the Florida State Science and Engineering Fair.



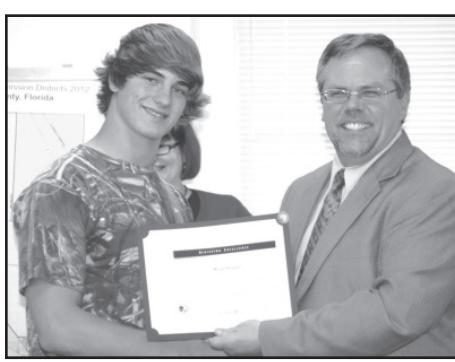
Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Ryan Daniel (left) will represent the Okeechobee Freshman Campus at the State Science and Engineering Fair.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Aubrie Reister (left) is one of two students from the Okeechobee Freshman Campus to take part in the State Science and Engineering Fair this year.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Michael Daniel (left) will represent OHS in biochemistry at the State Science and Engineering Fair.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Ryan Hagan (left) was honored by the school board for his wrestling accomplishments this year. Hagan reached the state finals in Lakeland.

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Senior Citizens	\$5.00 all movies
Matinees	\$4.50

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MOVIE LISTINGS

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Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. 3:00 & 7:00

II: "IDENTITY THIEF"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00.
Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. 3:00 & 7:00

III: "OZ: THE GREAT AND POWERFUL"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:15.
Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:15. Mon. 3:00 & 7:00



When it is Used to Flavor Tobacco!

Tobacco companies are using candy and fruit flavors to sweeten their products and make them more attractive to children and teenagers.

But this is a dangerous bait-and-switch, designed to addict younger and younger kids to tobacco, creating life-long customers.

Don't Let Kids Fall for the Trap.

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!

Tips

- I notice a lot of people don't know the proper way to tip. I see in a restaurant a party of two leave \$1. The waiters/waitress work on tips to earn a living. They receive very little salary from the restaurant. The proper tip to leave if you received good service is 15 percent to 20 percent of the total bill. I always tip 20 percent. These people have to make a living too.

Traffic

- As happens each year around this time, there is a lot of traffic on the county roads. It would help a lot if drivers would remember to use their turn signals to let other drivers know what they intend to do. Let the others on the road know if you are planning to change lanes, turn left or turn right. The worst ones are the drivers who just slam on the brakes and stop before turning without any indication they plan to turn. Show a little consideration for the other drivers on the road and maybe we can all make it home safely.

Letter to the editor

Stroke Support Group

The Heritage Assisted Living Facility is the sponsor of a "Stroke Support Group." This group is being formed for stroke patients, their caregivers, and anyone wanting to know about stroke effects and the care involved. Also anyone that might be interested in volunteering to assist when needed; e.g. -- When a caregiver may have to go shopping, doctor's appointments, or just to have some free time. The advisor for the group is, Muhammad Nooruddin, Registered Physical Therapist, and owner/director of "New American Physical Therapy and Aquatic Center." Muhamnaad has conducted previous stroke groups. These were successful and he had to expand to two sessions per week. The purpose of the group is:

Government

- Another good representation of what's wrong with our government and a fine example of that area of Democrats in charge: The state had to take over Detroit.
- Don't be too hard on Detroit, they only want to be like Chicago ...
- Our own Republican Lt. Governor has resigned as FDLE investigates her criminal activities. Did I mention she's a Republican?

Guns

- They make such a big deal about the rifles with the big clips, but the reality is that most gun deaths in this country are from handguns and most of those handguns were obtained illegally. We don't need more laws. There are already laws against convicted felons possessing a gun. Passing laws did not keep the handguns out of the hands of these criminals. What we need is more enforcement of existing laws.

County buildings

- Now that they have already thrown away more than \$50,000 on plans for a new building, the county officials are asking whether or not they need it after all. I guess the Okeechobee News asked the right questions when they discovered that the county administrator thought the sheriff wanted to take over the Alderman Building and the sheriff said he didn't want it. It would have been nice if the county commissioners asked those questions before they spent our tax money.

Letters to the editor

Ring the Bells

As the local coordinator for the Salvation Army Bell Ringers, I am pleased to report that the Okeechobee community 2012 Kettle Collection efforts yielded a 15 percent increase in collection over the 2011 total. Making this increase a reality was an amazing staff of volunteer workers who took the time to sit by our traditional Red Kettles and "Ring the Bells."

Another important factor is, of course, those of you who so willingly dropped your donations into our Kettles. Your continued generosity at this annual event is genuinely appreciated.

As a tribute to our volunteers for their tireless labors during our 2012 Holiday Kettle Campaign, the Okeechobee Masonic Lodge No. 237, F&AM will host a dinner in your honor on Saturday, March 9. The event will be held at the Masonic Lodge, 107 N.W. 5th Ave., from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m.

Your attendance at this function is sincerely appreciated as it was through your dedicated appeal to the shopping public that we were able to achieve this level of activity in Okeechobee. The Kettle income collected in Okeechobee stays in our community and is used to aid and assist local residents who need financial help for such things as paying their rent, electric or water bill or purchasing needed prescription medication.

If you were a 2012 Bell Ringer, contact me with your reservation at 863-357-0427. Please leave a message if I am unavailable to take your call. I look forward to seeing each of you at this much-deserved celebration of your giving to our community.

Kip Gardner

Kettle Drive Chairman
Salvation Army Coordinator

Arena

Due to the consideration of a wonderful piece of Okeechobee history, its heritage and usefulness, the more than appropriate and long awaited decision has been made to restore and return to the old arena on 441.



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.

Okeechobee News

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Our Purpose...

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

We Pledge...

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

MEMBER OF: FLORIDA PRESS ASSOCIATION

This weekend will be the last rodeo to take place in the Agri-Civic Center.

Mr. Todd Clemons and many more of the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association members voted to re-group, restore the old arena into a working arena for rodeos once again. Can I hear a resounding HOORAY!

More than just restoration is in the plans. Even a Cracker House with photographs and memorabilia will be on display, new lighting, repaired bleachers and more.

I for one could not be happier with this decision as myself and many more have discussed this arena for more than two years, as what is going to happen to it. My fear was it would be destroyed, taken down or purchased to house more medical offices. This is going to be GRAND!! As we all take part in the newness, but, not too much, as we intend for it to remain, "old" in appearance.

Different fundraisers and contributions will make this happen to stay within the guidelines of codes, but, it will all be worth it.

We MUST maintain our heritage and the history behind Cattlemen of our town. Cattle and agriculture are a huge reflection of what Okeechobee stands for in the realm of the USA.

If this arena has a special part in your heart, please contact Mr. Todd, and he will let you know of the upcoming plans and how you can be of help with this project. The needs are: Manpower, funds, energy in groups of people as volunteers.

As I have lived in Okeechobee since 1973, this is the best thing I have seen happen, to "Come back home" to a place I personally rode the Grand Entry in.

Please keep looking forward to a great place to again bring the kids and the rest of your family. This will be the place your family will want to go see an authentic rodeo.

Many heartfelt thanks to the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association for this landmark decision.

Happy Blessed Trails,
Bobbi Poole

Commissioners discuss budget shortfall

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

At their meeting on Thursday, March 14, Okeechobee County Commissioners discussed the budget shortfall as well as a grant for adding electricity to the horse barn stalls at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center.

Okeechobee County Administrator Robbie Chartier told commissioners that revenue projections change and keep changing. In February revenue sources that had been short increased. She went on to say that the situation is a little better than it was. However, the administrator added, "We do have a shortfall we need to address." The projected shortfall of current revenues is estimated at \$350,000. One thing commissioners must decide is how to address the \$500,000 shortfall that was covered by using funds from the solid waste host fees. Mrs. Chartier informed the board that retail sales taxes collected by the state are not seen by the county for two months.

Turning to other business, Parks and Recreation Director Albee Scoggins informed

the board that the application for a USDA grant to put electricity in the horse barn at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center has been modified. The original application was for funding to put the electricity in overhead. The modification calls for a combination of overhead and underground electricity. Mr. Scoggins said this modification would not adversely affect the county's chances for receiving the grant. The original idea was for overhead electricity in order for the stalls to be removed, allowing for greater flexibility in the use of the building. Staff has determined that there is no advantage to overhead electricity since the removal and setup of existing stalls is very labor intensive and cost prohibitive.

Sharon Vincent gave a report on this year's Health and Safety Expo. She said the goal was to educate our community about resources available. She said 130 vendors participated and 2,603 people attended. Commissioners approved Ms. Vincent's request to sponsor next year's event.

According to Gary Ritter, director of South Florida Water Management District's

Okeechobee Service Center, the lake is in good shape, however, the Kissimmee River is not navigable.

In other action the board:

- made a midyear adjustment of the budget to reflect changes in balances brought forward and changes in revenue estimates;
- approved a contract with Point and Pay, LLC to allow for the use of credit and debit cards to pay fees to the county;
- approved license agreements concerning the county SLERS tower;
- nominated Michael Hazelief for the governor's consideration as a member of the children's services council;
- approved a continuing services agreement for engineering services, geotechnical services and material testing; and
- conducted another strategic planning session for the development of a vision statement, mission statement and goals for the county.

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

Yellow journalism? Not us!



In this age of exploitative and trashy media, we're proud to be different. We believe in operating and publishing our newspaper as a public trust.

Fulfilling our public trust requires that we try to bring out the best in our community and its people. We seek the highest common denominators, not the lowest. We don't engage in gutter journalism. We know we can achieve success on the high road.

Original Cattleman's Rodeo Arena to reopen

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee County Cattlemen's Association is moving their rodeos back to their original location.

From the first rodeo in the early 1950s to about 2006 the cattlemen held rodeos at their arena on U.S. 441 N. With the expiration of their contract for the use of the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center, the Cattlemen's Association will move their two annual rodeos, the Speckled Perch Rodeo and the Labor Day Rodeo, back to that arena beginning with this year's Labor Day

Rodeo.

The Cattlemen's 5-year agreement with the county, which began with the 2007 Labor Day Rodeo, gave the Cattlemen use of the arena for seven days a year for \$1,000 a day plus utilities. The cattlemen also had control of concessions and parking.

As part of the agreement with the Cattlemen, the county agreed to increase the Agri-Civic center seating from about 2,500 to 3,754 at a cost of \$256,428.

Todd Clemons, of the Cattlemen's Association, said that the question of what to do at the expiration of the agreement was put to the membership and they opted to go

back to the old arena.

The old arena on U.S. 441 N. seats 4,000. The competition area at that facility is smaller than the competition area at the Agri-Civic center. However, there is no standard size for a rodeo competition area.

County administrator Robbie Chartier said that even though the income loss to the county is relatively small, that loss will have to be taken into consideration in planning the budget for fiscal year 2013/14.

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

Man accused of sending threatening texts to woman

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

A local man was arrested after his romantic advancements were spurned by a woman who had befriended him on a social networking site, and he then reportedly threatened her with death.

Michael L. Frost, 34, N.E. 18th St., Okeechobee, was arrested Wednesday, March 13, on a felony charge of aggravated stalking. He is being held in the Okeechobee County Jail on \$5,000 bond.

An arrest report by Officer Cesar Romero, of the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD), stated that the female victim befriended Frost on the site and would sometimes give him food to help him out. Frost then began calling and texting her, even



Michael Frost

though they were not in a romantic relationship, added the officer's report.

When the victim told Frost she did not want to get romantically involved with him, he allegedly began to harass her with text messages.

In one such message he allegedly told the woman "... they need to put a rope around your neck." He went on to tell her that "... I wish death to you and your family," stated the report. He reportedly concluded that message by saying "... when you die I am gone (sic) spit on your grave."

According to Officer Romero the woman told Frost to stop contacting her. Frost then told the victim that he would kill her if she contacted the police, added the officer.

IRSC to present one-day writing workshop

The Fielden Institute for Lifelong Learning at IRSC will present a one-day workshop, the Creative Habit for Writers based on the book "The Creative Habit" by Twyla Tharp. The workshop will be led by author Suzanne Fox, MFA, on Thursday, **March 21**, from 1-4 p.m. at the Williamson Conference Center in Okeechobee. The \$25 registration fee includes a performance by Tharp at the McAlpin Fine Arts Center, Fort Pierce, on April 12, at 4 p.m. To register, call 772-462-7880.

Writers Read Their Own Work

Friends of the Okeechobee Library are hosting an Open Mic event on Thursday, **March 21**, at 5 p.m. Come share a slice of your original fiction or non-fiction. Please bring up to five pages as each person will have up to five minutes to read. The public is invited to come and enjoy the work of local writers. For more information, call Jan at 863-357-9980.

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KEECHOBEE NEWS

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Community Events

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Eagles North plan coming events

On Friday, **March 15**, Eagles North, 9985 U.S. 441 N., will have steak dinners from 5:30-9 p.m., followed by music with Michael Gooood Music. On Saturday, March 16, at 5:30 p.m., card bingo begins. Tuesday, March 19, bingo starts at 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 20, bingo start at 5:30 p.m. All proceeds go to the F.O.E. 4137 community benefit fund.

Eagles plan weekend events

Starting at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 15, Cypress Hut Eagles will serve ribeye steak dinners for \$14; shrimp dinners for \$10; or, fish dinners for \$8, starting at 5:30 p.m. Music by Wayne Pervis on Saturday, March 16. St. Patrick's Day traditional corn beef dinner by Lorraine will start at 5 p.m. Music will be by the Hard Country Band. Sunday, March 17, Southern fried chicken will be served from 1-5 p.m. for \$6. A dart tournament will be held Tuesday, March 19, starting at 6 p.m. Hamburgers will be served. The public is welcome. Tuesday's proceeds go for the Fraternal Order of Eagles Diabetes Research Center, and the rest go to the community and national charity funds. For information call 863-467-1154.

VFW N. plans St. Pat's events

Friday, **March 15**, starts with The Grill being open from 5-9 p.m. and karaoke hosted by Sing with Sandy (Sandy Stiles) from 7-11 p.m. On Saturday, March 16, there will be burgers on the grill from noon-2 p.m. The grill will be open from 5-7 p.m. featuring seafood baskets and karaoke hosted by D & K (Danny & Kathy) from 7-11 p.m. Sunday, March 17, there will be a St. Patrick's Day Celebration complete with a corned beef & cabbage dinner from 1-3 p.m. for a donation of \$6.50 and a party with entertainment by D & K (Danny & Kathy) from 3-7 p.m. The public is welcome and proceeds go towards Veteran's Assistance Programs.

VFW Post 9528 hosting dinner

Buckhead Ridge VFW Post 9528 will host a dinner on Friday, **March 15**, from 5:30-7 p.m. Music will be by Saxman. The public is invited to enjoy either steak, pork chops or fish and shrimp dinners for a donation from \$7 to \$11. Proceeds to benefit veterans & family needs. For information, call Gordie at 863-467-2882.

Smoked chicken dinner offered

United Methodist Men, 200 N.W. Second St. (behind Walgreens), will have a smoked chicken dinner on Friday, **March 15**, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. for take out only. Delivery is available for 10 or more dinners. From 4-6:30 p.m. you can dine in or take out. Dinners will consist of 1/4 chicken, cole slaw, baked beans, roll and dessert for \$8 donation. Tickets are available at the church office; or by faxing orders to 863-763-2481 by 10:30 a.m. Thursday. Please include contact name, phone number and address to deliver dinners.

Embroidery Group to meet

Do you have an embroidery machine, or want to learn about them? Then join our monthly embroidery group where we all learn and share ideas while working on beautiful embroidery projects. The next meeting is Saturday, **March 16**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the local Red Cross office at 323 N. Parrott Ave. Please call Linda at 863-697-2450 or Mary at 863-697-1920 for more information.

Silver Palms RV Resort to hold classic car show

The Silver Palms RV Resort, 4143 U.S. 441 S., will host its first classic car show on Saturday, **March 16**. Registration is at 10 a.m. Judging will be from noon - 3 p.m. Awards presentations are at 3:30 p.m. All proceeds go to our troops, Wounded Warriors Project. For information, contact Butch at 307-743-1969; or, Jim 209-601-2000.

Farm Bureau hosts BBQ

The Okeechobee County Farm Bureau is having their 31st Annual YF&R Scholarship barbecue on Saturday, **March 16**, at the Agri-Civic Center. Join us for our barbecue that will run from 4 to 7 p.m. All proceeds will go toward the YF&R Scholarship Fund. Tickets are \$11 per person and can be purchased at the Farm Bureau Office. Tickets can also be purchased at the 4-H concession stand March 11-15, and on the day of the event. For information, call 863-763-3101.

Eagles plan St. Pat's dinner

Eagles North, 9985 U.S. 441 N., will serve corned beef and cabbage Sunday, **March 17**, at 2 p.m. for a \$6 donation. Public invited to celebrate the St. Patrick's Day dinner. All proceeds go to the F.O.E. 4137 community benefit fund.

Moose hosts St. Pat's dinner

A corned beef and cabbage dinner will be held at the Okeechobee Moose, 159 N.W. 36th St., on Sunday, **March 17**, from 3-7 p.m. Music will be by Lisa. Thursday's bingo starts at 1 p.m. with lunch at 12:30 p.m. Friday night bingo starts with Bonanza at 6:30 p.m. Food is available. Sunday Breakfast will be served from 8-11 a.m. Free pool all day! All month! All proceeds go to support Moose Charities programs.

VFW post 10539 to hold dinner

VFW post 10539 will hold a St. Patrick's Day dinner of corned beef and cabbage with the fixin's for a \$7 donation, on Sunday, **March 17**. They start at 4:30 p.m. with a \$500 Pot O' Gold drawing. Tickets are available at the Post.

VFW ladies plan breakfast

Buckhead Ridge Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW 9528 will hold their monthly breakfast on Sunday, **March 17**, starting at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. We will have biscuits and gravy, sausage, home fries, eggs any way you want them, toast, juice and coffee for a donation of \$5. Please join us; we are open to the public. For information, call our Post at 863-467-2882.

VFW Post #9528 to hold St. Patrick's Day events

Buckhead Ridge VFW Post 9528 will hold a St. Patrick's Day events on Sunday, **March 17**. Entertainment will be by Nancy Sheperd from 1-5 p.m. If you have seen Nancy before you will want to see her again; if you haven't see Nancy before you will not want to miss this opportunity. Corned beef, cabbage, Irish potatoes, Gordie's Hugh carrots, dessert from 2-5 p.m. for a \$7 donation. Proceeds go towards homeless veterans. For information, contact Gordie 863-467-2882.

Legion hosting Sunday bingo

American Legion 64 will once again host Sunday night bingo beginning on **March 17**, at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 5 p.m. in the bingo area. The kitchen will offer a limited menu. Payoffs will be determined by player attendance. All proceeds to benefit the American Legion veterans' programs. The event is open to the public.

The Orchid Club to meet

The Orchid Club will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, **March 18**, at the Extension Center, 451 U.S. 98 N. The Garden Club meets at 6 p.m. Bring your favorite orchid or a problem plant to discuss. For information, call 863-763-6469.

Historical Society to meet

The Okeechobee Historical Society will have its monthly meeting, Monday, **March 18**, beginning at noon in the Historical Society Museum on U.S. 98 N. Anyone is invited to attend, we only ask they bring a covered dish to share. Membership dues are \$10 per year to join.

Okeechobee Democrats to meet

The Okeechobee Democratic Executive Committee will be meeting on Thursday, **March 21**, in the meeting room of Beef O'Brady's beginning at 6 p.m. Any interested Democrat is invited to attend.

The B.R.A.T. Club Teen Dance plans "Harlem Shake Video"

The B.R.A.T. Club Teen Dance will be held at the Okeechobee Freshman Campus, 610 S.W. 2nd Ave. Saturday, **March 23**, from 7-10 p.m. Teens and 'Tweens from 12-16 are invited to attend. For only \$7, there will be music, costume contest, games and more! A "Harlem Shake Video" will be recorded at this teen dance. Admission includes pizza, soda and chips. For information, please contact Teresa Chandler at 863-801-4996.

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.

Kathryn Ann

(Ferrall) Greenisen

OKEECHOBEE — Kathryn Ann (Ferrall) Greenisen passed from this life on Mar. 13, 2013 at the Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, Carlisle, Pa.

She was the daughter of the late Dr. Walter Candel and Kathryn Althea (Donbar) Ferrall. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clifford Leland Greenisen, Jr.

Kay was a long-time resident of Salem, Ohio. She was an honorary alumnus of Salem High School, class of 1954. Her family moved to Little Rock, Ark., in her junior year of high school. She graduated from Little Rock High School.

Kay was a pianist from an early age. She played over twenty years for Peace Lutheran Church in Okeechobee, Fla. She enjoyed her time with children at Wee Little Lambs Day Care, Mt Holly Spring, Pa., Carlisle YMCA, and other day care facilities in the Carlisle, Pa., area. Most recently Kay volunteered her time at the Salem Historical Society, Salem, Ohio.

Kay was the mother of three sons, Jeff Greenisen of Woodbridge, Va., Tim Greenisen of San Antonio, Texas, and Scott (Julie) Greenisen of Boiling Springs, Pa. She is also survived by four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m., Sun., Mar. 17, 2013 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Salem, Ohio.

Hoffman-Roth Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc., 219 North Hanover Street, Carlisle is in charge of the funeral arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Kay's name to the Salem Historical Society, 208 South Broadway, Salem, OH 44460 or Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 251 South Broadway Avenue, Salem, OH 44460.

To sign the guest book visit www.hoffman-roth.com.

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By Dr. Ramesh Kumar
Big Lake Cancer Center

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Submitted Photo/Big Lake Cancer Center

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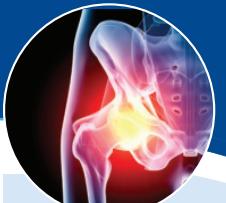
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Okeechobee County Fair 2013 royalty crowned

Special to the Okeechobee News

2013 Miss Teen Okeechobee County Fair and Little Miss Okeechobee County Fair were crowned Sunday, March 10 at the Okeechobee High School. Both will begin a yearlong reign representing her community.

A large audience witnessed an exciting evening as the new queens were crowned and other awards were given out. Darby Jones won the title of 2013 Miss Teen Okeechobee County. Destani Whaley was crowned 2013 Little Miss Okeechobee County. Both young ladies will be the official hostesses to the Okeechobee County Fair this week.

They will also make personal appearances throughout the year. It will be a fun and exciting year for both girls.

Darby Jones, 17, is the daughter of Todd and Rachel Jones. She is a senior at Okeechobee High School. Destani Whaley, 13, is the daughter of Krystal Avant and James Jamison. She is in seventh grade at Okeechobee Christian Academy.

Other Miss Teen Okeechobee County Fair awards were: First Runner-up Payton Byrd, 15; Second Runner-up, Hannah Whiting, 17; Miss Photogenic, Darby Jones; Miss Congeniality, Payton Byrd; and, the Business Achievement Award, Carissa Licata, 16.

Little Miss Okeechobee County Fair awards were: First Runner-up, Kayleigh Crum, 10; Second Runner-up, Sarah Jansen, 13; Miss Photogenic, Sarah Jansen, 13; Miss Congeniality, Cady McGehee, 13; and, the Business Achievement Award, Kayleigh Crum, 10.

Prize packages and gifts were given to all participating contestants.



Special to the Okeechobee News/Sharon Cannon
Miss Teen Okeechobee County Darby Jones (right) and Little Miss Okeechobee County Destani Whaley (left) were crowned during the Okeechobee County Fair Pageant on March 10.

Queen Darby's grand prize is the opportunity to compete at the 2014 Miss Florida Teen USA pageant, which will be held in October at Bailey's Hall in Hollywood, Fla. At this pageant she will have the opportunity to win a \$40,000 scholarship and compete in the Miss Teen USA pageant.

Emcees for the pageant were Bridgette Waldau, 2012 Queen Taylor Fulford and 2011 Queen Christina Close. Leslie's Dance Studio dancers entertained throughout the evening. The dancers were Kyleigh Adams, Preslynn Baker, Samantha Carlson, Madison Causier, Merydian Causier, Rye Dioquino, Rhiannon Dyer, Christine Groso, Audrey Jackson, Lauren Jackson, Shelby Kirton, Halle McDuffie, Kali Morse, Mattie Mullis, Sara Munoz, Kira Murphy, Tristin Powers, Delaney Rucks, Lauren Sills, Nikki St. Pierre, Chaka Yani Smith, Chloe Soriano, Brayleigh Stephens, Reese Stokes, Leyton Watford, Kaylee Whidden and Cameron Williams. There was also a special performance by Nikki St. Pierre singing "At Last."

Pageant organizers thank The Okeechobee County Fair Board, Leslie's Dance Studio, Kelly Raulerson - Absolutely Art, Eli's Western Wear, Brown Cow Sweetery, Bridgette Waldau Studio of Graphic Design, Sharon Cannon Photography, Shirley Palmer, Madonna Arnold, Virginia Bryant, Cheryl Kirton, 2010 Little Miss Okeechobee County Fair Shelby Kirton; 2011 Little Miss Hope Wisener, 2012 Little Miss Morgan Roberts and 2012 Miss Firecracker Brittany Avant.

The committee would also like to thank all the parents of all contestants and dancers for their support and for giving their children an opportunity to learn and shine in their

own bright light.

The committee extends a special thanks to 2012 Miss Okeechobee County Fair Taylor Fulford and 2012 Little Miss Morgan Roberts for their dedication and hard work during their reign. They were wonderful to work

with and did an excellent job representing their community.

To view photos of the pageant and of the Miss Teen and Little Miss reign throughout the year go to the County Fair Queen Facebook page.

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YMS students work on Reflex Math Fact Fluency

Special to the Okeechobee News

Yearling Middle School students are benefiting from the Reflex Math program.

Multiple studies have shown that the more capable problem solvers are those students who can automatically recall math facts. The studies also have shown that the students are able to learn math skills more quickly and are more likely to succeed in future mathematics courses.

The NCTM, National Math Advisory Panel "highlight math fact fluency as a central pillar of every student's mathematics education." A major proponent of the Reflex Math program is that an emphasis is placed on a "fact family approach" (a group of related facts that use the same numbers). In this process, students learn more than one operation at the same time, thereby helping them to understand the nature of inverse operations.

Older methods included learning 169 multiplication and 156 division facts as opposed to the Reflex Math program where they learn 91 fact families. The computerized program adapts itself to the individual student and is able to monitor the students' progress both in the classroom and at home. While giving the students serious amounts of practice as they answer facts, the students are never bored while enjoying the fluency developmental games. The grant allows for 35 students, who need assistance with multiplication and division of facts 0-12, to be enrolled in the class.

As students "graduate," the grant permits those students to be replaced with other students who are then given the opportunity to become more mathematically fluent.

Regarding the Reflex Math program, Mrs. Sylvia Bandi has spoken with other teachers who currently teach at Gove Elementary in Belle

Glade. The teachers have only positive comments regarding the program. Their elementary students are becoming fact fluent at an early age via a variety of creative computerized games. The program is available for both English and Spanish speaking students.

In a short time the 35 Yearling Middle School 6th grade students (from the classrooms of Mrs. Michelle Coleman, Mrs. Darlene Gibbs, and Mrs. Sylvia Bandi) have shown to be fluent in 60% of the facts! The students have mastered 3,500 new fluent facts and solved 175,000 total facts.

Pedro Sanchez, YMS, stated, "The Reflex Math program has helped me realize what the true meaning of multiplication and division are. The Reflex program is a mixture of playing games and learning. What people may not realize is that you're actually learning. That is why Reflex is a fun program to always do."



Special to the Okeechobee News/YMS

Carlos Ayala received a certificate for solving 5,000 facts; Alexander Soriano-Rios received a certificate for solving 200 new fluent facts; and, Pedro Sanchez received a certificate for becoming 100 percent fluent (YMS's first graduate of the Reflex Math program).

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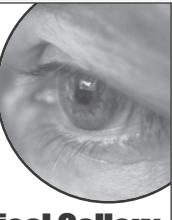
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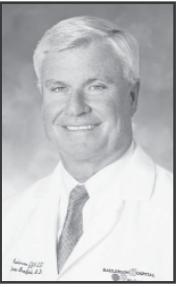
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County revises drivers license office plans

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The Thursday, March 14, meeting of the Okeechobee County Commission was a tale of two buildings. Commissioners discussed the fate of a building in the industrial park as well as a place to issue drivers licenses.

Commissioners spent a considerable amount of time discussing options for issuing drivers licenses.

The state is moving all drivers license services to the local county tax collectors as part of a 2011 mandate from the Florida Legislature.

Upon inspection, the state has determined that the present tax collector's office is not large enough to issue drivers licenses. The county had been considering building a new building to house the tax collector and property appraiser on the southwest section of the block where the current tax collector and property appraiser building is located. A contract in the amount of \$149,700 was awarded for design of the building. To date about \$53,862 has been spent on design.

Commissioners spent a considerable amount of time discussing the various options for housing the drivers license office. Among the options considered were, continuing with the present planned building, constructing a smaller building for just the drivers license office at an estimated cost of \$450,000, relocating to the health department building, using the current drivers license office, leasing an existing building or refusing to offer any drivers license services at all.

The consensus was to consider moving the drivers license office into the health department building and sharing a wing of that building with the building department.

Commissioner Bryant Culpepper noted that there were no sidewalks leading to that building and it was out of the way. He suggested a downtown location.

Commissioner Joey Hoover noted that there is sufficient parking at the health department building and the building is hurricane hardened.

Tax Collector Celeste Watford told commissioners that the state has looked at the

health department building and determined it would be satisfactory, if the county chose to use it.

"I never asked for a building," she told commissioners. "The choice of the office is up to you. Wherever you choose is fine. We are packed in our present location. I don't have the room. You have to give me the room."

Mr. Oden was directed to get cost estimates for modifying the health department building.

Commissioner Hoover suggested that the design process be stopped once it reached a good stopping point. Mr. Oden recommended that the design process be completed up to the point where the county would be ready to advertise for bids for construction. He was directed to investigate to see if the county would face a penalty for cancelling the design contract.

Turning to the other building on the agenda, Mr. Oden told commissioners, "We have gone back and taken a hard look at the Advanced Stone Building." The county acquired title to the building in the industrial park after the tenant defaulted on his lease agreement. Mr. Oden presented a number of photographs illustrating the condition of the building. He said it would take \$22,000 to remove all the wood from the engineered metal building. Frank Cunningham, who conducted a survey of the building, said it would cost about \$75,000 to restore the metal shell to its original condition and make it code compliant.

Commissioners were reluctant to do too much work to the building at this time since it is uncertain what modifications a tenant might want to make. Mr. Oden was directed to get estimates for removal of interior wood from the building and estimates to do the minimum amount of work necessary to make the building structurally sound and prevent deterioration as well as securing access to the building.

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

Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW 9528 invite you to dine

Buckhead Ridge Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW 9528 on Wednesday, **March 20**, at 5 p.m. will host the monthly Wednesday night dinner, and will have BBQ country ribs, baked beans, potato salad, roll & strawberry shortcake prepared by Karen Charest for a donation of \$7. Please join us. We are open to the public. For more information, please call our post at 863-467-2882.

Eagles North hosts a benefit for Margie Shifter

Eagles North F.O.E. 4137, at 9985 Hwy. 441 North, and the Auxiliary are having a benefit for Margie Shifter on Saturday, **March 23**. Items are still being accepted for an auction to be held at 3 p.m. Please contact The Eagles at 863-763-2552 to drop off items, or have them picked up. Please join us. Dinners will start at noon. Benefit will start at 11 a.m. There will also be a poker run the same day starting from the Iron Eagle. All proceeds will go to Margie Shifter to help pay for her medical bills and needs.

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Two arrested in drug operation

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

As a result of an undercover drug operation, two people have been arrested separately for allegedly selling the prescription painkiller oxy-codone.

Members of the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force set up the operation which led Tuesday, March 12, to the arrests of Denise Georgeanne Thomas and Michael Alton Murphy.

Thomas, 50, S.E. 33rd Terrace, Okeechobee, was charged with the felonies of possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell and sale of a controlled substance. She is being held in the Okeechobee County Jail on \$45,000 bond.

She was also arrested on an Okeecho-



**Denise G.
Thomas**



**Michael Alton
Murphy**

bee County warrant charging her with desertion - withhold support. She is being held without bond on that charge.

Murphy, 24, S.E. 39th Ave., Okeechobee, is also charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell and sale of a controlled substance. He is being held in the county jail on \$15,000 bond.

According to arrest reports Thomas and Murphy both met with a confidential source working with the task force at their respective homes, where the alleged sales were apparently made.

Those arrest reports also state that Thomas goes by several different names, including: Denise Thomas-Dawson; Denise Thomas Dawson; Denise Georgeanne Thomas; Denise Murphy; and, Georgeanne Denise Thomas.

Library book sale planned

Friends of the Okeechobee Library will hold their semi-annual book sale fundraiser on Wednesday, **March 20**, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday, March 22, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday, March 23, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Books, videos and DVDs are \$1 a pound. On Saturday a bag of books is \$2 and a box is \$5. For more information, call 863-763-3536.



EPISCOPAL

CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
"Come worship with us"
Sunday
8 am & 10:30 am
Holy Eucharist Mass
in English
12:30 pm Holy Eucharist Mass
in Spanish
Wednesday 6 pm
Holy Eucharist Service
200 NW 3rd Street
863-763-4843
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churchofoursaviourokeechobee.org

BAPTIST

Trinity Free Will Baptist Church
Sunday School 10:00 am
Sunday Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Bible Study 6:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Study 6:00 pm
Pastor : Thomas Dees
1840 N.E. 39th Blvd (Cemetery Rd)
Okeechobee, Florida 34972
Telephone: 863-763-4962

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).

- Cecil Curtis Williams, 16, S.E. 30th Terrace, Okeechobee, was arrested March 12 by Deputy Sergeant Robert Coleman on a felony charge of burglary of a structure and a misdemeanor charge of petit theft. He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail then released into the custody of his parents.

- Cory Patrick Ball, 22, Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, was arrested March 13 by Deputy Elbert Kline on an amended DOC warrant charging him with the felonies of violation of probation - burglary of a structure and violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- Cornelius Merriweather, 17, N.W. 11th St., Okeechobee, was arrested March 13 by the OCSO Street Crimes Unit on a felony charge of resisting a law enforcement officer

with violence and a misdemeanor charge of possession of marijuana under 20 grams. He was later arrested by Deputy Nathaniel T. Mitchell on Okeechobee County warrants charging him with the felonies of tampering with a witness, sale of cocaine and possession of cocaine with intent to sell. He was also arrested on Okeechobee County juvenile take and hold warrants charging him with failure to appear - resisting a law enforcement officer without violence, failure to appear - fleeing and eluding a law enforcement officer, failure to appear - possession of marijuana under 20 grams, violation of probation - battery on a detainee, violation of probation - battery on detention staff and violation of probation - sale of cocaine. He was also arrested on an Okeechobee County bench warrant charging him with the misdemeanor of no valid driver's license. Merriweather was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail then taken to the St. Lucie Regional Detention Center in Fort Pierce.

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.

Come Dine with the Doctor

Dine with the Doctor will be held on Tuesday, **March 26**, in the Raulerson Hospital cafeteria. Dinner is at 4:30 p.m. for \$5 each. The free lecture begins at 5 p.m. Please RSVP to 863-763-9228.

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Okeechobee Sports News in Brief

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

Twenty-three teams competed in the annual **Okeechobee Golf and Country Club** annual member-guest tournament Feb. 16-17. The team of Jim McClure and Howard Huffman won the B flight and Gene Miller and Bob Davies finished in second place. Another flight was won by the team of Ed Vrhoticky and Jim May with Dale Laflam and Tommy Ziegler in second place. The championship flight member's title was won by Ronnie White and Danny Lanman.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Elks help soccer club

A new Elks Lodge is in town. Jerry Jones, Exalted Ruler of Lake Okeechobee Elks Lodge #2871, presents Lupe Serrano and Andy Kessella of the Okeechobee Soccer Club a check to help defer their many expenses. This year the team has to travel all over Florida to participate. Next year they will sponsor games in Okeechobee. Elks believe in helping their local community. If you are interested in becoming an Elk, call 863-467-2658.

\$29,900

GREAT FIXER UPPER - SEE THE POTENTIAL - This 2 bed/2ba is a magnificent opportunity. Will take some work but could be special. Add your personal touch with this bargain price. MOTIVATED SELLER! MAKE OFFER!

Vicki Anderson
Lic. RE Broker
863-634-4106
For more Information

Coldwell Banker Berger Real Estate is pleased to announce the addition of Gracie Morton and Renee Box to our sales team.

Gracie has worked with her family in the construction business for the past 13 years, and she brings her knowledge and hard work to the real estate business.

Are you thinking of buying or selling?

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Gracie Morton
863.634.5283

Renee Box
863-801-2147



Renee has worked eight years in the mortgage loan origination field. As a real estate sales associate she can now help people buy/sell their home and help with the lending process.



Renee Box
863-801-2147

Mike Scott and Sam Smith took second place. Mr. White won the closest to the hole contest on the 11th hole on Saturday and Tim Lightsey on Sunday. The Club Championship is held on April 6th and 7th.

• OHS alumnus David Jeune's college basketball career ended last Wednesday in the Atlantic Sun Tournament when the University of North Florida Osprey's fell to Florida Gulf Coast 76-63. Jeune finished the year as a starter in all 32 games. He averaged nearly 24 minutes per game and averaged 3.7 points per game and 4.9 rebounds per contest. The 6'7" senior scored 10 points, a season and career high, on Dec. 8 against Pittsburg of the Big East Conference. He pulled down a season-high nine rebounds against North Kentucky on Jan. 2. Jeune was a member of the Atlantic Sun Academic Honor Roll during his career. He was third team all-state for Class 4A when he played basketball for Okeechobee High School.

• Samantha Harrell has quickly become a force as a college softball pitcher. She had pitched in 12 games for Eastern Tennessee State University with a (4-4) record. The Lady Buccaneers are (7-10). Harrell has a strong 2.72 earned run average and has allowed less than a hit per inning and struck out 33 batters while holding hitters to a batting average of .246.

• The Lady Brahman track team finished ninth at the Bill Wilson Invitational in Sebastian Saturday. Sha'Dajia Williams finished in 14th place in the 100 meters and fifth in the 400 meters. Mercedes Washington finished in 12th place in the 200 meters

and ninth in the 400 meters. Tabatha Henry took second place in the 200-meter steeplechase. Charleigh Heater finished in eighth place in that event. The 4x400 meter relay team finished in sixth place behind strong efforts of Shania Bays, Heater, Henry and Washington. Ami Edwards finished sixth in the shot put competition.

• The Brahman boys track team finished in eighth place at the Wilson event. Mike Thomas finished fourth in the 100 meters. Frank Adamo took sixth place in the 800 meters. Emmanuel Gaona finished ninth and Cole Owens 10th in the 1600 meters. Gaona finished sixth in the 2000 meter steeplechase. The boys also had strong performances from several relay teams.

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Lori Mixon
Lic. Real Estate Broker
(863) 634-1457
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Located in Western Martin County, this extremely well-kept home is on the Rim Canal minutes from the Okeechobee Waterway & Kanner Highway. Two acres of waterfront, tropical landscape. 28' X 12' inground, heated & fenced pool, screened patio. Interior of home features a spacious, open concept. Incredible kitchen has beautiful impact resistant skylight, large bar, pantry & island. \$289,500 Call Holly (863)532-1778

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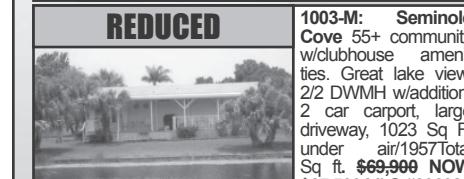
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* 1/2-acre parcel in Viking \$25,000 Make Offer! MLS #206600 • 40+/- Acres of vacant/pasture land in Fort Drum. Paved street in front of the property. \$125,000 NOW \$120,000 MLS #206360 • 319+/-acres on Hwy 441 N \$4,000,000 • 55+/-acres on SR 710 \$330,000. Make Offer! • Foreclosure 4 lots SE of 441 (1/2 acre). Motivated Seller each building site at \$5,000 NOW \$4,900.

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Announcements

Important Information: Please read your ad carefully the first day it appears. In case of an inadvertent error, please notify us prior to the deadline listed. We will not be responsible for more than 1 incorrect insertion, or for more than the extent of the ad rendered valueless by such errors. Advertiser assumes responsibility for all statements, names and content of an ad, and assumes responsibility for any claims against the INI USA. All advertising is subject to publisher's approval. The publisher reserves the right to accept or reject any or all copy, and to insert above the copy the word "advertisement". All ads accepted are subject to credit approval. All ads must conform to INI USA style and are restricted to their proper classifications. Some classified categories require advance payment. These classifications are denoted with an asterisk *.

Auctions

VERO BEACH HIGHWAYMEN PAINTINGS ABSOLUTE AUCTION!

SUN Mar 17@2PM

Over 50 paintings by the legendary artists of the Treasure Coast

Preview all week at Auctioneer's office

15 Royal Palm Pointe Vero Beach (772) 562-5015

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One man's trash is another man's treasure. Turn your trash to treasure with an ad in the classifieds.

Garage/ Yard Sales

OKEECHOBEE - 2911 SE 29 Lane, Friday and Saturday, March 15th & 16th, 8am to 2pm. Turn on 33rd Terrace by Motel which goes into 29th Lane. Household, collectibles, furniture, lots of misc.

OKEECHOBEE - 3744 SW 16th Ave. (Ousley Ests.) Sat. 3/16., 8am to 3:30 pm. HH items, & clothes. Lots of stuff, too much to mention!

How do you find a job in today's competitive market? In the employment section of the classifieds

We Buy Estates
Antiques, Collectibles,
Household, Tools,
Jewelry and etc.
Call 863-697-8906

YARD SALE
204 S.E. PARK STREET
DR. CLINIC'S
PARKING LOT
SAT. 3/16, 8AM TILL ?
LOTS OF GOOD STUFF

Employment

Employment Full Time

Artificial Inseminator/Milker
Needed for large dairy farm. Must be dependable. DFWP. Call 863-634-2271 for more information.

Reading a newspaper helps you understand the world around you. No wonder newspaper readers are more successful people!

MASSAGE THERAPIST

Licensed Massage Therapist wanted for Chiropractic Office. Contact Missy at 763-2400

Employment Full Time

Kissimmee River Restoration Project S-65EX1
Friction Crane Operator for 140 Ton Manitowoc Vicon 3900W. NCCER or NCCO Certification required. Must have experience with Clam Bucket, Concrete Bucket & Rip Rap working on & off of Barge. \$28 per Hour & \$50 per day Per Diem. Work week will be between 45-55 hours. Call 863-357-0022 or apply @ 2403 SW Ruck's Dairy Road, Okeechobee, FL 34974

Grab a bargain from your neighbor's garage, attic, basement or closet in today's classifieds.

Need a few more bucks to purchase something deer? Pick up some extra bucks when you sell your used items in the classifieds.

Employment Part Time

Grand Oaks Assisted Living Community
PT Cook needed. Exp. only apply (Level 2 Background check required). Apply in Person M-F 203 SE 2nd Street

Buying a car? Look in the classifieds. Selling a car? Look in the classifieds.

How fast can your car go? It can go even faster when you sell it in the classifieds.

Time to clean out the attic, basement and/or garage? Advertise your yard sale in the classifieds and make your clean up a breeze!

Business Opportunities

Business Opportunities

Need EXTRA MONEY?



OKEECHOBEE NEWS

107 SW 17th St • Suite D

Inquire Within

NO PHONE CALLS

1	8	3	5	6	9	7	4	2
6	9	2	1	7	4	5	8	3
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2	3	6	4	1	5	9	7	8
4	5	9	3	8	7	2	6	1
7	1	8	2	9	6	3	5	4
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Business Opportunities

NOTICE

Independent Newspapers will never accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is. If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 772-878-2010 for previous complaints.

Some 800 and 900 telephone numbers may require an extra charge, as well as long distance toll costs. We will do our best to alert our reader of these charges in the ads, but occasionally we may not be aware of the charges. Therefore, if you call a number out of your area, use caution.

Miscellaneous

Home Theater Surround system model KA4210 new in box cost \$3,495 will sell \$1,200 o.b.o. 1969 Rock-ola Juke Box with over 1,500 45's, 15 Elvis Presley albums \$1,000 o.b.o. Call 863-623-4412 leave message.

Agriculture

Lawn & Garden

COMPOST for Organic Gardening and Farming - Okeechobee Recycling Facility, enter at Waste Management, 10800 NE. 128th Avenue. Pickup or Delivered *Public Welcomed* Please call. (216)956-0949

It's never too late to find the perfect gift. Look for it in the classifieds.

Vacation Rentals

Summer Rental Available May thru September, Fully furnished 3/2 on canal with dock in Buckhead Ridge. View the property at www.gator-watchgetaways.com Drastically reduced rates, contact Jim and Grace for details 863-467-8559

Rentals

Apartments

2/1 Oak Lake 60A Remodeled. \$700 incl water 1st, last, \$500 sec Call 863-634-3312.

Shop here first!
The classified ads

When you want something sold, advertise in the classifieds.

TAYLOR CREEK Condos 1br/1ba, Partially Furnished \$650 mo. 1st, last & sec. dep. 561-352-4243

Love the earth Recycle your used items by selling them in the classifieds.

Condos/Townhouses Rent

Taylor Creek Condo 2BR/1BA, furnished, boat dockage, pool & water included, totally new kitchen & bath, \$800/month + 1 month security. Call (863)658-4264 or (305)522-5024

Get a quick response to any item you may be selling with a classified ad.

Real Estate

Houses - Sale

(4)Houses in Okeechobee All on water close to Taylor Creek & Lock. All have covered boat docks, w/excellent or new seawall's. All clean and like new inside w/or without furniture. Prices start at \$60,000 or make offer.

Motivated Seller 765-348-8270

Your new home could be in today's paper. Have you looked for it?



Mobile Homes

Mobile Home Sale

2000 Homes of Merritt 40ft Park Model, wide street, corner lot, new a/c, roof and tile floors. Very nice, located in Ancient Oaks Park \$65,000 Call 863-357-6530



Autos Wanted

CASH FOR CARS
No Title Needed,
Any Condition.
268junk.com
Located in Okeechobee
Call (863)484-2012

Utility Trailers

Car hauler - 2011 Sure-trac open car hauler, used once, paid \$5500, like new sell \$2,300.00/or best offer. (954)214-6903.



Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION CASE NO. 2013-CP-023

IN RE: ESTATE OF DARON GREGORY WASHINGTON SR., a/k/a DARON G. WASHINGTON SR.

Deceased

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of DARON GREGORY WASHINGTON SR., a/k/a DARON G. WASHINGTON SR., deceased, whose date of death was September 19, 2012, is pending in the Circuit Court for Okeechobee County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 312 NW 3rd Street, Okeechobee, Florida 34972. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA STATUTES WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The first publication date of this notice is March 8, 2013.

Personal Representative:
PATIENT A. WASHINGTON
1050 SW 83rd Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34974
Attorney for Personal Representative:
COLIN M. CAMERON
200 N.E. 4th Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34972
Fla. Bar No. 270441
colin@cameronlaw.com
438346 ON 3/8/13/2013

LEGAL NOTICE

A public auction will be held at BMJ Towing, Inc.
Lot at 414 South Parrott Avenue,
Okeechobee, Florida 34974
on Friday the
29th day of MARCH, 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

1G1ND52M1WY124580
1998 CHEV MALIBU 4 D SEDAN
2D4F4873HS513685
2005 DODGE MAGNUM BLUE
RGR03183
1949 CHEV PICKUP

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. 438794 ON 3/15/2013



Boats

2011 Lowe St. 195,90hp, trolling motor 8ft Minn Kota Talon,(2)23 gallon live wells,fish finder,4 tanks of fuel since new. Warranty good thru Aug. 2015. Located in Buckhead Ridge. \$16,500 724-388-4075

Campers/RVs

Wanted all Travel Trailers, Motor Homes and Fifth Wheels. Any Condition, Cash paid on the spot Call 941-347-7171

Fifth Wheels

2006 KZ New Vision 37ft High Quality 5th Wheel Trailer, Excellent Shape Will Deliver Within 25 Miles \$26,500 or O.B.O. Call 863-332-6008

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

Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL ACTION CASE NO. 2013CA00040

PNC BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff,
vs.
MARIA JOYCE LEGEREIT, ET AL,
Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION

To: **Maria Joyce Legereit**
Last Known Address:
3250 US Highway 441 S,
Okeechobee, FL 34974-6239
Current Address: Unknown

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

Last Known Address: Unknown
Unknown

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

LOT 238, TREASURE ISLAND, UNIT 6, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 3 PAGE 57, PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA. TOGETHER WITH A MOBILE HOME AS A PERMANENT FIXTURE AND APPURTENANCE THERETO, DESCRIBED AS: A 2004 SINGLEWIDE MOBILE HOME BEARING IDENTIFICATION NUMBER FLHBCS162449833 AND TITLE NUMBER 0089013041 A/K/A 3501 SE 28th St., Okeechobee, FL 34974-6679

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses within 30 days after the first publication, if any, on Alberto Law, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is P.O. Box 23028, Tampa, FL 33623, and file the original with this Court within 30 days from first publication service on Plaintiff's attorney, or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or petition.

This notice shall be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in the Okeechobee News.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this court on this 11th day of March, 2013.

SHARON ROBERTSON
Clerk of the Circuit Court
BY: Arlene Nealis
Deputy Clerk

Albertelli Law
P.O. Box 23028 Tampa, FL 33623
CCD-013993F01

**See the Americans with Disabilities Act - If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact Corrie Johnson, ADA Coordinator, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Suite 217, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986, (772) 807-4370 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

348797 ON 3/15/2013

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO. 2009 CA 000514

JPMORGAN CHASE BANK,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff,

vs.
MISLEYDYS EXPOSITO, et al Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION

To: **MISLEYDYS EXPOSITO and MARIO L. GONZALEZ**

RESIDENT: Unknown
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:
12751 NE 22ND AVE
OKEECHOBEE, FL 34972-4813

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

Lot 5, Block 5, COUNTRY HILLS ESTATES, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 97, of the Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida.

has been filed against you, and you are required to serve a copy to your written defenses, if any, to this action on Phelan Hallinan, PLC, attorneys for plaintiff, whose address is 2727 West Cypress Creek Road, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309, and file the original with the Clerk of the Court,

Public Notice

Public Notice

REQUEST FOR BID (RFB) NO. 6000000539
S-129 AND S-131 TRASH RAKE UPGRADES
AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS,
GLADES COUNTY, FL

The Procurement Bureau of the South Florida Water Management District, B-1 Building, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406, will receive sealed bids up to 2:30 p.m., opening time on **Tuesday, April 16, 2013** for the **S-129 AND S-131 TRASH RAKE UPGRADES AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS, GLADES COUNTY, FL**. This project includes but shall not be limited to: Demolition work, supply and install automated debris collection system, removal of pump intake bay debris racks, asphaltic road work, rock road work, maintenance dredging, electrical work, supply and install fall protection devices, security fencing, relocation of irrigation pump system and bearing waster lubrication system; replacement of asphalt fuel tanker containment pad, concrete work, supply and install slide gate(s) system, replacement of rain gauge, site improvements to provide site drainage, bank stabilization, replacement of onsite septic tank system and install new septic system.

An **OPTIONAL PRE-BID CONFERENCE** will be held on **THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2013 AT 10:00 AM**, at the District Okeechobee Field Station, 1000 N.E. 40th Avenue, Okeechobee, FL 34972. For directions call (863) 462-5280.

All bids must conform to the instructions in the RFB. Interested respondents may obtain a copy of the complete RFB (1) at the above address; (2) by downloading the solicitation from our website at www.sfwmd.gov/; (3) by calling (561) 682-2715. The public is invited to attend the bid opening. **Further information on the status of this solicitation can be obtained on our web site - www.sfwmd.gov/** 438527 CGS 3/14 ON 3/15/2013

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NOTICE OF DRAFT PERMIT

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) gives notice of its preparation of a draft permit for J.M. Larson, Barn #3, to be issued to J.M. Larson, Inc. The proposed permit authorizes the operation of the waste management system in accordance with the approved Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), which also limits the herd size and management practices. The permit will also provide coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), as delegated to the state by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The dairy is located at 4517 NE 224th Street, Okeechobee, Florida 34972. The Department has assigned permit application file number FLA139254-005-IW4A to the project.

Any interested person may submit written comments on the draft permit of the Department or may submit a written request for a public meeting to Greg Kennedy, FDEP Southeast District, 400 North Congress Avenue, 3rd Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33401, in accordance with rule 62-620.555 of the Florida Administrative Code. The comments or request for a public meeting must contain the information set forth below and must be received in the Office within 30 days of publication of this notice. Failure to submit comments or request a public meeting within this time period shall constitute a waiver of any right such person may have to submit comments or request a public meeting under Rule 62-620.555, Florida Administrative Code.

The comments or request for a public meeting must contain the following information:

(a) The commenter's name, address, and telephone number, the applicant's name and address, the Department Permit File Number and the county in which the project is proposed;
(b) A statement of how and when notice of the Department action or proposed action was received;
(c) A statement of the facts the Department should consider in making the final decision;
(d) A statement of which rules or statutes require reversal or modification of the Department action or proposed action; and
(e) If desired, a request that a public meeting be scheduled including a statement of the nature of the issues proposed to be raised at the meeting. However, the Department may not always grant a request for a public meeting. Therefore, written comments should be submitted within 30 days of publication of this notice, even if a public meeting is requested.

If a public meeting is scheduled the public comment period is extended until the close of the public meeting. If a public meeting is held any person may submit oral or written statements and data at the meeting on the Department proposed action. As a result of significant public comment the Department final action may be different from the position taken by it in this draft permit.

The permit application file and supporting data are 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 DEP Southeast District office, 400 North Congress Avenue, 3rd Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33401, Tel. (561) 681-6600.

438462 ON 3/15/2013

within 30 days after the first publication of this notice, otherwise a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

This notice shall be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in the Okeechobee News.

DATED: 3/11/2013

SHARON ROBERTSON
Clerk of the Circuit Court
BY: Arlene Nealis
Deputy Clerk of the Court

Phelan Hallinan, PLC
2727 West Cypress Creek Road
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

Movant counsel certifies that a bona fide effort to resolve this matter on the motion noticed has been made or that, because of time consideration, such effort has not yet been made but will be made prior to the scheduled hearing.

Florida Rules of Judicial Administration Rule 2.540 Notices to Persons With Disabilities. Please contact Corrie Johnson, ADA Coordinator, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Site 217, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986, (772) 807-4370 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notice if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than seven (7) days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

438796 ON 3/15/2013

RE: MISLEYDYS EXPOSITO and MARIO L. GONZALEZ
RESIDENT: Unknown
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:
12751 NE 22ND AVE
OKEECHOBEE, FL 34972-4813
YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following described property located in OKEECHOBEE County, Florida:

Lot 5, Block 5, COUNTRY HILLS ESTATES, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 97, of the Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida.

has been filed against you, and you are required to serve a copy to your written defenses, if any, to this action on Phelan Hallinan, PLC, attorneys for plaintiff, whose address is 2727 West Cypress Creek Road, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309, and file the original with the Clerk of the Court,

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS	2 Phenomenon	30 Transpose digits,	44 High capital
1 Old Eurasian letters	caused by ice	say	45 Hops driers
5 Bean counter	crystals between	31 Golden, Silver,	46 Fancies
15 Home of H.	the Earth and sun	Bronze and Iron,	47 100,000 BTU
3 One making cracks	to Ovid	48 John Denver	
4 Happens quickly	32 One may be rude	album with an eagle's silhouette	
5 Camus, for one	33 Ejected	on the cover	
6 Brazen	34 Diving milieu	50 Cashier's counter	
7 Kid-lit Judy	35 Smithereens	bowlful	
16 How travelers' bags are screened	39 Athens native	52 Naval noncoms	
17 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	40 Volunteers	55 AA issue	
18 Old-style street show	43 Disgusted	56 QB's miscue	
20 Tub contents	45 OB's	57 QB's	
21 Depend	46 High capital	58 Crossword	
22 Affected	47 100,000 BTU	59 Crossword	
23 A, B or C, perhaps: Abbr.	50 Cashier's counter	60 Crossword	
24 Like an alias	61 Diving milieu	62 Crossword	
25 Writ word	63 Smithereens	64 Crossword	
27 Wane	65 Athens native	66 Crossword	
28 1992 gold medal-winning Dream Team coach Chuck	67 Volunteers	68 Crossword	
29 They're not near the action	69 Castellaneta who voices Homer Simpson	70 Crossword	
30 Some six-pack contents	71 Kid-lit Judy	72 Crossword	
31 Six-pack alternative?	73 One making cracks	74 Crossword	
32 It's best if it's well-seasoned	75 Happens quickly	76 Crossword	
33 Party stipulation	77 Old-style street show	78 Crossword	
34 Gentle way to go	79 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	80 Crossword	
35 Party	81 Old Eurasian letters	82 Crossword	
36 Party	83 One making cracks	84 Crossword	
37 Party	85 Happens quickly	86 Crossword	
38 Party	87 Old-style street show	88 Crossword	
39 Party	89 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	90 Crossword	
40 Gentle way to go	91 Old Eurasian letters	92 Crossword	
41 Pickover's concern: Abbr.	93 One making cracks	94 Crossword	
42 Shuts out, in slang	95 Happens quickly	96 Crossword	
43 Takes it slow	97 Old-style street show	98 Crossword	
44 Eastern way	99 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	100 Crossword	
45 70s toothpaste with "green sparkles"	101 Old Eurasian letters	102 Crossword	
46 Call, in a way	103 One making cracks	104 Crossword	
47 Pot user	105 Happens quickly	106 Crossword	
48 Language that gives us "shampoo"	107 Old-style street show	108 Crossword	
49 Didn't just go	109 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	110 Crossword	
50 Very loud	111 Old Eurasian letters	112 Crossword	
51 Call, in a way	113 One making cracks	114 Crossword	
52 Pot user	115 Happens quickly	116 Crossword	
53 Language that gives us "shampoo"	117 Old-style street show	118 Crossword	
54 Didn't just go	119 Top 10 single on the 1970 album "Abraxas"	120 Crossword	
55 Wood fastener	121 Old Eurasian letters	122 Crossword	
56 Certain tax determinant	123 Happens quickly	124 Crossword	
57 They may be first class: Abbr.	125 Old-style street show	126 Crossword	

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:
HOE AMMO ABASED
AHL LOAF TRIPLE
RYE LUNARMODULE
DOCS RARE WERE
CUTTING CLASS
RAISE OLE FLU
STOLI MAE SOUR
COLLISION COURSE
ONUS HMO PITHY
TIX CUP PARTY
MONETARY UNIT
ATOM DOTE PIMA
GRACE PERIOD NAN
ANCHOR MOLE EGG
BOTANY ESAI REO
xwordeditor@aol.com

By Peter A. Collins

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Brahmans get 6-2 diamond win

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Tyler Barber pitched five strong innings and Alex Estremera had two hits, two runs scored, and an RBI to lead Okeechobee to a 6-2 win over St. Cloud in high school boy's baseball action Tuesday night at Brahman Stadium.

Barber struck out six and allowed two runs over the first five innings and Estremera picked up the save. Jack Radebaugh had two hits and Layton Thomas and Christian Crews both had RBI base hits.

Coach Jeff Blackstone said it was a big win for this team, "St. Cloud has played good baseball against quality opponents. I'm confident that we can get this thing turned around and that we're headed in the right direction."

Blackstone said the team gained confidence with two runs in the bottom of the sixth after St. Cloud cut the lead to 4-2. Crews and Estremera provided the key hits in the rally.

"We executed slash plays that scored runs and they were big runs from a confidence stand point for us to finish out the game strong," he added.

Blackstone also praised the pitching in this game. Barber and Estremera pitched well. The entire staff has thrown well lately. Kutter Crawford and Jack Radebaugh have been solid and the staff will benefit from the additions of Crews, and David Coleman, who have been medically cleared from arm injuries to start pitching again.

"I'm proud of the kids for sticking with it. We played some real tough teams early on. Our schedule doesn't get any easier but we have started to play better and adjust to the speed of the game," he added.

Barber said he felt the team has started to jell and playing loose and relaxed. He said the game is fun again when you win.

"I felt great tonight. I got ahead in the count, threw my fastball and all my pitches for strikes and confused the batters," he suggested.

Barber said he still has some work to do to get where he wants to be, which is leader of the pitching staff. He was kept out of the lineup and admitted he enjoys focusing just on pitching in games he is on the mound.

"When they started to time my stuff, I battled through it and struck my final batter out. We get hassled a lot at school when we lose so it feels great to start to win games," he added.

Okeechobee improved to 2-8, while St. Cloud fell to 10-5 on the season..



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy
Alex Estremera had two hits and picked up the save as OHS defeated St. Cloud on Tuesday.

Roger Dean

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Roger Dean

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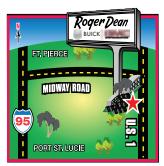
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Going Out: A Guide to Area Entertainment & Attractions

G.O.

**The 'Big O' is back and
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**Take home the green
at Brighton Casino**

**FWC offers free
fishing days**

**Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center
presents 'Biloxi Blues'**



Area festivals and special events...

Okeechobee County Fair

OKEECHOBEE—The Okeechobee County Fair is underway through March 17, at the Agri-Civic Center Fairgrounds, with entrance on State Road 710. The fair includes a carnival midway, livestock shows, cooking competitions, fruit and vegetable competitions, sewing and arts and crafts competitions and more. There is even a Lego building competition and a Duct tape creations event. The Okeechobee 4-H and FFA Livestock Show will be during the fair with the sale on Saturday, March 16. Fairgrounds opens at 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and at noon Saturday and Sunday. Entertainment includes a petting zoo, Okeechobee Idol contest, racing pigs, horse shows, a strongman contest and more.

Big O Birding Festival

LABELLE—The Big O Birding Festival, the largest bird-themed event in South Central Florida, is underway through March 16. The event has a registration “roost” at the Port LaBelle Inn off State Road 80 in LaBelle. From there, visitors explore Hendry and Glades Counties, which are home to more than 400 species of birds, including Wood Storks, Everglades Snail Kites, Limpkins, Painted Buntings, and others who reside in the area from October through April as well as species that live in Florida year round. The festival offers exclusive bird tours led by prestigious experts, workshops with a prestigious bird photographer, birding activities, meals and transportation to and from birding sites. For more information, go to BigOBirdingFestival.com or call 863-675-0125.

Megacon

ORLANDO—MegaCon, the largest comic book, anime, science fiction, fantasy, gaming and multimedia event in the southeastern United States, will take place March 15-17, at the Orange County Convention Center, 9800 International Dr. in Orlando. The annual event attracts around 50,000 visitors—many of them come dressed as a favorite character from a comic book, movie or video game. For more information, go to megaconvention.com.

Silver Palms RV Resort Classic Car Show

OKEECHOBEE—The Silver Palms RV Resort, 4143 HWY 441 S. in Okeechobee, will host its first Classic car show on Saturday, March 16. Registration at 10 a.m. Judging will be from noon to 3 p.m. Awards will be at 3:30 p.m. All proceeds go to the Wounded Warriors Project. For more information, contact Butch at 307-743-1969 or Jim at 209-601-2000.

Junior Cypress Annual Cattle Drive and Rodeo

BIG CYPRESS SEMINOLE RESERVATION—The annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive, planned for March 23, is a recreation of historic Florida cattle drives. Natives often bartered cattle with immigrants, and they traded cattle with Spaniards as far back as the 1600s. “We wanted to hold some event that would make people remember the impact Junior Cypress had on the tribe,” Paul Bowers, Former Board Representative said in explaining the symbolic drive.

“This annual cattle drive was started in memory of my uncle, Junior Cypress,” said Former Tribal Chairman Mitchell Cypress. “Cattle ranching was his business 24 hours a day. When I think of him, I see him on the back of a horse with his hat pulled down, sheltering his eyes from the sun or driving around the Rez with a pickup truck load of kids, heading for the cow pens or the swimming hole. Big Cypress Indian Reservation is located between Ft. Lauderdale and Naples. Take 1-75 to exit 49 north. For more information, go to floridaseminoletourism.com.

10th Annual LOST Bike Ride

OKEECHOBEE—Rotary’s 10th Annual L.O.S.T. (Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail) Bike Ride will be on April 20, starting at 8 a.m. The L.O.S.T. is a great trek for people of all ages, skills and abilities. With rides of 12, 20, 40 and 54 miles as well as a 5K walk, there is something for everyone. The L.O.S.T. trail itself is world-renowned for its stunning vistas and numerous forms of wildlife. It has become a worldwide destination for bird watching and world class fishing. This great fundraising event promises to be fun for all. All entrants are provided a goody-bag with a commemorative t-shirt and much more. Also, there is a BBQ meal provided afterwards for all entrants as well as a 50/50 and a raffle with a ton of great prizes. All proceeds benefit the charities of the Rotary Club of Okeechobee. For more information, email OkeechobeeRotary@live.com or call Center State Bank at 863-763-5573.

Balloons Over Paradise

IMMOKALEE—Seminole Casino Immokalee will bring its 2nd Annual “Balloons Over Paradise” Festival to the Seminole Tribe Youth Ranch Immokalee on April 20-21, starting at 6 a.m. daily. This celebration of flight features more than 40 custom hot air balloons and plenty of fun for the whole family including tethered balloon rides, live music by award-winning performers, food vendors, art showcase, children’s activities, carnival games, acrobatic kite demonstrations, classic car show, demonstrations by agility dogs and more. Admission is free to the all-ages festival. The Seminole Tribe Youth Ranch is located at 1195 SR 29 in Immokalee. The colorful balloons kick off each morning with an illuminated light show to orchestral music. Festival goers can walk among the balloons as they inflate for a mass ascension into the sky. Specialty balloons include Sugar Bear, Ella “phant” and a flying globe.

Attendees will enjoy a great lineup of activities, all to the sounds of a variety of bands. On Saturday, April 20, pop-rocker Eddie Money will perform his greatest hits. During the late ’70s, Money had a handful of album rock hits and wound up crossing over into the Top 40 with songs like “Baby Hold

On” and “Maybe I’m a Fool.” During the early ’80s, he began to make funny narrative videos, which became staples on early MTV and made “Shakin’” and “Think I’m in Love” hits. 1986s Can’t Hold Back featured the hit “Take Me Home Tonight” and “I Wanna Go Back,” making the album a Top 10 smash. In 1988, Money followed the album with Nothing to Lose, which featured the Top 10 “Walk on Water.” Two years later, “Peace in Our Time,” taken from the 1989 Greatest Hits: The Sound of Money, reached No. 11.

Children will join in on the fun with storytelling, bounce houses and a climbing wall. Food vendors will be on hand with Amish donuts, kettle corn, crepes and great grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and sausage. Attendees will also enjoy funnel cakes, cotton candy and other treats. Parking is free. Pets and coolers are not permitted. For more information, go to seminolecasinoevents.com.

On the cover

An angler in an FLW tournament on Lake Okeechobee is shown in the cover photo by Shane Baker. FLW Outdoors (named for Forrest L. Wood) is a tournament fishing organization that provides fishing resources and entertainment to anglers, sponsors, fans and host communities. For more on FLW, go to flwoutdoors.com.

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Take home the green at Seminole Casino Brighton with \$160,000 in cash and prizes in March!

BRIGHTON SEMINOLE

RESERVATION – Take home the green at Seminole Casino Brighton with the chance to win your share \$160,000 in cash, free play and prizes throughout March!

Step right up and win your share of \$100,000 in possible cash and prizes during the Carnival of Cash Game Show. Earn 250 points and receive one free ticket for your chance to play on Monday, March 18 at 7 p.m. Tickets available while supplies last. See Player's Club for additional details.

Win your share of \$35,000 cash! Earn entries daily in March to be one of seven lucky players to each take home \$5,000 on March 16 and 30.

The best way to play is for free! Seminole Casino Brighton is giving away \$5,000 in Free Play. Be one of 50 players to win \$100 in Free Play on Friday, March 29 between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Win your share of \$15,000 in Free Play with Seminole Hi Lo. There are five lucky winners per night on March 21, 27 and 28!

Cash in during the \$5,000 giveaway. Fifty lucky players will each win \$100 cash on Friday, March 22 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Josiah's Restaurant is serving up Irish specialties in honor of St. Patrick's Day on Sunday, March 17. Diners will enjoy corned beef, cabbage and red potatoes. The restaurant will also offer its Honey Glazed Ham Easter Dinner Special on Sunday, March 31.

Players can enjoy bingo matinee sessions on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 11:45 a.m. Packs are \$18 and \$28.

Tuesdays, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, visitors 55 and older will get a free bag lunch, while supplies last. On Wednesdays, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., visitors 55 and older will get a free breakfast, while supplies last. The free bag lunch and breakfast offers are

open to new or returning Player's Club members. Not a member? It's free to join, so sign up today.

As always, there is free bus transportation from the Hampton Inn in Okeechobee at 1200 State Road 70. On Tuesdays, the bus picks up at 10:30 a.m. It departs the casino at 5:30 p.m. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, the bus picks up at 2:15 p.m. and departs at 7:30 p.m. On Sundays, the bus picks up at 11:15 a.m. and departs at 6 p.m.

See the Player's Club for promotion details. Must be at least 21 years old and a Seminole Player's Club member to participate. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call 1.888.ADMIT.IT.

About Seminole Casino Brighton

Seminole Casino Brighton is a 27,000-square-foot casino with 412 slot and gaming machines, live action blackjack e-tables, a six-table poker room, and high-stakes bingo action, and Josiah, 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 in the Brighton Indian Reservation, 17735 Reservation Road, (State Road 721) in Glades County, FL 34974. For more information, call toll-free 800-360-9875 or 863-467-9998 or visit www.seminolecasinobrighton.com.



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See Player's Club for more details. Management reserves the right to change or cancel the promotion at any time.
If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call 1.888.ADMIT.IT.

Anglers, biologists agree—the Big ‘O’ is back!

The fishing is good on Lake Okeechobee

By Eric Kopp

If Lake Okeechobee could talk she would likely quote Mark Twain and say: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

In recent years the Big 'O' has been through periods of exceedingly high water, droughts and at least three major hurricanes. And it was thought those anomalies, along with increased fishing pressure, had killed off the lake's largemouth bass and black crappie populations.

But, with a little help from her friends, the lake is on her way back to being one of the top angling lakes in the nation.

"The lake looks as good as it's been in 15 to 20 years, ecologically," said Don Fox, a biologist who heads up the Florida Wildlife and Freshwater Fish Commission's (FWC) office in Okeechobee. "It's still turbid out there, but it's getting better. I'm very optimistic. We're turning the corner."

And, he added, the fishery is living proof that the lake is healing.

Fox said the black crappie (speck) population is rebuilding and he described the largemouth bass population as "fantastic." He went on to say the bluegill and shellcracker fishery has rebounded and is "as good as they've ever been."

"There's lots of small forage out there. We had a good forage base out there along the shoreline," he said, in reference to the panfish populations.

As for the bass fishery, for which Lake Okeechobee has often been referred to as one of the best in the nation, FWC fisheries biologist Alyssa Jordan said electrofishing studies done in October of last year indicated the popular gamefish has a bright future.

"We've found in terms of bass, the population seems about the same as in the last couple of years. They (the fish) are running a bit bigger, but we also have a lot of bass in the 10 to 18 centimeter range which is good for the future," she said.

She said last year's data peak for bass was 26-30 centimeters, while this year's peak is at 30 to 32 centimeters. A 26-centimeter fish would be approximately 10.2 inches in length, while a

fish 32 centimeters long is about 12.6 inches in length.

Some of the better areas for bass around the north end of the lake have been Little Grassy and Eagle Bay islands.

"They were doing pretty good in the Indian Prairie area also," added Jordan.

"The lake looks as good as it's been in 15 to 20 years, ecologically."

Don Fox, FWC biologist

Around the south end of the lake, she said her sampling has shown that bass seem to like cattails. In the Observation Shoal area, she's found bigger bass like to hang around "little points of vegetation."

In regard to the speck population, Jordan said she did a lake-wide shocking in December of 2012 and "found a pretty big jump" in the numbers of fish. Although a lot of the fish were small, she said the amount of fish shocked was almost triple that of the year before.

Quite a few of them were fairly young, which was good. Size-wise, it's probably pretty similar but with a few more big fish," she added.

Jordan explained that in last year's project she got 516 fish in 540 minutes of sampling, which comes out to .96 fish per minute. This year, she said they got 2.51 fish per minute and had a larger group of 8- to 10-inch fish.

As for big papermouths, she said January of this year saw a lot of really large specks being caught.

"Larger than normal," she continued. "Some of them were the biggest I've seen. Still, the population is not where it used to be, by any means. But it seems to be coming back."

The larger specks and the rebounding of their population is due, in part, to good forage. Jordan said her studies have shown a spike in both threadfin and gizzard shad.

Jordan said her samplings have also indicated that the panfish population is doing well.

She said she's been getting about 1.5 fish per minute while electrofishing,

with quite a few big fish. The majority of the bluegill are running 7 to 8 inches in length.

"We had quite a few in that range, but we definitely had quite a few of the larger ones," she said.

Speaking of larger, Jordan said while the numbers of redears aren't as good as the bluegill, they do appear to be doing

better than they were. She said she's been getting a lot in the 7- to 8-inch range, but have had some of the feisty panfish topping 9 inches in length.

While Jordan has been using elec-

tricity to catch fish, the ordinary angler isn't allowed to do that. FWC wildlife officer tend to frown on that.

So, just where can fishermen find their favorite species and what types of baits are working?

Cory Lee, another fisheries biologist with FWC deals with creels and

indicated that fishing, overall, is good. The bass fishing has begun to really pick up and their population has rebounded well.

"The 2007-08 drought really decimated the bass and crappie populations. There was no place to reproduce," he said.

But, as Jordan's shocking study has indicated, those two species are again causing a lot of excitement for anglers.

"The lake is just chock full of fish right now," said Lee.

Around the north end of the lake, he said, the fishing has been very good around King's Bar and Little Grassy. Area fishing guides, using wild shiners for bait, have caught quite a few



Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Lake Okeechobee fisheries are in good shape, according to the Florida Wildlife Commission.

largemouths 8 pounds and over this year.

Along the east side, he said the J&S area is holding a lot fish but there isn't much size to them.

"We saw a lot of numbers, but not

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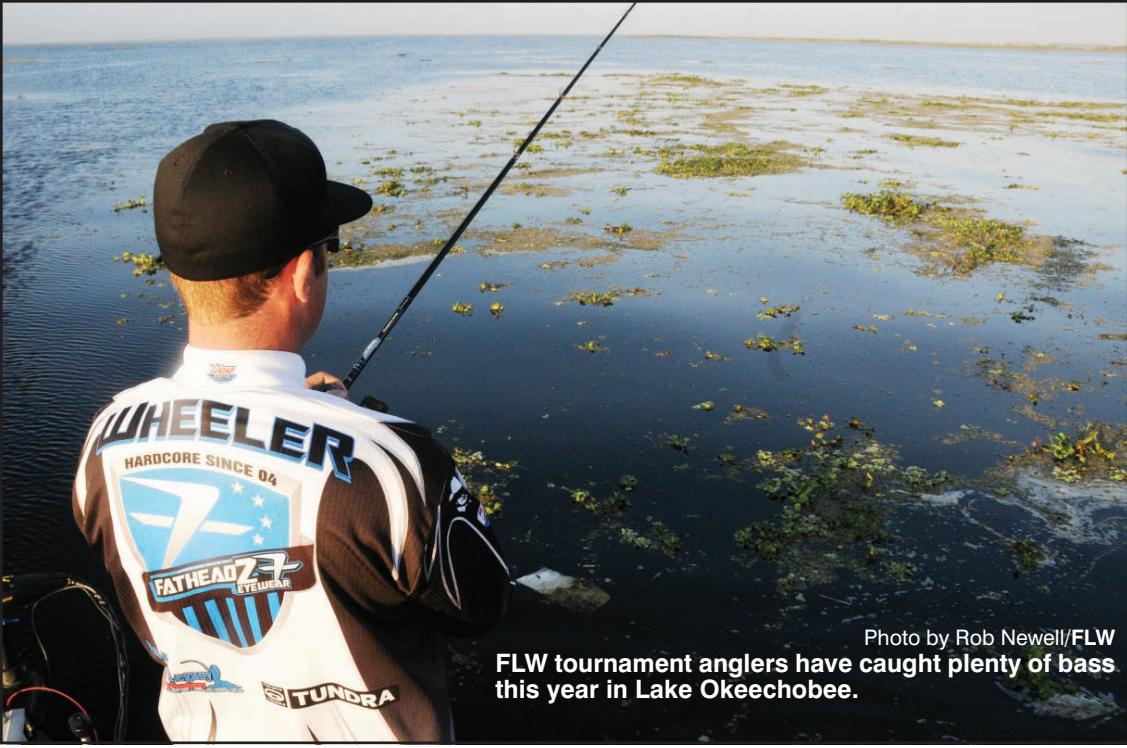


Photo by Rob Newell/FLW
FLW tournament anglers have caught plenty of bass this year in Lake Okeechobee.

ANGLERS

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a ton of size. We saw a lot of 2 to 4 pounders but nothing huge," he said of recent samplings at J&S.

On the south end, the South Bay area has been producing fish around the tips of the islands and bass are being caught at Boy Scout Cut.

Around Clewiston, he said a lot of 6- and 7-pound fish are being caught in the West Wall area. However, he cautioned, this can be a rough area to fish when the wind shifts and blows directly into it.

Coming on around the lake, Lee said the Fisheating Bay area is "a really good area" for bass.

As for artificial baits, Lee said some anglers have told him they're catching bass on spinnerbaits. But, he added, most are catching fish on jigs tipped with a crawdad.

"That can be moved slowly, especially in the cooler water," he offered.

The recent cold weather has created a fishing bonanza for speck anglers, said Lee. Both live minnows and jigs have been producing a lot of limits in the Kissimmee River. He said some are also being caught on grass shrimp.

During a recent shocking of the J&S area, Lee said a lot of 11- to 13-inch crappie were found.

Around the Belle Glade area, speck anglers are doing very well in the Rim Canal.

"I've been hearing reports of 15-inch crappie there," he said.

The Clewiston area, he said, does all right but it doesn't get as much fishing pressure by speck anglers as other portions of the big lake.

Although a few bluegill and shell-

cracker are being caught, Lee said it will likely be the end of March or the beginning of April before they really get active. Lee said he has seen quite a few bluegill in the shallower areas of Fisheating Bay and the western marsh.

"Once you get past the cattails and get to the sandy bottom areas you'll find them," he offered, adding that some are being caught there now on grass shrimp.

We also contacted area guides and fish camps to see if they would be willing to divulge even more information into where fish can be found, as well as the hottest baits.

And, here's what they had to say.

OKEECHOBEE

Okeechobee guide Larry Wright said the recent cold snaps have caused the bass fishing to cool down, but the speck fishing has been hotter than a late August day in South Florida.

"The fishing is fantastic, as long as the weather stays warm," he said of the bass angling outlook. "When it warms up, the fish act like it's summertime."

Around the Okeechobee area he said a lot of bass are being caught on a mouse-colored spinnerbait in The Pass, and on Little Grassy and the southwest side of King's Bar. Another good producing bait has been a white Big EZ made by Gambler Worms.

Elsewhere, some good fish are being caught in the Henry Creek area on soft plastic swim baits as well as blue/silver chug baits.

"They're behind the cattail wall, up close to the dike," he offered, adding that the fishing here slows dramatically when strong winds blow into the area.

In the North Shore area, Wright

said anglers have been successful chunking a watermelon/red Speed Worm and retrieving it slowly and just beneath the surface.

But if you're strictly hunting for lunker largemouths, wild shiners are the way to go. Wright explained that when the water is cold set the shiner about 5 feet deep. When the water warms, bring them up to a depth of about 3 feet.

As for papermouths, Wright said they "are running really big."

"There are a lot of good ones being caught on minnows at night, and on jigs," he said.

The most popular jig is simply known a #17C in white. Pink, he added, runs second.

When it comes to bluegill and shellcrackers, Wright said he's been seeing them in the boat trails from Third Point out to the Indian Prairie Canal.

BELLE GLADE

When asked about the bass fishing, Pat Stevens at Slim's Fish Camp simply said "everybody's bangin' them!"

He went on to say anglers competing in recent tournaments have been weighing in stringers nearing the 30-pound mark. Winners in two recent cast-for-cash events weighed in five-fish limits topping the 29-pound mark. And, he added, both stringers were caught in the same area.

Stevens said the hottest bassin' areas have been Pelican Bay, East Wall and the west side of Ritta Island. If you're planning on dunkin' a wild shiner, he suggested fishing the Barge Canal or Long Point areas.

Two of the better producing artificial baits have been white spinnerbaits with gold willowleaf blades, and Gambler's Big EZ soft plastic swim bait. The top colors for the Big EZ have been copperfield, watermelon/red and the 49er. When skies are cloudy, Stevens suggested switching to a black/blue Big EZ.

Also producing fish is the topwater angler's favorite standby lure—a white flash Zara Spook.

Stevens also suggested flipping or pitching a black or brown jig, tipped with

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Opportunities abound for boating fun

Want to skim through the marsh in an airboat, glide down the river in a canoe, take a nature tour on a pontoon boat or bounce around the lake on a Jet Ski?

The Lake Okeechobee area offers plenty of opportunities for all kinds of boating fun.

Don't have your own boat? No problem. There are charter boats and rental boats available all around the lake. Most bait shops have information on how to charter a fishing trip or boat ride or rent a boat. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has an online "boat ramp finder" at their website <http://myfwc.com/boating>.

Like the wind in your hair? An airboat ride may be for you. Airboats are designed to travel through areas that are too shallow or too clogged with vegetation for traditional boats to navigate. Riders sit up high, giving you an excellent view of the lake and the lake area wildlife ... without getting "too" close. The view will depend on what time of year and what time of day you go out. Area airboat tour guides can help you choose a trip that is perfect for your family.

Are you ready for a unique wilderness

kayak and canoe experience? Try a canoe trip on Fisheating Creek. The creek is the only free-flowing tributary that runs into Lake Okeechobee. While paddling the entire 52-mile distance to the lake isn't possible, the Fisheating Creek Outpost offers two trip options. Burnt Bridge has a put-in located 8 miles upstream from the campground. Ingram Crossing is 16 miles upstream and recommended for advanced paddlers or for those looking for an overnight trip.

If you own your own boat and want a transport to Burnt Bridge or Ingram Crossing, the Outpost can shuttle you and your boats. The Outpost also has canoes and kayaks available for rent.

Fisheating Creek is narrow for much of the distance. Banks are surrounded by towering cypress trees, wonderful for providing shade on hot summer days. Alligators and turtles are a common sight, as are Great Blue Heron, egrets, ibis, hawks and many more species of birds. Keep a sharp lookout—you might spot a wild hog, turkey or deer along the waters edge. During the fall you're likely to see thousands of colorful butterflies. There are plenty of panfish for the anglers in your group. The clean tannin-stained water ranges from a golden to

deep brown depending upon time of year and your viewing angle. The water gets its color from decaying plant matter. Sit back and enjoy listening to birds singing and watch the reflections of clouds and trees as you drift through cypress swamps and hardwood hammocks along Fisheating Creek. For more information, go to fisheatingcreekoutpost.com.

Basic rules while paddling:

- It is Florida state law that a child under the age of six must wear a U.S.C.G. approved Type I, II, or III personal flotation device while onboard a vessel under 26 feet in length while the vessel is underway. This includes canoes and kayaks.

- Bring plenty of water or other drinks in non-disposable containers.

- Don't litter—take a trash bag or other receptacle for collecting your trash. If you see trash while paddling, kindly pick it up.

- It is always a good idea for safety to let someone know where you are paddling and when you expect to return. You can download a float plan at MyFWC.com.

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ANGLERS

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either a Little Swimmer or Creature Bait.

Much like the north end of the big lake, Stevens said a lot of the slabsides being caught are "huge!" He said anglers are getting fish topping the 15-inch mark around Tree Island, House Boat Cut and in the Rim Canal.

If fishing in the daytime, he suggested using a jig while nighttime anglers are having the best luck using live minnows.

Stevens said the bluegill really aren't showing up much yet, but expects that fishing to get hot and heavy later in March and around the first of April.

Unlike the bluegill fishing, Stevens said panfish anglers are already catching shellcrackers on red worms. He said they're fishing 4- to 5-feet deep around the Airport Hole and the Dynamite Hole.

"And they're bigger than usual—like over a pound," he added.

CLEWISTON

Captain Mike Balon, fishing out of Roland and Mary Ann Martin's Marina, said the cold winter temperatures and blustery winds have slowed the bass fishing somewhat in that area. He de-

scribed it as fair, even though he had just come off the water with his guide party who had just boated a bucket-mouth that topped the 7-pound mark.

Artificial bait fishermen having the most success are pitching 3/4-ounce black/blue jigs into cover that are tipped with a blue crawdad or twin-tailed grub trailer. White spinnerbaits with gold blades are also producing fish, while chrome/blue rattlin' crankbaits are also putting bass in the boat.

The hottest areas, he said, have been Ritta Island, the East Wall and the West Wall.

Unlike Belle Glade and Okeechobee, Balon said the speck fishing "has not been real good." He suggested using either live minnows, or a green or chartreuse jig in the Rim Canal or around Horse Island.

So, even though we've covered a lot of water and talked to different anglers, we've learned fish are being caught on a variety of baits and in several different areas. And despite the differences in areas and baits there's still one common denominator—the Big 'O' is back.

Regardless of what species you prefer, these anglers and biologists all agree there are some real tackle testers lurking in the blackwater confines of Lake Okeechobee.

So, with that in mind, what are you doing sitting there? Go fishing!

FWC offers license-free fishing days in April & June

With more than 3 million anglers in the state, it is likely you either know someone who fishes, or you are someone who fishes. Either way, Florida's license-free fishing days are the perfect venue to try your hand or introduce a friend to some of the finest fishing in the world.

During its Feb. 13 meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) selected Saturday, June 1 and Sunday, Sept. 1, as the 2013 saltwater license-free fishing days. On these days, the requirement to have a recreational fishing license is waived for Florida's residents and visitors while they are saltwater fishing.

The FWC offers four license-free fishing days a year: two saltwater and two freshwater. While the Commission selects new saltwater license-free fishing days on an annual basis, freshwater license-free fishing days are set to the first Saturday in April and the second Saturday in June.

This year's freshwater license-free fishing days are Saturday, April 6 and Saturday, June 8. Use these days to catch the big one and get rewarded for it. Sign up for an FWC freshwater angler recognition program in advance at www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com and you will be entered into a drawing for a Phoenix bass boat powered by Mercury. If you catch, photograph and release a largemouth bass heavier than 8 pounds, you'll be eligible for great rewards or certificates for catching qualifying freshwater fish from among 33 exciting species in the program. The FWC will honor license-free freshwater fishing days as a legal exemption for fish caught on these dates.

To make these events accessible to as many people as possible, the FWC plans these dates around holiday weekends and national events.

This year's June 1 saltwater and the June 8 freshwater license-free days are during National Fishing and Boating Week. Highlighted by significant national media coverage and public events, this week promotes boating and fishing across the country as fun and healthy outdoor activities. In 2012, 37 states had at least one license-free fishing day during this annual event.

The Sept. 1 saltwater license-free day falls on Labor Day weekend, when many families will be out on the water, enjoying one of the last big fishing weekends of summer. The ever-popular bay scallop season is also open to harvest on this date.

License-free days not only introduce new anglers to the lifetime sport of fishing, they also economically benefit the state as those 3 million anglers cited by the American Sportfishing Association's "Sportfishing in America" report, shop at tackle stores, purchase boat fuel and bait and travel to their favorite fishing hole. Some of this money even finds its way back to the FWC via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Program specifically to create more fishing and boating opportunities.

Go ahead and plan your fishing experience in advance. Ask friends to show you their favorite fishing spot.



Photo by Rob Newell/FLW

Get out the Lake Okeechobee is popular with tournament fishermen and fishing poles with those who just enjoy a Saturday on the lake. for the kids (children under 16 are not required to have a fishing license year-round). Get ready to get into fishing in 2013.

But don't forget, all other regulations such as seasons, size limits and bag limits still apply on these days. Visit MyFWC.com/Fishing to learn more about saltwater and freshwater fishing in Florida – from current regulations to fishing hotspots.

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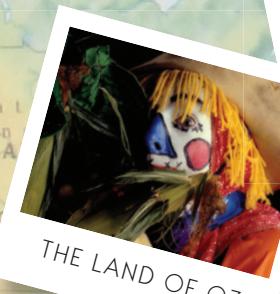
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Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music

LABELLE—The LaBelle Firehouse Community Theatre will present "Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music" on March 15-17 and March 22-24. The play was written by Lee Blessing and will be directed by Dave Johnson. Productions are Friday and Saturday nights at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. the shows start promptly, so please arrive 30 minutes in advance to be seated before the show starts. For tickets or more information, call 863-675-3066 or email info@firehousecommunitytheatre.com.



The Odd Couple

OKEECHOBEE—Okeechobee Community Theatre wraps up its 34th year with a performance of "The Odd Couple," March 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. at the Freshman Campus Auditorium on Southwest Second Street (behind Golden Corral

Restaurant.) Felix Unger is a neat, tidy health nut whose wife has thrown him out. Desperate for a place to live, he moves in with his divorced long-time friend, Oscar Madison. Oscar is sloppy and disorganized, and living on a fast-food diet. Inevitably the polar-opposite lifestyles clash, with hilarious results. The play, by Neil Simon, is perhaps the most successful comedy in Broadway history, becoming a hit motion picture and a long-running spin-off TV series. For reserved seat ticket information, call 863-763-1307.

Biloxi Blues

BELLE GLADE—Rena Shagan and Montana Repertory Theatre's "Biloxi Blues" will be at the Dolly Hand Performing Arts Center in Belle Glade on Monday, March 25 at 7:30 p.m. Winner of the Tony award for Best Play, Neil Simon's 25th play to reach Broadway follows the hilarious Eugene Jerome and his antics as he navigates his basic military training to serve in World War II. Considered one of Simon's best plays, it's non-stop laughs with a little worldly wisdom that can only be served up by one of America's master playwrights. Stay after the show to hear from the actors and voice your thoughts during the post-performance talk-back! The box office is located at the southeastern corner of the building, 1977 S.W. College Drive, Belle Glade which is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. to noon. The box office also opens one hour prior to performances. For more information call the box office at 561-993-1160.



Jazz & Blues Festival

FORT PIERCE—Squeezing every drop of delicious music out of a note is what they do best at Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society, so it's no small wonder that, like a burgeoning giant, the nonprofit Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society has grown to present its upcoming First Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Festival. Society Board Members and President Don Bestor, Jr., have promised eight straight days of marvelous, mind-blowing Jazz and Blues performances, March 22

through March 29. A special preview night begins Friday, March 22, at Art Mundo Studios, 111 Orange Ave., Ft. Pierce, called "Support the Arts, Enjoy the Grape", featuring a live painting-in-progress exhibition, jazz, snacks and cocktails from 7-9 p.m. For more information, contact Studio Director, Holly Theuns at 772-776-0021. Saturday, March 23, the Jazz & Blues Society will present Live Jazz at the annual Sandy Shoes Festival on the waterfront at Veterans Memorial Park. Sunday, March 24, features the popular Waterside Blues Concert Series, 1-5 p.m. on the waterfront at Marina Square featuring the "infamous and hilarious Party Dogs" and The Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society's Jazz Ensemble. Music, food, refreshments and arts and crafts vendors all will be there. Admission is free. Bring your chairs and enjoy the show. The Heart of the Jazz & Blues Festival is a series of five, free, mid-day concerts, Monday through Friday, March 25 thru 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the waterfront across from the Main Library. The Festival's finale, a celebration of America's original art forms, Jazz and Blues, will be a grand show Friday evening March 29, in the Sunrise Theatre Black Box, featuring

the infectious "Doc Grober and the Mudcats." Tickets are available at the Sunrise Theatre Box Office at 772-461-4775 or www.sunrisetheatre.com.

Tap

BELLE

GLADE—Matt Davenport and ECE Touring's "TAP: The Show" will be at the Dolly Hand Center for Performing Arts on Tuesday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m. Celebrating the artistry of tap dance from around the world, this show is a non-stop explosion of rhythmic energy. Wrapped in dazzling costumes and backed by a soaring orchestral score, the cast of award-winning dancers and singers travel seamlessly through decades of styles from Broadway and big-band, to world music and pop-rock. Enjoy dance numbers from Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, the precision of Irish step and look to the future of tap with street performers. The box office is located at the southeastern corner of the building, 1977 S.W. College Drive, Belle Glade which is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. to noon. The box office also opens one hour prior to performances. For more information, call the box office at 561-993-1160.





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