

Publisher's Note:
China

**Do you want me to buy your products?
Manufacture them in Marion County, FL!**

My message to China is, if you want me to buy your products then manufacture them in Marion County Florida!!!

The foreign manufacturers have already kicked into high gear knowing that the United States' people will swarm the stores and buy billions of dollars of cheaply made product that could fall apart within 30 days. But they're not all cheap. I purchased three ugly stick fishing rods. I see on TV how tough they are. The eyelets fell out the first month (made in China). I sent a note when returning the rods, I said "try having them made in the United States." I would suggest that you buy local services. A good gift is a coupon to detail their car, it stays local. Buy someone in your family a new sink or a local bathroom makeover. Redo countertops. Replace flooring. Buy a membership to Too Your Health Spa. How about an air conditioning service call or air conditioning duct cleaning? Maybe a massage or a chiropractic adjustment. I will be giving out restaurant coupons. Home made gift baskets, that's what Christmas used to be instead of this huge money spending machine. I know people who have admitted they still owe money from last Christmas. That is not what Christmas is supposed to be about.

What are you waiting for . . . Christmas??? Well it's here, now what is their excuse? I don't understand the hold up on the pipeline from Canada. They have moved it away from the sensitive area. What are Obama and the White House waiting for??? Dropping the price of oil is a key element to helping the economy recover.

By the time this goes out Thanksgiving will be over. I only hope people give thanks and show appreciation to the Troops still

overseas. Pray they get home safe. When they get home I will be taking the Banner off the front cover and move it to my editorial page. I also want to see if I can help the Wounded Warrior program; maybe run some ads, help collect some money. Hey, maybe I can sell advertising space where the banner is.

The World Crisis: financial, religious and a president that appears to be trying to ruin us. Maybe it's because he does not know how to rise above all of the crap we are being led to believe or maybe there are

(Continued on Page 3)

Elections Are Coming Too Soon

By Charlotte Poss
Elections for the Presidential Primary are just around the corner. It seems the start of campaigning comes earlier and earlier all the time.

Too much money is spent on trying to win an office that pays what the politicians state is a small amount. It is always said that they are running for the betterment of the people. The only people I see benefiting from the politicians are themselves. They spend millions of dollars and travel all across the U.S. to campaign and who is doing the job that they were elected to do?

Our elected Legislators have been on the road, or airways for over a year already. These men and women were elected to do a job that they now pay some aid or Administrative Assistant to do. So please someone explain to me why are they being paid so

(Continued on Page 7)

Tom's Picks

**Do you need some work done and don't know who to call?
Call Tom's Picks at 804-1223**

November referrals from Tom's Picks include:

- Windows •Lawyer
- Lawncare •Handyman

Veterans Park



Veterans meeting veterans on Veterans Day, passing on history to anyone who would listen. There was a great ceremony honoring the veterans of all the wars and honoring those that did not come home. More pictures and information on page 10.

Clowning Around



The Ocala Business Leaders meeting was visited by two business people who are members that dressed for Halloween. It was such a neat picture I had to run it. OBL is a unique business group that has fun and helps each other on a consistent basis. Pictured are Art Meadows and Alexis Brown having fun while working.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



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IN GOD WE TRUST**

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ONE PERSON'S OPINION
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

It is so easy to manipulate some people. The phrase "useful idiots" sums it up very nicely. We have these "useful idiots" with us in every generation, and in our generation in abundance, since the brain manipulation started decades ago.

Our educated {?} class is a class brainwashed, and propagandized by liberal professors who hijacked our educational system decades ago. All that money for phony education. I want a refund of my tax dollars used to pay for this nonsense.

It cannot happen here. It already is happening. We are this close to subjugation. Open your eyes, look around you.

Recently, I attended an event where I was searched every day, my belongings. The catch words are Safety, and Security. That is just how easy it is. I no longer fly. The searchers, {fellow citizens} did there searching with relish. As do community patrols who are concerned with our "safety, and security". A few days ago, I was issued an edict to keep my garage door closed at all times. It is supposed to be my garage door. Don't I have the right to decide if it is open or closed, for my convenience? Something so mundane is the bailiwick of citizen spies? We are told when, and how to use everything. Recycle, do not buy, buy only what you are told, you use too much to heat, drive to much, cook, 2 minute showers, etc. Is that

Freedom? We must cut back, while millions are allowed to rush over our borders at will. These people are taking my water, and everything else I use. I am forced to share resources with them, like it or not.

Logic should tell us something, but try to tell that to a liberal useful idiot. They want to hear none of this. Useful idiots are so devoid of common sense, and logic, and information. As a first step to rectify this situation may I humbly suggest useful idiots read: The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom, just to see how bad things can get. If these useful idiots are prepared to experience this: Be my guest, but do not expect me to share the experience. I choose to decline.

D.I. L. Ocala, FL

Tom.....

The article in November's Village Spectator about the upcoming Social Security COLA states that the increase will be canceled out by a corresponding increase in The Medicare Part B premium. That is not so! The average increase in Social Security payments is estimated to be around \$43 per month while the increase in the Part B premium is going to be \$3.50. Hardly, a wipe out.

I realize that you did not write the article, but since you are the publisher/editor of the Spectator I feel that you should insist that all articles be credible.

Regards,
J. B.
The Villages

Publishers Note
Thanks Jerry for setting the record straight. Thanks for being a reader.
TomL

Opinion Editorial

Florida House of Representatives Dennis K. Baxley

A longstanding and honorable tradition in Florida has been established in the ceremonial naming of bridges and highways in memory of great community leaders.

In this tradition, the request by friends and family to memorialize John W. Brantley, Jr. at the bridge he built over the Ocklawaha River on Highway 40 East was an appropriate request and legislation was filed. We believe in remembering.

Subsequently, it came to light that this bridge was also named as a memorial to a great community servant, R. N. "Bert" Dosh.

While not an intention of the original proposal, dual naming of highways and bridges is not unprecedented. (For example,

the dual naming of the 17th Street bridge for Governor "Buddy" MacKay and Lt. Governor Jim Williams.)

As the history of these great community leaders, Mr. Dosh and Mr. Brantley, is reviewed, it makes a lot of sense to honor both men. Mr. Dosh was the visionary for this project and Mr. Brantley built the bridge.

This is just another historical record of the fact that nothing significant is ever achieved alone.

It is a privilege to honor both men and their heritage of service. Sharing the honor diminishes no one and speaks to the greatness of both.

Lorri Silvera
District Executive Secretary
State Representative Dennis Baxley
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SPA I East Ocala 694-1141 (Behind Blvd. Car Wash)
SPA II West Ocala 237-6149 (Behind CFCC)
SPA III Belleview 245-2800 (Behind Sonny's Bar-B-Q)
SPA IV Dunnellon 489-3383 (W. Dunnellon Rd 488)



Publisher's Note: CHINA

(Continued from Page 1)

too many money grabbers for him to control. I would bet he believes in a way of life something like Marxism. We are half way there.

We can do this, we need to bring back our Christian heritage, instead of teaching our children to say holiday instead of Christmas. Get rid of all the not politically adjustments. Children should have two plans of education. One - as they get to middle grades they know if they are going to college, they should have a course preparing them for college. The students that are struggling to make passing grades should not be taking college courses. How many of you out there use algebra after leaving school? That one course has been the downfall of many students. The message we send to children is that it is not OK to be a delivery man, it is not OK to be a forklift driver or lineman or work on the city maintenance crew or be a

school bus driver. You get the picture. The politicians have changed the system to grade the teachers and to prepare every student for college. You can see the results, we are leaving behind half of the students. REVAMP THE SYSTEM - IT DON'T WORK!

The original Wall Street demonstration was a good thing. It took shape of a villain. Wall Street for the last year has been a tool for the FAT CATS to either hide money or make money and some with inside information as you are finding out.

When Americans work together they can out produce anyone in the world. We need to get into that mode again and work hard together and bring an end to this mess our political system has brought into.

One last but very important thing. STOP SENDING MONEY TO COUNTRIES THAT HATE US AND ARE MAKING THREATS! That is stupidity at its highest.

TomL

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Loans from China

By Tom Loury

I want to make something perfectly clear; China does not own America and Americans, they own some politicians. Here is what I think we should tell them, start building an old folks home because when we get through with the next election process everyone of the politicians that signed off on these loans will need a place to stay. They will have plenty of money to pay at taxpay-

ers' expense. I will do my best to run a list of those involved.

China can repo the politicians that signed off on the loan. We will pay the debt, it may be late but it is clear that the American People have to stop the current administration if we want to survive as the leading country in the world.

We have some very popular people coming up in the political ranks that are not what

they seem. Marco Rubio is not White House material. It has been my experience that he does not always do what he says. Of course someone in his ranks and file could be messing him up but it's up to him to clean up his own yard before he we ask him to clean up ours. If you want to know about this call me.

Have you noticed that every time a republican takes the lead they are attacked. Something mysteriously comes up from their past. I believe the 7 year rule should work. If you don't bring these things up within 7 years then you can't bring them up at all. In most cases you can't sue after 7 years, some are shorter. If you want a good law to add to the books that would be one.

I also think China is behind the market with cheap solar panels. A friend that is dead now owned a solar pool heating business. He said after a year a cheaply made solar panel started turning the pool water black, that could happen to heating your water in the house I would think. After heating and cooling so many times the inner lining breaks down. What would you be drinking out of your tap water during that process?

I say buy local with American made products. They are right here in our country and we can ask them to make it good if it goes bad.

God Bless America . . . TomL 352-804-1223

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Ocala DownTown

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COLUMNS are the opinions of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the SENIORS VOICE, and are chosen to represent a diversity of views on local issues. The editorial on page 4 is the opinion of the Publisher only.

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Newspaper Deadlines

Editorial & Ad Copy for January

Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown
12am, December 19th

Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator
12am, December 19th

■ Charlotte Poss ■

THE OMBUDSMAN

Volunteers are needed for the Ombudsman Program. The Long-Term Ombudsman Program, works to help those living in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities and Adult Family Care Homes have a voice. So many residents' in these facilities have no

one to turn to when there is a problem are do not know where to go to get help. You can help by volunteering now. Twenty hours a months is what is asked for. Please call now and ask for an application. 1-888-831-0404, you won't regret it.

Friends of the Library

Ken Tipper

Lucy Beebe Tobias, author and former Star-Banner journalist, will talk about her book, "Florida Gardens Gone Wild", at a program sponsored by the Friends of the Ocala Library on Sunday, December 11, at 2 p.m. at the library on Silver Springs Boulevard. Tobias says of her latest book, "It's about my down and dirty life with garden-

ing, discovering native plants, organics, and connections with nature." Along the way, Tobias found places to visit that will surprise even seasoned gardeners.

Tobias will autograph the book, with \$2 of the \$12 sale price going to the Friends. Refreshments will be served by the Friends. For information on the Friends log on to friendsoftheocalalibrary.org.



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Elementary Students Recognized

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2011, Marion County Commissioners and fire rescue leaders held the Fire Prevention Month 2011 poster contest winner presentation at the McPherson Complex Auditorium.

Students from across Marion County put their imaginations to work, creating posters incorporating Fire Prevention Month's 2011 message "Get Down. Get Out. Get On the Phone!"

Following are the poster contest winners:

Kindergarten

Jasmine Barnett
Evergreen Elementary

Grade 1

Derrick Williams
Blessed Trinity School

Grade 2

Vanessa Maldonado
Madison Street Academy

Grade 3

Hailey Burnsworth
Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary

Grade 4

Kaitlynn Kirby
Maplewood Elementary

Grade 5

Victoria Blanchette
Bellevue Elementary

The winners received prizes totaling more than \$1,200 from MCFR's community partners: Paul Davis Restoration (medals and trophies), Baskin Robbins®/Dunkin Donuts® (the South Pine Avenue, State Road 200 and East Silver Springs Boulevard locations) and McDonald's® (the Northwest Pine Avenue, Southeast Maricamp Road, Southwest Highway 484, Southwest 27th Avenue, Southwest 38th Court and two Silver Springs Boulevard locations).

Fire departments across the country recognize National Fire Prevention Week, but MCFR has expanded it into a monthlong campaign since 2007. Overall, firefighters reached approximately 20,000 children during this year's campaign, teaching them life-saving fire safety messages.



The Centers Inc. Welcomes New CEO

Ocala, FL Charles R. Powell as its new Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Powell brings extensive leadership experience and expertise in lead-

ing mental health and substance abuse agencies. He holds a MS in Clinical Counseling from Wright State University, a MA in Philanthropy and Development from St. Mary's University, and a BS in Communications from Ohio University.

Mr. Powell's experience spans seven states and numerous strategic visions for funding, governing, developing and administering the best programs for recovery, resiliency and strength based models. He comes to Ocala from Behavioral Health Services of South Georgia where he was the chief executive officer serving a 10 county region. According to Stephen Spivey, a member and former president of the non-profit's board of directors, "Mr. Powell, in a relatively short time there, has been able to establish a lot of key relationships with not only legislators but other health care officials. His expertise in integrated health care will be invaluable in navigating the changing climate of health care."

Mr. Powell said he "is honored to be selected as the next CEO of the Centers, Inc., and is confident that he will be able to provide the creative energy necessary to fulfill the Centers' mission." The change in leadership of the Centers will be November 14th as Russell Rasco begins his retirement after 33 years of service to the Centers.

The Centers, a private, non-profit behavioral health care organization, has been serving Marion and Citrus Counties for over 39 years. With four locations in Marion County and three in Citrus County, it is one of the top ten employers supporting over 560 trained professionals. Housing a fifty-



seven-bed acute care facility (Children and Adult Crisis Stabilization Units and Adult Psychiatric Hospital), fifty-bed adult and fifteen-bed adolescent residential substance abuse treatment facilities, the Centers is saving lives every day. In partnership with Kids Central, Inc., the Centers also provides case management and crisis response services for children and families in Circuit 5. Furthermore, through its partnerships with local schools, law enforcement, and children's services, the Centers provides vital community outreach, prevention, and intervention programs for thousands more. In fact, one out of every fifteen individuals in our community directly benefits from the Centers services every year.

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Elections Are Coming Too Soon

(Continued from Page 1)

much money to spend most of their time campaigning for the next election.

It was written somewhere that your legislators only spend 60 to 66 days in session. So, why are they being paid so much and

receiving so many benefits that you cannot get.

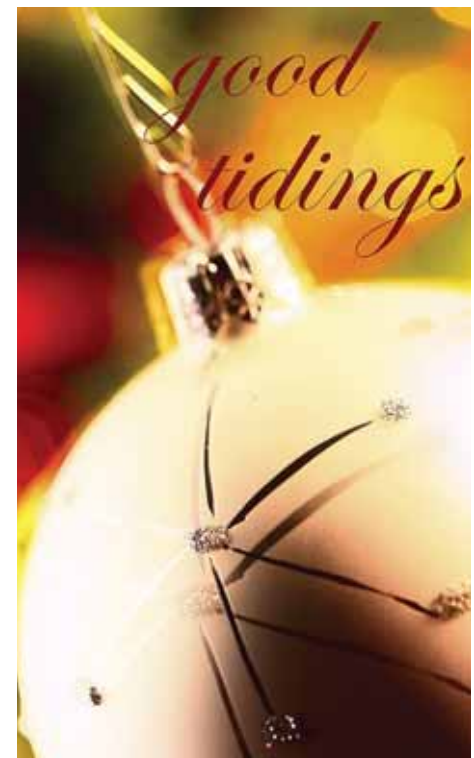
It would be so nice to see these elected officials live on social security and have Medicare coverage just like the rest of us. Where in this world other than being a poli-

tician can you retire after two terms which is (8years), and receive full benefits and pay covering their entire family. Only in the U.S.

Remember, we the voters are the ones who put these people in office. When you go out to vote and voting will again be early do a smart vote. A person should vote for

the one who can do the best job regardless of his or her political affiliation. Political parties have to stop running the country and the people have to take over. We must elect who is best for the job. We sure do have our work cut out for us.

Elections Day is coming and we need people in office who will stand up for the people and be accountable to the people. Use the right that so many military men and women gave us, "freedom", too many of us take that freedom for granted.





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SENIOR SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

SANTA ON THE SQUARE

When: Tues and Thur December 6th, 8th, 13th, 15th, 20th and 22nd.

Time: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Where: Downtown on the Square Cost: Free

What: A favorite family holiday program including a visit with Santa, music, snacks and hayride. Open to all ages. Don't forget to bring your camera for that unforgettable photo.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS CELEBRATION DANCE

When: Friday, December 9th, 2011

Time: 7:00 PM to 10:30 PM

Where: American Legion Hall on NE Sanchez Ave. in Tuscaawilla Park

Cost: \$5.00 per person

What: Waltz in the holidays with an evening of ballroom dancing. Wear your sparkles and colors to celebrate the season.

Light refreshments provided. Trish Sands will provide the music.

LAKERIDGE WINERY & SHOPPING TRIP

When: Wednesday, December 14th, 2011

Where: Orlando, Florida

Time: Leave 8th Ave. Adult Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Return is 6:00 PM.

Cost: \$26.00 per person

What: Have a fun filled day of shopping at the Florida Mall and the Orlando

Premium Outlet after touring the Lakeridge Winery. Save your gas, avoid the traffic and tolls. Come and join us and enjoy the day. Limited to 45 participants. For more info, call Grace at 629-8357.

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When: Thursdays starting January 5th, 2012

Time: 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM for beginners and 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM for intermediate

Where: 830 NE 8th Ave. Adult Rec. Center

Cost: \$35.00 for a four week session

What: Learn all types of Ballroom Dancing with Trish Sands. To register please call the Center at 629-8545.

MOVIE FOR DECEMBER 2011

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH AND 14TH AT 1:30 PM

"UNKNOWN" Starring: Liam Neeson, Diane Kruger, January Jones, Aidan Quinn and others.

Liam Neeson headlines this thriller about a prominent doctor on a business trip to Germany when he awakens from a coma to find that another man has stolen his identity and taken over his life. Dr. Martin Harris (Neeson) has just arrived in Berlin to deliver an important presentation when he realizes that his briefcase has gone miss-

ing, and leaves his wife Elizabeth (Jones), t their hotel to try to retrieve it. During his cab ride back to the airport, however, a serious car accident lands Dr. Harris in the hospital, where he lies in a coma for four days. Upon awakening, Dr. Harris is horrified to discover that every relic of his identity has been completely erased. His shock is soon compounded when, upon seeking out his wife at a lavish party, another man (Quinn) appears by her side claiming to be the real Dr. Martin Harris, and requests that hotel security protect them from the unstable "imposter". Facing total denial from everyone he turns to, Dr. Harris gets a tip from a sympathetic nurse to seek out the assistance of Ernst Jurgen (Gantz), the former head of the German Secret Police, who implores him to track down Gina (Kruger), the illegal immigrant taxi driver who narrowly saved his life, and may hold all the answers to all of his questions. Now, the closer Dr. Harris gets to solving the mystery, the greater the danger becomes until the astonishing truth is

revealed, plunging him into a desperate race against time. RATED PG 13

All movies are shown at the 8th Avenue Adult Recreation Center at 1:30 PM—Telephone: 629-8545

Enjoy a free movie in a comfortable setting. Please call the center to reserve your seat.

Movies for January, 2012

"WATER FOR ELEPHANTS" "HEREAFTER"

NOTICE:

The 8th Avenue Adult Recreation Center located at 830 Ne 8th Avenue, Ocala will be closed Saturday, December 10th for the Ocala Christmas Parade and Friday, December 23, 2011 thru Monday, January 2, 2012 for the holidays.

The Barbara G Washington Adult Recreation Center located at 210 NW 12th Avenue, Ocala will be closed Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26, 2011 and Monday, January 2, 2012.

Your opinion matters to us!

Let us know what you think about the Seniors Voice and Downtown. 804-1223



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On November 10th, 22 new employees joined the Marion County Fire Rescue family as single-certified EMTs and paramedics. As part of a Marion County Fire Rescue tradition, these recruits raised their right hand and promised to dedicate their best efforts to saving lives and protecting property.



Marion County Fire Rescue also recognized 37 newly promoted driver/engineers, 14 employees for their committed years of service (ranging from 10 to 25 years with MCFR) and a group of firefighters with the Marion County Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society for receiving the Chris Blackwell award for the "Most Active Chapter" at the 2011 International Convention held in Grapevine, Texas recently.


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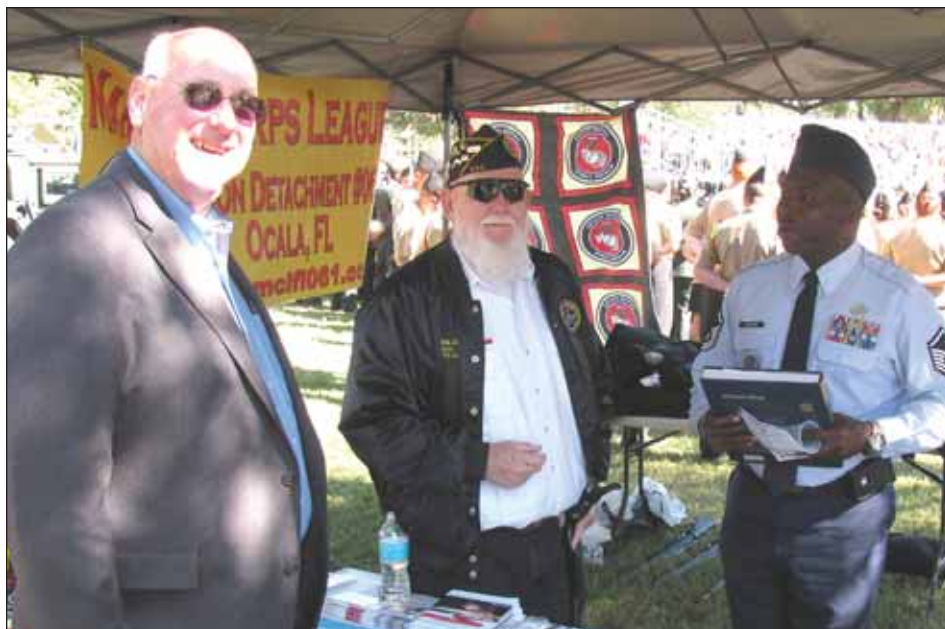
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Veterans Day



Veterans Day November 11, 2011. 11am Ocala/Marion County Veterans Memorial Park:

The day included a wonderful program of music, poetry and recognition of our Veterans, sponsored by Marion County Public Schools. There was an exciting aerial display by the Leeward Air Ranch War Birds,

a static display of military vehicles from several preservation societies, a display by the United States Submarine Veterans (Nautilus Base), and all branches representing our United States Veterans. The Memorial Wreath was placed followed by a 21 gun salute and Taps. As I wandered through the crowds and spoke with people asking where

they had arrived from, I was amazed to talk with people who drove from Texas, Virginia, and Michigan to be with a family member here in Marion County for this special tribute ceremony. Hundreds of Marion County Students filled the Park to show respect and honor for those who have served, those who continue to serve, and for our future genera-

tions to learn and appreciate Freedom. All Marion County Public School ROTC units performed drills and conducted the presentation of the Colors. Francis Marion Military Academy performed a special drill and showed off their skills as well.



Pictured is a group of men representing the United States Submarine Veterans at the park. The vice-commander, Ken Nichols, said they would love to have this photo published. The lady with them is Jackie Porter from the Marion County School Board honoring our Veterans.

Vets in the Classroom



A special program that takes place year round in Marion County Public Schools is Vets in the Classroom. This program brings history to life by placing experienced military veterans directly before students in the Classroom. Their personal experience help students understand the importance of military service and build patriotism and respect for America. Veterans provide invaluable insight and first-hand knowledge that excites student learning. In November, in honor of Veterans Day, I had the honor of spending the day at Fort King Middle School with WWII veteran Mr. Harry Kirby. Mr. Kirby

resides in Oak Run and served in the US Army. At 87 years old, Mr. Kirby spoke to over 350 8th graders about his experience at "The Battle of the Bulge". Of course the 8th grade boys wanted to hear about the tanks and the weapons used. When Mr. Kirby showed an old photo of he and his wife, Jean, (married 66 years) all the girls said "aah"!!! I was also taken back by the crisp, meaningful presentation that WWII veteran Mr. Harry Kirby gave to the students. Thank you to all who volunteer to this wonderful classroom program. www.jackieporter.com <<http://www.jackieporter.com>>



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Jobless Numbers Continue to Tumble

Nov. 18, 2011

(OCALA, Fla.) With less than a week before Thanksgiving, something to be thankful for: lower unemployment across-the-board for Workforce Connection's three-county region.

Regional unemployment was 11.5 percent in October, down from September's 12.1 percent and significantly, down 1.8 percent over the year, according to today's release from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

That's the third consecutive drop in unemployment and the lowest regional rate since May's 11.5 percent.

"This is very good news. We're not only

seeing positive, strong growth but we're seeing a trend, and that is very positive," said Workforce's CEO Rusty Skinner. "Where we had experienced almost a yo-yo effect, up slightly one month, down the next, our unemployment has steadily trended downward."

The October unemployment rates for the region were: 11.8 percent in Marion County, down from 12.4 percent in September; 11 percent in Citrus County, down from 11.6 percent; and 10.3 percent in Levy County, down from 11 percent.

Out of a labor force of 209,256, there were 185,239 employed and 24,017 without jobs. While the labor force shrank by 1,119

over the month, the number of those with jobs increased by 239 and there were 1,354 fewer unemployed.

DEO delivered more good news: Total nonagricultural employment in the Marion County/Ocala Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was up 1,100 jobs over the year for a 1.2 percent growth rate. Eight industry sectors saw positive gains, three areas showed no growth and only three experienced job loss.

Trade, transportation and utilities added 600 jobs over the year, representing a 3 percent growth rate; education and health Services, added 500 jobs, for an increase of 3.7 percent; retail trade and leisure and hospitality both added 300 jobs, for growth rates of 2.1 percent and 3.2 percent respectively; transportation, warehousing and utilities added 200 jobs, or 8.7 percent more since October 2010; and wholesale trade added 100 new jobs for a growth rate of 3 percent.

Manufacturing, financial services and 'other services' remained the same over the year while mining, logging and construction; information; and government experiences job losses.

That's the second consecutive month the Ocala MSA experienced positive job growth over the year, which previously had not occurred since June 2007.

Here's how each county fared in October:

* Citrus County's labor force shrank slightly from 58,390 to 58,215 over the month, but the number of employed rose by

214 to 51,813 and the number of those without jobs was 6,402, a drop of 369. Citrus' unemployment rate fell 1.7 percent over the year.

* Levy County's labor force of 17,512 remained virtually unchanged over the month, growing by 10 and by 131 over the year. The number of those with jobs rose by 123 to 15,706 while the number of unemployed fell by 113 to 1,806. The unemployment rate dropped 1.6 percent since October 2010.

* Marion County's labor force shrank by 920 to 133,529; the number of those with jobs dropped by 70 to 117,720 after expending the previous month by 918. Those without jobs dropped by 850 to 15,809 a two-month drop of 1,197 and a decline of 2,644 unemployed over the year. The unemployment rate dropped 1.9 percent since the previous October.

The state's unemployment rate of 10.1 percent is down from 10.6 percent in September and 11.6 percent over the year. Becky Rust, DEO's chief economist, said that represents the lowest unemployment in Florida since June 2009 and a drop of 1.5 percent over the year. The national rate dropped from 8.8 percent to 8.5 percent.

Rust described overall statewide growth as 'positive or modest.' She noted that all 67 counties experienced a drop in unemployment over the month as well as 65 counties since October 2010.

For the seventh consecutive month, the Ocala MSA's unemployment ranked fourth

(Continued on Page 14)



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HOST A HOLLY JOLLY PARTY

(Family Features) When it comes to celebrations, there's no season quite like the holiday season.

The celebration experts from Wilton share party tips and irresistible recipes to help create a fabulous cocktail buffet complete with all the trimmings.

"It looks like it would take lots of time

and effort, but it really doesn't," says Nancy Siler, Vice President of Consumer Affairs at Wilton. "We've worked out all the details to make it easy, elegant and delicious."

Siler suggests setting up a beverage station so guests can serve themselves, or recruit a friend to help prepare and serve your signature cocktails - sugar-rimmed Cheery

Cranberry Mojitos and colorful All Aglow Melon-tinis that twinkle with sparkle gel. And for a warm beverage choice, offer rich, thick hot chocolate garnished with frosty snowmen, peppermint curls or chocolate candy-coated marshmallows.

"When it comes to the food, a mix of savory and sweet is a must," Siler adds. "Tree-shaped Merry Mushroom Bites and tiny Savory Southwest Donuts piped with avocado to resemble a wreath will wow both the eye and the palate. For another unexpected twist on tradition, stack peppery spritz crackers in a clear glass canister."

And for the sweets, beautifully decorated snowflake shaped holiday butter cookies are displayed on stacked pedestal plates alongside a bowl of truffles adorned with festive candy drizzles and luminescent pearl dust. Both treats make a fitting finale - and can be made in advance.

For more holiday recipe and decorating ideas, visit www.wilton.com.

Parmesan Pepper Spritz Crackers

Makes about 7 dozen crackers
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups (about 8 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/3 cup milk
Preheat oven to 375°F.

In small bowl, combine flour, black pepper, white pepper and salt. In large bowl, beat cheese, butter and garlic until smooth. Gradually add flour mixture to cheese mixture. Mix until dough forms a ball. Gradually add milk, mixing until fully incorporated. Shape into small logs and place in Cookie Master Ultra II. Using desired disk, press crackers onto ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake 11 to 13 minutes or until edges

(Continued on Page 13)

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HOST A HOLLY JOLLY PARTY

(Continued from Page 12)

are light golden brown. Cool 2 minutes on cookie sheet on cooling grid. Remove from sheet and cool completely. Store in airtight container up to 1 week.

Merry Mushroom Bites

Makes 24 bites
1/3 cup diced yellow onion
3 tablespoons butter
12 ounces portobello or baby portobello mushrooms, coarsely diced

4 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
1-1/4 teaspoons black pepper
3 eggs
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1-1/4 teaspoons salt
1 package (4 ounces) water or other favorite crackers
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
Chopped rosemary or parsley (optional)
Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare Bite-Size Silicone Tree Mold with vegetable pan spray.
In large skillet, cook onion and butter

over medium-low heat stirring occasionally until soft, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, rosemary and black pepper; cook until liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes; cool slightly. Transfer mixture to food processor. Add eggs, flour, and salt. Pulse until mixture is pureed with no large pieces of mushroom or onion. Fill cavities of silicone mold completely with mushroom mixture, patting flat.

Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until top of the mushroom mixture is firm. Cool in pan 15 minutes; carefully remove and place on cracker. Top with sour cream, sliced red pepper and, if desired, rosemary. Serve warm or at room temperature.

powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, finely minced



Savory Southwest Donuts

Makes about 36 mini donuts
1 tablespoon ground paprika, divided
1-1/2 cups cake flour
1-1/4 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon ground chipotle chili

2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
Topping
1 ripe avocado
1 teaspoon lime juice
Salt to taste
Additional chopped cilantro

(Continued on Page 14)



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HOST A HOLLY JOLLY PARTY

(Continued from Page 13)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray Mini Donut Pan with vegetable pan spray. Lightly sprinkle wells with some of the paprika.

In large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cumin, chili powder and salt. In second bowl, whisk together milk, egg, oil, garlic and cilantro. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and stir just until flour is moistened. Fill each donut cavity about 1/2 full.

Bake 5 to 7 minutes or until the top of the donuts spring back when touched. Let cool in pan 4 to 5 minutes before removing. Wash pan, dry thoroughly and prepare with pan spray and paprika. Repeat with remaining batter.

For topping, mash avocado with lime juice and salt; stir until smooth using a whisk or in a food processor. Pipe avocado mixture over top of cooled donuts. Sprinkle with cilantro. Serve immediately.

See step-by-step instructions for Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles, Chocolate Raspberry Chip Truffles and Snowflake Shortbread Cut-Out Cookies on www.wilton.com.

All Aglow Melon-tinis

Makes 1 cocktail
Wilton Red Sparkle Gel
2 ounces green melon liqueur

1 ounce lemon flavored vodka
1 ounce bottled sour mix
2 ounces club soda

Maraschino cherries (optional)
Squeeze Wilton Red Sparkle Gel around the inside of a martini glass.

In cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine melon liqueur, vodka, sour mix and club soda; shake well. Strain into martini glass. Garnish with maraschino cherries.

Cheery Cranberry Mojitos

Makes 1 cocktail
6 fresh torn mint leaves, plus additional sprigs for garnish
1/2 lime, cut into four wedges
1 tablespoon dried cranberries
2 tablespoons Wilton Red Colored Sugars, plus additional for garnish
2 ounces rum
3 ounces cranberry juice
2 ounces club soda

In tall glass, thoroughly muddle mint leaves, lime wedges, cranberries, and red sugar. Add rum, cranberry juice and club soda and stir. Add ice and additional club



soda to fill glass.

Peppermint Blitz Hot Chocolate

Makes about 4 servings
1 quart (4 cups) milk

1 cup (about 6 ounces) Wilton Dark Cocoa Candy Melts, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
3 ounces chocolate liqueur (optional)
1 ounce peppermint liqueur (optional)

In a large pot over medium-low flame, heat milk and Candy Melts, whisking frequently, until boiling. Remove from heat. Stir in extracts and liqueurs, if using.

Garnish with peppermint sticks or curls or snowman decorations and serve immediately.

(captions)

Snowflake Shortbread Cut-Out Cookies, Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles, Chocolate Raspberry Chip Truffles, Parmesan Pepper Spritz Crackers, Merry Mushroom Bites and Savory Southwest Donuts

All Aglow Melon-tinis, Cheery Cranberry Mojitos and Peppermint Blitz Hot Chocolate

Jobless Numbers Continue to Tumble

(Continued from Page 11)

highest among the state's 23 MSAs down from second in March and third in April behind Port St. Lucie's 12 percent, Sebastian-Vero Beach at 12.7 percent and Palm Coast at 14 percent.

Among Florida's 67 counties, Marion County's unemployment rate remains the ninth highest and Citrus County's continues to be the 18th highest, while Levy County fell four more places to 29th.

Workforce Connection serves job seekers

and employers cost-effective, high-quality employment, training and education. Last year, more than 36,000 career seekers and 1,600 businesses received services.

The local, business-led nonprofit organization works with economic development partners throughout the three-county region to bring new employers to the area as well as to provide services and hiring and training incentives that help new and existing businesses, large and small.

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