

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Zumba Gold, every Thursday, 4:30 to 5:30 PM, Archer Community Center
- Zumba classes every Thursday, 6-7 PM, Archer Community Center
- January 10<sup>th</sup>, Planning and Zoning Board Meeting, Archer City Hall, 7:00 PM
- January 16<sup>th</sup>, CITY HALL CLOSED, Martin Luther King Day
- January 23<sup>rd</sup>, City Commission Meeting, Monday, Archer City Hall, 7:00 PM

# ARCHER NEWSLETTER January 2012



Visit our website at [CityofArcher.com](http://CityofArcher.com)!

Happy New Year Everyone,

What a change from the warm weather we had during the Holidays. I must admit I enjoy the cold.

We have a new face in the office. I want to welcome Donna Pons to Archer. She has a diverse background and brings another level of professionalism to our staff.

Last year my focus was bringing a sewer system to our city. I don't expect that to change. Budget cuts and lack of money at all levels of government make for another challenging year. We are exploring all options and as the saying goes, leaving no stone unturned.

Make a choice to get involved this year. Come to Commission meetings. It's imperative that you let your voice be heard. Change begins at the grass roots level. Get out and vote when there is an election. That is the only way we can change the way this country is headed.

I hope that everyone has a great year. Stay warm.

Mayor

Frank Ogborn



## FLORIDA HISTORY CORNER

A few years ago, I got a phone call from a third cousin who had found my family tree posted on Ancestors.com. He lives in South Carolina, so I haven't had a chance to meet him, but he told me about several other third cousins who live in Middleburg.

What a surprise! Pat Moeller, the president of the Middleburg Historical Society is a good friend of mine, so I called her and told her about my new-found relatives. I asked her if she had ever heard of Isaac Varnes, and she said, "Of course! He was the founder of the town of Middleburg!" It seems he came to Florida in 1818, before Florida belonged to the U.S., because he knew sooner or later Florida would be part of the U.S., and he wanted to find land to claim.

In 1820, when Florida became part of the U.S., Isaac Varnes homesteaded land on Black Creek. He started the town of Middleburg by letting people set up stores and offering to give them the land where their stores stood if they could keep the store open for one year.

It turned out that a number of my new-found third cousins live in Middleburg, and they are all Pat's good friends, so I took a trip to Middleburg and met them all and learned more about the family history. They are all members of the Varnes family, descendants of Isaac Varnes and his wife Priscilla, who was a full-blooded Choctaw Indian. Isaac and Priscilla are our great great great grandparents.

When my mom was growing up in Miami, she realized that people didn't approve of the Varnes family, but she never knew why. Since then, I have learned that the Varnes family members were frowned upon because during the Civil War they helped slaves to escape! One of my third cousins, Paul Varnes, is an author (and a retired UF professor). Two of his books are Black Creek, the Taking of Florida, which is about the Varnes family's experiences during the Seminole Wars, and Confederate Money, which is about the Confederate gold being brought to Yulee plantation in Archer! These are very interesting books, and I would highly recommend them to anyone interested in Florida history.

*M. Zander*



**Archer Playground**

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