

Orange Beach Community News

Orange Beach, Alabama

August 14, 2006

by Ken Grimes, Jr.

Ready for the roar of the racing engines and the sights out on the gulf as the Thunder On The Gulf festivities begin. No doubt about it, race week is here in Orange Beach! Orange Beach became the home for Thunder On The Gulf a couple of years ago and the numbers have shown that the event does a good job in attracting race fans and regional enthusiasts to a great venue for racing as well as a top quality place to entertain. What better way to watch a race than on the sand just feet away from the gulf or from high above on a condo balcony. The view along the Alabama Coast is superb and creates an excellent race venue for the sport and from all accounts the racers love knowing that the "grandstands" in



the condos are full. Relocating the Dry Pits to the Wharf is a major difference with this particular race and a culmination of long term plans to bring the boats to a commercial area with more for all to do on site. Catch a movie, do some shopping, ride the ferris wheel or just hang out in the shade are options that can only be offered at such a location. We hope the week of activities at the Wharf turns out to be a big success. Don't forget the All American Jam on Saturday, August 19 beginning at 5:30pm at the Wharf Amphitheatre. The concert will feature Starship with Mickey Thomas, The Georgia Satellites, The Marshall Tucker Band and the Atlanta Rhythm Section. Make your plans by visiting www.thunderonthegulf.com and click The Wharf link. No matter how you plan to spend your race week, keep it safe and play it smart as many people will converge on the beaches this Sunday. We hope you enjoy the Thunder this week in Orange Beach.



2005 Dry Pits bring the race teams face to face with the public for an up close look at the boats





Asst Chief Ken Wilks and Chief Forney Howard share the MDA Golden Axe with a local family dealing with the disease and its effects.

“Fill the Boot” this weekend as the race fans come into Orange Beach they will see volunteers and professional staff of the Orange Beach Fire and Rescue standing on the corners of major intersections collecting donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Jerry Lewis telethons made a huge impact for Jerry’s Kids and the MDA and many fire departments across the country support the effort with local “fill the boot” campaigns. Orange Beach Fire and Rescue is proud to have received the Golden Axe award from the MDA and looks to make another big impact this year. Chief Forney Howard asks for residents to join in the support of MDA during the boat race weekend as we reach out to help those in need. Look for your local firefighters at the intersection of the Beach Express and Canal Road at the Wharf this weekend.

Last week the Gulf State Park Beach Pavilion officially opened with state Department of Conservation officials on hand with Gulf State Park Director Hugh Branyon. Mayors Pete Blalock and Billy Duke joined other leaders as the ribbon was cut and a big picnic was held. In addition to the Beach Pavilion, the park opened the Lake Shelby cabins which provide a truly unique experience to the vacation seeker. With all the fanfare, it is unfortunate that two of the



Mayor Pete Blalock, State Senator Bradley Byrne, Mayor Billy Duke of Gulf Shores and Gulf State Park Superintendent Hugh Branyon at the beach pavilion opening after two years of rebuilding since Ivan.

three Orange Beach state park accesses on the beach are still closed at Cotton Bayou and Florida Point. These projects are not under the direction of the City of Orange Beach and we truly desire for them to open to our residents and day trippers into the area. We are asked daily . . . “when will the beach accesses open in Orange Beach” and we can offer no timeline or possible opening date. Keep in mind that Romar Beach access is open on the western end of town. Congratulations Gulf State Park on the recent openings and we hope to see more coming soon.

Water aerobics is now being offered after hours at the Orange Beach Aquatics Center. The new low impact, high intensity class will be held on Tuesdays from 5:30–6:30pm and will be taught by instructor Barbara Goodman. Aqua Joggers, Water Dumbbells and Noodles are used during the class are provided by the OBAC. Wear your swimsuit and bring a towel along with \$2 per person. No pre-registration is required to participate. For more information contact the Orange Beach Aquatics Center at 251-974-SWIM (7946).



An official ribbon cutting will take place on Friday, August 18th at 10am for the new Art Supply Store inside the Center. Now Orange Beach has professional art supplies and top quality brushes and artistic items for the professional to novice. Stop by and shop with Cyndi Brewer. An "Open House" will also be held from 9 – 5pm that Friday. Keep your Labor Day plans flexible with the Waterfront Festival of Art at the Art Center. The festival is September 2-3 and is a nice two day art show. Contact Cyndi Brewer at 981 ARTS for more info on entering the show. The Orange Beach Art Center has lots of great gift items as it continues to set new sales records each month. The 313th Army Jazz Combo will be playing on Saturday, September 2nd for entertainment. Find out more at www.orangebeachartcenter.com

Plenty of fun and fellowship is going on down at the Orange Beach Senior Activity Center on any given day. Call 981-3440 for details on classes and trips coming up this month of August. Here are your Bridge Scores for Tuesday August 8th: 1st: Jan Borman; 2nd: Gene Grant; 3rd: Randy Laney and for Thursday August 10th: 1st: Wilson Pierce; 2nd: Bobbie O' Farrell; 3rd: Richard Thompson. This is the most competitive and fun Bridge playing in Baldwin County.

Our community was host to a very special group from across our state a few weeks ago. The Alabama Association of Parents with Children of Visual Impairments was gathered in Orange Beach to share and bond while helping their children enjoy the beauty of the gulf coast, even though many could not see it.



OB Fireman Shane Haddock shares a moment with a young lady who now has her own image of a fireman in her mind

These special children and their families were able to share in a wonderful experience from the sandy shores to the back bays. Thanks to many of our Orange Beach Fire Department personnel, the impairments went away as they used the other senses to develop their own images of what a fireman wears and uses to save lives. Great job to all who made the experience the best it could be. Take a moment. . . close your eyes, and just absorb the sounds of Orange Beach one day



right before sunset on the beach or the pier. We too might be able to fully experience what we cannot see and appreciate what we see everyday just a little bit more.

Got some news around Orange Beach? Let us know what's going on by sending your community news to obecon@gulfnet.com and be sure to log onto www.cityoforangebeach.com and register.
