

Home Destroyed By Fire

By Jacob Bemby
Greene Publishing, Inc.

Firefighters responded to a house fire on Jersey Road early Monday night, Jan. 2.

According to reports, the fire started when an ember in a wood heater escaped and went

behind a wall. When firefighters responded to the home, which was owned by Jack Hunter and occupied by Justin and Karagan Surlis, they thought they could handle the blaze but a mighty gusting wind would not allow them to control

it.

The home was a total loss. Firefighters responded from Cherry Lake Fire & Rescue, Madison Fire & Rescue, the Hamburg-Lovett Volunteer Fire Department and the Pinetta Volunteer Fire Department.

November Another Very Dry Month

By Lazaro Aleman
Special from ECB Publishing, Inc.

Typically the driest month of the year, November didn't disappoint this year, with an average of 1.57 inches of rain falling across the district during the month.

The 1.57 inches represents 67 percent of the long-term average for the month, which is 2.34 inches, according to the latest hydrologic condition report issued by the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD).

"Localized areas in Taylor and Lafayette counties saw as much as four inches, while parts of Madison and Jefferson received less than half of an inch," the report states. "A narrow band of up to five inches fell in the southern part of the Suwannee basin in Georgia, but most of the basin received less than normal rainfall."

Meanwhile, the district's average 12-month deficit dropped slightly, from 8.9 inches in October to 8.4 inches in November, according to the SRWMD.

The report shows Jefferson County received 0.56 inches of rainfall in November, compared with the November average of 3.44 inches. The county received 6.66 inches of rainfall during the last three months and 40.86 inches during the last 12 months.

Madison County, meanwhile, received 1.23 inches in November, compared with the November average of 3.12 inches. Madison County received 8.67 inches during the last three months and 45.91 inches during the last 12 months.

River flows remained extremely low across the district during November, with a few rivers setting new records for low daily flows and the Aucilla River ceasing to flow at the Lamont gauge.

Lake levels also remained generally below their long-term average levels, with the exception of one lake in Bradford County. Sneads Smokehouse Lake in Jefferson County was reported at its lowest recorded level for the fourth consecutive month.

As for groundwater levels, record and all-time lows were recorded at various of the district's monitored wells.

"Average conditions across the district, compared to both historic November data and all data, fell to the 5th percentile, making November the ninth consecutive month with conditions below the 25th percentile (based on records beginning no earlier than 1978)," the SRWMD report states.

The U.S. Geological Survey categorizes all river basins in the district as being under severe drought.

The SRWMD continues urging voluntary reduction of water consumption. It reminds residents that landscape irrigation is limited to one day per week through March, "based on a water conservation rule that applies to residential landscaping, public or commercial recreation areas, and public and commercial businesses that aren't regulated by a district-issue permit."

The district compiles the hydrologic conditions report using water resource data collected from radar-derived rainfall estimates, groundwater and surface water levels, and river flows, among other variables.

The district encompasses all or parts of 15 counties in north-central Florida, including Madison County and the eastern half of Jefferson County.

Financial Planning Seminar Set



A Lay Stewardship Conference entitled "Christian Financial Planning" Seminar, provided by the Florida Baptist Convention Stewardship Department, will be held at the Associational Office on Monday night, January 9, beginning at 6:30 pm and concluding by 9 pm.

This conference is along the lines of Dave Ramsey's financial planning materials and is FREE!

If you should have any questions regarding this conference, please call me Matt Swain, Stewardship Director MFBA, at 386-209-0241.

For more information, please call (850) 973-8607.

Local Resident Thelma Thompson Publishes Book

By Lynette Norris
Greene Publishing, Inc.

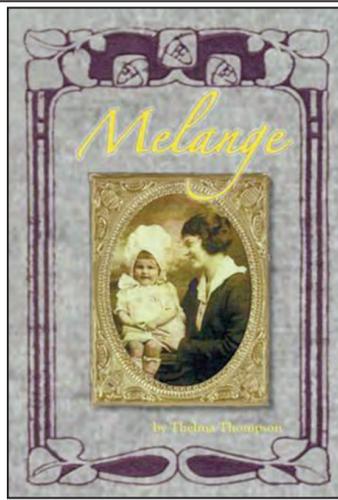
Longtime Lee resident Thelma Thompson has published a book of poetry and prose, available now in paperback from the Barnes and Noble website.

The title of the book, *Melange*, comes from the Latin word meaning "bits and pieces" said Thompson when describing her book. The book contains about 100 poems, she said, along with several prose pieces that she has written over the years, "but mostly, it's poetry."

Two poems that come to mind when she is asked which ones are her favorites, are two poems written about her by her daughters. One, "This Lady and I," was written by her daughter Vicki Langford, who also lives in Lee in a house right behind her mother's. The other poem, of which Thompson can't recall the title right offhand, was written by her daughter Gloria Bynum.

There are also two poems she wrote in memory of two of her children who passed away, another daughter, Diane, whom she lost at age 46, and a son, Mike, who died at age 36.

Although there is really no common theme, just "bits and pieces" as the title suggests, a lot of the poems do



deal with her family history.

She also has a collection of prose pieces about "the language of nature," she said. "I wrote about how everything in nature has a voice...storms, trees, birds...everything speaks with its own voice."

It has been a long time since she first sent it off for publication to AuthorHouse in Indianapolis back in April, and since then, there have been a few mishaps that come from dealing with a large corporation; whenever she called, it seemed that things and people had been shuffled around to different offices, and her son, who had agreed to act as her agent, filling out the necessary paperwork and sending it in, received a letter from the publishing house congratulating him on "his" new book. Also, the company was supposed to send her a free copy of her book a long time ago, but she is still waiting for it.

The 172 page book is currently available online through the Barnes and Noble website.

Wednesday's County Commission Agenda

Agenda For The Regular Session Of The Board Of County Commissioners Of Madison County, FL, To Be Held At The Commissioners Meeting Room Courthouse Annex, Wednesday, January 4, 2012, 9:00 A.M.

- Roll Call
- Adoption Of The Agenda
- Petitions From The Public - Five (5) Minute Limit
- Approval Of The Minutes From The Regular Meeting Held December 21, 2011.

Department Reports

- Constitutional Officers
- County Attorney
- County Coordinator
- Consent Agenda
- Approval of Sheriff's Department Expenditure of State Confiscated Currency for \$3,300.00.
- Budget Amendment Request for Old Health Department Heating and Air Conditioner for \$3,640.00.
- Public Works Department
- Discussion Regarding Resurfacing NW Honey Lake Road - Mr. Lonnie Thigpen.
- Review with Possible Approval of Lease for Solid Waste Roll-off Truck - County Coordinator and Mr. Jerome Wyche.
- Review with Possible Approval of Leases for Road Department for Two Dump Trucks - County Coordinator and Mr. Lonnie Thigpen.
- Discussion of Possible Sale of Used Trucks from the Solid Waste and Road Departments.
- Approval to Obtain Maintenance Map for SW Wonderwood Street - Mr. Lonnie Thigpen.
- Unfinished Business
- Discussion Regarding Sale Options for County Owned Property.
- New Business
- Approval of Workforce Resolution Supporting Recommendations Related to Fiscal Accountability - Ms. Sheryl Rehberg.
- Discussion Concerning Changing the Meeting Times of the Regular County Commission Meetings - Commissioner Parrish.
- Approval to Waive Recreation Park Fees for Relay for Life Softball Tournament - County Coordinator.

- Gary L. Bergosh
- Meredith Charbula
- J. Clifton Cox
- Gerald B.

- Curington
- James H. Daniel
- Charles W. Dodson
- Stephen C. Emmanuel
- Kelton Farris
- Craig D. Feiser
- Glenn P. Gifford
- Brant Hargrove
- Michael J. Hauversburk
- Claude Robert Hilliard
- Kenneth L. Hosford

- Scott D. Makar
- Eric H. Miller
- Miguel Antonio Olivella, Jr.
- Timothy D. Osterhaus
- Steven E. Sellers
- Clifford A. Taylor
- Waddell A. Wallace, III

- The commission appreciates the many outstanding applicants who offered to serve the citizens of Florida

First District Court Of Appeal Judicial Nominating Commission Notice Of Interviews

The First District Court of Appeal Judicial Nominating Commission met on Dec. 29 and selected the following 21 applicants for further consideration for the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Paul M. Hawkes:

- Scott D. Makar
- Eric H. Miller
- Miguel Antonio Olivella, Jr.
- Timothy D. Osterhaus
- Steven E. Sellers
- Clifford A. Taylor
- Waddell A. Wallace, III

The commission appreciates the many outstanding applicants who offered to serve the citizens of Florida

in the very important capacity of appeals court judge. Interviews of the applicants will be conducted on Jan. 5 and 6, at the First District Court of Appeal, 2000 Drayton Drive, Tallahassee. Interested persons may contact the chair for the interview schedule. Interviews are open to the public. However, the chair requests that vis-

itors come and go during transitions between interviews as a courtesy to the applicants.

The JNC welcomes comments on the qualifications of any of the applicants. Those wishing to comment should do so in writing to Michael J. Glazer, Ausley & McMullen, P.O. Box 391, Tallahassee, Florida 32301, or by

email to mglazer@ausley.com.

The members of the Judicial Nominating Commission include the following: Michael J. Glazer, chair; Edward Fleming, vice-chair; Alan Bookman; Patricia Ann Connors; Barbara Johnston; Jerome Novy; Daryl D. Parks; Gary Rutledge; and Steven Yablonski.

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Local Weather

Wed 1/4	59/38	Thu 1/5	67/40	Fri 1/6	72/52	Sat 1/7	74/58
Mainly sunny. Hard freeze expected. High 59F. Winds WNW at 5 to 10 mph.		A few clouds. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the low 40s.		A few clouds. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 50s.		Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the upper 50s.	

VIEWPOINTS & OPINIONS

THE SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Savvy Senior,
Can you recommend some good brain-fitness computer games that are designed to help seniors keep their minds sharp? I love to play solitaire on my computer but I'm interested in expanding to some other games that can benefit my mind and memory.

Forgetful Frank

Dear Frank,
There are actually a handful of great brain-training websites and computer software products on the market today that are backed by research and proven to help boomers and seniors improve their memory, slow age-related mental decline and even build a stronger brain. But there's no evidence that these games will prevent Alzheimer's disease. Here are the best options to consider:

Web Workouts

If you're interested in exercising your brain but don't want to spend a lot of money, brain-training websites are a good place to start. While there are many sites that offer games that claim to sharpen the mind, the most valid and highly rated one is *Lumosity.com* who currently boasts around 15 million users.

Developed by neuroscience researchers from Stanford University and UC San Francisco, Lumosity offers more than 35 games and exercises aimed at increasing alertness, sharpening memory skills, improving concentration and faster thinking. The games are fun and engaging, and in each game, as your skill improves, the tasks become progressively more difficult to keep you challenged. The costs: \$14.95 a month or about \$80 for a one-year subscription. Lumosity even offers mobile apps for smart phone users so you can train wherever you are.

Another good site to check out (but not the quality of Lumosity) is *Cognifit.com*. This site starts with a brain fitness assessment that lets you know where your stronger areas are, and where you could use some extra training. Cognifit offers around 20 games that are free to play, or you can pay \$4.95 for each of their two advanced games for memory and concentration training.

Software Products

In addition to the websites, there are also a number of computer software brain-training products that you can purchase and use on your home computer.

Some of the best are made by Posit Science (positscience.com, 866-599-6463), which sells three types of brain-training software including "Brain Fitness," which speeds up and sharpens the auditory system of the brain for faster thinking, sharper focus, and better memory; "InSight" which targets visual processing to improve how your brain takes in, reacts to, and remembers what you see; and "DriveSharp" which strengthens the cognitive skills essential for safe driving. All software is available in PC and Mac versions. The only downside is the price. You can buy the Brain Fitness and InSight software together for \$690, or individually for \$395 each. The DriveSharp software costs \$89.

Another excellent option is Dakim BrainFitness Software (dakim.com, 800-856-5502) that costs \$249 and is designed specifically for adults over 60, as well as for seniors with memory loss. And for non-computer users, Diakim offers a touch-screen console for \$2,349 that's pre-loaded with BrainFitness software. Just plug it in and you're ready to go.

No Computer Needed

If you don't want to rely on a computer for playing brain-boosting games, consider electronic games like Brain Age, Brain Age 2 (see brainage.com) and Big Brain Academy (bigbrainacademy.com). Made by Nintendo, these games cost around \$20 each, but to play them you'll need to purchase a hand-held Nintendo DS Lite game unit which runs around \$100. You can buy these products online at amazon.com or at retail chains like Walmart, Target and BestBuy.

There are also dozens of mind-challenging books and puzzles you can purchase that can help too, such as "Keep Your Brain Alive: 83 Neurobic Exercises" by Lawrence Katz and Manning Rubin, and "The Big Book of Mind Bending Puzzels" by Terry Stickels. Check your local book store, or visit amazon.com to find them.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

On occasion, I'm invited to speak to a group about a variety of subjects – military history, economics, public policy, etc. I rarely turn these opportunities down and am always gratified that someone or group feels that I might have something valuable to say.

Just before Thanksgiving, Suzanne Griffin called me on a Sunday afternoon and asked me to speak to her 10th grade English class the next day about Carroll Agner's service in World War II, as subject I wrote about in this column six years ago. We were able to work out the schedule so I spoke to a group of about 25 high school students. Teenie Cave represented the Treasures of Madison County and brought a number of Carroll's photographs from the war for the class to see.

First of all, let me say that I love to speak to young people. I'm a futurist, so I'm always looking toward what lies ahead. Young people are our future. If I can make an impression and possibly inspire them, then these are goals that I value.

I spoke to the class for nearly an hour, relating Carroll Agner's service as a member of the Army's famous 2nd Infantry "Indianhead" Division, then answered their questions. At times, my Air Force service and Vietnam experience came up as well.

Last week, I received a package of thank you notes written by the students following my visit. Each contained a personal sentiment from the student. They were interesting and gratifying to read. Each was well written and contained very interesting insights.

It was obvious to me that the students learned a great deal from the presentation. The photographs certainly helped make those impressions vivid. Carroll had a fine camera when he was overseas, and he used it well. The students were able to see just how bitter that winter of 1944-45 was in Northern Europe and what wartime field conditions were like nearly seventy years ago.

Some of the letters mentioned that they learned more from this presentation about World War II than they did in history class. That's just wonderful. When an event like the war is vividly described, it becomes much more real than a standard textbook. Although I am not a WWII veteran,

National Security



Joe Boyles
Guest Columnist

I am the son of a vet and have studied the war and strategy closely over the years. Also, my combat experience in Vietnam probably helped describe these events in realistic detail.

Some of the students commented about my method of presentation. They appreciated my sense of humor (always important) and that I answered their

Thanks Vets

questions directly. I really appreciate the question and answer period in any presentation. It turns a lecture into two-way communication. I would add that when you understand and value history, you can put events in perspective that might otherwise not be apparent.

One student commented that I had her complete attention. That's a lot to ask of a high school student over an entire class period. Another thanked me for getting them out of a test. Now there's someone after my own heart.

Several students commented on how brave they were. I can speak for Carroll, myself and other vets here. We really don't see it that way. We joined the military for various reasons. We were given a job to do and a lot of training to prepare us for war. When the bullets started to fly and things got tough, we simply reverted to our training. First responders like cops, firemen, and EMS techs will tell you the same thing. You do what you have to do when the stress level rises.

Several students commented that they wanted to join the military as well. Good for them. It is a great training ground and helps prepare young people for life. I've often said that the two greatest advantages of a military life are education and travel. If you value these two things, then the military has a lot to offer.

One point I made to the class was that war is an unnatural and temporary condition. It is destructive and something that we want to avoid if at all possible. It may be exciting, but it is also exhaustive. Peace is a much more satisfying and prosperous condition.

In conclusion, I really appreciated Suzanne's offer to speak to her class and look forward to the next opportunity. You can be assured that I got just as much out of the experience as they did.

Red, White And True Mysteries

Learn How The New Year Is Celebrated Around The World

As the year 2011 comes to a close and 2012 is upon us, we take a look at how other countries celebrate the New Year with their rituals and traditions.

The tradition of celebrating the New Year began with the Babylonians around 2,000 B.C., although the actual day varied from January to March, depending on the country. The New Year has been celebrated on January 1 in most countries since Julius Caesar established the Julian calendar in 46 B.C. The Julian calendar was later replaced by the Gregorian calendar in 1582.

In addition to partying, New Year traditions around the world include lighting fireworks, making wishes or resolutions, giving gifts, and observing local superstitions. While our New Year celebration lasts only one night and one day, that is not the case in some of the other countries.

For example, the Chinese New Year celebration lasts for a month, and the actual New Year occurs on the second new moon after the winter solstice, which means that it always falls on a different day than the previous year. The Chinese calendar is a combination of solar and lunar calendars. It has a 12-year cycle in which years are based on animals, and 2012 will be the "Year of the Dragon." The Chinese locals will wish you a Gung Hay Fat Choy; translated, this means Happy New Year in Chinese, although I think something gets lost in the translation.

In Persia (now known as Iran), the Persian New Year falls on March 21 and lasts for 13 days. The locals start cleaning their houses several days before their New Year, and they buy new items for their houses as well as new clothes for the New Year. Relatives exchange gifts, and they settle all personal disputes in order to avoid what they consider to be bad luck. Children honor their elders and also receive money from them as a New Year's gift. They

also place something sweet outside their homes on the night before the New Year, and the first person to enter the home the following morning takes the sweet snack. It is believed to be bad luck to stay at home on the 13th day of the New Year.

In Russia, celebrations include a New Year's Tree which is topped with a bright star and decorated with sweets. Russians listen to their president's annual New Year's speech right before midnight, and they also engage in fortune telling.

In Costa Rica, Guatemala and Chile, it is common to prepare 12 grapes, which signify the 12 months. In Costa Rica and Guatemala, they do it because they believe it will bring them good luck. Many Chileans also travel to Easter Island to welcome the New Year.

The Germans, French, Brazilians, South Africans and Australians all celebrate the New Year on January 1. In France and Australia, though, the celebration lasts until January 6. More than 3 million tourists ring in the New Year in Australia each year, either to watch the massive fireworks celebration in Sydney or to be at one of the first places on Earth to see the New Year.

As with last week's column about the origin of several Christmas traditions, I credit my bride Mindy for thinking up the topic for this week's column, too.

Happy New Year to you, or Gung Hay Fat Choy (as they say in China), or Feliz Año Nuevo (Spain), or Glückliches Neues Jahr (Germany) or Bonne année (France).

###

Paul Niemann can be reached at niemann7@aol.com

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AROUND MADISON

Boyz to Kings: Two Success Stories

By Lynette Norris
Greene Publishing, Inc.

"Boyz to Kings" Spotlights Zamaury Page

"It takes a village to raise a child" is one of the main philosophies, if not the main philosophy of "Boyz to Kings," a grassroots community organization that came together when "we decided to stop talking and create that village," said Merv Mattair, a former Juvenile Residence Program Director, who envisioned "Boyz to Kings" in 2010 as a way to help young boys and their families, and now heads up that organization.

"When we as a community come together and use preventive methods, then the chances of our youth entering the system, stealing from neighbors, fighting, dropping out of school, etc., is slim," he said.

Boyz to Kings is a community organization that works like an extended family to get young boys and their parents involved in school, volunteering, community activities and fun events, while pairing each young boy with a role model, men who volunteer to help teach and mentor the young boys as they learn what it takes to stay on the right path and be a part of a community.

The group gets together to perform tasks in the community, take trips, play sports, hear speakers, and much more. Upcoming events include a trip to see the movie, "Courageous."

"It's something when a kid knows that 20 more sets of eyes are on them...and they know that somebody else cares about them because that gives them one more person to please and make proud," said Mattair.

When a child does do well and make someone proud, he gets acknowledgement from the group.

Right now, the Boyz to Kings Spotlight is on Zamaury Page, for achieving a first term GPA of 3.3, the highest of the group. For his efforts, he received \$40; his parents, Tarnisha and Bobby Thompkins, and his role model Tharron Robinson were all praised for "staying on him."

For more information about the Boyz to Kings mentoring/role model program, please contact Merv Mattair at 673-1003.

"Boyz to Kings" Graduates Third Class of 24/7 Dads

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it often takes a village to teach that child's young father how to actually "be a father" to the child, in every sense of the word, particularly if the young man has had no father in his own life to lean on and learn from.

Merv Mattair saw that need in 2010, when, with the help of Kiwanis, the Madison County Health Department and the Arbours Apartment Complex Manager, he formed the organization "Boyz to Kings" as a support system for the community, young men and parents.

Soon afterward, Mattair began teaching a series of "24/7 Dads" classes to young men who are new fathers or about to become new fathers. The classes, known as "Fatherhood Huddles," consist of 12 sessions of instruction, discussion and sharing of testimonies and insights as the young men move toward "complete and total fatherhood" as the 24/7 suggests, learning how to be involved in the lives of their children and become the role models those children will need in later life.

So far, three groups of young men have successfully graduated from the "24/7 Dads" course, with the third and latest group of five young men, Charlie Graham, Jr., Travis Mitchell, Jr., Desmond Roberson, Deonshay Wells and DeMarcus Norton, completing the course near the end of 2011. As with the two previous groups of successful graduates, the Boyz to Kings group held a small graduation ceremony and celebration for the young men, for what they had achieved through devoting their time to several weeks of classes, and what they had learned from the curriculum and from sharing their experiences with each other.

"It was my pleasure to graduate the third 24/7 Dad class of willing fathers...who decided to take the next step toward being a complete father to their children, a support system to the mother of the baby during the prenatal stage, a better communicator with the mother of their child, a better leader in the community and much more," said instructor Mattair, who was also pleased to note that several supporters for the young men had also come to the graduation celebrate their accomplishment, including mothers, siblings, coaches, grandparents, and many others.

Having that support system for the young men was very important, Mattair noted, since three of the young men from the latest class were still in high school, "trying to focus on keeping their grades up and mentally dealing with the impact of the decisions made, and from my experience of getting a young girl pregnant in high school, I know how tough it can be."

While there are support programs in schools to prepare the young mothers-to-be for what's to come, there are currently no programs aimed at helping the young men and teaching them how to deal responsibly with becoming fathers at a young age. Believing that it is a lack of this knowledge that causes the young men to drop out of school, abandon the young girls or become abusive partners, Mattair would like to see the



Photo submitted

The third group of young fathers to graduate from the "24/7 Dads" program are (left to right), Charlie Graham, Jr., Travis Mitchell, Jr., Desmond Roberson and Deonshay Wells. Not pictured: DeMarcus Norton, who was absent due to the baby being sick.

schools pick up the 24/Dads curriculum and realize the importance of having a support program for the young fathers as well as the young mothers.

"If it were not for my dad being right there as my 'program,' I know I would have given up during the prenatal stage and only caused another child to be raised without a father," he said.

Most of the young fathers who have graduated from the 24/7 Dads course did not have fathers in their own lives, but they wanted to break that cycle and give their own children what they wished they had had with their fathers.

Pam Monlyn's son was one of the young men in the latest 24/7 Dads class who did not have a father in his own life to lean on. "I thank Mr. Merv for taking the time to give my son, Deonshay Wells, the needed knowledge on being a father," said Monlyn. "I want the best for my son. From what I have witnessed, this program needs to be in schools for any young man who may travel that road."

Mattair commended the latest graduates of 24/7 Dads for taking the time and making the effort to learn what they needed to know to be good fathers for their children. "To all the fathers who completed the class, I commend you for your sacrifice," he said. Noting the importance of everyone working together to help and support each other, he added, "I learned a lot from you. And like we stated in class, we cannot be afraid to ask for help, because we will never have all the answers."

For more information on the 24/7 Dads program and the Fatherhood Huddles, please contact Healthy Start at 973-5000 or Merv Mattair at 673-1003.



Photo submitted

Zamaury Page, center, shows off his reward for achieving a first term GPA of 3.3, the highest in the Boyz to Kings family, while role model Tharron Robinson, left, and mother Tarnisha Thompkins, right, look on and smile.

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Mary Ellen Greene

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The Spirit of Madison County

Established 1964

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Published weekly by Greene Publishing Inc., 1695 South SR 53, Madison, FL 32340. Periodicals postage PAID at the Post Office in Madison, FL 32340.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MADISON COUNTY CARRIER, P.O. Drawer 772, Madison, FL 32341-0772.

This newspaper reserves the right to reject any advertisement, news matter, or subscriptions that, in the opinion of the management, will not be for the best interest of the county and/or the owners of this newspaper, and to investigate any advertisement submitted.

All photos given to Greene Publishing Inc. for publication in this newspaper must be picked up no later than 6 months from the date they are dropped off. Greene Publishing, Inc. will not be responsible for photos beyond said deadline.

P.O. Drawer 772
Madison, FL 32341
(850) 973-4141
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AROUND MADISON COUNTY

Obituaries

Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Miller celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 17th at Cakewood Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama with a reception following the ceremony.

They were honored by Family and Friends. Their Son Eric Miller and Daughter Tara Springfield hosted the ceremony.

Highlights of the occasion were words from their son Eric and the cake which was made by their daughter Tara, as well as fellowship with family and friends at the reception.

The couple are both retired. Charlie is from Greenville and Barbara Siplin Miller is from Madison.



Funtime

Sudoku Puzzle #2407-M

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

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Medium

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

Sudoku Solution #2407-M

Sharon Daniel Blanton

Sharon Daniel (SD) Blanton passed on to Heaven's gate December 22, 2011, while visiting family in Indiana.

He is the son of Burton Fitzgerald Blanton and Leila McDaniel Blanton.

SD was a lifelong resident of Lee and a member of the Lee First United Methodist Church. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1949 and was a combat wounded veteran of the Korean War and a member of the American Legion. SD was a man of many talents. He farmed family land for many years as well as sold insurance, owned and operated a post mill and later a metal recycling company.

SD was preceded in death by his wife, Evesta (Mickey) Blanton; grandson, Berton Blanton; his next wife, Patricia; step-granddaughter, Andrea Gaston; and two nephews, Danny and Kenny Mauldin.

He is survived by his wife, Gayhart Kimbrel Blanton; sister, Eleanor Mauldin (Bill Cannard); six children, Venus Cochran, Tim (Tonja) Blanton, Jerome Blanton, Ernest Blanton, Pamela (Rich) and Candace (Clayton) Roberts; four step-children, Lisa (Kessler) Gaston, Allen Clingler, Andrea (John) Turner, Shannon (Matt) Barrett; 14 grandchildren; seven step-grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; one step-great-grandchild; and one nephew.

Graveside memorial service will be held on January 7, at Stonewall Cemetery in Lee at 2 p.m.



Find Us On Facebook

Ira Lee Richardson

Ira Lee Richardson died Friday, December 30, 2011, in Madison.

Funeral services was held at the Beggs Funeral Home, Madison Chapel, on Tuesday, January 3, 2012, at 11 a.m. Burial followed in the Blue Springs Cemetery. The family received friends at Beggs Funeral Home in Madison on Monday, January 2, 2012, from 6-8 p.m.

Ira Lee was born on May 9, 1939 at home on the Richardson farm. His parents were Ira Lee Richardson, Sr., and Avis Milford Richardson. He had lived in Jacksonville before moving back to Madison 30 years ago. He was a welder and did construction for Woodson Hopkins in Jacksonville. He was a member of Macedonia Baptist Church and was attending Hickory Grove Methodist Church.

Ira Lee was survived by two sons: Mark (Lisa) Richardson of Baker County and Scott Richardson of Richmond, Va.; two brothers, Billy (Susan) Richardson of Madison and Ray (Mary) Day of Jacksonville; and a special niece, Maryn Richardson; and special nephews, Todd, Rodney and Joshua Richardson and James Day.

Donations may be made to your favorite charity in lieu of flowers.

Beggs Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, (850) 973-2258.

Carol "Meme" Wisor

Carol "Meme" Wisor, age 67, died Sunday, December 25, 2011 in Valdosta.

She was born in Massillon, Ohio and moved to Valdosta in 1971 before moving to Pinetta in 1998.

She volunteered at Pinetta Elementary School and loved to bake and be with her grandkids. She was a Home-maker and of the Catholic faith.

She is survived by her son: Jay Wisor (Michelle) of Pinetta; one brother Charles Cincinnati of Navarre, Ohio; one sister Lois Spiecher (Keith) of Navarre, Ohio; four Grandchildren: Dustin Wisor, Brandon Wisor, Cole Wisor and Scott Langner.

She will be loved and missed by all.

Donations may be sent to Pinetta Elementary School.

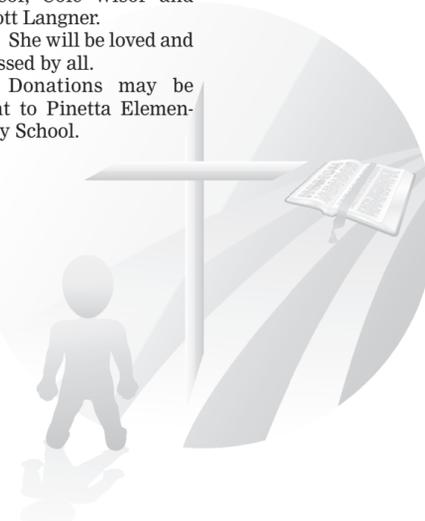
Rebecca Margaret Burnett

Rebecca Margaret Burnett, 91, died Sunday, January 1, in Louisville, Ky.

She was a native of Madison and a retired nurse for the Veteran's Administration, a member of Berry College Alumni Association in Rome, Ga., and a supporter of Alley Cat Advocates and a member of the Baptist faith.

She was preceded in death by brothers, Robert, Kenneth, Wayne and David Burnett; and sister, Edith Burnett Cosby. She is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be given to Alley Cat Advocates, 3044 Bardstown Road #204, Louisville, Ky. 40205.



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AROUND MADISON COUNTY

Ring^{*}ing^{*} In^{*} Christmas^{*} At^{*} The^{*} 55^{*} Plus^{*} Club^{*}



Greene Publishing, Inc. Photo by Lynette Norris, December 14, 2011

Ring^{*}ing^{*} their hearts out, the ladies play their medley of Christmas songs, re-
counting the birth of Christ through music.



Greene Publishing, Inc. Photo by Lynette Norris, December 14, 2011

Decked out in their red and green Christmas sweaters, the ladies open their
performance with "Silver Bells."

By Lynette Norris

Greene Publishing, Inc.

The ladies of the Southern Bells Handbell Choir opened their program at the 55 Plus Club with, appropriately enough, "Silver Bells."

The Southern Bells, ranging in age from 60 to 96, began about two years ago under the direction of Sharon French and Enid Kozlowski, from the Baptist and Methodist churches respectively. The two got together and came up with the idea of a handbell choir for senior ladies.

The rest, as they say, is history. Ever since then, the ladies have been ringing their way into the hearts of audiences throughout the community of Madison. French and Kozlowski believe that the choir is a part of God's ministry, bringing music and joy to everyone who comes to hear the ladies play. At the Dec. 14 meeting of 55 Plus, there wasn't an empty seat left anywhere as the Southern Bells began their concert.

After their opening number of "Silver Bells," French, who took turns with Kozlowski directing the songs, told the audience that the rest of the program would be about the Nativity, "telling the story of the birth of Christ" through music, including "O Holy Night," "Away in a Manger" and a sing-along of "Silent Night."

The Southern Bells received a standing ovation

from the delighted 55 Plus crowd at the conclusion of their performance.

The 55 Plus Club, an outreach of United Methodist Cooperative Ministries, meets the second Wednesday of every month for lunch, followed by a presentation of a speaker or musical performance. The Club is free and open to anyone 55 or older who would like to join them at the UMCM

building about five miles north of town on the corner of Colin Kelly Highway and NW Dill Street.

The next 55 Plus meeting will be Wednesday, January 11, and will feature a presentation on the Treasures Museum of Madison County. For More information on the 55 Plus Club, or any other outreach ministry of UMCM, contact Deborah Brown, UMCM Coordinator, at (850) 929-4938.

Chamber Offering Series Of Small Business Workshops

By Lynette Norris

Greene Publishing, Inc.

If you're thinking about opening your own business in 2012, or if you already own your own small business, the Madison County Chamber of Commerce is planning a series of workshops designed to help you either get started or make your business better.

The workshops will be hosted by the Greater Madison County Chamber of Commerce and the FAMU Small Business Development Center, and held at Chamber Office, 248 SW Range Avenue in downtown Madison.

Mark your calendar for every fourth Thursday at 5:30. The workshops are free and open to all.

The workshop schedule for January through March is:

- January 27 - Starting a Business
- February 23 - Writing a Business Plan
- March 22 - Marketing Plans

To register, or for more information, contact the Chamber Office at 973-2788.

Teenie Cave Is The Guest Speaker At Next 55 Plus

By Lynette Norris

Greene Publishing, Inc.

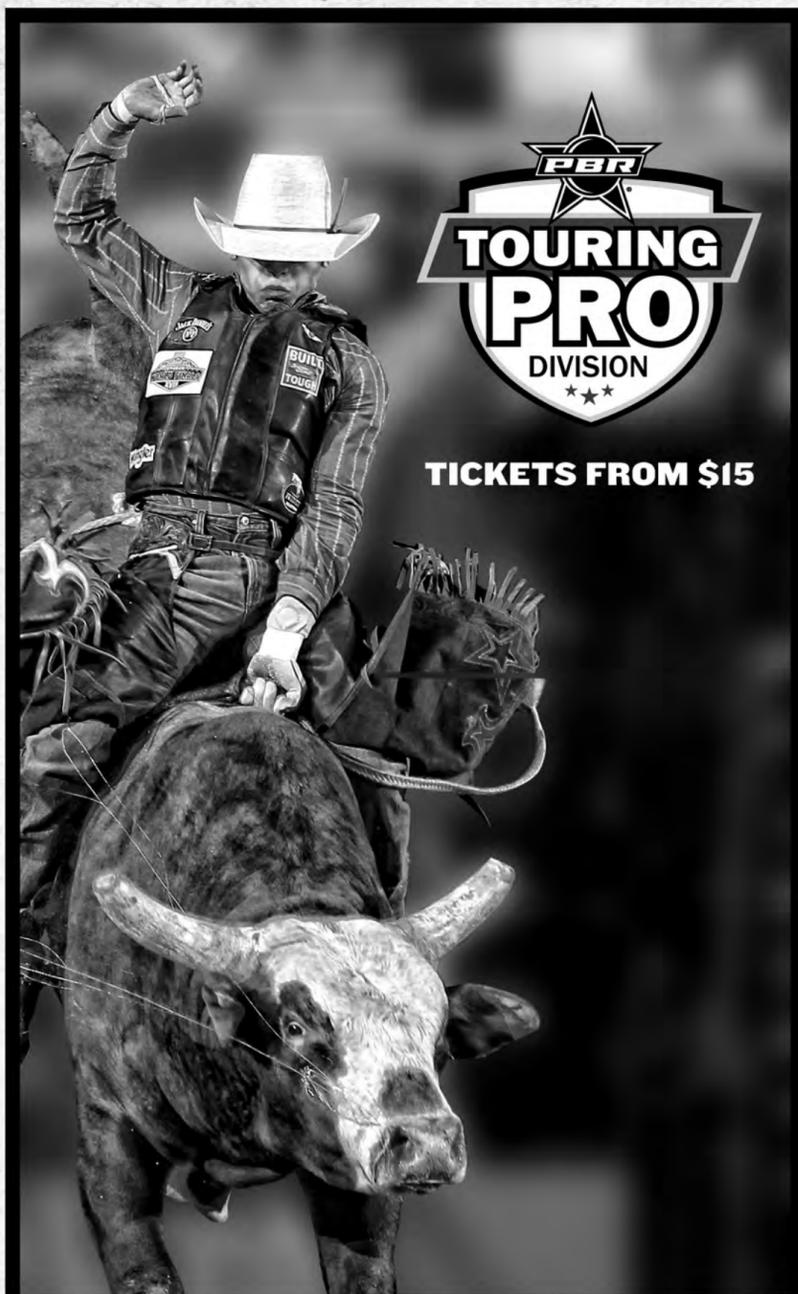
The 55 Plus Club wishes everyone a Happy New Year with good health, good fortune and an invitation to their first 55 Plus Club meeting of 2012.

The Club will meet again at noon on Jan. 11, 2012, and program chairperson Lilla Howerton, who always works to have interesting programs for the club meetings has arranged for guest speaker Teenie Cave to give her presentation on "Treasured Memories and Folklore of Madison County." Whether you are a long-timer or a newcomer to Madison County, you won't want to miss this special nostalgic program of bygone days and local history.

The presentation includes lots of pictures and photos, meaning that the UMCM Center's brand new large screen will be used for the very first time.

The meeting will be at the usual spot, the United Methodist Cooperative Ministries Center on the corner of Dill Street and Colin Kelly Highway, about five miles north of town. The meetings and the lunch are free and open to anyone 55 and older who would like to gather together to see friends, enjoy good food and hear an interesting program.

For directions or more information about 55 Plus or any other outreach ministry of the United Methodist Cooperative Ministries, contact Deborah Brown, Coordinator, at (850) 929-4938.



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AROUND MADISON COUNTY

Seniors Enjoy Fun Holiday Season

The Madison County Senior Center presented a festive Christmas season with everything from a Chinese Gift Exchange, also known as a White Elephant Exchange, Santa by the Fireplace with Willis Phillips, a Christmas Sing-A-Long Party, as well as seniors creating their own gorgeous Christmas tree decorations.

From a 12-foot tree in the main dining hall to four other individually decorated Christmas trees, several graciously donated, the Senior Center welcomed one

and all.

Keeping in mind the reason for the season, the seniors heard heartfelt messages at their request from the following pastors: Frank Rains, Robert Roundtree, as well as Bob Laidlaw of First United Methodist Church in Madison.

The seniors' Christmas Bake Sale was Dec. 14 at the Courthouse lawn and around downtown Madison.

Holiday trips the seniors enjoyed included a Holiday Lights viewing in Madison neighborhoods on Dec.

16 and a trip to see a Victorian Christmas at The Mansion on Dec. 9.

Seniors age 60 and over are invited to participate in the activities at the Madison County Senior Center. Call Angie Cisco, Older American Act coordinator, for upcoming events in the New Year at (850) 973-4241.

The Madison County Senior Center is located at 1161 SW Harvey Greene Drive, just off State Road 14 South.



Annie Holton sits a spell at The Mansion in downtown Madison.

Photo submitted



Photo Submitted
Ella Mae Brown, left, and Linda Howell, right, make cookies for the seniors' bake sale.



Photo Submitted
Willis Phillips entertains Dec. 15 at the Madison County Senior Center.



Photo submitted
Linda Blevins explores The Mansion's creche.

NOTICE OF CITY ELECTION CITY OF MADISON, FLORIDA

The City of Madison will hold an election on March 13, 2012, for the purpose of electing (2) two Commissioners for a term of (4) four years each. The districts involved in the elections are 2 and 3. The qualifying time is from noon January 23, 2012 until noon, January 27, 2012.

For further information, please call Lee Anne Hall, City Clerk at 973-5081.

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SCHOOL

NFCC Honors 2011 Registered Nursing Graduates

Pinning and Lamp Lighting Ceremony marks beginning of new journey for graduates

North Florida Community College honored its Registered Nursing Class of 2011 with a traditional Pinning and Lamp Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 14 at Van H. Priest Auditorium. Twenty-one RN graduates were recognized and took part in the ceremony's Lighting of the Lamps and Reciting of the Nightingale Pledge. Two graduates received special recognition: Tristan Sorensen (Jefferson County) received the Excellence in Clinical Setting Award and Heather Olson (Madison County) received the Outstanding Student in a Registered Nursing Program Award.

The pinning ceremony is a special moment for RN graduates and marks the beginning of each student's career as a professional nurse. NFCC graduate Ashley Haynes (Madison County) was recognized as the "Keeper of the Light" who will return next year to pass along the Lamp Lighting tradition to the next class of RN graduates.

NFCC's 2011 Registered Nursing graduates are:

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Alison Flynt

Tristan Sorensen

Monticello, FL
Monticello, FL

MADISON COUNTY

Ashley Collis
Jodi Cooper
Sara Myslikowski
Heather Olson
Gwen Cauley
Ana Pretto
Teri Roessler
Allyce Rutherford
Shana Douglas
Tara Richardson
Amber Cooper
Ashley Haynes

Lee, FL
Lee, FL
Madison, FL
Pinetta, FL
Pinetta, FL
Pinetta, FL

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Kelly Melland
Twyla Sears

Live Oak, FL
Live Oak, FL

TAYLOR COUNTY

Logan Avery

Perry, FL

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Ashley Brevard
Leslie Skeen

Lake City, FL
Lake City, FL

LOWNDES COUNTY

Heath Bowen
Elizabeth Lineberger

Lake Park, GA
Valdosta, GA

"As a class, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to our families, along with the NFCC faculty and staff for your support through this journey. Without you, we would not be here today."



Photo submitted

North Florida Community College's Registered Nursing Class of 2011

Front Row (l-r): Shana Douglas, Tara Richardson Heath Bowen, Amber Cooper and Ashley Collis. Second Row (l-r): Allyce Rutherford, Ana Pretto, Jodi Cooper, Tristan Sorensen, Sara Myslikowski and Twyla Sears. Third Row (l-r): Elizabeth Lineberger, Ashley Brevard, Logan Avery, Leslie Skeen and Alison Flynt. Back Row (l-r): Heather Olson, Kelly Melland, Teri Roessler, Gwen Cauley and Ashley Haynes.

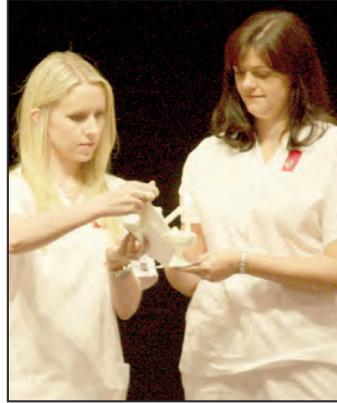


Photo submitted

NFCC Registered Nursing graduates, left to right, Alison Flynt (Jefferson County) and Shana Douglas (Madison County) take part in the traditional Lamp Lighting ceremony.



Photo submitted

Graduate Ashley Haynes (Madison County) receives her NFCC nursing pin from her mother Shirley Haynes. Ashley was also named as the "Keeper of the Light" and will return next year to pass along the Lamp Lighting tradition to the next class of RN graduates.

Photo submitted

Graduate Jodi Cooper (Madison County) gives the class presentations during the Registered Nursing Class of 2011's Pinning and Lamp Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 14 at Van H. Priest Auditorium.



Photo submitted

NFCC graduate Tristan Sorensen (Jefferson County) receives her NFCC nursing pin from Monica DeMott on Dec. 14 at Van H. Priest Auditorium. Sorensen received the Excellence in Clinical Setting Award for Fall 2011.

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2 bedroom, 2 bath frame house on 3/4 acre lot with 2 out. Building for sale by owner. Down town Lee, FL. 386-719-0421. City water. Tax parcel I.D. # is 03-1S-10-1057-000-000. \$59,000 price firm.

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- Size 4 - off white dress, worn as flower girl dress, lace work around bodice, pretty lace work at bottom, cap sleeves - \$25
- Size 7-8 - off white dress, worn as a flower girl dress, overlay of lace over entire dress, probably knee to calf length - \$25
- Size 8 - white, long dress, lace around neck with decorative bodice - \$25
- Size 16 - white long pageant gown, cap sleeves, white sequin work across entire bodice and sleeves, buttons around neck with circular cut-out on back, beautiful gown - \$100

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... LEGALS ...

Notice of Sale Pursuant to Chapter 83, Part IV
Under the Authority of the Self-Service Storage Facility Act, Section 83.805 the described below has been seized for nonpayment of rent and other accrued expenses. Property consists primarily of household and personal goods in units rented by: Krista Godfrey, Yolanda Denson, and John Christian Jr. The property will be sold at auction to the highest bidder as provided by the Self-Service Facility Act, section 83.806. The sale will be held Saturday January 13, 2012 at 9:00 A.M., at the Madison Mini Storage, 1098 E. U.S. 90, in Madison, Florida. For further information call 973-2008.

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CHRISTMAS AT THE MANSION

Christmas at the Mansion Holiday Reception Community enjoys "A Victorian Christmas" at the Mansion



Photo submitted

North Florida Community College Board of Trustees Chair Mike Williams, right, and NFCC Board member R.B. Davis and wife Cecil were among those attending the Christmas at the Mansion reception on Dec. 6 at the Wardlaw-Smith-Goza Conference Center.



Photo submitted

Local pianist Lynne Sapp provided a musical backdrop to the holiday reception Dec. 6 at the Wardlaw-Smith-Goza Conference Center.



Photo submitted

Tyler Platt accompanied his parents Troy and Tracey Platt to the Christmas at the Mansion holiday reception Dec. 6.



Photo submitted

Jackie Johnson, left, and Maria Greene at the Wardlaw-Smith-Goza Conference Center's 2011 Christmas at the Mansion holiday reception Dec. 6. This year's theme was "A Victorian Christmas" and the holiday reception was a prelude to the Christmas at the Mansion holiday open house held Dec. 7-11.



Photo submitted

Members of the Rural Area Theatrical Troupe (RATT) posed as Victorian era mannequins throughout the Wardlaw-Smith-Goza Conference Center Dec. 6 to add flare to the beautiful "Victorian Christmas" décor that greeted guests.

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