

# NEWSBRIEFS

By: Christina Vilar, Staff Reporter

## Warrior Band starts competitive streak

The annual marching festival, hosted by the Oak Grove band on October 2, will mark the beginning of their busy competition schedule. This first contest of the season kicks off at OG and what better way to start it off than on Warrior territory? Bands from all across the state will be going neck and neck with the All Superior Warrior band. This year, the bands will be judged by for Oak Grove Middle School principal Terry Ingram, Jim Pierce from Memphis, TN, and Jim Knight from Birmingham, AL. The event will last all day as approximately 30 bands enter the field in competition. The bands range from 1A-6A.

Not only will the band be competing this month, but they'll also be giving back to their community by participating in a benefit concert. The band will be performing at the Saenger Theatre October 5 to help raise money for the Edward's Street pantry stuffer. Among the acts performing at the Saenger are The Pride from Southern Miss and OGHS junior Clay Gatlin. Tickets cost \$6 per person.

## Seniors' film makes finals at festival

Seniors Will Bedwell and Trey Hardin's new film, *The Traveler's Verse*, has been selected as a finalist for the Austin Young Filmmakers Competition. The YFC picks eight to ten films made by teenagers each year. Truman Productions's (Bedwell/Hardin) film is one out of the many made by teenagers across the country.

While at the festival, the winner of the Young Filmmakers Competition will have an opportunity to see over 200 films, like *Avatar 2*, attend the Austin Film Festival luncheon on the last day of the conference (October 23), and learn from a panel of veterans who have made names for themselves in the film business. The 17th Annual Austin Film Festival is scheduled for October 21-28.

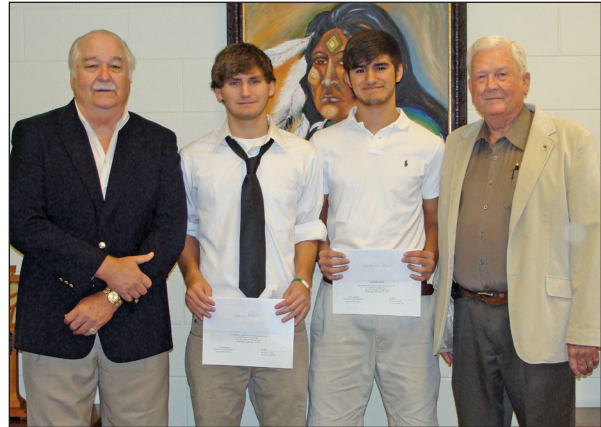
## OG hosts speech and debate tournament

On September 24 and 25, the OG Forensics team hosted the seventh annual Warrior Invitational Debate and Speech tournament. The events included dramatic interpretation, impromptu speaking, television commentary, duo interpretation, and 15 other categories. Approximately 400 students from 17 high schools participated.

Among them, 49 students represented Oak Grove. Out of the 49 team members, 23 are novices. These new members include: Kelsey Addison, Sarah Bial, Tori Borbash, Lauren Bounds, Bria Burkett, Ryan Cone, James Ford, Miriam Ford, Ryan Henry, Austin Heusser, Hannele Heusser, Rachel Hummel, Ileana Jimenez, Christina Legradi, Nakia Lindsey, Harrison Livingston, Caroline Neese, Sarabeth Sappington, William Smith, Alex Thomas, Sean Thomas, Clarissa Warner, and Kaila Williams.

## OG seniors honored by Civitan Club

Two Oak Grove High School students were recognized by representatives from the University Civitan Club on September 15, 2010, at OGHS. Seniors William Ross and Daniel Rigel were awarded a certificate of recognition, leadership, and outstanding service to OGHS and the community by Mr. Sam Clinton and Mr. Larry Lawrence. The students were also awarded tickets to the Southern Miss vs. Kansas football game on September 17, 2010 as well as a monetary award of \$10.



Oak Grove seniors William Ross and Daniel Rigel were honored by the University Civitan Club represented by Mr. Sam Clinton and Mr. Larry Lawrence.

# Fear hinders Gulf Coast recovery, not oil spill

By: Will Bedwell

Staff Reporter

This past summer, all news stations heralded the BP Deep Water Horizon oil spill as the greatest environmental disaster the United States has ever faced. This disaster (technically an oil leak but referred to commonly as a spill) has gushed more oil into U.S. waters than any other drilling related catastrophe. The long-term damage, however, is still undeterminable. In the face of such uncertainty, the citizens of the Gulf Coast remain paralyzed with terror as to what the future may hold for themselves and their homeland. Yet hope is beginning to muster as the ecological impact is turning out to be much less catastrophic than predicted.

The main basis scientists have for predicting the spill's effects is the Exxon Valdez Oil Tanker Spill that was transporting oil in 1989 when it struck a reef off the coast of Alaska and spilled 500,000 barrels of crude oil into the Northern Pacific Ocean. The spilled oil eventually covered 11,000 square miles of ocean and 1,300 miles of Alaska's coastline.

An estimated 100,000 birds and 3,000 mammals were killed due to the spill, as well as destroying millions of salmon eggs. Environmentalists expect 30 more years to pass before any of the animal groups fully recover.

In light of such statistics, the Deep Water Horizon spill (which put an estimated 4.9 million barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico, almost ten times the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez) is expected to be extremely detrimental to the Gulf's ecosystem.

One large concern has been the expected wash up of oil along the Gulf Coast. Louisiana's marsh lands are environmentally unstable and many feared their destruction. Thankfully, only 400 acres of the marshlands have been tainted with oil. This is a minute amount made even smaller when one realizes that an estimated 2,000 miles of Louisiana coastline disappear each year due to rising ocean levels. Of all 253 beaches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, only 49 had to be closed for necessary clean up, and all these beaches have been cleaned by government groups.

There are three main reasons cited by Michael Grunwald, winner of the Society of Environmental Journalists Award, as to why the spill has not had the extreme effects so many predicted. First, the oil that

spewed forth from BP's leak is of a much lighter and degradable type than what was spilled by the Exxon Valdez. This accounts for the unprecedented speed in which much of the oil is being broken down by the Gulf's natural ecosystem. Second, the warmth of the Gulf's waters as opposed to those in the Northern Pacific also allow for more bacteria in the water to break down the oil at a much faster pace than the Pacific's bacteria. Lastly, the large amount of water continually deposited in the Gulf by the Mississippi River has kept much of the oil in deeper waters away from the area's coastline.

Most environmentalists were worried about the spill's impacts on the Gulf of Mexico's populations of sea-life, birds, and mammals. Much to their elated surprise all fish and shrimp have tested clean. Also the amount of oiled birds is only 1% of those oiled by the Exxon Valdez spill, and the amount of oiled mammals only 3%.

All facts seem to point out that the largest effects of the spill are not environmental but actually psychological. The American Public's psyche has been rocked and is in turn causing the Gulf Coast's economy to suffer. Commercial fishing and tourism are the industries being hurt the most.

Due to the public's fear about the spill poisoning seafood, a fishing ban is currently enforced for 40,000 miles of Gulf waters to ensure harvested seafood's safety. The ban threatens the livelihood of thousands who depend upon commercial fishing for their career, despite all tests proving the fish and shrimp of the area to be untainted and all of their chemical findings being well below any levels of concern.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, the current trend of scared tourists canceling trips to Gulf Coast's beaches could last three years and cost the area \$23 billion. To put that figure into perspective, visitors to the Gulf Coast fuel both the \$34 billion tourist industry and the employment of industry's 400,000 workers.

If this disaster is to be thwarted and if the Gulf Coast is to survive, the American Public must turn to the facts instead of the prophetic doom being preached by the mass media. President Obama has declared all beaches "clean, safe, and open for business." He explained the solution to the situation perfectly when he said, "If people want to help, the best way is to come down here and visit."

# Barbour bans synthetic marijuana

By: Amelia Passer

Staff Reporter

Synthetic cannabis, also referred to as Spice, was outlawed by Governor Haley Barbour on September 3, 2010, making the use, sale, or possession illegal statewide. The bill was passed on August 27, 2010, to which the Governor quickly signed.

"Several Mississippi communities have attempted to stop the sale of this drug," Barbour said in recent news release. "However, our law enforcement needs a comprehensive law to address the issue. Spice is no different than marijuana and should be treated as every other controlled substance under our laws."

Spice was ruled in 2009 by the Drug Enforcement Administration as "a drug of chemical concern."

The synthetic drug, which is commonly sold as incense, is sprayed with chemicals that mimic the effect of THC, (tetrahydrocannabinol) which is naturally found in marijuana; however, spice users tend to experience long term effects far more intense than the effects from the consumption of cannabis.

Those who consume the synthetic drug have been reported to experience anxiety, agitation, and sometimes seizures or convulsions, and when overdosed may cause serious dangers.

So far, the bill has caused much controversy. "It is not a problem that responsible people use [spice], it is a serious problem if foolish or naïve people use it. It is the same problem that surrounds alcohol and any other legal prescription drug," journalist, Kevin Keck, who researched the synthetic drug, said.

Law enforcements have discovered no stores in Lamar County selling spice, but just in case, officials have given retailers of the product until October 1, 2010, to turn their stocks over to law enforcement or legally dispose of the drug in some way.

Interestingly enough, when the Handy Pantry, located on 4th Street, and The Raw Shop, located on Hardy Street, were asked to answer questions on Mississippi's new law for this article, both stores

refused to disclose any information on the subject.

The bill bans the sale, use, or possession of synthetic marijuana. Any violators face up to six months in jail, a fine up to \$1,000, or both, which is the same offense as possessing 30 grams or less of marijuana as well as no more than 90 days in prison.

"This bill gives our law enforcement the support they need to rid our communities of synthetic marijuana. Effective immediately, all store owners must stop selling this drug, and consumers caught with it will face serious consequences," Barbour said. "I appreciate the hard work by the Legislature to swiftly pass the important measure and protect our communities."

## Anderson

DESIGN CENTER

"Everything For Your Way of Living!"



- Carpet
- Tile
- Wood
- Laminate
- Travertine
- Lighting
- Granite Countertops
- Rugs
- NORWALK Furniture
- Art
- Accessories
- Mirrors
- Lamps
- Chandeliers
- Ceiling Fans
- Paint
- Custom Draperies
- Backsplashes
- Blinds
- Shutters
- Light Fixtures
- Serta Mattresses

545-7198

facebook

11 Office Park Dr. (Behind Petro) 515 W. Scooba ( Behind McMullan)