Jim Kirk re-elected as mayor

**By Pete Gawda**
Okeechobee News

At their meeting on Tuesday evening, Jan 15 the Okeechobee City Council elected a mayor and appointed councilmen to represent the city on committees and boards.

“I'll do the best job I can,” Mayor James Kirk said as he was re-elected to that position by his fellow councilmen. He has served as mayor for the past 22 years.

The mayor will serve on the Juvenile Justice Council, the Okeechobee County Healthy Start Coalition and the Executive Round Table. Councilman Clayton Williams was appointed to represent the city on the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Economic Council. Councilman Mike O’Connor was named as alternate on the Central Florida Planning Council. Councilmen O’Connor and Devin Maxwell will serve on the Tourist Development Council. Councilman O’Connor will also represent the city on the Okeechobee Main Street

See CITY — Page 15

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School board may ban tobacco on campuses

**Random drug testing considered**

*By Charles M. Murphy*

Okeechobee News

Okeechobee Schools will consider a ban on tobacco use on campus and a new random drug testing policy for students.

SWAT students at OHS spoke on tobacco usage at school by staff members. The Center for Disease Control urges policies that prohibit all tobacco usage on school grounds.

See SCHOOL — Page 5

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Official wants SFWMD board ousted

**By Eric Kopp**
Okeechobee News

MOORE HAVEN - Although he admits there may be little he can actually do, Glades County Commissioner Paul Beck is going to ask that one or more members of the current South Florida Water Management District governing board be removed.

Commissioner Beck said Thursday, Jan. 17, that he is doing some research and plans to make that suggestion at the commissioner’s next meeting. That meeting is slated for Monday, Jan. 28.

“There’s some shenanigans going on there,” he said in a phone interview. “There’s probably not a whole lot we can do but throw a little

See SFWMD — Page 14

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Lake Levels

14.94 feet

Last Year: 13.43 feet

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

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Stargazing on public lands

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IRSC plans business summit

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Main Street to host Puppy Pageant

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Rotary plans L.O.S.T. ride

... Page 4
Outstanding school board member

Kelly Owens was nominated by the Okeechobee Educational Foundation as an outstanding school board member to receive the Consortium of Florida Educational Foundation’s 2012 STAR recognition. Kelly received a certificate for her nomination and a bouquet of flowers by Foundation President Linda Syfrett, and Vice President Mary Hurley. Pictured left to right: Kelly Owens, Mary Hurley and Linda Syfrett.

Rotary Student of the Month

Shiloh Anuez was recognized by the members of the Okeechobee Rotary Club on Jan. 8, 2013, as the Okeechobee High School Student of the Month for December. Miss Anuez, a senior at OHS, is seen here with her parents and Toni Wiersma, Okeechobee High School Principal and new Rotarian.

Puppy Pageant during art festival

Is your dog the fairest of them all?

Okeechobee Main Street is currently taking applications for their inaugural “Puppy Pageant” to be held on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 10 a.m., in Flagler Park.

This exciting event is open to dogs and puppies of all ages and includes competitions for Most Obedient, Best Dressed, Most Adorable, Friendliest, Best Trick and Pet/Parent Look-a-Likes.

The Puppy Pageant is open to the public and applications are available at Okeechobee Main Street, Photography by Bobbi and Katie’s Pets.

If you are interested in entering your pet or putting up a pet-related booth at the festival, please contact Cindy at 863-357-6246.

CASTLE calls for volunteers for safe parenting program

If you have a few hours to spare and share your great parenting techniques, call CASTLE today. Teaching Safe Parenting, CASTLE’s mission is to stop child abuse before it even happens by empowering parents with the education necessary to create successful, loving, and nurturing families. We are currently seeking volunteers for our Safe Families Program. We’re making a difference, one family at a time. Call 772-465-6011 or e-mail hr@castletc.org for more information.

Phone Discounts Available To CenturyLink Customers

The Florida Public Utility Commission designated CenturyLink as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier within its service area for universal service purposes. CenturyLink’s basic local service rates for residential voice lines are $19.50 per month and business services are $28.00-$32.50 per month. Specific rates will be provided upon request.

CenturyLink participates in a government benefit program (Lifeline) to make residential telephone service more affordable to eligible low-income individuals and families. Eligible customers are those that meet eligibility standards as defined by the FCC and state commissions. Residents who live on federally recognized Tribal Lands may qualify for additional Tribal benefits if they participate in certain additional federal eligibility programs. The Lifeline discount is available for only one telephone per household, which can be either a wireline or wireless telephone. A household is defined for the purposes of the Lifeline program as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Lifeline service is not transferable, and only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain Lifeline telephone service can be punished by fine or imprisonment and can be barred from the program.

Lifeline eligible subscribers may also qualify for reliable home high-speed Internet service up to 1.5Mbps for $9.95* per month for the first 12 months of service. Further details are available at centurylink.com/internetbasics.

If you live in a CenturyLink service area, please call 1-800-201-4099 or visit centurylink.com/lifeline with questions or to request an application for the Lifeline program.

*CenturyLink Internet Basics Program – Residential customers only who qualify based on meeting income level or program participation eligibility requirements, and requires remaining eligible for the entire offer period. First bill will include charges for the first full month of service billed in advance, prorated charges for service from the date of installation to bill date, and one-time charges and fees described above. Qualifying customers may keep this program for a maximum of 60 months after service activation provided customer still qualifies during that time. Listed High-Speed Internet rate of $9.95/mo. applies for first 12 months of service (after which the rate reverts to $14.95/mo. for the next 48 months of service), and requires a 12-month term agreement. Customer must either lease a modem/router from CenturyLink for an additional monthly charge or independently purchase a modem/router, and a one-time professional installation charge (if selected by customer). A one-time shipping and handling fee applies to customer’s modem/router. General – Services not available everywhere. CenturyLink may charge or cancel services or substitute similar services at its sole discretion without notice. Offer, plans, and stated rates are subject to change and may vary by service area. Deposit may be required. Additional restrictions apply. Terms and Conditions – All products and services listed are governed by tariffs, terms of service, or terms and conditions posted at centurylink.com. Taxes, Fees, and Surcharges – Applicable taxes, fees, and surcharges include a carrier Universal Service charge, carrier cost recovery surcharges, state and local fees that vary by area and certain in-state surcharges. Cost recovery fees are not taxes or government-required charges for usurpcharged use for Taxes, fees, and surcharges apply based on standard monthly, not promotional, rates.
South Florida public lands open for stargazing

Miles away from the bright lights of urban areas, the expansive DuPuis Management Area in western Martin and Palm Beach counties is an ideal spot for exploring the night sky.

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide recreational opportunities on public lands, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is partnering with Florida Atlantic University’s Center for Environmental Research (CES) to host another season of galactic tours of the winter constellations. The Treasure Coast Astronomical Society will be your guide to the sky, with a talk on the facts and folklore about the constellation Orion, one of the sky’s most famous configurations of stars.

Star gazing is planned for Saturday, Jan. 19 and Saturday, Feb. 2, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the DuPuis Management Area 23500 S.W. Kanner Highway in Canal Point. The Visitor Center entrance is located at Gate 5 on State Road 76 in Martin County, two miles east of Port Mayaca or seven miles west of the intersection with State Road 710.

Telescopes will be set up for observa-
tions at the free events. Visitors may bring their own telescopes. The events are part of the Nature Lecture Series sponsored by the District and the CES at DuPuis.

The DuPuis Management Area is a 22,000-acre natural area open to public recreation throughout the year. The area was part of the historic Everglades and features an eco-

ologically diverse and significant vegetative community.

Throughout South Florida, the District provides recreational access to its public lands while continuing to manage them to support environmental restoration, water supply, water quality and flood control missions. At present, the District owns approximately 621,000 acres of land that are open to the public.

Many of these properties are in their natural state or have enhancements such as picnic tables, informational kiosks, primitive campsites and hiking trails.

For more information on recreational opportunities throughout the District’s 16-county region, visit www.sfwmd.gov/recreation.

Neighborhood Watch recognized

Special to the Okeechobee News

Recently the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office has recognized another community within Okeechobee as a certified Neighborhood Watch group. This community consists of SW 21st Ave, SW 1st way, SW 20th Terrace, and SW 21st Terrace.

The requirements for this community to achieve this milestone were to attend three monthly meetings where the topics range from “What is neighborhood watch?” to identity theft and residential security (How to protect your home from burglary.) Once the community met these minimum requirements a sign was erected announcing the achievement. It has been decided that the meetings will be held by the Sheriff’s Office and the community will continue on a quarterly basis with varying information topics.

Anyone interested in this program for their community should contact the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office crime prevention unit at (863)357-1600 also you can refer to the Sheriff’s Office website at www.okeesheriff.org under the crime prevention tab for additional information.

Adoptive, foster homes needed

There are so many children in the community in need of loving foster and adoptive homes. These children are infants, toddlers, teens and sibling groups. Will you make a commitment and open your heart and home for a child?

Hibiscus Children’s Center Foster Parent Program and Adoption Services will guide you through the steps to make this a reality for you. The first step is to attend our free 30 hour MAPP Class,

Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting, to be held in Okeechobee.

Classes begin on Saturday, April 6, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration is required.

Please contact Janet Steward to register and/or for additional information, 772-340-5044 ext. 415 or email js steward@hcc5kids.org
**Letters to the Editor**

**Rotary plans 10th Annual L.O.S.T. Bike Ride (Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail)**

Greetings from the beautiful and historic City of Okeechobee!

We'd like to invite you and your cycling/walk club to our 10th annual L.O.S.T. Ride on April 20, at 8 a.m. The L.O.S.T. (Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail) 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 world-wide destination for bird-watching and world class fishing. This great fund raising 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. Please consider joining us for an event you won't soon forget! For more information email OkeechobeeRotary@live.com or call Center State Bank at 863-763-5573.

**Okeechobee Rotary Club**

**Stop sales of exotic pets**

Florida’s war on snakes can be directly attributed to lawmakers who capitate to the exotic animal industry by refusing to ban wild animals being kept as pets. When you make it as simple as pulling out a credit card to buy snakes, alligators, iguanas and other exotic species, the cruel cycle begins.

Animals quickly go from “must have” to “must get rid of.” Some end up in already-overburdened shelters; others are simply dumped, destined to become targets in state-sponsored killing sprees – appallingly called “contests.”

As a licensed wildlife rehabber with 15 years experience in treating society’s castoffs, I can attest that people will not change, so the laws must. Legislators must slam the door shut on the exotic pet industry once and for all.

**Sincerely,**

Early Mitchum

Keeper of the Wild, Inc.

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**Opinion**

**Upcoming inauguration**

The president of the United States of America is a flat out joke. I refuse to capitalize the word president because in my opinion he doesn’t deserve the recognition the title should bring. He does not honor this country nor does he care about the people.

He has no respect or any other possible connection he could conjure up. Sadly the people who voted for him believed his lies. In the end they will find he is nothing more than a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

I’m sorry if this offends anyone, but there is no kind way to describe a snake-in-the-grass. I find him morally offensive because he lies to everyone about everything. Our country is falling into a position where we will be united with everything that is immoral, “politically” correct, with no conscience of what is wrong or right.

This country was founded on Biblical principles that were guide lines for living in peace with one another and honoring our Creator. I refuse to watch this ‘man’ be inaugurated back in office. For the week he will be celebrating I will unplug my television and radio and will not read any news.

Shame on America for letting this man take control of your lives.

Look back in history. Hitler convinced the very people he slaughtered to make him their ruler. History does not repeat itself ... people repeat history.

I love my country and I pray God will be merciful to this country. But I love my God above all and I praise HIM that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the forgiveness of our sins. Because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ I can live with the assurance of knowing that when I leave this earth I will spend eternity with my Lord and Savior.

And He loves all of you, too. You are not too old or too sinful to come to Him today and ask His forgiveness. Jesus died for everyone. What He hates is sin, not the sinner, so no matter what you have done or are doing, He will forgive you because HE loves you!

Cheryl Gawda
SCHOOL
Continued From Page 1

camuses. A state study showed over 16.4 percent of Okeechobee Middle School students used tobacco in the last 30 days. Over 27 percent of Okeechobee high school students surveyed said they had used tobacco in the last month.

Students surveyed 68 percent of them saw adult staff members smoke on campus. Many students also witnessed smokeless tobacco usage among students, visitors and staff.

Superintendent Ken Kenworthy said some school systems in Florida have banned tobacco usage on all campuses. He said he does not know how difficult it would be to enforce such a policy.

Chairman David Williams said putting up signs ‘no smoking’ might curb the use of tobacco on campus.

Board member Malissa Morgan said she fully supported a tobacco ban. Board member Joe Arnold suggested they create a policy for new employees hired by the district. It would have to be approved during impact bargaining sessions with the Okeechobee County Education Association.

Mr. Kenworthy said some districts allow employees to leave campus in order to smoke or use tobacco products during their lunch hour or scheduled breaks.

School Board member India Riedel said she had a problem with employees using their planning time to smoke when they should be working on improvement or their educational materials.

Ms. Morgan said it is not appropriate for students to ever see an employee or adult smoking at school.

The board took no action on the request for an anti tobacco policy in Okeechobee County Schools. They did urge Mr. Kenworthy to research this issue for all the possible impacts and report back to the board.

The board scheduled a workshop for February 5 at 5:30 pm to discuss random drug testing for students. The workshop will include discussion on why the district has suggested this, a climate survey of teachers and staff, and an informal public survey with 200 responses, the Florida Substance Abuse youth survey, strategies the district and community has to combat drugs, and sample policies adopted in other districts. He’ll also divulge the actual cost of the drug tests.

The board also approved an agreement with Cambridge Education to provide a Train the Teachers program. It will train six administrators who will then conduct observation training for administrators who conduct evaluations of teachers. The cost is $23,000.

Several bookkeepers were honored as they earned perfect internal fund audits for 2011-2012. The list includes Jacki Skinner of Central, Debra Fraser of North, Debbie Hill of Okeechobee and Roll Clark of the Okeechobee Freshman Campus. These schools, with the addition of Okeechobee Achievement Academy, had perfect audits this year.

The district also cut six positions. He said it was necessary to save $124,000 which includes one classroom teacher at Central, a secretary and school bookkeeper. Employees were either transferred to another school or the position was already vacant.

The district and union declared an impasse on the classified unit contract and a special arbitrator will be selected soon to decide the merits of the financial issues. Negotiations also resumed this week on the teachers contract which remains unsigned. The district recently proposed a salary freeze for all employees. The union countered with one step, or a 2.55 percent increase in salary.

Superintendent Kenworthy said the district is not in a financial position to give raises this year. “Automatic salary hikes are a thing of the past, especially in this financial climate,” he explained.

Students honored for high achievement on the 2012 FCAT included Caitlyn Albers, Madison Mayer, Tristan Anderson, Jacob McGehee, Madsyn Causer, John McGehee, Nicole Chesley, Minh Thu Nguyen, Emily Crews, Cavin Platt, Ryan Daniel, Manuel Ramirez, April Hogenkamp, Rebecca Snyder, Margarita Martinez, Lacey Thomas and Rachel Williams. These students earned a 5.0 on either the FCAT math, reading or science tests.

In other actions, the board honored Georgia Cope and Janice Crowley upon their retirements. Ms. Cope served 14 years in the system and was custodian at OHS while Ms. Crowley served for 16 years and was custodian at Yearling Middle School.

The board voted to expedite a ninth grader at Okeechobee Achievement Academy for battery and a 10th grader at OAA for making threats and intimidation.

The board also accepted the retirement notice of Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Mary Hurley who will retire effective July 1, 2013.

OHS Assistant Principal Dylan Tedders said at the end of the 2011-2012 school year, 23 percent of the returning student body had a grade point average of under 2.0 and were in danger of not graduating with a diploma.

They have emphasized new credit retrieval efforts and new programs to help more students graduate. He said that several students have greatly increased their grade point average in this program. At the end of the last semester in December, 19 percent of the student body had grade point averages below 2.0.
Community Events

Cypress Hut Eagles weekend plans

Cypress Hut Eagles will be serving choice rib eye steak dinner for $14, shrimp $10, or fish $8, starting at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18. Music by Wes and Deb Saturday Jan. 19, serving baby back ribs for dinner with two sides for $10 from 4-7 p.m. Music starts at 6 p.m. by Music by Debbie and Jimmy Harper. Sunday, Jan. 20, Southern Fried Chicken served from 1-5 p.m. for $6. Dart tournament Tuesday Jan. 22 starting at 6 p.m. Hamburgers will be served. The public is welcome.

Tuesday’s proceeds go for the Diabetes Research Center, and the rest go to the community charity funds. For more info please call 467-1154.

Okeechobee County offices closed

Okeechobee County offices will be closed Friday, Jan. 18, from noon to 2 p.m. Board employees will attend an employee luncheon. County offices will reopen at 2 p.m.

North VFW plans events

The North VFW Post 4423, 300 NW 34th St, has a weekend of fun and food planned. Friday Jan. 18 starts with bingo at 1 p.m.; the grill will be open 5-9 p.m. with karaoke by Lisa 7-11 p.m. Saturday Jan. 19, there will be burgers on the grill from noon to 3 p.m., bingo at 1 p.m., seafood baskets as well as a full menu from 5 to 7 p.m. and karaoke by Cowboy Karaoke (Jody Lynn). Sunday Jan. 20 Lori will be serving a pork but dinner from 1-3 p.m. for a $6.50 donation. Proceeds go to the Veterans Assistance programs.

Advance directives seminar planned

On Jan. 20, beginning at 3 p.m., Life Community Church, 701 S. Parrott Ave. will host an afternoon of important information regarding advance directives, living wills, power of attorney, and other pertinent information that will help you communicate your wishes to health care providers, facilities and to family members. Everyone, regardless of age, can benefit from pre-planning including why it is important to have a will as well as a living will. There will be professionals from various fields to share information. It will be held in the building behind the Okeechobee Christian Academy. This is a free event and the public is invited.

See Community Events—Page 8

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

Jay Allison Bracey, 86

OKEECHOBEE — Jay Allison Bracey, Master Mariner, Blue Water Cruiser, a sailor who navigated by the stars made his final voyage home on Jan. 15, 2013 after a valiant battle with cancer.

Jay was born with salt water in his veins Aug. 10, 1926, and had made two ocean voyage by the age of three months with his father, Frank E Bracey, and mother, Idis H Bracey on their way to Eagle Island Lighthouse off the shores of the Penobscot Bay in Maine where his father would be the last keeper of that lighthouse until 1945.

Jay was raised on the island the youngest of eight. His lineage traces back in history to his 9th generation grandfather, Miles Standish, the military leader of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony. Jay was a proud American and Navy Veteran of World War II, and was chosen to serve as one of the youngest men in the secret field of Radar aboard the U.S. Navy Flagship, the USS Catalina which accepted the surrender of the Japanese forces in 1945.

After service to his country, he married Frances Louise Sargent (who predeceased Jay by many years) and settled down in Southport, Maine while working for the Navy in the new field of fiber-glass. He later moved to southern Florida which became his home for the last 50 years of his life.

Jay captained private power and sailing vessels throughout the Caribbean and the Yucatan, and his favorite island was Hispaniola. His heart was happiest sailing, exploring, diving, treasure hunting, learning and absorbing island cultures and folklore. Jay’s renowned clients and friends referred to Jay as the “last gentleman of yachting.”

He built sail and power vessels for Feadship in Holland and Capetown, South Africa. His friends of the world and all who met Jay knew his caliber of honor was of a rare quality. His presence in this world made a difference, and to this world he will be sorely missed.

Jay’s beloved sisters and brothers who have gone before him are Steven Bracey, Robert Bracey, Frank Bracey, Glenn Bracey, Hilda Bracey Howard, and Adria Bracey Francis.

Jay is survived by his daughter, Cathy L Alfano and her husband Frank of Virginia Beach, Va.; grandchildren, Tracey L Boldyga of Chesapeake, Va., Roger (Skip) E Skarin and wife Jessica of Hampton, Va., Jason (Jay) P. Alfano of Virginia Beach, Va.; great grandchildren, Matthew T Gregg of Virginia Beach, Ty C and Seth N Skarin of Buffalo, Mo.; great granddaughter, Nina L Alfano of Virginia Beach; his sister, Shirley Dyer of Newcastle, Maine; along with many nieces and nephews; grand and great grand-nieces and nephews all over the world with many that always kept close contact, and the love of his life for the past 35 years, Susan Puleo of Georgia.

The family sends a special thank you to the Big Lake Cancer Center, The Hamrick House Hospice, the Community Events, and the love of his life for the past 35 years, Susan Puleo of Georgia.

The family sends a special thank you to the Big Lake Cancer Center, The Hamrick House Hospice, and the love of his life for the past 35 years, Susan Puleo of Georgia.

Mrs. Busbin resided in Florida most of her life.

She was the wife of the late Albert R. Busbin.

She is survived by her son, William; and grandson, Michael.

A memorial service will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Sun., Jan. 27, 2013 at Treasure Island Baptist Church, 4309 US Hwy 441 S.E., Okeechobee, FL 34974.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to Treasure Island Baptist Church.

Joseph “Joe” Samson Swinford

OKEECHOBEE — Joseph “Joe” Samson Swinford passed away Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013 in Raulerson Hospital. He was born March 28, 1956 in Olive Branch, Miss.

He proudly served our country in the United States Army. He was a member of the NRA and a supporter of the Nakoda Indian Tribe.

He is survived by his wife, Melba Jean Swinford; daughter, Roxanne; son, Michael; four grandchildren; and a cousin, Doris.

The family will hold a memorial service at a later date. Memorial Contributions may be made to the Nakoda Indian Tribe.

All arrangements are under the care of Matthew and Paul Buxton of Buxton-Seawinds Funeral Home, 3833 SE 18th Terrace, Okeechobee, Fla.
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**Community Events**

**BHR Ladies Auxiliary hosts breakfast**

Buckhead Ridge Ladies Auxiliary 9528 will host their monthly breakfast on Jan. 20, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Buckhead Ridge VFW on State Road 78. They will serve sausage, biscuits and gravy, home fries, eggs any way you want them, juice, coffee for a donation of $5. The event is open to the public.

**VFW post #4423 and Auxiliary to meet**

VFW Post #4423 and the Ladies Auxiliary will hold their monthly meeting on Sunday Jan. 20 at 11 a.m. at the post located aka 300 NW 34th Street. The Men’s Auxiliary will meet Monday Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. Be sure to mark your calendar.

**Orchid and garden clubs to Meet**

On Monday, Jan. 21, the Garden Club will meet at 6 p.m. and Orchid Club at 7 p.m. at the Okeechobee County Extension Center, 451 Highway 98 N. Come discuss your latest problem or show a favorite plant.

**OGCC Gold Tee**

The Okeechobee Golf and Country Club Gold Tee Golf Scores for Jan. 11 were: first place, Daryl Beardman; second place Rick Jordan; third place, Wally Hall; fourth place tie Lamar Birdashaw, Ron Smet and Wall Dierig.

**Historical Society to meet**

The Okeechobee Historical Society will be having its regular monthly meeting on Monday, Jan. 21 beginning at noon in the Museum headquarters on Highway 98 N.

**Community Collaborative Council meets**

The Community Collaborative Council of the Okeechobee County Shared Services Network will conduct their monthly meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 22, at 10 a.m. in the board room of the Okeechobee County School Board office.

**Community Events**

** Arrest Report**

The following individuals were arrested on felony and/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).

- Anthony Rushawn Smith, 43, N.W. Fifth St., Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 15 by Deputy Max Waldron on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with the felony of child abuse. His bond was set at $1,500.
- Taveares L. Whitehead, 35, W. 30th St., Riviera Beach, Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 15 by Deputy Ronald A. Brown on an Okeechobee County warrant charging him with the felonies of violation of probation - possession of a controlled substance (alprazolam) and a misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia. Her bond was set at $8,000.
- Robert A. Pohl, 48, S.E. 36th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Jan. 16 by the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force on a felony charge of driving while license suspended - habitual offender. His bond was set at $10,000.

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

**OGCC Gold Tee**

The Okeechobee Golf and Country Club Gold Tee Golf Scores for Jan. 11 were: first place, Daryl Beardman; second place Rick Jordan; third place, Wally Hall; fourth place tie Lamar Birdashaw, Ron Smet and Wall Dierig.

**Historical Society to meet**

The Okeechobee Historical Society will be having its regular monthly meeting on Monday, Jan. 21 beginning at noon in the Museum headquarters on Highway 98 N. Interested in joining? Dues are $10 per person per year.

**Community Collaborative Council meets**

The Community Collaborative Council of the Okeechobee County Shared Services Network will conduct their monthly meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 22, at 10 a.m. in the board room of the Okeechobee County School Board office. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the community to identify issues, collaborate, and share information regarding services for children and their families. The meeting is open to the public.

For more information, please call Sharon Vinson at 863-462-5000, Ext. 257.

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Sebring out scored OHS
Lady Brahmans, 28-11

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Sebring out scored Okeechobee 28-11 in the second half to defeat the Lady Brahmans 50-30 in girl’s high school basketball action Monday night in Okeechobee.

Rondaja Williams had a game high 15 points for the Lady Blue Streaks. Okeechobee was led by senior center Ami Edwards who had eight points and nine rebounds. New point guard Lahna Sedatol had six points and three assists for Okeechobee, (8-9).

Okeechobee hung tough in the first half as they played solid defense and hit enough shots to stay close. Sebring led 12-6 after the first quarter and 22-19 at the half.

“We were trying to develop some of the younger guards,” Morrow said, “We hope to get the basics and the fundamentals out of them to gain confidence up to where they want the ball and can get the ball to our post players.”

Edwards will have to pick up the pace on defense and in the first half she had several opportunities inside. Bethany Stuart also hit a pair of nice mid-range jump shots and Micco hit a 16 foot jumper to keep OHS close in the first half.

Morrow said for a few days the team was struggling without the co hit a 16 foot jumper to keep OHS close in the first half. “We got a lot of good bounces in the first half but we need to do a better job of boxing out for rebounds,” she explained, “We did play solid man to man defense and we did step up the effort. For one half we were really competitive.”

While the team has struggled without the co hit a 16 foot jumper to keep OHS close in the first half. “We got a lot of good bounces in the first half but we need to do a better job of boxing out for rebounds,” she explained, “We did play solid man to man defense and we did step up the effort. For one half we were really competitive.”

Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Lexi Manson (#11) watches her pass to a teammate during the first half of Mondays girls basketball game at OHS. Okeechobee fell to Sebring 50-30.

Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Hailey Greeson (#10) looks for an open teammate during the basketball game between OHS and Sebring on Monday.

January 18, 2013
Okeechobee News
IRSC hosts business summit

The Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College is hosting the 2013 Minorities and Women in Business Summit Friday, Feb. 8, 2013 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Brown Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship just off 35th Street on the Indian River State College Main Campus located at 3209 Virginia Avenue in Fort Pierce.

The Minorities and Women in Business Summit is a day-long conference for Treasure Coast minorities and women in the business community that will provide tools and motivation on subjects including diversity, success, empowerment and more. The summit will provide informative sessions on topics related to doing business and becoming an entrepreneur. The summit will focus on empowering minorities & women for business growth.

Speakers at the summit will focus on organizational leadership, with a morning presentation "Responsible for Results" by Patrick Arcement. His presentation will be followed by a working luncheon Keynote by award-winning author and host of the Dr. Empowerment radio show, Larthenia Howard, who will share her secrets for professional development designed to enrich personal and professional growth. During the afternoon session participants will participate in a special IRSC Minority Affairs Department Diversity Training session titled "Ouch! Dealing with Stereotypes & Employee Differences in the Workplace". Tickets are $59 per person. The price includes breakfast, a working luncheon and networking opportunities for local business women and minorities. For a limited time those who register can receive two admissions for the price of one ($59). For more information or to purchase tickets for the 2013 Minorities and Women in Business Summit, call the CCTI toll-free at 1-888-283-1177 or visit www.irscbiz.com.

Go further with Ford

On Nov. 15, 2012 Ford Motor Company sponsored “Go further with Ford” a fund raising event to benefit charities across the USA. Okeechobee Motor Company held the event to help Okeechobee Habitat For Humanity. Okeechobee Motor Co. provided food and drinks along with a chance to win a 2013 Ford Fusion and a trip to the taping of American Idol to registered people who completed a survey. A large turnout made this event a huge success enabling Habitat For Humanity to be presented a check for $1000, making the presentation was Dowling Watford, General Manager of Okeechobee Motor Co. Accepting the check was Fran Syfrett and Ed Thornton for Habitat For Humanity.

Economic Council honors Worley

The Economic Council of Okeechobee met on Jan. 9 at the Indian River State College Williamson Conference and Education Center. Jon Geltner (left), incoming Chairman of the Economic Council, recognized outgoing Chairman G.M. “Hoot” Worley (right) with a plaque for his service to the Council. Sharon Vinson (center), Facilitator of the Shared Services Network of Okeechobee County, spoke to the group about the services her organization provides to the community. State Representative Cary Pigman, District 55, also attended the meeting and introduced his Legislative Assistant Bryan Mielke, along with Larry Ford and Marty Mielke from Senator Denise Grimsley’s Office, District 21. For more information about the Economic Council of Okeechobee please call 863-467-0200.

Martha’s House plans auction

Martha’s House is seeking items for silent and live auction to be held at the Caribbean Night Dinner and Comedy Show, featuring music by The Chobee Steelers on Feb. 9 at the KOA. They would greatly appreciate any and all donations.

 Rotary welcomes new member

The members of the Okeechobee Rotary Club welcome new member Carol Wagoner. She is pictured (right) with her sponsor, Tabitha Trent. The Okeechobee Rotary Club meets at noon on Tuesdays at the Golden Corral Restaurant.

BIRTHDAY

CHRI$ HICKMAN

LORDY, LORDY, looks who’s 40!!!!! Lots of love from Jamie, Hayden, and all of the Hickmans!!

Humane Society needs volunteers

The Okeechobee Humane Society Pet/Rescue is in need of volunteers to help with office work and to help as kennel supervisors. Any time you can spare is appreciated. The organization is a non-profit with no paid staff and depends on donations and community volunteers. For more information, contact Belina Forlifer at 863-357-1104.
What is Cyberknife Radiation Therapy?

By Dr. Ramesh Kumar
Big Lake Cancer Center

How many cancer patients would jump up and consider a treatment option that is proven to be highly effective, does not need surgery, painless, completed in 5 days or less, without significant side effects, while continuing to maintain their full level of activity and function?

Radio surgery is a technique that utilizes specialized machines that allow large amounts of radiation to be delivered with sub millimeter accuracy thereby killing the cancers without damaging surrounding normal tissues. It is as simple as going out to get a chest x-ray! Cyberknife Robotic Radio surgery system, created at Stanford University over 10 years ago is unique and better than other systems in the fact that it is the only Radio surgery system that can achieve what is called “real-time tracking and killing of tumor.”

What kind of patients can be helped by Cyberknife? There are several situations too numerous to mention here where Cyberknife would be extremely useful and safe. The following are just a few of them:

- Patients with Trigeminal Neuralgia, pituitary tumors and tumors of the acoustic nerve called Acoustic Neuroma can avoid major surgical procedures on the brain by getting treated with Cyberknife.
- Patients with cancers of the brain, spine, lung and prostate are but a few of the cancers that can be helped with one to five sessions of Radio Surgery.
- An article that was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2010 showed that patients with patients with lung cancer who received Radiosurgery had a survival rate of 55.8% at 3 years versus 20 to 35% for those patients treated with traditional radiation over several weeks.
- As one of our patients commented, if it is good for patients at Stanford University, it is good for patients from the Okeechobee area!
Serving the communities south of Lake Okeechobee
May 27, 2010

Orthopaedics

Orthopaedic Specialists at Raulerson is located at 1924 Hwy 441N, Okeechobee (just north of the Hospital, in the blue-roof building). Call for an appointment 863-357-0540.

We Treat Kids Too!

Orthopaedic Specialists at Raulerson offers a full range of orthopedic services including:

- Total Hip and Knee Replacements
- Arthroscopic Surgery & Sports Medicine
- Pediatric Orthopedics
- Work Related Injuries

Most insurances and Medicare are accepted.

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Orthopaedics

Great Orthopaedic Care - Right Here in Okeechobee

Orthopaedic Specialists at Raulerson offers a full range of orthopedic services including:

- Total Hip and Knee Replacements
- Arthroscopic Surgery & Sports Medicine
- Pediatric Orthopedics
- Work Related Injuries

Most insurances and Medicare are accepted.

Look for the next edition on February 15th
The 2012 – 2013 Medical Information Guide is available online

specialsections.newszap.com

Use this interactive site to browse through articles and advertisements on our updated Newszap website

Now featuring Sudoku and the Crossword Puzzle in every edition of the OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Look for the puzzles near the Classifieds section
SFWMD
Continued From Page 1

Sunshine on it.” The “Sunshine” he was referring to is the state’s Government in Sunshine law.

The commissioner’s bold idea was precipitated by last week’s vote of the governing board to approve a resolution that paves the way for the district to possibly purchase 638 acres of A. Duda & Sons property in Glades County for $16.9 million. That price of $2,984 per acre is a 56 percent discount from the appraised value of $6,800 per acre.

The district will also have the option of buying an additional 2,489 acres of Glades County property from Duda for $16.9 million, which is not a discounted price. SFWMD will have four years to exercise that option.

By a unanimous 9-0 vote, the SFWMD governing board gave their approval to Resolution 2013-105 which allows the district to enter into negotiations with A. Duda & Sons.

The entire deal, however, is contingent on Duda receiving a 30-year extension on two of its land leases with the state.

Governing board members and the county’s tax assessors and tax deferrals.

Glades Electric increases scholarships

Glades Electric Educational Foundation is gearing up for “scholarship season” by increasing the dollar amount awarded to each county in their service territory. The scholarships are awarded to GEC members’ children who are high school seniors and have upheld academic excellence. Previously, each of GEC’s service counties received a $4,000 and $5,000 scholarship. Concern for Community, compels us to continue and even increase our investment in our area’s youth. We want to show them there are people and organizations in their own home towns willing to help them succeed”, said Glades Electric’s Board President, Jack Coxe.

The student’s academic achievement, leadership involvement, and extra-curricular activities are among some of the variables taken into consideration. The decision seems to grow more difficult each year as the number of applicants continue to rise. This is a wonderful testament to the hard work of our area’s school administrators, staff, and teachers in encouraging more students to seek higher education,” said Jennifer Manning, CFO of Glades Electric.

Students can pick up an application from their school office, a GEC office, or download an application from www.gladesec.com.

Tallahassee to discuss the proposed extensions. Charles Lee, Audubon Florida director of advocacy, will present his group’s objections to the trustees.

Audubon’s Jane Graham attended last week’s governing board meeting and, echoing Commissioner Beck’s concerns, told those members that this proposed deal between the district and Duda was more opaque than clear.

“We oppose this resolution because of the lack of public transparency. Normally, there would have been public discussion but none of that happened,” said Ms. Graham, an Everglades policy associate with Audubon Florida.

She went on to tell board members it appears as if the district has been acting “outside of Sunshine.”

The resolution was approved despite the objections of Ms. Graham and other environmental groups in attendance at the Jan. 10 governing board meeting.

And like the environmentalists Commissioner Beck did not hide his displeasure at the actions of water managers during the commissioner’s Jan. 8 meeting.

“I don’t oppose the sale of the property, it’s their treating us like a bunch of idots,” he told fellow board members.

After a 12:30 p.m. luncheon at the Moore Haven Yacht Club, the Legislative Delegation will meet at 1:30 p.m. in the county commission meeting room on the second floor of the Glades County Courthouse. The delegation meeting is open to the public.

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CITY
Continued From Page 1

Board. Councilman Dowling Watford will serve on the Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments, Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities and the Battle of Okeechobee Re-enactment Committee.

At their December meeting, the city council approved an alley lease assignment involving Glades Gas and Florida Public Utilities Company. At Tuesday’s meeting the council rescinded that action in order to modify the agreement.

The council approved legislative priorities to be presented to the Okeechobee County Legislative Delegation later this month. They will be asking $250,000 for the city stormwater system and $200,000 for the City Commerce Park as well as funding for the Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park as well as funding for the Florida Department of Transportation Five Year Program. Other issues not involving funding were also approved.

The council approved previously discussed city initiated changes to the future land use map and city initiated zoning changes for six properties to ensure they represent the most appropriate uses of the properties. About 24 acres owned by the Okeechobee Utility Authority north of the City Industrial Park was changed from change to how this delay was hurting the economy.

In other action the council:

• approved temporary closings of Third Avenue that is part of the abandoned Florida East Coast Railroad right of way.

• approved the appointment of Adam Crum to the Fire Fighters Pension Board of Trustees for a term from Dec. 7, 2012, to Sep. 30, 2013;

• awarded a contract for a CDBG housing project to Swedt Trucking and Paving in the amount of $41,676;

• purchased a bush hog from Everglades Farm Equipment for $15,035;

• approved a lease agreement between the Chamber of Commerce of Okeechobee County and State Representative Cary Pigman.

Main Street seeks artists for annual festival

Okeechobee Main Street invites all artists to apply for acceptance to the 2013 Top of the Lake Art Fest. The art fest will be held on Feb. 9 and 10.

The art fest is a juried outdoor Fine Art Show which will take place in Flagler Park. The purpose of the Top of the Lake Art Fest is to bring talented fine artists to our community to showcase and sell their work. Highlights of the art fest will be the Top of the Lake Chalk Walk (street painting) and the dedication of the fifth Okeechobee Main Street community to showcase and sell their work. Highlights of the art fest will be the Top of the Lake Art Fest.

More information can be obtained by contacting Cindy at 863-357-6246 or Bridgette Waldau at 863-467-7300.
OECO PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISOR
Position assists with managing the physical, fiscal, and human resource issues of the Structural Maintenance
Department. Supervises water resource operations and maintenance programs in the Support
Division. Provides advice and assistance with projects affecting the
management and operations of the emergency management.

No training or experience is required.

Equal Opportunity, FLRA (a)(3) exempt employer not subject to Federal
hourly wage, overtime or
recordkeeping requirements.

No overtime expected. Overtime,
if any, calculated and paid as
per applicable regulations.

Employment
Full Time

CARNIVAL AMUSEMENT & RECREATION ATTENDANTS
Wanted for Doolan Amusement Company. 16 temporary positions open from
02/15/2013 to 12/15/2013

Job involves: Perform variety of attending duties at amusement stand (traveling
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amusement rides, food concessions and/or
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No training or experience is required.

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hourly wage, overtime or
recordkeeping requirements.

No overtime expected. Overtime,
if any, calculated and paid as
per applicable regulations.

The work schedule varies widely, typically
40 Hrs/Week, Wed-Sun, 1:00 PM to 10:00 PM.
The employer will pay the weekly salary for
each week that the worker is employed.

Employer will pay the applicable variable
prevailing wage for each location, starting in Okeechobee Co, FL, $325.20/Week
and traveling to: St. Johns Co, $328.40/Week;
Volusia Co, $318.00/Week; Indian River Co, $319.20/Week; Miami-Dade Co, $324.00/Week;
Broward Co, $326.20/Week; Orange Co, $331.60/Week; Palm Beach Co, $325.20/Week;
St. Lucie, Martin Co, $323.20/Week; Sarasota Co, FL, $322.40/Week; Orange Co,
$323.60/Week; Broward Co, $325.20/Week;
St. Lucie, Martin Co, $323.20/Week; Sarasota
Co, FL, $322.40/Week; Orange Co, $323.60/Week; Broward

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Opportunities

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In all cases of questionable advertisement value, such as promises of guaranteed income from
work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are it is.

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Some 800 and 900 telephone numbers may require an extra charge, as well as local long
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Please apply by either:
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Email Resume to: jfdolanetina@yahooom

Doolan Amusement Company: 4331 S.E. Hoptown Terrace, Stuart, FL 34997
Please include complete contact information in your submission.

Employment Part Time

Focus Group
Law firm seeking individuals for a lawsuit focus group in Okeechobee, FL.
Saturday January 29, 2013
for approximately 1/2 day. Individuals must have photo ID showing
an address in Okeechobee and will be
paid $40.

To apply, please call Sheila at 877-496-8752

It's too late now to find the perfect gift. Look for it in the classifieds.

Grand Oaks Assisted Living
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Get a quick response to any item you may be selling
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January 19th & 20th
Saturday 9 am - 5 pm & Sunday 9 am - 4 pm
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2000 Virginia Ave., Ft. Pierce, FL
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Your new home could be in today’s paper. Have you looked for it?

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2. The minimum age of benefit age 62.
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For more information, call 863-467-2000.

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Business Opportunities

SUNCOAST GUN SHOW
January 19th & 20th
Saturday 9 am - 5 pm & Sunday 9 am - 4 pm
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BUY • SELL • TRADE

CONCEALED WEAPON CLASS $49
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large house, 2 1/2, large yard, W/D.
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large house, 2 1/2, large yard, W/D.
$1,000.00/mo. Bring pets.
Call 561-723-2226.
FWC kicks off 2013 Python Challenge

Nearly 800 people are registered and ready to compete to see who can bring in the longest and the most Burmese pythons from designated public lands in south Florida, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) announced Jan. 12 at the 2013 Python Challenge™ Kickoff in Davie.

For competitors, the challenge is to harvest the well-camouflaged Burmese python, which can grow to more than 17 feet in the wild in Florida, with the chance of winning prizes of up to $1,500. Registrants are coming from more than 30 other states. They will have through midnight on Sunday, Feb. 10 to find these nonvenomous constrictors.

For the FWC, the primary goals of the Python Challenge™ are to raise public awareness and increase the agency’s knowledge base regarding this invasive species and how to better understand and address impacts on the Everglades ecosystem, including native wildlife.

“The 2013 Python Challenge™ is an unprecedented effort to focus public interest, support and direct involvement to help deal with Burmese pythons,” said FWC Chairman Kenneth Wright at the kickoff news conference. “The FWC is pleased that so many people are joining this earnest effort to limit the impact of this invasive species on Florida’s diverse native wildlife. Floridians and people from all across the United States truly care about the Florida Everglades, and they are clearly eager to help us better understand and solve this problem,” Wright added.

“When they harvest snakes, Python Challenge™ competitors will be collecting valuable data that will contribute to the current Burmese python research and management efforts of the FWC and its partners,” Wright said. “We are grateful to Python Challenge™ participants, sponsors and partners for helping make this event happen.”

FWC officials today welcomed competitors and the public to the 2013 Python Challenge™ Kickoff at the University of Florida Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, which is in Davie. People attending the kickoff had the chance to get a close-up look at captive Burmese pythons, learn from experts how to identify these snakes and witness demonstrations of python-handling techniques. UF held its annual open house featuring work by faculty and students addressing invasive species in Florida.

The kickoff is the first of two public awareness events. The Python Challenge™ concludes with an Awareness and Awards Event on Saturday, Feb. 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Zoo Miami.

There are two separate Python Challenge™ competitions: the General Competition for the public and the Python Permit Holders Competition for people who have permits from the FWC and other agencies to regularly harvest these snakes. Both groups will be collecting data. When dropping off a harvested Burmese python, participants must submit data sheets providing information such as the snake’s size, GPS location and habitat where it was found.

Grand prizes of $1,500 for harvesting the most Burmese pythons will be awarded to winners of both the General Competition and the Python Permit Holders Competition, with an additional $1,000 prize for the longest Burmese python harvested overall. Funding for the prizes is provided by sponsors and through registration fees.

People can sign up for the Python Challenge™ at any time during the Jan. 12 to Feb. 10 competition, even on the final day. Go to PythonChallenge.org for the required online training, official rules and registration, as well as information on the public events.

The key sponsors of the 2013 Python Challenge™ are the Feltman Foundation and Flowers Foundation. Many partners, including the University of Florida, The Nature Conservancy, The Future of Hunting in Florida, the Wildlife Foundation of Florida and Zoo Miami, are providing important support for the Python Challenge™.

The FWC’s partner agencies have also played a critical role in these efforts; they include South Florida Water Management District, Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

Florida prohibits possession or sale of Burmese pythons for use as pets, and federal law bars the importation and interstate sale of this species. The public can help fight the threat to control invasive species such as Burmese pythons by:

- Reporting sightings of exotic species to IveGot1.org, 888-IVEGOT-1 (888-483-4861) or by using the free smart phone app IVEGOT1 for iPhone and Android. It’s helpful if you can submit a photo and location.
- Not releasing an exotic pet into the wild, and reminding others of the dangers of releasing nonnative species.
- Additional information about the 2013 Python Challenge™ can be found at PythonChallenge.org.
COME SEE A MIAMI DOLPHIN ALUMNI PLAYER & 2 CHEERLEADERS

Steel Drum Performance by the Chobee Steelers!

January 19th is going to be a great day at Gilbert Chevrolet! We’ll have 2 Miami Dolphins Cheerleaders and 1 Alumni at the dealership once again! See you there!

Food catered by Jersey Mikes!

When?
Saturday Jan. 19th, between 11:00am-1:00pm

Where?
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