

HOPE from page 3B

World is connected more than ever before

anything was that through all that had been taken away from them, they had survived because they held onto hope. And so my book is a combination of telling the stories of children, of mothers who held onto their children ... of boy soldiers who were literally taken away from their families and forced to fight for the rebels, and then at the end of the war, went back home to their families and were accepted back. As I traveled throughout the Monrovia (Liberia's capital city) area, it was obvious that there was not any area, not any section, not any sector of the population that wasn't affected in some way by the war. It was the questions I had, the curiosity I had about what were the root causes of this war that led me to come home and to begin digging and do my research that also penetrated the pages of my book.

that we commit today.

Q: Why would you encourage people to read this book?

A: If people are interested in reading a good story then they will be interested in reading this story because it connects two different countries, it spans two different centuries and it helps us to understand how what we do now can affect our children and our children's children. I also think that it's worth reading because we are a country now that is connected more than ever before by what happens on the other side of the world. There might have been a time when what happened on the other side of the world didn't affect us that much, but now if a pebble is thrown in the ocean on the other side of the world, we eventually feel its ripples here. So when a civil war rips apart a country in western Africa, we need to understand why that happened and how that affects us and how we're connected to those people and what we can learn from it so we don't repeat any of the mistakes in the next generations.

Q: How long did it take you to write the book?

A: I wrote fairly constantly and researched for six months on my book. I probably averaged about 20 to 25 hours a week writing the book.

Q: What do you believe is the book's main message?

A: I think that part of the message of the book that I wanted people to realize is that the sins we commit today, whether it's in an immediate, small family system or whether it's in a system of a nation as a whole, they're passed down and generations from now still end up paying for the sins

Q: Why have you decided to donate all of the book's proceeds to assist the Liberian people in rebuilding their homes and to further the work at Ricks Institute?

A: This is part of my stewardship. I believe that as part of being a good steward, you don't just give your monies, but you give your talents and your time. So this is part of my being a good steward.



Photo Courtesy of Michael Helms

Dr. Olu Menjay with a student from Ricks Institute. Menjay survived the Liberian civil war and is now the institute's principal. Helms tells Menjay's story in his new book, "Hoping Liberia—Stories of Civil War from Africa's First Republic."

"Hoping Liberia — Stories of Civil War from Africa's First Republic"

What: To purchase the book, contact Smyth and Helms Publishing by calling 1-800-747-3016 or visiting books@helms.com. Order signed copies from First Baptist Church in Jefferson, located at 81 Institute Street; www.fbcjefferson.org; 706-367-8332.

Cost: \$18. All proceeds benefit the Bricks for Ricks Liberian Housing Foundation, Inc., founded by Helms to help war refugees rebuild homes and to further the work at Ricks Institute.

More Info: Ricks Institute: www.ricksonline.org; Bricks for Ricks: www.bricksforricks.org.

SHOES from page 3B

Area children collect shoes for kids in Haiti

Jackson Primary School in Hoschton, New Liberty United Methodist Church and The Children's Place at New Liberty for people to donate new or gently-used shoes to people in need.

"Under normal circumstances, that's one requirement for children to have shoes to go to school," she said.

Romero will collect all the donated shoes on Feb. 19 and deliver them to Healthy Notions to be sent to Haiti. Residents can donate any shoes except knee high boots, high heels over 2 inches or slippers, she said.

But no matter what kind of shoes people donate or how many they drop off, they will get the satisfaction of knowing they've helped someone else.

"I think it's important for the children to learn that it's nice to help out and do nice things. There's always something you can do for someone else," Romero said.

Get involved

Want to learn more about the shoe drive or other ways to donate? Visit the following Web sites for more details.

Healthy Notions Kids: www.healthynotions.blogspot.com

"Give a Day, Get a Disney Day" program: www.disneyparks.disney.go.com/disneyparks/en_US/WhatWillYouCelebrate/index?name=Give-A-Day-Get-A-Disney-Day

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Clinton Bush Haiti Fund: www.clintonbushhaiti.org

Other local relief efforts

Debbie Cornelison's fifth-grade class at Ivy Creek Elementary has been raising money for Haiti. Two students in her class have family members in Haiti, and one of the students has a relative who is still missing. The students are making a commercial for the morning announcements to inform students how to help earthquake survivors in Haiti by donating money. For more information, please contact Debbie Cornelison at 678-714-3655 or Tammy Glausier at 678-765-5245.

The Vine United Methodist Church in Hoschton raised more than \$2,000 for the United Methodist Committee on Relief to be sent directly to Haiti. The church is also sponsoring Eternal Hope in Haiti, Inc., an orphanage that was unaffected by the earthquake. The orphanage has taken in an additional 30-50 kids that were left homeless and has a medical team to assist with medical care.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Jeffrey's Sports Grill, located on Ga. 211 in Braselton, will be raffling off an autographed NFL Falcon jersey of two-time pro-bowl wide receiver Roddy White. Tickets cost \$5, with all net proceeds benefiting the Hall County Animal Shelter. Ticket sales began Tuesday and will last until 300 tickets have been sold.

Chris Latona will be donating the signed jersey to raise money to purchase beds for the dogs at the shelter who are currently living and sleeping on concrete floors.

Latona and other local volunteers have been raising money for the shelter for about two months and still need approximately 90 beds to get all the dogs off the concrete floors. Donations can also be made by check payable to: Hall County Animal Shelter, C/O Chris Latona, 2520 Shumard Oak Dr., Braselton, GA 30517.

Donations made by check will receive a receipt, as all donations are tax deductible.

The **Friends of the Braselton-West Jackson Library** invite the community to its Lunch and Learn series, which started up in January. The Lunch and Learn series will take place at 11:30 a.m. in the lower level of

the Braselton Police and Municipal Court building.

On Feb. 10, the event will focus on the town of Braselton and will feature Susan Ethridge Chaisson, who grew up on and lives at the Shields Etheridge Heritage Farm. Food will be provided by Key West Bar and Grill.

On March 10, Bill Blackwell, assistant general manager of the Gwinnett Braves, will be the guest speaker, and the event will focus on the city of Hoschton. Anthony's New York Pizza and Grill will provide the food.

On April 21, Vicki Starnes from the Crawford Long Museum in Jefferson will be the guest speaker, and the event will focus on honoring Jackson County.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Diane Lemaster at 678-546-3380 or dilemace@aol.com.

Leftover Pets/The Pet Mechanics will be offering spay/neuter surgeries in Jackson County on Feb. 15 and 16. Surgery patients can be as young as eight weeks. All dogs and cats that are at least three months of age at the time of surgery will receive a free rabies vaccine. Prices are as follows: female dog over 25 pounds: \$75, female dog 25 pounds or less: \$60, male dog: \$50, female

cat: \$50, male cat: \$30. Financial assistance programs are available for clients on a fixed income. We accept clients by appointment only, so call 800-978-5226 to schedule an appointment.

For more information about the nonprofit organization, visit www.leftoverpets.org.

The **Barrow-Jackson County committee of the March of Dimes**, an organization that promotes healthier beginnings for babies, announces its forthcoming fundraising events.

The Beef O'Bradys in Jefferson will help with the committee's fundrais-

ing efforts. The restaurant will donate 10 percent of sales on Feb. 21 to The March of Dimes. Patrons are asked to leave receipt in the purple bucket to be counted.

The committee also will host the Rock to Save, a fundraiser set for 7 p.m. March 12 at the Jefferson Civic Center. A live band, silent auction and free dinner buffet will be featured. Tickets are \$20 per person in advance, \$120 for a table of eight and \$25 at the door the night of the fundraiser

For tickets or more information about the fundraisers, contact Wendy Mingus at 706-824-7019.

From staff reports

Pet of the Week

This is Reena, a 5- to 6-year-old Chihuahua mix that is only about 10 pounds. She is a sweet and sensitive girl.

Reena is a little shy when she first meets you, but she warms up quickly and then wants to be your friend. She would do best in a quiet home. She is great with older children (young children make her a little nervous) and other dogs. She is house trained and spayed. If interested in Reena, please call 706-367-1111 or visit www.hsjc.com and complete an adoption application.



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Chad Palmer, MD, received his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia. He completed his residency in family medicine at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga and his sports medicine fellowship at the University of Washington. Dr. Palmer has served as a team physician for several colleges and universities, as well as a ringside physician for boxing tournaments. He is a member of the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine.

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IS YOUR INCOME AT RISK?

As millions struggle to hang on to their jobs in a tumultuous economy, the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) reminds workers that maximizing their ability to hear well is a smart job security strategy. "Unaddressed hearing loss has a negative impact on overall job effectiveness, opportunity for promotion, and even lifelong earning power," says Sergei Kochkin, PhD, Executive Director of the non-profit BHI.

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