

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 3 Inserts

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

50¢

UP COMING

Wednesday, 9:45 & 11 a.m.



"Charlotte's Web," part of the Children's Series at the **Mattie Kelly Arts Center**, Niceville, will be performed. Tickets are \$6 each.

Info: 729-6065.

Saturday, 9 a.m.

Boys and girls ages 10 through 14 living in Niceville and Valparaiso may participate in the local level competition for the 2011 **Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship** at the **Holy Name of Jesus Church Parish Life Center**, 1200 Valparaiso Blvd., Niceville.

Saturday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.



The fifth annual **Computer Tech Event** will be held at the Northwest Florida State College Niceville campus in the College Mall, Building K. The **free event** focuses on the home computer user and will feature 25 free how-to workshops, vendor displays and door prizes. The annual event is the only one of its type on the panhandle.

Saturday, 7 a.m.



The **Children's Advocacy Center Relay for Life** team plans a **yard sale** at 401 McEwen Drive, Niceville. To donate for the yard sale, bring items by the CAC 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Volunteers are needed to help get the sale ready.

Info: Katie, 833-9237, ext. 222.

Calendar, B-4.

'Y' to stay, for now

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

The Niceville branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) is not slated for closing, at least not for the next several months, said YMCA officials during a public meeting held at the Niceville "Y" Thursday.

The Niceville branch is making enough money to cover its own expenses, as are YMCA branches in Fort Walton Beach and Crestview, said Al Stearns, the Emerald Coast YMCA's new board chairman, and new chief executive Jack Daly.

The two men spoke to a crowd of about 50,



Jack Daly

most of whom appeared to be members of the Niceville branch who had come to learn the facts behind recent rumors that the branch, in the Palm Plaza shopping center, might be about to close.

"Rumors that the Niceville YMCA is about to close are not true at all," said Daly, who has been in his new position since Jan. 8.

"There is no intent to close the Niceville YMCA on any particular date," said Stearns, who has been in his new post for about three weeks.



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Niceville YMCA members were addressed by Y officials on financial issues facing the facility.

Please see 'Y', page A-4

High winds wreak havoc



Strong winds associated with a thunderstorm ripped through Niceville west to east for about 2.5 miles along John Sims Parkway Jan. 18, at about 9:20 p.m., knocking down power lines, damaging or destroying signs of at least five businesses and flattening an unoccupied construction trailer in front of the new Walmart store, right. The winds also overturned and smashed aluminum bleachers at the Niceville High School baseball field, above, and flipped a backyard pavilion in the 1500 block of Edgewater Drive. No one was hurt. The National Weather Service in Mobile, Ala., said there were no indications of a tornado and no severe weather warnings or watches for Niceville were in effect at the time the damage occurred. Keith Williams, a NWS forecaster, said thunderstorms can generate winds capable of the damages reported in Niceville.

Beacon photos by Del Lessard



Foreclosures ease from record levels

But repossessions by banks continued at rapid rate in 2010

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Although foreclosure actions fell nearly 30 percent in Okaloosa County last year, the local housing market hasn't yet turned the corner, industry observers say.

There were 1,699 foreclosure lawsuits filed in Okaloosa County in 2010, or 693 fewer than the year before, according to figures provided by the Okaloosa County Clerk of Court. But 2009 was a record year, and 2010 was second only to that.

The dropoff was especially sharp in the final three months of 2010. From October through December 2010, creditors filed 221 actions to repossess the real estate of delinquent borrowers, slightly more than one-third the 603 filed in the same three months of 2009.

The last-quarter drop in filings occurred about the same time mortgage holders nationwide halted or slowed foreclosures after accusations they were speeding through the paperwork with "robo-signing" practices that did not verify information each step of the way.

Also in December, some big banks announced that they would suspend foreclosures over the holidays, according to Gloria Frazier, owner of ERA American Realty of Northwest Florida.

In addition, more foreclosures would have been sought last year had it not been for a now-expired military program called Housing Assistance Program, or HAP, Frazier said. The HAP program was originally enacted to protect military service members from losses because of the impact on communities hit with Base Realignment and Closure decisions, she said.

Under HAP the federal government made up the difference for military homeowners who were "upside down" with their homes—that is, they owed more than their property was



Gloria Frazier

Please see HIGH, page A-6

Walmart seen as boosting tax base

Niceville store opens today

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Local government coffers are expected to benefit from the new Niceville Walmart with added tax revenues.

Okaloosa County Property Appraiser Pete Smith said that because the new Walmart building was substantially completed by Jan. 1, enjoyed utilities services, and had workers stocking shelves, the store's taxable value was added to the rolls as of that



Beacon photo by Del Lessard

A Walmart store is scheduled to open today in Niceville.

date. The store is scheduled to open for the first time today at 8 a.m.

Property owners in Niceville this year pay a total millage rate of 14.4990 mills, including property taxes levied by Okaloosa County (3.2899), the school

Inquiring Photographer, A-4.

board (7.5340), the city of Niceville (3.6301) and the Northwest Florida Water Management District (0.0450).

"I don't know yet how much it will be," said Niceville City

Manager Lannie Corbin about tax revenues generated by the new store. But he added, "It's going to be positive."

On the other side of the ledger, Corbin said, it's also too early to tell how much in city services the new retailer will require.

For each mill of the property tax rate, property owners pay \$1 per \$1,000 of taxable value, after all exemptions. Thus, the owner of Niceville real estate with a taxable value of \$100,000 this year

Please see WALMART, page A-3

College cuts scholarships to preserve future funds

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Students at Northwest Florida State College (NWFS) will find fewer endowed scholarships available for next fall semester, according to college President Ty Handy.

"About 45 percent of (the NWFS Foundation's) endowed scholarship funds are 'underwater,'" Handy told foundation board members during a meeting in Niceville Jan. 18.

By underwater, Handy explained, he meant that endowed scholarships are usually established by a donor who contributes a large initial sum of money to serve as the "principal" fund, which is deposited or invested in an interest-producing account of some kind, so that the

interest earned can then be used each year to pay for one or more scholarships for students who meet the eligibility requirements for that particular scholarship.

In the last couple of years, however, the national economic recession has prevented some scholarships from earning

enough interest to cover the cost of annual scholarships, requiring the NWFS Foundation to either not award a scholarship, or to use some of the principal amount to cover the cost of awarding one.

"For the last two years," said Handy, "we have awarded most

Please see COLLEGE, page A-3



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Students at Northwest Florida State College Monday. Fewer endowed scholarships will be awarded next year.

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\$170M bridge-bond sale delayed

Uncertain markets blamed

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Turbulence in municipal bond markets has raised borrowing costs and forced the delay of a planned \$170 million bond sale by the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority.

The delay may well bring higher borrowing costs, which eventually will be passed on to bridge toll payers.

The MBBA plans to borrow the money to finish the last two phases of an 11-mile bridge connector road between the north end of the 3.6-mile toll bridge and Highway 85 just north of Niceville.

A portion of the borrowed money will also be used to pay off some earlier bonds and pay borrowing costs through the connector road construction, expected to be completed in Jan. 2014, and the first year or two of operation.

According to bond documents, a single, automated toll station on the completed 11-mile connector road will charge Sunpass users \$1 and cash customers \$1.50. Toll rates for the bridge itself—which were increased by 50 cents in June 2010—are forecast to remain at the current rate of \$2 for Sunpass and \$3 for cash payers until the next scheduled toll increase in 2018.

MBBA Executive Director Jim Vest told members of the bridge authority at a meeting in Niceville Thursday that the expected sale of the bonds on Jan. 20 was being delayed because the U.S. municipal bond market has been in "disar-

ray" for several weeks.

The market turbulence means borrowers, like the MBBA, will likely have to pay higher interest rates to sell bonds. "Interest rates are as high as they've been in two years," Vest told MBBA directors. The borrowings will be repaid by tolls on the 3.5-mile bridge and its new connector highway in Niceville.

At Vest's request, the MBBA approved a resolution allowing a change in the mix of 2011-A and 2011-B bonds in the sale. The resolution raises the maximum amount of 2011-A bonds that could be sold, from \$145 million to \$165 million. The change, he said, could help "level out" a "bump" in the 2015 debt service curve.

The maximum amount of 2011-B bonds, money that will be used to redeem earlier MBBA bond issuance, remains at \$25 million, Vest said. The current bond indebtedness of the MBBA is listed as \$132.7 million, according to bond documents. The sale will boost the bridge authority's total bond indebtedness to \$297 million.

The 2011-A and 2011-B bonds the MBBA plans to sell are rated BBB, the lowest investment-grade rating, by Fitch Ratings.

The pricing and subsequent sale of the bonds could come as early as this week, Vest said. The financial firm marketing the bonds continues to line up investors who want to purchase the bonds, but is keeping an eye on market conditions to try to get the lowest interest rates, which would benefit the bridge authority, Vest said.



Beacon photo by Del Lessard
Trees have been cleared to make way for a planned expressway connecting State Road 85 north of Niceville to State Road 20 in Seminole. A scheduled \$170 million bond sale by the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority to pay for the work has been delayed by market turmoil.

Bridge authority Chairman Gordon Fornell asked whether there were any construction deadlines in the sale of the bonds. Vest said no, that the MBBA had awarded the construction contract for phases 2 and 3 of the connector road to the current phase 1 contractor, Anderson Columbia, and that clearing and grubbing work on the next two phases was underway with \$500,000 in funding. The construction contract for phases 2 and 3 will be finalized as soon as the bond sale is completed, he said.

The 2011 bonds can be sold with tax-exempt interest rates up to a maximum of 7.5 percent, a rate that the current market is approaching. That prompted MBBA Member Daniel Bowers to ask if the bonds were sold at the maximum interest rate would the borrowing still meet cash flow requirements or would it require a toll hike.

Vest said no toll increase

would be needed even at 7.5 percent interest.

Vest said after the meeting that most previous borrowings by the MBBA drew interest rates in the 6-percent range, although some were as low as the 4- to 5-percent range in 2007. The original bonds used to build the toll bridge—which opened in 1993—required the MBBA to pay 9.9 percent interest, he said.

According to the bond documents, construction of a second bridge span across Choctawhatchee Bay to handle additional traffic won't be needed until the mid-2020s. The MBBA had at one time forecast a second span would be needed several years earlier, but volume has fallen annually since 2007.

In other business at the Jan. 20 MBBA meeting in Niceville:

—HDR construction engineer James Van Steenburg said Phase 1 of the connector road, a 2.8-mile stretch now under construction from the toll bridge, across Highway 20 to Range Road, is on schedule to be completed and opened by May. The fifth of eight 180-foot girders for a 240-foot overpass of Highway 20 was set in place last week, and temporary metal jacks supporting the south-bound lanes of the connector road overpass were removed.

—Van Steenburg presented each of the board members with a memento from the Highway 20 overpass, a six-inch-long bolt. It takes 1,304 such bolts to connect three beam segments in each 240-foot long girder, he said. There are eight 240-foot girders supporting the overpass.

Widening of Highway 20 from White Point Road to just east of the connector road overpass on the outskirts of Seminole, is also on schedule, to be completed in mid-March, Van Steenburg said.

**The
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& Beacon Express**

1181 E. John Sims Pwy.,
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Fax: 729-3225
info@baybeacon.com

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COLLEGE

From page A-1

of the scholarships," even if that meant spending some of the principal. However, he said, that practice cannot continue without jeopardizing the ability of such scholarships to continue in perpetuity as intended by most donors.

Therefore, he said, in the coming year, more than one-third of NWFSC's endowed scholarships will not be awarded to students, in order to allow the underwater funds to gain interest and recover their funding levels for the future. The remaining scholarship funds, officials said, will be supplemented by college funds are themselves still "in the black" and able to award scholarships in the coming academic year.

Total awards from the \$25.56 million in scholarship endowments are expected to "just under" \$200,000 (including \$30,000 in other scholarship funds) in the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters, according to the college, down from

\$382,000 last year, according to NWFSC Foundation Executive Director Cristie Kedroski.

Foundation endowed scholarships, however, last year accounted for a small fraction of over \$21 million in student aid, of which the largest single source (\$8.66 million) was federal Pell grants.

Kedroski said that the foundation has 224 endowed scholarship funds, which awarded a total of about \$382,000 last year. Of those funds, 88 are underwater, she said. Another 97 are "above water," she said.

Fortunately, the cut in scholarships is likely to last only for a year or two, said Handy, as a slow but steady economic recovery helps scholarship fund investments earn interest and replenish their funding.

The cuts do not affect other, non-endowed scholarships, such as taxpayer-funded Bright Futures awards. Even before figuring in scholarship assistance, Florida taxpayers pay most of the cost of educating students enrolled in state-operated colleges and universities,

although the proportion paid by students and their families has grown in recent years.

The NWFSC Foundation is the fund-raising arm of the Niceville-based college.

In other business, Ray McGovern, an economic and investment advisor from the McGovern Group of Merrill Lynch, told board members that NWFSC Foundation investments have gained about 10.6 in value during the past year. "Our equities are up 14 percent," he said, "while the Standard and Poor's Index is up only about 10 percent."

McGovern forecast that the national economy will gradually recover. "The problem of the national deficit will be addressed," he said, "either voluntarily, if Congress can address it, or involuntarily, as is happening in Greece."

McGovern said he expects the U.S. economy to continue "muddling along," with two to three percent growth despite high unemployment rates.

One sign of an improving economy, said Handy, is that enrollment at NWFSC is down

by about one percent this spring semester after several semesters of growth. While the small drop in enrollment poses little problem for the college, he said, it may indicate that the economy is getting better, as community college enrollments traditionally grow during poor economies and drop when the economy improves, fluctuating by potential student's choices between devoting their time and energy to currently-available jobs, or enrolling in college courses to improve their chances of finding jobs or moving to higher-paying jobs that require more education.

In other business during the Jan. 18 meeting, the board approved a slate of officers and new or returning members to the board. The officer nominees will be voted on by the board. The proposed new officers are:

- President: Wayne Campbell
- Vice President: Lamar Conerly
- Treasurer: Fred Thomas
- Secretary: Cristie Kedroski, executive director

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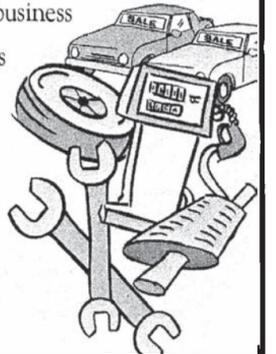
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WALMART

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pays \$1,449.90 in property taxes to the various jurisdictions.

The actual 2011 taxable value of the 153,000-square-foot Walmart Supercenter and its 17.6-acre site won't be released until Smith issues preliminary figures this summer. The vacant land, which Walmart bought last year for \$4 million, was carried on the rolls at \$90,000, but this outdated figure bears little relation to the improvements, totaling at least \$4.7 million, that were added in the past 12 months.

Using 2009 tax statistics, the average taxable property value of the three other Walmart Supercenters in Okaloosa County (Crestview, Fort Walton Beach and Destin) was just over \$9 million. If the Niceville store is assessed at about that figure, it would generate more than \$130,000 annually in real estate taxes, including \$29,609 for the county, \$67,806 for the school district and \$32,671 for the city of Niceville.

Starting next year, the new store will also pay tangible-property taxes (additional taxes on business equipment and stock at the same millage rates as the levy on real estate) to the same taxing entities.

Smith said there will be no tangible-property levy on the Niceville Walmart this year because it wasn't open for business Jan. 1.

Although figures weren't available, the value of taxable inventory, fixtures and equipment in the Niceville Walmart should exceed \$1 million by a considerable margin.

As a utilities customer, the store also pays local taxes on its water, power and phone bills. The city of Niceville relies on utilities taxes for a large part of its income. The county also taxes some utilities services.

At least partially offsetting such revenues, however, is the fact that certain public costs are typically associated with the addition

of any big retail outlet to a community.

For instance, a store the size of the Niceville Walmart would be expected to generate plenty of motor-vehicle trips by its thousands of customers, hundreds of employees and many suppliers, imposing costs on local roadways and, possibly, on emergency departments should there be an increase in traffic accidents. Also, similar big stores elsewhere have proven to be a focus of certain crimes, such as theft, increasing police and court workloads.

It is too early to tell what effect the added competition posed by the giant discounter will have on other tax-paying businesses in the Niceville area.

Opening ceremonies scheduled for 7:30 a.m. today at the new Walmart include Eglin Air Force Base personnel presenting the colors and a store employee singing the national anthem. Representatives from the Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce will cut the grand-opening ribbon.

The public may begin shopping at 8 a.m., after which the store will remain open 24/7. The outlet offers a full line of groceries, more than 30 merchandise departments, a pharmacy, a vision center and a liquor store.

Over 300 new jobs are associated with the new Niceville Supercenter, which has been in

plans for nine years. Valparaiso Realty, developer of the Crossings Shopping Center where the new Walmart is located, began planning the shopping center with a Walmart as the anchor store, in 2002. More retail stores are expected to follow now that Walmart is here and open.

"We are grateful for Walmart to be here and to employ so many people," said Niceville Mayor Randall Wise. "I'm sure it will help our economy."

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What do you think about the new Walmart opening in Niceville?



"It's awesome! I'm looking forward to it. We needed a Walmart to compete with the other stores."

Dawn Mitchell, 40, Niceville, medical receptionist



"I'm not a big fan of Walmart. I work at Food Depot, so it will be competition for us. I'm not worried, though. We have loyal customers that come in all the time."

Nickolas Holt, 20, Niceville, stocker



"Though I am a big supporter of Walmart, having worked at the Destin Wal-Mart for four years, I'm concerned that it might put some of the smaller local businesses out of business."

Daniel Wood, 36, Niceville, retail



"I like it. It will bring a lot more to the community. It brought a lot of jobs here. Two of my friends got jobs there."

Jeremiah Ketchum, 24, Niceville, mover



"I think it will be a blessing for people who need a job. I know the Lord will take care of all the other businesses that might feel threatened."

Nomie Wallace, 60, Niceville, housewife



"I'm excited. It will save long drives, and the prices are reasonable."

Sandria Mishaw, 47, Niceville, grill operator

What should we ask next week? Email your suggested question to: info@baybeacon.com Include "Suggested IP question" in the "subject" field.

'Y'

From page A-1

Behind such rumors, said the two men, is the fact that while the Niceville, Fort Walton Beach and Crestview branches of the Emerald Coast YMCA are breaking even or better financially, the Destin branch of the Y is about \$3.4 million in debt—a debt for which the regional Emerald Coast YMCA organization is responsible—and continues to lose money

at a rate between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per year.

"Fort Walton and Crestview are doing well, and Niceville is doing OK," said Stearns, "but Destin is doing nothing and is dragging the rest of the organization down."

The new leaders of the Emerald Coast YMCA, said Stearns, cannot unmake any mistakes of the past, but they are working to stop the losses and gradually pay off debt incurred by the Destin branch. That branch, he

said, was started about seven years ago, partly in response to requests from the City of Destin for the YMCA to help the city establish a municipal swimming pool.

The Emerald Coast YMCA built a branch in Destin, consisting of an outdoor swimming pool and an adjoining building containing lockers and other support facilities. The pool and building were built on land belonging to the family trust of the late Mattie Kelly, who had been a prominent businesswoman and community activist in Destin.

The City of Destin contributed about \$1.4 million to help build the pool, Stearns said, with the Emerald Coast YMCA borrowing the rest of the \$6 million construction cost from a group of seven local banks, of which Beach Community Bank was the lead.

The Kelly family trust still owns the land on which the Destin Y was built, said Stearns.

About \$4 million in pledges were never actually paid to the Emerald Coast YMCA by the donors who made them, leaving the YMCA organization now holding about \$3.4 million in debt, Stearns said.

Meanwhile, the Destin YMCA

is not making enough money to cover its current expenses, possibly because it consists of only a pool and does not offer any of the other programs or facilities people usually expect of a YMCA, such as exercise equipment and instruction, youth and family programs, martial arts classes, team sports, summer day camps, activity rooms and other features available at one or more of the other three branches in Okaloosa County.



Al Stearns

"We are currently negotiating with the City of Destin to turn over management of the Destin pool to the city," said Daly. He said the city government might be willing to take on the pool management expense because it was the city government that initially declared a need for a municipal pool, contributed \$1.4 million of taxpayers' money to help build it and may still be interested in trying to make a go of the facility.

However, even if Destin takes

over running the pool, the Emerald Coast YMCA will still have to pay back the original debt to the banks, Daly said.

As for the Niceville branch of the YMCA, it was started in 2006, funded by a startup loan of about \$150,000 from First City Bank, Daly said, with about \$140,000 of that debt remaining. The Niceville branch, however, currently makes enough money to cover its expenses and make payments on its debt. It also contributed about \$13,000 in 2010 to help the Destin branch, along with about \$21,000 from the Crestview branch and about \$91,000 from the Fort Walton branch.

Monthly expenses of the Niceville Y are between \$50,000 and \$70,000, said Jennifer Krider, chairwoman of the board of the Niceville branch.

Recent membership drives in Niceville have been successful, said Stearns, and membership has been going up during the last couple of months, especially because January, the month when many people make New Year's resolutions to lose weight and get into better physical shape, is the most popular month of the year for joining fitness centers and YMCAs.

However, he added, February is the most popular month for people to quit their memberships in such organizations, as the least resolute new members give up. Currently, he said, the Niceville Y has about 787 "membership units" which include individual and family memberships, or about 1,071 people in all.

Daly said that raising dues at the Niceville Y, where family memberships cost about \$62 per month, is unlikely, as such a price hike could cause membership to drop rather than increase as hoped. "In tough economic times," he said, "people have to make tough decisions" about their expenses, and about 300 commercial fitness centers closed in Florida during the past year as people cut costs by dropping their memberships.

Stearns was asked why people should join the Niceville YMCA despite the current problems and the presence of several commercial fitness clubs in the Niceville area. He replied that unlike most commercial facilities that offer only personal fitness training, the Niceville Y "offers more than exercise machines," including programs for families and children, an indoor pool and heated spa and other programs not offered elsewhere. He said the Emerald Coast YMCA "is looking at the Niceville branch each month to see how it is doing," but there are no current plans to close it.

Following Thursday's meeting, Niceville YMCA branch director Sarah Traver told the Beacon, "I have a positive outlook about the future of the Niceville YMCA. Membership is up, and we have a lot of happy people here. We have several ideas for increasing membership, and many of our members are helping." For information about the Niceville YMCA, Traver said, people can call 850-897-9622.

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Okaloosa seeks fugitives

This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Name: Joseph Matthew Gainey
Wanted for: violation of probation on original charges of grand theft and possession of cocaine. Gainey's last known address was in Crestview.
Height: 5-feet, 9-inches
Weight: 180 pounds
Age: 21
Date of birth: 01-29-1989
Hair: brown
Eyes: blue



Name: John Michael Rice
Wanted for: driving with a suspended or revoked license and resisting arrest without violence. Rice's last known address was on Navy Street in Fort Walton Beach.
Height: 5-feet, 9-inches
Weight: 195 pounds
Age: 20
Date of birth: 09-13-1990
Hair: black
Eyes: brown



This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. A reward is offered by Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers, 863-8477, or 1-888-654-8477. Information can also be provided anonymously by texting "TIP214 plus the message" to CRIMES (274637)

Police Blotter

The following accounts of the activities of police are according to records of the Niceville and Valparaiso police departments, the Okaloosa County and Walton County sheriff's offices, other law-enforcement agencies, and the Okaloosa County and Walton County jails.

Arrests

A 16-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by Niceville police Jan. 17 on a misdemeanor charge of retail theft. The boy allegedly stole a DVD and a video game from Kmart, 1140 E. John Sims Parkway.

Helen M. Matkin, 47, of 207 Deer St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Jan. 14 on a misdemeanor charge of battery. Matkin allegedly struck a female neighbor on the left side of her face Dec. 4.

Chastity Monique Barrow, a student, 32, of 304 Reeves St., Lot B-7, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police on a Walton County warrant for violation of probation on the original charge of grand theft.

Stephanie Anne Johnson, 22, of 224 Madison St., Niceville, was arrested by Valparaiso police Jan. 17 on the charge of driving while license suspended or revoked.

Kory Tyler McNamara, unemployed, 18, of 304 Reeves St., Lot C-20, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Jan. 16 on charges of grand theft auto and fleeing and attempting to elude.

A police officer allegedly saw McNamara run two stop signs before the officer activated the lights and siren on his patrol car. McNamara allegedly sped up, ran a third stop sign and parked the car in a driveway. He then walked quickly away. The vehicle had damage to the front driver's side headlight.

McNamara allegedly stated that he had been joy riding in the car, a rental vehicle, that he had taken from a friend.

After learning that the vehicle, a 2010 Toyota Yaris, had been reported stolen in Lakeland, police subsequently arrested the friend, Jordan Leigh Wolfe, unemployed, 25, of 304 Reeves St., Lot C-20, Niceville, on a charge of grand theft auto.

Thefts

A Valparaiso resident from the first block of Quail Trail reported that unknown person(s) stole a \$200 GPS unit from his unlocked vehicle sometime Jan. 4-10.

A Valparaiso resident reported Jan. 11 that his identity had been stolen. The victim said he received a letter from the IRS saying that he owed over \$40,000 in income taxes for the 2008 and 2009 years. The IRS letter said a man in Virginia had filed the returns under a business name and used the victim's Social Security number. After the Valparaiso resident explained that he had not been in Virginia for over 20 years, and had not worked since 1987, the IRS advised him to file a police report.

A Niceville resident from the 4500 block of Huntington Circle reported that unknown person(s) stole two Adirondack chairs from his boat dock sometime Jan. 18-19. The chairs were valued at \$300.

Other

Jesse Daniel Strange, 23, of 702 Tarpon Lane, Niceville, was issued a notice to appear by Niceville police Jan. 14, on a misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

A Niceville man with an at-large address reported that he was punched in the face twice by an unknown man with a pistol Jan. 15 in the 600 block of Ginkgo Avenue. The victim said that his assailant also struck him with the pistol. The victim was taken to Twin Cities Hospital for injuries that included a fractured nose.

Road closure

Hudson Circle from Scott Street to Palm Boulevard will be closed for utility installation Wednesday, Jan. 26, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call the Niceville Public Works office at 729-4064.

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Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from January 17, 2011 through January 23, 2011.

- 0 Structure Fire
- 0 Vehicle Fire
- 0 Other Fire
- 0 Illegal Burn
- 0 False Alarms
- 21 Emergency Medical Calls
- 2 Vehicle Crash
- 0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication
- 3 Other Emergency Calls
- 1 Hazardous Conditions

Street	Situation	Date	Time
S. Palm Blvd.	Medical	1/17/11	03:21
Palm Blvd./Valp Blvd.	Medical	1/17/11	16:27
N. Palm Blvd.	Medical	1/18/11	07:22
Perdido Circle	Medical	1/18/11	09:45
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Power Line Down	1/18/11	21:17
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Service Call	1/18/11	22:17
Tee Street	Medical	1/18/11	22:57
Bayshore Drive	Service Call	1/18/11	23:23
Finck Road	Medical	1/19/11	18:54
Bahia Vista Drive	Medical	1/19/11	21:07
Reeves Street	Medical	1/20/11	01:12
SR85N	Medical	1/20/11	12:27
Willow Lane	Medical	1/20/11	12:45
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	1/20/11	15:23
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	1/20/11	17:44
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	1/20/11	17:55
N. Parlin Drive	Medical	1/21/11	06:04
Judith Avenue	Medical	1/21/11	12:42
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	1/21/11	13:11
Cove Circle	Medical	1/21/11	18:06
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	1/21/11	18:38
26th Street	Electrical Problem	1/21/11	20:35
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	1/23/11	10:12
Willow Lane	Medical	1/23/11	15:22
Niceville Avenue	Medical	1/23/11	16:54
Iowa Street	Medical	1/23/11	18:59
26th Street	Medical	1/23/11	23:26

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HIGH

From page A-1

worth—and who received permanent change-of-station orders between February 2006 and Sept. 30, 2010, she said.

Frazier said another reason for the decline in filings was that many of the people who found themselves upside down have either already filed for foreclosure or have decided to continue to pay on their mortgages.

Frazier said she expects modest increases in home sales in 2011

compared with last year, as first-time buyers take advantage of unusually low mortgage rates.

The housing market has been on the skids nationwide since the real estate bubble burst in 2007, but Florida has been particularly hard hit. As a result, foreclosures have flooded the courts.



Rick Harper

“There’s still a lot of foreclosures in the pipeline,” said economist Rick Harper, director of the University of West Florida Haas Business Center. Although banks in the Panhandle still have a lot of soured loans to work through, he said, he doesn’t expect to see foreclosures in 2011 reach 2009 levels.

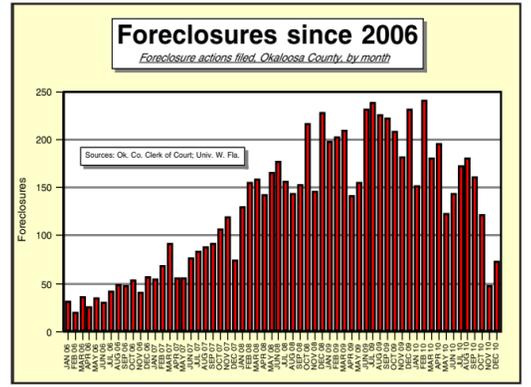
Harper analyzed foreclosure filings in five Panhandle counties from Escambia to Bay and came to two main conclusions:

—“One is that changes in foreclosure rates over time are pretty similar across counties, so that all exhibit the recent drop off associat-

ed with the robo-signing-related slowdowns,” Harper said.

—He also said that counties with faster growth during the past decade in the vacation/second home market, such as Walton County, have higher foreclosure rates. This explains why Escambia, which he said had more modest economic growth, also has the lowest foreclosure rate per 1000 resident households.

While home sales in Northwest Florida have stopped falling, Harper said sales are still far below what we saw in the mid-2000s at the peak of the housing boom.



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Lance Cothorn

Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC accounting firm welcomed Lance Cothorn, CPA; Shelly Hayes; and James Wright, JD, CPA, LLM to the local Niceville office.

Cothorn joins CRI as a staff accountant. His primary duties include providing audit and compliance services to government contractors and assisting client accounting services with audit testing. He holds a bachelor's of accounting degree from James Madison University.

Hayes works in the client accounting services department preparing and compiling financial statements and providing various consulting services to businesses of all sizes.



James Wright

Wright specializes in foreign tax compliance, estate and trust planning, and preparation of tax returns. He holds a master of laws in taxation from Georgetown University, a certificate in estate planning from Samford University, and a juris doctor from Cumberland School of Law.

Casey Young, daughter of Reed and Crystal Young of Niceville, was chosen recently to represent Rocky Bayou Christian School at the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference for sophomores next spring. Casey's paragraph on the challenges of being a leader at her school was chosen by a panel of faculty judges.



Casey Young

Please see WHO'S, page B-2



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Marcus Chambers, who was named principal of Niceville High School Monday, with his wife, Krissinda, and their children, Camden, 6, and Peyton, 8, who are students at Edge Elementary School in Niceville.

School board names next NHS principal Marcus Chambers comes to Niceville from Pryor

By Mike Griffith

Beacon Correspondent
The Okaloosa County School Board appointed Marcus Chambers as the new principal of Niceville High School during its Jan. 24 meeting in Crestview. He is suc-

ceeding Linda Smith, who is retiring. Chambers, who until now was the principal of Pryor Middle School in Fort Walton Beach, was chosen from four finalists for the position.

Please see PRINCIPAL, page B-3

Cousteau to keynote Chautauqua assembly

If you have a taste for learning, you won't want to miss the 2011 Chautauqua weekend Jan. 27-30 in DeFuniak Springs.

Chautauqua, a traditional conglomeration of educational activities, displays, seminars, programs and speeches, is a rural tradition. Started beside Lake Chautauqua, N.Y., in 1874, a group led by a pastor, Dr. A. H. Gillet, toured Florida in 1884, looking for a spot that would have the good weather that would enable Chautauqua to expand its schedule beyond the minimal time span allowed by the New York climate.

Things have come a long way since then. This year's keynote speaker is Céline Cousteau, granddaughter of legendary underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau. The program theme is "A Journey into Florida." Cousteau will speak on Friday, Jan. 28, at 9 a.m. at the new Walton County High School auditorium in DeFuniak Springs.

"We are anticipating an outstanding presentation by Ms.

Cousteau," said Florida Chautauqua Center President Christopher Mitchell. "Her presentation about the significance of protecting our underwater world is timely to the recent environmental disaster we all witnessed this year in the Gulf of Mexico. We actually secured Ms.

Cousteau prior to the BP oil spill because of our assembly theme and her and her family's unique excursions in the ocean waters around the world—places most of us can only dream of ever seeing in person."

Also on the agenda are displays ranging from live animals from throughout the world to spectacular underwater photography, from Muscogee Indian culture to area high school students.

Special events include teas, featuring steel drum performer John Bussert, and tales of the Florida of the last centuries.

Sessions include musical exploration, the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II and cultural exhibitions.



Céline Cousteau



Tiger Cubs visit Beacon

Members of Tiger Cub Scout Den 1, Troop 50, visited the office of Beacon Newspapers on Thursday, Jan. 20. Den members are: Coleton Anderson, Keanon Breazeale, Troy Clark, Sammy Dickerson, Sean Kelly, Ben Lawson, Aaron McCurdy, Nic Sampson, Gage Smith, Tristan Smith and Ryan Teel. The visitors toured the Beacon's news, advertising, production and circulation facilities at 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville.



Wings of gold

Mackenzie Coon, 4, of Eglin Air Force Base, holds a just-hatched female monarch butterfly at Niceville Garden Center. Mackenzie's mother, Wendy, brought three monarch chrysalises to the center's greenhouse. According to Wendy Coon, the Live National Monarch Foundation lost all of its caterpillars and milkweed plants, on which the butterflies hang their chrysalises for the larva to feed on, to the cold.

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Niceville UMC to debut Saturday service

A new Saturday evening worship service slated to begin at 6 p.m. Jan. 29 at Niceville United Methodist Church (UMC) promises to be anything but typical. In fact, the format is geared to appeal to those who are not accustomed or drawn to a traditional Sunday morning worship experience.

"It's a fresh approach to worship here in our local communities, and we hope it will attract people who we have not been able to reach yet—specifically those who cannot be present on Sunday mornings or those who may be hesitant to attend a Sunday morning service," said Jeremy Smith, Niceville UMC's teaching pastor.



Jeremy Smith

The new service—called Exchange—will be contemporary in nature, featuring a live band and worship songs that are similar to the styles of well-known contemporary Christian bands like Hillsong United and Jesus Culture. While there will be familiar elements incorporated into the format such as a sermon, offering and communion, the design and delivery of the service will also feature modern multimedia elements, drama and many different musical styles.

"We want to provide an open, inviting environment that is accepting of people wherever they may be in their faith journey," said Josh Walker, worship leader for Exchange.



Josh Walker



The Niceville United Methodist Church will be the site of a new Saturday evening contemporary service, called "Exchange."

"We want this service to connect people to Christ in a way that is not intimidating or too formal in nature. It is our hope that people who have never known the fullness of a Christ-

centered life will be introduced to the hope that is found in knowing him and begin to grow as believers."

Exchange is open to people of all ages and backgrounds,

but Smith noted that the format was designed with younger generations in mind, describing the overall feel as "edgy" but worshipful. Dress will be casual, and child care will be

provided to meet the needs of young families.

Exchange will mark Niceville UMC's sixth weekend service. Plans include an expansion of the program to include small groups and regular programming on Saturday nights.

Senior Pastor Ruel Ausley noted that he is excited about the potential of the new service and is looking forward to witnessing God's plans for the congregation.

"Saturday evening services have been successful in other regions, and we believe people who are currently not attending church in our community are hungry for something new," he said.



Ruel Ausley

PRINCIPAL

From page B-1

Chambers and Smith will work together while he remains Pryor principal, according to Okaloosa Schools Superintendent Alexis Tibbetts, beginning in February when the governor's budget is released. A new Pryor principal will be named at the Feb. 14 school board meeting, she said.

In introducing Chambers to the school board at Monday's meeting, Tibbetts called Chambers "a wonderful, amazing man" who is "embedded in the Niceville community." She cited Chambers' previous experience in both the Niceville area and the Okaloosa School District among reasons why he was selected to lead the high school.

Chambers, said Tibbetts, is a graduate of Northwest Florida State College, where he played baseball and basketball, as well as a graduate of the University of West Florida. He is a member of Niceville's First United Methodist Church and has been a teacher at Ruckel Middle School, an assistant principal at Niceville High School and an Okaloosa school district admin-

istrator in charge of school discipline.

As principal at Longwood Elementary School, Tibbetts said, Chambers helped that school earn its first Blue Ribbon rating, and at Pryor Middle School, he helped the school's students earn their highest level of progress in mathematics in the history of the school.

Chambers, said Tibbetts, "is a great administrator who believes in excellence in academics, extracurricular activities and athletics. He is articulate and communicates well with the news media." She also said Chambers "does a lot of research and understands budget management."

After his unanimous vote of approval by the school board, Chambers spoke to the board briefly, thanking Tibbetts, his family and others who have supported him throughout his career. "Niceville High School has a tradition of excellence, and it is my goal to continue that tradition," he said.

He said Niceville High School is well known for the professionalism of its teachers and staff, and that he is committed to their continued professional development, and to the

education of NHS students.

"My kids are currently students at Edge Elementary School," Chambers said, "and I hope to one day be their principal at Niceville High School."

Following the school board meeting, Chambers spoke with the Beacon, accompanied by his wife, Krissinda, and their children, Peyton, 8, and Camden, 6.

He said of his vision for Niceville High School under his administration, "I plan to hold conversations with the teachers and staff at Niceville and develop a mission and vision with their help." He said he looks forward to working at a school with Niceville's "unprecedented reputation for excellence, and to continue and further it."

He said that despite the school's reputation, he intends to push for further improvements.

"If we do not remain in constant forward motion, we move backward," he said. His expectations for NHS students, he said, will be for them "to constantly improve themselves and to be all that they can be."

Chambers' daughter Peyton was asked what advice she would give her friends about what to expect if they were, one day, sent to the principal's office

as high school students.

"If they were sent to my dad's office because of a good thing," Peyton said, "he would tell them congratulations and that he was proud of them. If it was for a bad thing, they probably wouldn't be happy when they went in to the office, and they wouldn't be happy when they came out."

Earlier on Monday, Tibbetts was asked by the Beacon when she expects to report back to the school board on her findings and recommendations regarding a recent proposal to start school later each day for high school students and earlier for elementary students, to better match the natural sleeping and waking patterns of adolescents. She said she is still studying the issue. "I have made it clear that we will need a lot of information before making any changes," she said.

Transportation, she said, will be a key factor in her recommendations when they are made.

"We need to make our bus routes as efficient as possible," she said. "I prefer not to start any classes, for high school or elementary students, before 7:30 if possible, but it is difficult to compress all the district's start times between 7:30 and 9 a.m."

Walmart donates locally

As part of Walmart's commitment to the communities in which it operates, \$25,000 in grants from the Walmart Foundation were to be presented during the grand opening celebration of the new Niceville store.

Those organizations receiving grants are Okaloosa County Schools, Niceville High School,

Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy, Sharing and Caring Food Pantry, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department, Niceville Police Department, Niceville Fire Department, city of Niceville, Fisher House, Covenant Hospice, Disabled American Veterans, Choctaw Basin Alliance and USO.

WHO'S

From page B-1

Casey is an active member at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church, participating in their youth, Praise Band, Student Worship, and Sunday Worship services.

Timothy Sung was chosen as alternate.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael C. Kostelnik of Niceville, assistant commissioner of the Office of Air and Marine at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, has been nominated for a 2011 Laureate Award by Aviation Week & Space Technology magazine, for his leadership of an industry/government team that fielded the Guardian Maritime Unmanned Aircraft System in 2010.

Dr. Pat Tidwell of Niceville has been recertified by the American Board of Family Medicine. Board certi-



Pat Tidwell

fication confers a standard of excellence in knowledge and practice to physicians who not only certify via the examination process, but who also work diligently on the maintenance of these skills during the seven-year cycle between examinations.

The Emerald Coast Association of Realtors has named Susan Rood of Century 21 Wilson Minger the 2010 Niceville Realtor of the Year.



Susan Rood

Lori Ogles of Niceville, manager of Reli Title's Grayton Beach office, has been elected to serve as the 2011 treasurer for the Emerald Coast Chapter, Women's Council of Realtors.

The law firms of Matthews & Hawkins, Destin, and Jones & Flowers, Niceville, have merged into Matthews Jones & Hawkins, LLP, with offices in Niceville, DeFuniak Springs and Destin.

Church page submissions

Please e-mail items of interest about your church, including workshop/activities open to the community, mission trips, special programs, guest speakers and building plans to info@baybeacon.com, along with church name, address, contact number/e-mail and photos.

Obituary

Robert E. Leach

December 24, 1952 - January 2, 2011

On January 2, our loving brother Robert of Crestview, Fla., was called home to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He

will be dearly missed.

Robert was a medic in Vietnam and Indochina, a custom home builder in Naples, Fla., along with several state projects. His loves were bass fishing, hunting by horseback in Kansas, and raising Blue Macaws.

Robert is preceded in death by his parents, William P. Leach Sr. and Alice M. Leach, (sisters) Mary Eleanor and Alice Mary, and (brothers) James Joseph and

William P. Jr.

Robert is survived by (sisters) Kathleen Eiriksson and family of Crestview, Fla., Barbara Jones and family of Deltona, Fla., (brothers) Thomas Leach of Valparaiso, Fla., Stephen Leach of Clearwater, Fla., and (uncle and aunt) Frank and Christine Leach of Clearwater Fla.

Graveside service will be held Jan. 29, 2011, at 11 a.m. at Beal Memorial Cemetery, Fort Walton Beach.

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Worship Schedule

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HOMEROOM

Lewis student essayists win cash

Lewis students in Jane Gamble's eighth-grade U.S. history classes were assigned an essay on the theme, "Does patriotism still matter?" Several essays were entered into a VFW Post 7674 patriotism essay contest. From left: Austin Nipper, third place, Mykael Briley, second place, and John Thomas, first place. All three students won medals and certificates, with first place winning \$125, second place earning \$100, and third place earning \$75.



8 Falcons named to All-County Band

Eight Lewis School musicians made All-County Band this year. From left: Khloe Miller, seventh grade flute; Theresa Gunger, eighth grade flute; McKenna Dean, seventh grade French horn; Randy Sterling, eighth grade French horn; Ben Huston, eighth grade trumpet and No. 1 in county; Mykael Briley, eighth grade trombone; Josh Banaszak, seventh grade tuba; and Sofia Glynn, sixth grade clarinet. The Lewis band director is Robert Colon.

Geography bee winners

Three students in fifth through eighth grades at Destin Middle School won prizes in the school site round of the National Geographic World Geography Bee on Jan. 7. From left: Ben Evans (third place), Mike Olson (first) and Ryan Rasins (second). Ben and Ryan live in Niceville. Twenty Destin students participated. Participants were asked questions about landforms, water forms, physical geography, continents, countries, states, map skills and cultural information. The top three finalists won gift cards to Rave Motion Pictures in Destin Commons.



Auburn rolls and so does Corey

Corey Church, a third grader at Bluewater Elementary, celebrates the Auburn national football championship in traditional Auburn style by rolling his trees the way it's done at Toomers corner in Auburn.



Gadzinski is student of month

Zachary Gadzinski of Rocky Bayou Christian School was selected as the January ACE (Accepting the Challenge of Excellence) Student of the Month by the Niceville Exchange Club. Zach was honored at the Exchange Club's monthly luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 11.



Zachary Gadzinski

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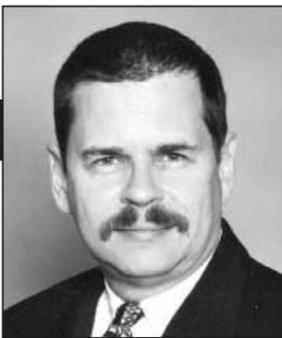
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2011
CALENDAR

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Swim meet volunteers

Emerald Coast Swim Team is in need of volunteer timers for its swim meet Friday-Sunday, Jan. 28-30. All volunteers will be fed during their work times.

Food donations are also needed for this event to feed nearly 100 volunteers.

Art exhibits at college

The McIlroy Gallery at Northwest Florida State College will feature the work of Beauvais Lyons, Association for Creative Zoology, while the Holzhauser Gallery features "die Wunderkammer" through Feb. 20.

Gallery Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 1-4 p.m. Sundays and 6-7:30 p.m.

prior to performances in the main-stage theater.

The "Beauvais Lyons" exhibition features brilliant and beautiful prints by Beauvais Lyons, curator of the Hokes Archives at the University of Tennessee.

The "die Wunderkammer" exhibition will convert the gallery into a large-scale cabinet of curiosities with rarely-seen objects and works from NWF State College's permanent collections. In the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries, wealthy Europeans displayed their collections in the format of a Wunderkammer, or cabinet of wonders.

'Charlotte's Web' on stage

"Charlotte's Web," part of the Children's Series at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Mainstage, will be performed Wednesday, Jan. 26, 9:45 and 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$6 each. Info: Delores Merrill, Mattie Kelly Arts Center house manager, 729-6065.

Hospice seeks volunteers

Covenant Hospice is seeking individuals who are interested in making a difference in the lives of patients and families facing end-of-life issues and in supporting the organization. A volunteer workshop will be held from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, at the Covenant Hospice branch office, located at 101 Hart St. The workshop is free and open to the public. Food and drinks will be provided.

To register or to learn more, call Kappy Smith at 729-1800.

'All Shook Up' is coming

"All Shook Up," part of the Artist Series on Mattie Kelly Arts Center Mainstage, will be performed Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$35 each. Call 729-6000 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4: p.m. or mattiekellyartscenter.org. It's a story of a square little town until a motorcycle-riding, guitar-playing, hip-swiveling hunk rides in and has everyone jumping out of their blue suede shoes.

Chautauqua at DeFuniak

Céline Cousteau, granddaughter of Jacques Cousteau, will be the featured keynote speaker at the official 2011 Florida Chautauqua Assembly in DeFuniak Springs Jan. 27-30. The program theme is "A Journey into Florida." Cousteau will speak Friday, Jan. 28, 9 a.m., at the new Walton County High School auditorium, DeFuniak Springs.

Chautauqua Assembly is a four-day, conference-style program which includes educational sessions and evening performances relating to the annual theme, as well as free, interactive historical and live animal exhibits.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased in advance by calling the Florida Chautauqua Center at 892-7613. Guests purchasing money-saving four-day passports for \$125 or one-day passes for \$60 will have Cousteau's presentation included in their packages.

Cello quartet to perform

First Arts Concert Series presents Rastrelli Cello Quartet at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 28, at 103 First Street, SE by First United Methodist church.

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for students in advance; \$15 adults and \$8 students at the door. Tickets are available at Pavlic's Unique Florist and Kitchenique, Destin; Bayou Books, Niceville and in the church office.

Info: 243-9292 or 243-6083.

SOCKS Latin jazz live

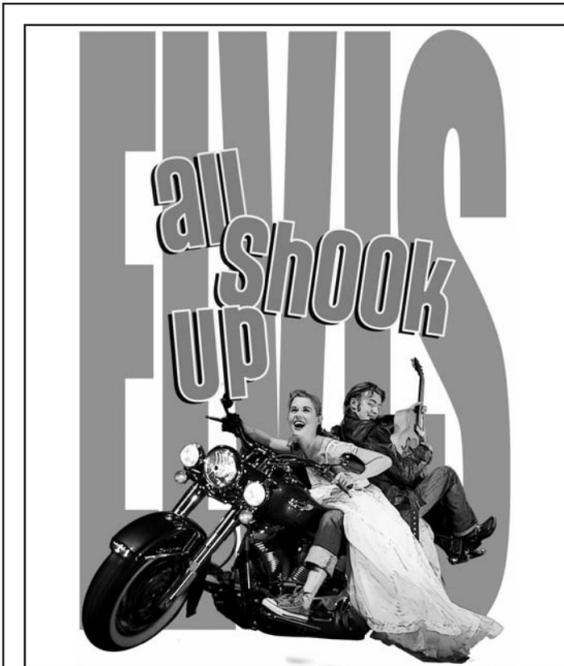
A live Latin jazz performance Friday, Jan. 28, at the Destin Community Center, will benefit Save Our Cats and Kittens (SOCKS). The doors open at 6:30 p.m., no reserved seating. Tickets are \$18 per person. The show will begin at 7:15 p.m.

Call 862-1432 or go to Copy Systems Business Center in Destin Walmart or Eagles Wings Books and Gifts in Destin.

Walk up tickets available for \$20 on day of show beginning at 4:30 p.m..

Showcase soccer team

Emerald Coast United is forming a U18/U17 college showcase team for players already committed to a college program who want to keep in shape, and for those players still looking for college commitment. Players cannot



'All Shook Up' slated

"All Shook Up," part of the Artist Series on Mattie Kelly Arts Center Mainstage, will be performed Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$35 each. Call 729-6000 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4: p.m. or mattiekellyartscenter.org. It's a story of a square little town until a motorcycle-riding, guitar-playing, hip-swiveling hunk rides in and has everyone jumping out of their blue suede shoes.

try-out unless they have a release from their previous club. Tryouts will be held at Twin Oaks, Saturday, Jan. 29 at 10 a.m.

Yard sale to benefit Relay

Children's Advocacy Center Relay for Life team plans a yard sale Jan. 29, 7 a.m., at 401 McEwen Drive, Niceville. To donate for the yard sale, bring it by the office 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Volunteers are needed to help get the sale ready. Info: Katie, 833-9237, ext. 222.

Free throw championship

Boys and girls ages 10 through 14 living in Niceville and Valparaiso may participate in the local level competition for the 2011 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship Saturday, Jan. 29, at the Holy Name of Jesus Church Parish Life Center, 1200 Valparaiso Blvd., Niceville.

Registration/practice begins at 9:30 a.m., competition starts at 10 a.m.

Winners will progress to district, regional and higher competitions, starting Feb. 12.

'Crazy Victorians' program

History Rocks! at the Heritage Museum, will present "Those Crazy Victorians" for ages 5-10 Jan. 29,

9:30-11 a.m.

Does someone you know enjoy scrapbooking? Scrapbooking is a very old custom from the Victorian Age. The Victorians were known for "perfecting" the art of relaxation and hobbies. Explore the history behind trinket box decoration, sailor valentines and much more.

Cost: \$7 per child or \$5 for museum members with a family membership. Parents and chaperones attending are free. Receive one class registration free with a new family membership.

Pre-registration is required. 678-2615.

5K/10K run/walk set

Destin's first Bayou, Bay & Back 5K/10K Run/Walk will take place Saturday, Jan. 29, at Clement Taylor Park, 8 a.m., rain or shine. Awards will be presented to the overall winners, both runners and walkers, male and female, as well as to winners in 13 age categories.

Prior to Jan. 28, registration fee is \$25 and may be completed on Active.com before Jan. 27 or by downloading the race brochure at DestinChamber.com. On Jan. 29, the registration fee is \$30, and registration may be completed on site.

Info: DestinChamber.com or 837-6241.

Computer Tech Expo set

The fifth annual Computer Tech Expo will be held Saturday, Jan. 29, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Northwest Florida State College Niceville campus in the College Mall, Building K. The free event focuses on the home computer user and will feature 25 free how-to workshops, vendor displays and door prizes.

Workshop topics include: Microsoft Windows 7, Apple iPad & iPhone, Microsoft Cloud Computing, Facebook Tips, Author & Health Care Consultant Charlene Grafton, Creative Use of Photos by Shirley Pike, Best Selling PC Tune-Up from iolo technologies, LLC, Acronis True Image Webinar, Microsoft PowerPoint and OneNote, How to Stop Identity Theft, Trouble Free Computing, Skype 5.0, Digital Magic by Jackie Youngblood and more.

Student music showcase

The Choctaw Bay Music Club will present its annual Student Showcase at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 30, at the Westwood Retirement Center, Fort Walton Beach. Students from various music teachers in the area in recital and will be recognized for their achievements. Info: Carrie Clancy, 936-5682

Better Listening series

The community classical music study series, "Better Listening," will begin Wednesday, Feb. 2, 7-9 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall, 1295 Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso. Now in its ninth year, the series combines commentaries on classical music with related CD selections. This year, two faculty members from the Northwest Florida State College will present programs. Dr. Jeremy Ribando has performed as a tenor soloist in operas and musicals. Lois Van Dam is professor of music and chorus director. Returning speakers include Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra director Jeffrey Rink and retired humanities professor Dr. Robert Larson. The first of nine sessions will be "Was that Beethoven or Mozart?"

All sessions are free and open to the public. No reservations are required. Info: Lou Johnson, 897-1411 or musicstudy@uufec.com.

GOP women to meet

The Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated will meet Wednesday, Feb. 2, at the Pranzo's Restaurant on Okaloosa Island. Socializing will begin at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. To accommodate working women, there will be a "Dine and Dash" table, which will accommodate those who can only stay for a limited time.

Senior Home Care representative Tami Shirey will speak on the benefits

of Home Health Care.

In support of Fisher House, lunch-attendees are asked to bring paper towels to help with paper supplies for the facility and good quality hardback books for their library.

Reservations: Donna Pattison, 651-5416, or donnapattison@cox.net by noon Friday, Jan. 28. Cost of the lunch is \$16 for members and \$18 for guests. Info: rwof.org.

Bird identification

Choctawhatchee Audubon Society plans a Feb. 3 program on "Basic Bird Identification Techniques" at Northwest Florida State College.

Lenny Fenimore will speak about how to get started identifying birds and is eminently qualified to lead us in the right direction.

Info: Gary Parsons (850) 678-1461

Ruckel sets winter dance

Ruckel Middle School will host their annual "Winter Dance" on Friday, Feb. 4, 6-8 p.m. Coronation of a Winter Prince and Princess, per grade level, will be featured at the event. Tickets are \$5 at the door. Only current Ruckel students may attend. Any questions about the dance can be answered by calling the school at 833-4142.

'Madeline-Bad Hat Day'

"Madeline—Bad Hat Day," part of the Children's Series on Mattie Kelly Arts Center Mainstage, will be performed Feb. 4, 9:45 and 11:30 a.m. Tickets: \$6 each. Info: Delores Merrill, Mattie Kelly Arts Center house manager, 729-6065.

St. Olaf Band to perform

The St. Olaf Band, will appear in a free concert on Friday, Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville. A free will offering will be taken.

The band is the oldest music organization at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn.

Info: stolaf.edu/music.

Bee Gees tribute planned

"Night Fever—A Bee Gees Tribute," will be performed Saturday, Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m., at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, NWF State College, Niceville.

Tickets are \$30 in advance. Call 362-9356 or 837-1742.

Dance Theatre of Harlem

The Dance Theatre of Harlem Ensemble, part of the Artist Series, will perform on the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Mainstage, Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$35 adults/\$25 youth/student (ages 18 and under and NWFSC students w/ID). Call 729-6000 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4: p.m. or mattiekellyartscenter.org.



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Garden club bottle art

Valparaiso Garden Club members display their "garden bottle art." Participating members were Renee Gollehon, Barbara Cunningham, Belinda Motley, Doris Camp, Scotta Mayhew, instructor Jerry Pattee, Diane Blackman, Janis Findley, Edith Levin, Marion Bushey, Pat Tye, Nell Poston, Sue Krewson and Jackie Edge.



Niceville juniors enter tour

Niceville High School juniors Rebekah Pruet and Nate Ritterband have been nominated to enter Chelco's Youth Tour Program, in which deserving students compete for an all-expense-paid, week-long trip to Washington, D.C. From left: Kathy Morrow, Chelco director of communications, Nate and Rebekah.

Engagement

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.



Kayla Ann Lowitz and David Gilbert Williams

Lowitz-Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Stan Sisk of Niceville and Ron Lowitz of Crestview, announce the engagement of their daughter, Kayla Ann Lowitz, to David Gilbert Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Williams, of Niceville.
Kayla is a graduate of Niceville High School, Okaloosa Walton College, and 2010 Graduate of University of Central Florida with a degree in sociology. She is employed at Rocky Bayou Christian School.

David is a graduate of Okaloosa Walton College. He is a student at University of Florida and will graduate in May 2011 with a degree in aerospace engineering.
The wedding is planned for May 13, 2011, at Swift Creek Park in Niceville.



Married 70 years

Frank and Vivian White celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary Jan. 19 with family and friends at Superior Residences of Niceville. They were married in Elizabeth City, N.C., in 1941. Behind them, from left, are son Phil, granddaughter Kelsey and daughter-in-law Doreen.

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- Acreage
- Homes for Rent
- RV's for Sale
- Homes for Sale

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Waterfront lot, approx one acre, LaGrange Bayou, 1 LaGrange Cove, Freeport, \$300k, 865-0324

Autos for Sale
1997 Jeep Wrangler Sport, Red, 4WD, 139,000 mi, \$6800, (571) 288-8242.

Help Wanted

NEWSPAPER DELIVERY
Earn extra cash of \$45 to \$140 or more each week in your spare time! The Bay Beacon seeks a reliable independent contractor to insert, bag, and deliver newspapers Tuesday night. You must be over 21 and have a reliable vehicle, a good driving record, a Florida driver's license, and proof of current liability insurance. No collecting duties. Earnings vary according to route and work load. Stop by the Bay Beacon for an information sheet and to fill out an application. The Beacon 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville • 678-1080 (Parkway East Shopping Center across from PoFolks)

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Okaloosa Island, 2 BR, 1 Bath, Apt, Renovated, WD use, \$620, 678-2324, 830-7879.

Items for Sale
New furniture consignment shop opening in Niceville. For pick up schedule call 279-3488.

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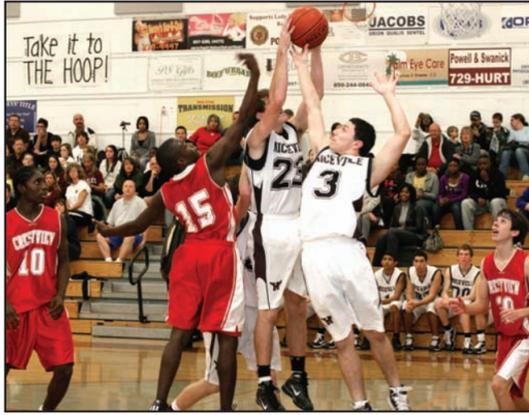
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Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

Eagles stop Crestview

Niceville High School junior Kyle Koszuta maneuvers around a Crestview player as teammate Andrew Mitchell watches in Friday's varsity matchup. Niceville went ahead early and staved off a Bulldog charge to win, 58-54.



Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

NHS falls to Bulldogs

Sophomore Colby Billings (23) and Freshman Michael Baffa go after a rebound for Niceville High School in Friday's junior varsity basketball game against Crestview. The Eagles fell to the Bulldogs, 60-39.



Photo by Michelle Drake

Eagles win district title

Grace Sager, captain of the Niceville High School girls soccer team, controls the ball during Friday's District 2-5A championship game. The Eagles downed Mosley, 1-0 in sudden-death overtime, to take their 10th district title since 2000. They will take on Navarre High School in the Regional Quarterfinals Thursday, 7 p.m., at Twin Oaks in Niceville.



Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

JV wrestler wins bout

Niceville High School's Hank Monan takes his Crestview opponent down during Thursday's 160-pound junior varsity wrestling match. Team scores are not kept for JV wrestling, according to the coach.



Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

Niceville scores win

Niceville High School's 135-pounder Tanner Aull gets the advantage over his Crestview opponent during Thursday's wrestling match with Crestview. The Eagles won, 50-23.

The Week Ahead

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Thursday, Jan. 27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —NHS-Navarre, girls basketball, 5:30/7 —Lewis-Ruckel, basketball, 6:30 —Lewis-Ruckel, girls basketball, 5 —Destin@Bruner, basketball, 6:30 —Destin@Bruner, girls basketball, 5 —RBCS-Covenant Christian, basketball, 6:30 —RBCS-North Bay Haven, JV basketball —Regional quarterfinals, girls soccer, NHS-Navarre, 7 | <p>Friday, Jan. 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —NHS-Choctaw, girls basketball (JV), 5 —RBCS@Escambia Charter, basketball, 6:30 —NHS-Choctaw, basketball, 6:30 —District finals, boys soccer (if needed), FWB, 7 |
| <p>Monday, Jan. 31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —RBCS-S. Walton, basketball, 5:30/7 | <p>Tuesday, Feb. 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —RBCS-Jay, basketball, 5:30/7 —NHS-Rutherford, basketball, 5:30/7 —Regional semifinals, girls soccer, 7 |



Photo by Scott Schaeffler

Rocky drops one to Hoboes

Rocky Bayou Christian School's Lauren Wright shoots during Friday's girls basketball game against Laurel Hill. The Knights dropped a close one, 49-46.

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Soccer league forms for youth

Emerald Coast United Soccer Club plans a new soccer league this spring. U8 and U10 leagues will begin in spring, with the hope of expanding in the future. Registration forms and information can be obtained at emeraldcoaststars.com. In-person registration will be held at Niceville City Hall Feb. 5 from 9 a.m. to noon.

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