

Head Start centers will be closed for rest of school year

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

SHADY GROVE – Parents of students who attend Dallas/Selma Head Start in Butler and Shady Grove were informed this week that the centers will be closed for the remainder of this school year.

According to Head Start board chairman Cheryl McGrew, the centers closed Friday, May 4, about two weeks earlier than the scheduled last day of school. McGrew told the *Sun* that the

centers were forced to close early due to some major expenditures that had to be made in order to meet inspection requirements.

"We just had some major expenses to meet," explained McGrew, "and we did not have enough money in the budget to pay the staff and meet those expenses."

"This decision was made based on the increased expense of meeting State Transportation Regulations, which required the Head Start program to hire one Bus Monitor for every ten children riding the bus (i.e. a 44 passenger bus

would mean 5 Bus Monitors)," McGrew further explained. "Furthermore, the increased cost of gasoline and other transportation expenses, such as car seat/booster seat requirements for the Alabama Department of Human Resource, facilitated the need to suspend this school year."

The closure affects all centers under the auspices of the Dallas/Selma Community Action Agency.

The centers are required to hold classes for 120 days out of the school year. According to McGrew, both the

North Butler and Shady Grove centers had already logged significantly more school days this year.

"We are not short any days," she said. "The students have gone 161 days already."

The centers are slated to reopen for the next school year, with funding already in place. However, the funding is earmarked for the 2007-08 term and cannot be used to complete this year's budget.

Lease agreement between CCC and AFG under scrutiny

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – A lease agreement between the County Commission and the Butler Industrial Development Board came under scrutiny at Monday's meeting of the Commission.

Last fall, the Commission agreed to lease a parcel of property in the county's industrial park on Ala. 10 east across from the Airport to the ID board and to allow the board to sub-lease it to Accelerated Freight Group, a Theodore, Alabama-based trucking company.

At that point, AFG had tried unsuccessfully for almost two years to persuade the county to lease the property to them directly for use in developing a local freight yard across from Tamko Roofing Products. When nothing appeared to be moving in that direction, Butler Mayor Ben Smith approached the Commission and said that the city's ID board would be glad to help facilitate the project if the county would lease them the property.

Lease agreements were signed by all parties and in late 2006, the site was graded and crushed rock spread, but nothing else appears to have been done to prepare the site for the freight yard.

Probate Judge D'Wayne May said Monday that the county needs attorney Lee McPhearson to look into the lease and to give the board his interpretation of the terms of that agreement.

According to what officials said at the time, if the site isn't used for the stated purpose within a certain time frame, the property automatically reverts back to the county.

McPhearson said he had spoken earlier with Butler native Bud Cooper, who is one of the principals in AFG, and was told that the trucking company was waiting on some contracts with Tamko to be finalized before any further work would take place at the site.

The matter was tabled but May asked McPhearson to have a report for next Monday's meeting (May 14th).

Telephone calls to AFG President Rob Bowman were not returned prior to presstime on Tuesday afternoon.

Mayor Smith told the *Sun* that it is his understanding that AFG is waiting on Tamko to finalize some contracts before beginning actual construction work at the site.

Tommy

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phone about how our papers are doing and catching each other up on the news from Boone and Gilberttown.

On Thursday, our good friend Willie Gray, who, along with his wife, Rhonda (who has Choctaw County roots, by the way), owns and operates *The Washington County News* in Chatom and *The Call-News* in Citronelle dropped in at the office and took Dee Ann and I out for lunch at J&K. Thanks, Willie. Come back any time ... especially meal time!

A couple of weeks ago, Dee Ann and I had the opportunity to go to lunch with Jim Walther, the group publisher of Gulf Coast Newspapers, in Fairhope.

Jim's chain publishes newspapers in Gulf

Shores, Robertsdale, Foley, Fairhope, Daphne, Bay Minette and other towns in Baldwin County. He took us on a tour of beautifully landscaped downtown Fairhope and also the offices of *The Fairhope Courier*. Afterward we enjoyed a delicious deli lunch in one of the town's unique, open-air restaurants.

Every business owner benefits from sitting down and talking with their counterparts in other areas, and this often opens up doors for mutual cooperation as far as news events, advertising, and other "newspaper" stuff goes, as well as gives us ideas of how the papers can better serve our readers.

We just want all of our staff members, and our fellow journalists at newspapers and magazines from coast to coast, to know how much we appreciate them here at the *Sun*.

take time to get to know each other all over again, to share the events of the day, and to remind ourselves of the depth of the indescribable friendship that we treasure.

When it comes down to it, our nightly coffee-drinking ritual – well -- it's not really about the coffee at all.

Perhaps those advertising executives were on to something after all. Perhaps that's what the 'smell the coffee' thing is all about anyway.

Nominations now being taken for local students to earn free trip to Space Camp

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER – Teachers, principals, and school officials are being asked to nominate students who will be going into the sixth grade in the 2007-08 school year to receive a free trip to Space Camp at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville this summer.

According to letters received from Gov. Bob

Riley's office, three students from Choctaw County will be given the opportunity to attend the camp which runs from Sept. 11-15th.

Students get actual "hands on" training in various aspects of space science, including getting to meet actual U.S. Space Shuttle crew members, getting to see the inside of a real shuttle, see a real moon rock, and full-sized actual rockets of the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo

space craft.

The faith-based initiative is a cooperative effort through the Ala. Dept. of Homeland Security and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama.

The cost of the tuition will be covered, but students will have to pay for their own travel to Huntsville, or either find a sponsor to cover those costs.

"I would like for the

ones chosen to do this to have good grades, who have earned this," Commissioner Dandy Brown said. "I think it would encourage them to do better."

The proposal was tabled until next week, but Commissioners said that school officials are welcome to call them and talk about the opportunity. A decision is expected to be made at the May 14th meeting of the board.

Public invited to activities at center

By Lillian Hodge
Contributing columnist

LISMAN -- It's been a while since you heard from the center, but all the same we are still during well -- the church, community and school. The weather is real good - not cold or not to hot. We're getting ready to make a trip to Selma,

Alabama to Older Americans Day, that is Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. It's going to be held at the Concordia College May 8. We will have prizes awarded, judged dance of different type and door prizes we all will have a good time each year.

We'll return back to the Center on Wednesday morning with the Bible

brought by Bishop Johnny B. Payton -- very good lesson. Bring your Bible and you are invited to attend. We had a visitor this past week, Mr. Ralph Marsh from Washington, D.C., the son of Mrs. Bernice Marsh. Also some people attended the class --Ann Ella Halsell, Mrs. Lucille Watters and Bro. James Spears, a very nice

group.

I am asking your prayer for our pastor First Anniversary on May 6, at 2 p.m. Rev. Marvin Dixon is the guest and his choir and be sure to pray for our sick and shut in.

Mrs. Zenoba Burton will be buried on Monday in Cleveland, Ohio. Our sympathy goes to that family. My time is gone.

Come play bingo at Butler Senior Center

By Jessie Wright
Contributing columnist

BUTLER -- We have had a great week at the Center, had a full house most every day.

We have had a couple of our members out due to not feeling well, Mary Catherine Hampton we hope you are feeling much better.

We are glad we have Bobby Roberts with us. He has been coming for a couple of weeks, we hope

he will become a member of the center, and come on a permanent basis. We love to have new people to come to the Center.

The Bingo winners for April were Mae Hampton, Nita Gilbert, Thelma Lewis, Mary E. Dukes, Sue Mosley, Edna Anderson, Jewell Gibson, and Bertha Ivory.

We still have Bingo on Mondays and Fridays also once a month. Charie from Southern Care Hospice brings prizes and call the

bingo game. We have exercise on Tuesday and Thursday, and we have a game of Canasta going every day.

Also some one has a game of Pool going most every day. So if anyone needs to have some where to go and enjoy the activities just know you are always welcome to come to the Center.

The outside grounds look so good. We hired Gaines Todd to do some landscaping here and he

has done a great job. The Crepe Myrtles look good, I will be glad when they begin to bloom, they are just so pretty.

Some of us from the Center are going to Selma for the Older American Day on May 8. This event is held each year in Selma, Partly to keep Senior Citizens informed about things to help the Seniors. We have lunch which is furnished by ATRC, also a great time and lots of entertainment.



Jail Log

Assault (3rd degree) – Steven Bell, 18, 711 Tennessee Drive, Lisman, arrested on 4/30/07, arresting officer not listed.

Larceny under rental agreement – Pricilla Marie Ward Chaney, 23, P.O. Box 20, Lisman, arrested on 5/3/07 by Dunn. Released to Lauderdale Co., Miss., authorities.

Theft of property (2nd degree) – Jimmy Capers, 28, Sherwood Manor Apartments #213, Butler, arrested on 5/7/07 by Lafayette.

Criminal trespass – Ralph Irby, 50, 10662 CR 32, Lisman, arrested on 5/7/07 by Huckeba.

Domestic violence (assault, 3rd) – Henry Lassiter, 49, 839 Lotts

Ferry Road, Butler, arrested on 5/5/07 by Gates and Skinner. Released on bond.

Unlawful possession of controlled substance (two counts; meth and Zanax®) – Ryan Mitchell Myrick, 20, 276 County Barn Road, Laurel, MS, arrested on 5/6/07 by Alford and Wood. Released on bond.

Unlawful possession of marijuana (1st degree), resisting arrest – Victor Smith, 22, of P.O. Box 45, Lisman, arrested on 5/7/07 by Skinner and Gates.

Public intoxication – Brandon Lee Shedd, 22, 47 Lawrence Welborn Road, Laurel, MS, arrested on 5/6/07 by Alford and Wood. Released on bond.

DUI – Paula M. Turner, 42, 1289 Needham Road, Needham, arrested on 5/3/07 by Trooper Deas. Released on bond.

Unlawful possession of marijuana (1st degree), resisting arrest – Victor Smith, 22, of P.O. Box 45, Lisman, arrested on 5/7/07 by Skinner and Gates.



Obituaries

Samuel Roland Ford QUITMAN, MS. – Samuel Roland Ford, 29, died on Wednesday, May 2, 2007 in Smith County, MS. He was employed as

an Oilfield Worker for Workover Specialties.

Funeral services were graveside on Monday, May 7, at Harmony Cemetery with Rev. Rodney Ward officiating. Interment was

in the Harmony Cemetery.

Survivors include wife Tonya Rowell Ford of Quitman, MS.; two sons Curtis Ward, Billy Ward, Jr. and one daughter Jennifer Ward all of Quitman; father & stepmother Billy Joe & Yvonne Ford of Needham; mother & stepfather Linda & William Christian of Quitman; one brother Jamie Ford of Laurel, MS. and one sister Kayla Greer of

Brownville, TN.; one half brother, two half sisters, several stepisters, and nieces & nephews.

Pallbearers were Jimmy Gressett, Johnathan Whitaker, Larry Holder, Jr., James Wheat, Bubba Sparks, James Jeffery Christian, and Justin Duett.

Wright's Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Grice graduates from Basics



Airman Starritha S. Grice

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Air Force Airman Starritha S. Grice has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksman-

ship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

She is the daughter of Milton and Eunice Grice of Butler and is a 2005 graduate of Alabama School of Math and Science, in Mobile.

Graduation 2007

Special Section next week!

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