

The Bay Beacon

14 Pages, 2 Sections, 2 Inserts

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

50¢

**UP
COMING**

Wednesday, 6-8 p.m.



College Night at Northwest Florida State College, Building K, will feature representatives from more than 60 colleges and universities across the nation.

The event provides NWFSO students, high school students, their parents, and others the opportunity to gather information, ask questions and plan for university transfer.

Info: 729-6467.

Thursday, 4:30-7 p.m.



Coastal Bank and Trust will hold a **takeaway steak dinner fundraiser**. All proceeds will benefit the **American Heart Association Heartwalk**.

The dinner can be picked up at Say Cake in Valparaiso.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at Coastal Bank and Trust.

Info: 729-5570.

Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.



The **Friends of the Niceville Library** will hold a **book sale** at the Niceville Community Center, 204 N. Partin Drive.

Nonmembers can sign up to join the group at the door and enjoy the pre-sale Friday, 4-6 p.m.

Info: 729-4090.

Calendar, B-3.

Niceville council shuns F-35 noise stand

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

The Niceville City Council last week declined to take a stand in the controversy over jet noise from Eglin-based F-35s.

During a meeting Thursday, Councilman Dan Henkel asked fellow council members for guidance on how he should act as the council's representative to an upcoming meeting of the Okaloosa County League of Cities.

The agenda for the League of

Cities meeting, Henkel said, includes a proposal from the city of Valparaiso to officially endorse "Option 2-A," one of several proposed options for flying F-35 fighter planes from Eglin Air Force Base after the new F-35 training wing at the base becomes fully operational.

Henkel said Option 2-A is considered the option least likely to cause noise problems in Valparaiso or Niceville, but is not necessarily

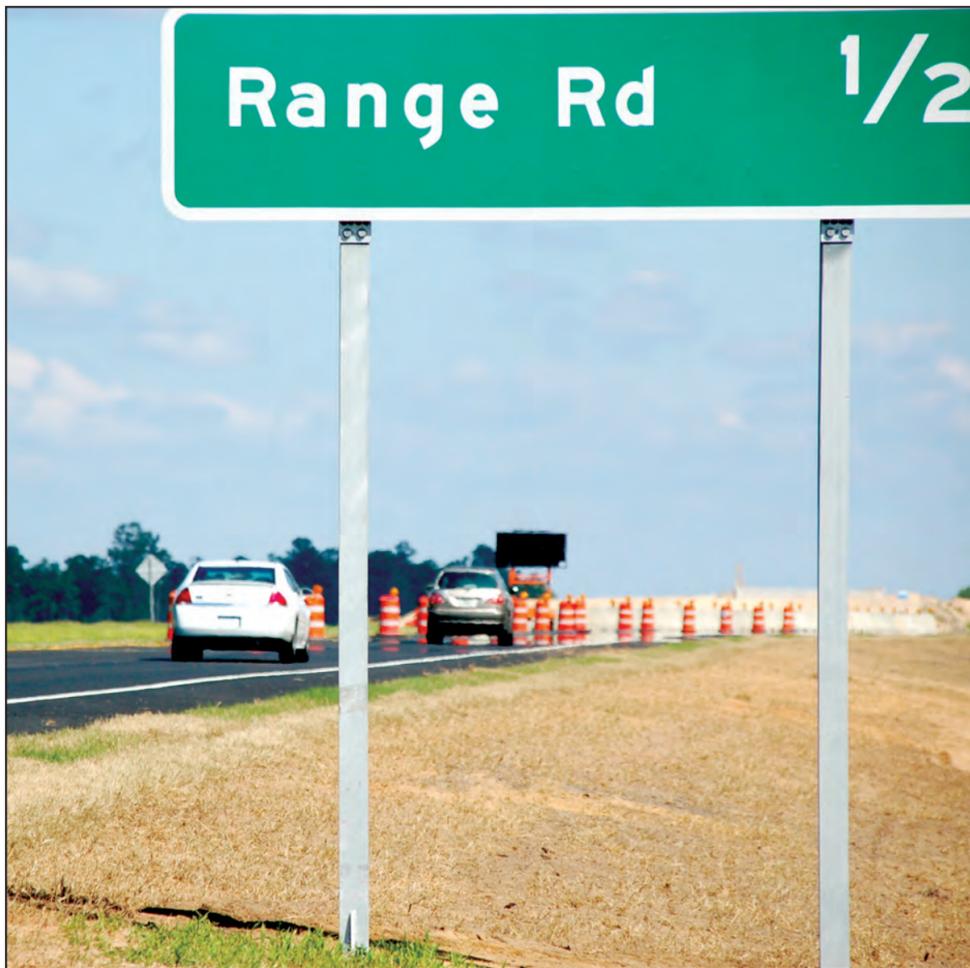
Please see NOISE, page A-2



F-35s arrive at Eglin Aug. 31.

Air Force photo

New access to bridge road



Residents of Blue Pine Village, Parkwood Estates and others living in the vicinity of Range Road got an easier way to travel to Destin when the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector Road opened a 1.3-mile, two-lane extension between the Highway 20 exit and Range Road, Sept. 7. For now traffic remains light on the newest, and toll-free, extension of the connector. When the entire 11-mile expressway is completed between the bridge and Highway 85 north of Niceville, now scheduled for January 2014, tolls will be collected north of Range Road. Motorists using the completed connector will avoid as many as 14 stoplights in Niceville and Bluewater Bay.

Beacon photo by Del Lessard

Authorities seek three in home invasion

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Niceville police are investigating allegations that three masked men, one armed with a pistol, tied up two Niceville men in their home, robbed a mother, and stole her car.

Niceville Police Department reports give the following account:

About 4 p.m. Aug. 31, police received a call from Keegan McDermott, 19, saying three men had confronted him and his mother, Letitia McDermott, 44, when they returned to their home at 1403 Cape Lane, Niceville. The three men wore bandannas over their faces and one held a pistol.

Please see INVASION, page A-5

Gaetz selection as next chief of state senate set

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, is scheduled to be designated as the next Florida Senate president during a ceremony Monday in Tallahassee.

The ceremony, which will be hosted by the Republican Caucus of the Florida Senate, will be at 3 p.m. (2 p.m. Niceville time) Sept. 19 at the Florida Capitol.

Gaetz represents coastal areas of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties, including the Twin Cities area. Although already designated to become Senate president, Gaetz will not actually begin serving in that position until 2013.



Don Gaetz

Please see GAETZ, page A-5

School district: No money for raises

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

The Okaloosa County School District has told teachers it can't afford to give them the customary 3 percent annual raise.

The teachers union has responded by filing a contract grievance.

The school district has proposed freezing teachers' salaries this year by paying no across-the-board increase and no annual "step" increases.

The action would save taxpayers nearly \$1.2 million a year in payroll costs, according



Alexis Tibbetts

to the school district.

In past years, annual step increases averaged 3 percent for every returning teacher, said Mike Foxworthy, the school district's personnel director.

Although teachers have not gotten an across-the-board cost-of-living increase in at least three years, Foxworthy said, they have continued to get 3-percent annual step increases.

Teacher pay raises for the cur-



Karen Peek

rent year, if any, are still being negotiated, Alexis Tibbetts, Okaloosa schools superintendent said last week. However, she said, the school district's 2011-12 budget contains no money for teacher pay raises. It's too late to make any changes in the spending plan, Tibbetts said a few hours before Monday's school board meeting, during which the budget and tax rates were given final approval.

Karen Peek, president of the Okaloosa County Education Association, which

Please see SCHOOL, page A-7

Destin bank seeks Niceville branch

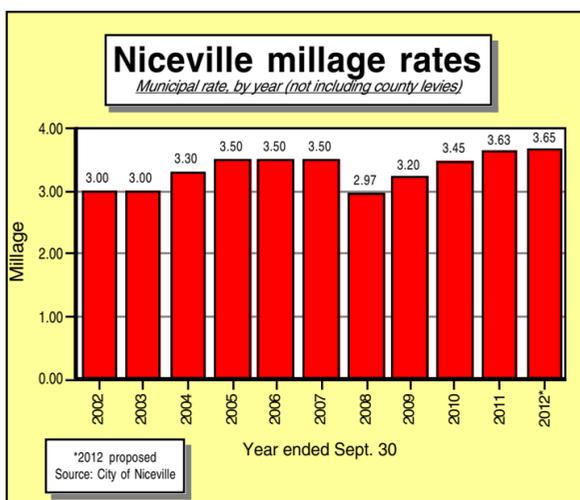
By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

A Niceville branch bank with headquarters in Mississippi may be acquired later this year by a Destin-based bank.

First Florida Bank, a five-year-old state-chartered bank, has applied to the state of Florida and the Federal Deposit Insurance

Corp. to establish a branch in Niceville through acquisition of the building now occupied by M&F Bank, said Ronny A. Clay, president of First Florida Bank. M&F (Merchants and Farmers) Bank has a Niceville branch office at 750 E. John Sims Parkway.

Please see BANK, page A-2



Hearing set on tax, utilities hikes

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Proposed increases in property taxes and in water and sewer rates will be subjects of a public hearing Thursday by the Niceville City Council.

At the hearing, which will take place at 6 p.m. at city hall, Glenn Stevens, an engineer from Polyengineering, a consulting firm employed by the city, will brief the council in greater detail on the water and sewer systems

and the costs of running them.

City financial consultant Bill Fray will also brief the council during that meeting, regarding the city's ongoing effort to secure low-interest bank loans to replace current bonds.

City Clerk Dan Doucet said that the proposed rate hikes will increase the base rate for city water customers from \$11.15 to \$11.35 per month. Water consumption rates for the first 2,000

Please see HEARING, page A-2

HEARING

From page A-1

gallons used by customers will go from \$1.91 to \$1.95 per thousand gallons used. For an "average" customer who uses about 7,000 gallons per month, said Doucet, the total rate hike will amount to about 58 cents per month. The city also imposes a 10-percent tax on water bills inside and outside city limits.

For sewer customers, said Doucet, the base rate will increase from \$16.90 to \$17.60

per month, and the cost per 1,000 gallons used will climb from \$2.36 to \$2.46.

In addition, the city council is considering a rate increase for the city's stormwater utility, which builds and maintains retention ponds and underground vaults to prevent stormwater runoff from running directly into local streams and bodies of open water such as Turkey Creek and Boggy Bayou.

The purpose of the utility is to prevent flooding and prevent pollution from reaching open water. The increase, said Doucet, would

amount to a change from \$4.25 to \$4.38 per month for residential property owners, and from \$8.51 to \$8.77 for commercial and industrial facilities.

The council is also considering an increase in sanitation tipping fees from \$13.11 to \$13.37 per month for residential customers, and by 2 percent for commercial customers. The 2 percent, said Doucet, keeps up with increases in the consumer price index.

Also on the hearing agenda is a proposal to raise the city millage rate to 3.65, up from 3.6301.

BANK

From page A-1

The company's main office is in Kosiusko, Miss. M&F Bank was established in 1890 and has 48 locations in four states, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama and Florida. It opened its Niceville branch in 2007.

First Florida Bank, which began operations in November 2006, has its main office in Destin and a branch in Sandestin.

In an email to the Beacon Clay said, "The bank has approximately 200 shareholders with most residing in the communities bordering the Choctawhatchee Bay, Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Shalimar, Niceville and Valparaiso, as well as Freeport and DeFuniak Springs. We strongly believe that the city of Niceville is an area that can greatly benefit from our products and services."

Clay said the application his bank filed with regulatory

agencies was to assume the lease on the M&F Bank building in Niceville "and assume certain deposit relationships." He declined to elaborate on the deposit relationships. "We expect to have a staff of about eight employees, some of whom will have to be additional staff," he said.

In addition to the typical banking depository products, Clay said the new bank would offer consumer and small business loans, construction loans, home mortgage loans, and both consumer and business credit cards at fixed rates.

"We have received communication from the Office of Financial Regulation, state of Florida, expressing their intent to approve our application once the applicable comment period has been fulfilled. Our application with the FDIC remains in the review process," Clay said.

FDIC's Atlanta office is taking public comments on the proposed change through Sept. 21. Clay said he expects the transaction to be approved and finalized by the fourth quarter of 2011.

M&F Bank did not respond to a request for comment before the Beacon's press deadline.

NOISE

From page A-1

avored by the Air Force due to potential costs and operational restrictions.

After some discussion, the city council members reached a consensus that Henkel should not vote to officially endorse any particular option.

Councilman Bill Smith said local cities should not try to

limit the Air Force's options, and that actual noise from the F-35 is yet to be determined, and may depend on such variables as wind and weather, as well as flying procedures.

Lannie Corbin said the Air Force is already involved in seeking ways to mitigate local noise. "They want to do the right thing," Corbin said, and any interference from local cities would not really be helpful.

Henkel said that much of the economy of Okaloosa County "is tied to the Air Force." With a round of Base Reductions and Closures recently completed, but with expected cuts to national defense budgets likely in the near future, Henkel said, it would be unwise to take any actions that could make Eglin Air Force Base less attractive to the military.

Eglin Air Force Base is scheduled to receive 59 F-35s, the nation's newest jet fighter, to operate a training wing. Four have arrived.

The Air Force is studying how much noise the jets are expected to generate, and where. Valparaiso and northwest sections of Niceville are expected to be the most affected by the warplane's takeoffs and landings from Eglin's north-south runway, one of two on the base.

Water service to be interrupted

The city of Niceville announced a period of interrupted water service Sept. 15, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., weather permitting, due to utility repair.

Saint Andrews Drive, Coral Drive, Cove Circle, Tarpon Lane, Linden Avenue and the surrounding area, south of Valparaiso, will be affected.

For more information, call the Niceville Public Works office, 729-4064.



Dan Henkel

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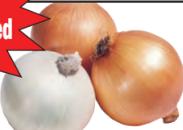
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 <p>FRESH, RED, RIPE ROMA TOMATOS</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">88¢^{LB}</p>	 <p>FRESH, YELLOW ONIONS</p> <p>3 LB BAG</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$1.55</p>	<p>MINUTE MAID SIMPLY ORANGE JUICE</p> <p>59 OZ DECANTER</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$2.75</p>	
 <p>KELLOGG'S CEREAL</p> <p>ASSORTED MINI WHEATS OR RAISIN BRAN EXTRA</p> <p>15-18 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$2.33</p>	 <p>COCA-COLA AND ALLIED PRODUCTS</p> <p>20 PK CANS</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$4.99</p>	 <p>GATORADE THIRST QUENCHER</p> <p>8PK BTL, SELECT VARIETIES</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$4.66</p>	
 <p>CHARMIN BASIC BATH TISSUE</p> <p>12 CT, DBL ROLL</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$5.33</p>	 <p>BOUNTY BASIC PAPER TOWELS</p> <p>8 CT, REG SIZE</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$5.33</p>	 <p>QUAKER OATS OATMEAL</p> <p>REGULAR OR QUICK, 42 OZ CANISTER -OR- INSTANT, SELECT VAR, 10-15 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$2.28</p>	
 <p>PREGO PASTA SAUCE</p> <p>24 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$1.55</p>	 <p>MAZOLA COOKING OIL</p> <p>48 OZ BTL</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$3.67</p>	 <p>CAMPBELL'S CHUNKY SOUPS</p> <p>SELECT VARIETIES, 18-19 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$1.37</p>	
 <p>FLAVORITE CANNED VEGETABLES</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">58¢</p> <p>SELECT VAR, 4-15 OZ</p>	 <p>CRYSTAL FARMS CHEESE</p> <p>CHUNK OR SHREDDED, 8 OZ PKG.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$1.78</p>	 <p>BLUE BELL SHERBET</p> <p>QTS</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$1.99</p>	
 <p>STONE RIDGE ICE CREAM</p> <p>SELECT VAR, 48 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$2.33</p>	 <p>BLUE BONNET SPREAD MARGARINE</p> <p>1 LB</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">77¢</p>	 <p>BANQUET MEALS</p> <p>SELECT VAR, 5-10.25 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">95¢</p>	
 <p>BANQUET POT PIES</p> <p>7 OZ</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">58¢</p>	 <p>MIRASSOU WINE</p> <p>ALL VARIETIES, 750 ML</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$4.99</p>		

State fire event set



An estimated 300 volunteer firefighters from across the state, as well as from Alabama and Georgia, will be in Niceville this week for training during the sixth annual Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend. Live fire training, part of volunteers' certification process, will be an important part of the training. Above, a scene from a past Volunteer Firefighter Weekend.

Niceville site of annual training classes

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

As many as 300 volunteer firefighters from as far away as the Florida Keys will participate in a series of training classes to be held in Niceville this week.

Classes offered during the sixth annual Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighters Weekend begin today and will run through Sunday. Classes and events will be centered at the Niceville campus of Northwest Florida State College.

In addition, classes will also take place at two Niceville motels—the Quality Inn and the Holiday Inn Express—as well as, for the first time, at the Community Center of the Niceville United Methodist Church, according to Charlie Frank, president of the Tallahassee-based Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend Council, sponsor of the event.

The Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend began as an idea of the Florida State Fire College in 2005, according to Frank. The fire college wanted a fire department to host this event, and Frank, then chief of the Valparaiso Volunteer Fire Department, agreed to do it.

The first two volunteer firefighter training weekends, which started in December 2006, took place at Lewis Middle School. The training weekend moved to the Niceville campus of NWFSC in 2008.

Now the event attracts firefighters from all over the state, as well as from Alabama and Georgia.

This week's training classes are free to volunteer firefighters, Frank said. In addition to classroom training on Friday and Saturday, volunteer firefighters will get hands-on training in vehicle extrications, and rescue and fire attack techniques during a "live burn" at a specially constructed structure at the college. Such training is often difficult and expensive for many volunteer departments to schedule, he said.

Sunday, participants of the water safety class will take a "leap of faith" into the pool of the Quality Inn in full gear and air packs. Vehicle extrications and various live fire demonstrations will also take place, according to Frank.

Volunteer firefighters can earn certification credit from the Florida State Fire College, Frank said. The training hours can go toward volunteers being certified as Firefighter-1, the basic certification level required to fight fires in the "hot zone."

At least six volunteers from the Valparaiso Fire Department had signed up for some of the training classes, according to Valparaiso Fire Chief Mark Norris.

Until the 1990s volunteer firefighters in Florida usually needed at least 40 hours of training to begin fighting fires. Then the state quadrupled the training requirement to 160 hours for certification as Firefighter-1. The increased training require-

ment put a strain on many volunteer fire departments whose firefighters typically work full time in addition to their volunteer firefighting duties. Several local fire departments subsequently shifted from volunteer departments to full-time and part-time paid firefighters, squeezing out volunteer firefighters in the process.

Norris said Florida recently increased the training hours required to be certified at the Firefighter-1 level by another 28 percent, to 206 hours.

Frank said that about 250 volunteer firefighters had signed up for classes as of last week, and the group expected around 300 to attend. More than 200 volunteer firefighters attended last year's event, he said.

Frank, who now works for the State Fire Marshal's Office in Tallahassee, said the event's sponsor this year received a four-year federal grant totaling \$586,000 to continue the free training program for volunteers.

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Niceville's Newspaper

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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

Courtney Nichole Tandy, a retail sales worker, 29, of 503-D Johnson St., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 29 on charges of driving while license suspended or revoked, habitual offender, and resisting an officer with violence.

A deputy observed Tandy get into a vehicle and start the engine as she was leaving a court appearance in Shalimar, where the judge had instructed her in open court, "don't drive." When advised she was being taken into custody by verbal order of the judge whom she had just seen, Tandy allegedly grabbed the deputy's right hand and wrist and proceeded to scratch and claw, while screaming "help."

Bradley James Thomason, 41, of 379 S. Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 30 on a Walton County warrant on a charge of a motor vehicle operator refusing a blood-alcohol test.

Anthony Charles Sartin, unemployed, 39, with an at-large address, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Sept. 1 on charges of grand theft, three counts, passing a forged instrument, three counts, dealing in stolen property, three counts, and providing false ownership information on pawn items, three counts.

All the charges relate to May 16 when a Niceville resident reported her home was burglarized while she was on vacation and several checks and several thousand dollars in jewelry were stolen. Sartin, the victim's son, was identified as the individual cashing three of the stolen checks, made out to himself for \$3,000, \$2,500 and \$2,750, on May 6, 11 and 13. Sartin was also identified as the person who pawned three items of jewelry as his own, on April 30, May 2 and May 4.

Samantha Jo Hill, 28, of 133 Perdido Circle, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 29 on a contempt of court charge.

Cassandra Jean Novinski, 20, of 304 Reeves St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Sept. 1 on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of possession of drug paraphernalia, two counts, and on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of prostitution.

Alyssa Renee McGinnis, 18, of 503 County Line Road, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Sept. 1 on a charge of failure to appear on original charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana.

Michael Paul Hagan, a construction worker, 26, of 1493 Pine St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Sept. 2 on a charge of domestic violence battery that allegedly occurred Aug. 13.

Brian Jeffery Miller, 30, of 499 Johnson St., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 31 on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of fraudulent use of credit card.

Lauren Jean Gagnor, 21, of 1509 Pinehurst Cove, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 30 on a charge of fraudulent use of credit cards, two counts. On May 7 Gagnor is alleged to have used a former roommate's credit cards to make two ATM withdrawals, each for \$102.

Gagnor was also arrested the same day on charges of burglary, larceny and fraudulent use of credit cards. On April 11 Gagnor and two male co-defendants allegedly burglarized an unlocked vehicle at a Bluewater Bay address, stole the victim's wallet, then used the victim's credit cards to make several purchases.

Gagnor was also charged with burglary, larceny and dealing in stolen property related to another car burglary April 11 in which Gagnor and two male co-defendants burglarized an open garage at an address in Bluewater Bay, stole three sets of golf clubs and

later pawned the stolen clubs.

Keith Alvin McGuire, 25, of 107 Summit Court, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 30 on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of possession of a controlled substance, Percocet, without a prescription.

Bryan Michael Sperry, a self-employed handyman, 28, of 122 Crestview St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 30 on charges of grand theft, dealing in stolen property and providing false ownership information for pawned items. Sperry is alleged to have stolen several thousand dollars worth of jewelry from a home where he had been a guest for about a month, then pawning the stolen items while claiming he owned them.

Gerilyn Anne Surgner, 48, of 4234 Marysa Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on misdemeanor worthless check charges, 14 counts.

A 14-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 28 on charges of indecent exposure, two counts, and lewd or lascivious exhibition by an offender under the age of 18, two counts.

Chase Allen Garrett, a student, 18, of 1009 Coral Drive, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 31 on a charge of domestic violence battery.

John Paul Barnett, 30, of 1405 Cape Lane, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop for an extinguished tag light and driving with a suspended driver's license, Sept. 1, on a charge of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine.

Michelle Lynn Stoflet, 41, of 713-B McKinney St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Sept. 4 on a charge of trespass after warning.

Levy Houston Lucas III, a tree cutter, 27, of 1032 Christy Drive, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Sept. 6 on a charge of domestic violence battery.

Demilo Graves, 20, of 1403 Cape Lane, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 31 on a charge of falsely identifying himself to a law enforcement officer.

James Douglas Snow, 54, of 1727 Union Street, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Sept. 5 on a charge of assault. Snow allegedly confronted a man and demanded that he pay him the \$700 he claimed the man owed him.

During the confrontation at a Niceville convenience store, 1001 Valparaiso Blvd., Snow allegedly pulled a handgun from his waistband in his back and displayed it at his side. Police later determined that the handgun was a 9 mm Beretta that was inoperative because it had been modified to be a military training aid.

A Niceville resident reported that someone stole her 54-inch flat screen television from a residence in the 700 block of 27th Street sometime Sept. 1-2.

A Niceville business, 438 E. John Sims Parkway, reported that unknown person(s) had stolen two mattresses from a storage locker located outside the business sometime Aug. 30-Sept. 2. The mattresses were valued at \$320.

An employee in the 1500 block of Merchants Way, Niceville, reported that unknown person(s) smashed out the driver's side window of his locked car and stole a laptop computer, a laptop bag, a wireless mouse, a headset, a GPS unit and a pair of shoes, sometime Aug. 31 between 1 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. The vehicle was parked on the west side of the Winn-Dixie complex near a Mexican restaurant. The stolen items were valued in total at \$1,290.

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls September 2, 2011, through September 11, 2011.

0 Structure Fire	13 Emergency Medical Calls
1 Vehicle Fire	8 Vehicle Crash
0 Other Fire	0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication
0 Illegal Burn	9 Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms	2 Hazardous Conditions

Street	Situation	Date	Time
E. College Boulevard	Medical	09/02/11	09:19
E. John Sims Parkway	Alarm activation	09/02/11	19:32
SR85N	Vehicle fire	09/02/11	20:12
S. Partin Drive	Alarm activation	09/02/11	22:07
Bayshore Drive	False call	09/03/11	12:20
Elm Street	Power line down	09/03/11	14:55
Hickory Avenue	Medical	09/03/11	21:57
E. John Sims Parkway	Vehicle crash	09/04/11	09:25
E. John Sims Parkway	Medical	09/04/11	13:58
Perdido Circle	Canceled	09/05/11	01:31
Grand Oak Drive	Lightning strike	09/05/11	08:08
Azalea Drive	False call	09/05/11	13:09
Nutmeg Avenue	Medical	09/05/11	18:45
Rocky Bayou Bridge	Canceled	09/06/11	08:21
Rocky Bayou Bridge	Assist sheriff's dept.	09/06/11	10:34
Government Avenue	Vehicle crash	09/06/11	15:49
Redwood Avenue	Vehicle crash	09/07/11	09:11
2nd Street	Medical	09/07/11	11:59
E. John Sims Parkway	Vehicle crash	09/07/11	14:06
Evans Street	Medical	09/07/11	20:33
E. John Sims Parkway	Vehicle crash	09/08/11	07:11
26th Street	Medical	09/08/11	09:16
Yacht Club Drive	Medical	09/08/11	14:58
N. Partin Drive	Medical	09/09/11	00:34
Reeves Street	Medical	09/09/11	12:34
26th Street	Medical	09/09/11	14:38
E. John Sims Parkway	Alarm activation	09/09/11	17:23
SR85N	Vehicle crash	09/09/11	21:08
W. John Sims Parkway	Medical	09/10/11	02:59
E. John Sims Parkway	Alarm activation	09/10/11	18:35
SR85N	Vehicle crash	09/11/11	14:42
27th Street	Vehicle crash	09/11/11	16:22
Benton Avenue	Medical	09/11/11	18:39

Weekly Safety Tip: Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 9-15. Remember to test smoke detectors, develop escape plans for your family and practice fire safety all year long.

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls September 4, 2011, through September 12, 2011.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Dominica Way	Water problem	09/04/11	11:44
Crystal Court	EMS excluding vehicle	09/04/11	14:03
Grand Oak Drive	Dispatched, canceled	09/05/11	08:08
N. White Point Road	Medical assist EMS	09/05/11	08:39
Range Road	Severe weather	09/05/11	11:08
Range Road and Hwy. 20	Severe weather	09/05/11	12:45
Azalea Drive	Dispatched, canceled	09/05/11	13:10
Lido Cove	Severe weather	09/05/11	13:55
Saint Kitts Cove	Severe weather	09/05/11	14:06
Antiqua Way	Public service assistance	09/05/11	14:26
1/4 mile west of Co. Line	Severe weather	09/05/11	14:37
Haintree Boulevard	Severe weather	09/05/11	14:44
Hickory Street and Cat-Mar	Severe weather	09/05/11	15:26
N. White Point Road	No incident found	09/05/11	16:17
Ingrid Court	Dispatched, canceled	09/05/11	22:22
Fairway Lakes Drive	Dispatched, canceled	09/06/11	07:08
Rocky Bayou Bridge	Dispatched, canceled	09/06/11	08:22
Range Road	Medical assist EMS	09/06/11	18:45
Range Road	Alarm system activation	09/07/11	09:13
Sunset Beach Boulevard	EMS excluding vehicle	09/07/11	12:40
E. Highway 20	EMS excluding vehicle	09/07/11	15:28
Cougar Circle	Heat from short circuit	09/08/11	05:57
Merchants Way	Medical assist EMS	09/08/11	08:32
Oak Shores Drive	Medical assist EMS	09/08/11	08:59
W. Parkwood Lane	EMS excluding vehicle	09/08/11	11:19
Napa Way	EMS excluding vehicle	09/08/11	13:46
E. Highway 20	Medical assist EMS	09/08/11	16:03
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	09/09/11	06:49
E. Highway 20	Medical assist EMS	09/09/11	12:26
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	09/09/11	22:36
White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	09/10/11	14:30
E. Highway 20	System malfunction, other	09/10/11	18:21
Shirah, Destin	Building fire	09/10/11	18:51
White Point Road	Medical assist EMS	09/10/11	21:19
Turnberry Cove	Dispatched, canceled	09/11/11	03:19
Merchants Way	Medical assist EMS	09/11/11	10:38
John Steinbeck Drive	No incident found	09/11/11	17:39

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

Riesel sentenced to life in prison
Convicted for 2008 beating death of Niceville man

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Randy Scott Riesel, 30, will spend the rest of his life in prison for beating a Niceville man to death in 2008.

On Sept. 16, 2008, Riesel, then a Niceville resident, 509 23rd St., Lot 4, severely beat Charles David May II, of 304 Reeves St., Niceville. May died of his injuries less than two weeks later.

In April 2009, an Okaloosa County jury found Riesel guilty of second-degree murder and he was sentenced to life in prison, according to Okaloosa County court records.

Riesel was subsequently retried and convicted a second time by an Okaloosa jury July 15, 2011, and, on Sept. 7, Riesel was sentenced to life in prison by Circuit Judge Thomas Remington, according to court records.

Sheriff's reports gave the following account of the 2008 beating:

Responding to a battery call about 11:10 p.m. Sept. 16, deputies found May unconscious and bleeding profusely from the face, and with major injuries to his head, lying outside the mobile home Riesel shared with Amanda Hagan, and their infant.

Niceville police officers were already on the scene assisting May. He was later flown by helicopter to Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola.

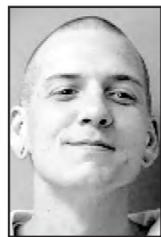
Deputies saw a trail of blood leading from May to the front door of Lot 4.

After knocking on the door without success, deputies looked through a window and saw Riesel and Hagan cleaning what appeared to be blood off the floor and wall. After announcing themselves as lawmen and ordering the door open, but again getting no response, deputies entered the blood-spattered home and ordered Riesel and Hagan to the floor, without further incident.

Hagan told deputies that Riesel had gotten into a physical altercation with May inside the home, and that Riesel dragged the unconscious May outside and left him on the ground, where officers found the injured man.

Riesel said he had been visiting a friend next door when Hagan called him and told him that May was nude and in Riesel's child's room. Riesel confronted May and asked him why he was in the room. Riesel admitted to striking May with his hands and told deputies he would do it again.

May never regained consciousness after the beating and died later that month. Riesel was subsequently charged with second-degree murder Sept. 29, 2008, according to a sheriff's arrest report.



Randy S. Riesel

Valp. eyes school rezoning

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

The Valparaiso City Commission Monday gave preliminary approval to two competing sets of proposed ordinances related to a proposed rezoning of the former Valparaiso Elementary School.

Only one set, if any, is expected to survive a final vote.

One set of ordinances, recommended by the Valparaiso Planning Commission, would create a new broad zoning category for public institutions, including schools, museums, parks and the like.

The opposing set of ordinances was developed by the city attorney, Doug Wyckoff. Wyckoff's proposals would be a more restrictive zoning category called Public Institution, with a sub-category of Elementary School. Uses of the land other than for an elementary school would require the owner of the property, in this case the Okaloosa County School Board, to request

a zoning change.

A school board representative at the city commission meeting, attorney Jeff Burns, said the school district supports the Planning Commission's version, and strongly opposes Wyckoff's version.

A final vote is scheduled for Oct. 10.

Both sets of ordinances deal with a proposed new zoning district for the 13-acre school board property that contains the former Valparaiso Elementary School, which the school district closed in May, saying it didn't have enough students.

The school district has not said what, if anything, it plans to do with the property. A south Florida company says it wants to reopen the school as a charter school, competing with the school district.

Valparaiso's Planning Commission recommended a new zoning category of Public Institution. Their recommendation came following a hearing

Aug. 16 to analyze three ordinances related to the former Valparaiso Elementary property. One proposed ordinance created a new zoning category, Public Institutional, while another applied the new category to the city's future land use maps, and the third recommended the 13-acre school site be rezoned from its current C-1 Commercial zoning category to the new Public Institutional zoning district.

Wyckoff told commissioners that he felt the Planning Commission's three proposed ordinances failed to preserve an elementary school on the property. He said preserving Valparaiso Elementary School was what commissioners had tasked him to do during a commission meeting in January.

Wyckoff's three proposed ordinances call for a new zoning category of Public Institution, Elementary School—but also includes the following sub-categories:

—Public elementary schools.

—Community recreation.

—Public parks and playgrounds.

—Public libraries, public museums, public art galleries.

Representing the Okaloosa County School Board, attorney Jeff Burns told commissioners that the school district approves of the three ordinances recommended by the city's Planning Commission. The proposed Public Institutional zoning proposed by the Planning Commission was very similar to other, broad zoning categories used by Niceville, Fort Walton Beach, Crestview, the county and other municipalities for school properties in those locals, Burns said.

Likewise, Burns said the school district opposed the three ordinances recommended by Wyckoff. Wyckoff's versions of the ordinances narrows the discretion of the school board and violates Florida statutes and the state constitution that gives control of the land to the school board.

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INVASION

From page A-1

Keegan and his mother said they were in Destin when they received a call from Derek James, Letitia's other son, stating, "You need to come home, now!" When his mother tried to get more information James, 21, stated that was all he could say.

When Keegan and Letitia got

home, one of the three intruders reportedly pushed Letitia to the floor, demanding money. Letitia said she saw her son James and his roommate, Demilo Graves, 20, seated on a bed.

One of the three men pointed a gun at Keegan and demanded money. Keegan said he ran from the house and went to a neighbor's home to call police.

After a few moments the

three intruders ran out the front door, grabbing Letitia's purse on the way out. They drove away in her car, a 2005 Nissan Altima.

James and Graves told police they had been at the residence when the three men entered the home and forced them to lie face down on the bedroom floor while their hands were tied. After ransacking the home the three men reportedly forced

James to call his mother while a gun was held against his head.

Police investigators said the stolen Altima was recovered Sept. 7, about a block from the victims' home.

The victims said they did not who the masked robbers were.

Police asked that anyone with information on the case call the Niceville Police Department, 729-4030.



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GAETZ

From page A-1

To actually become Senate president, Gaetz will first have to win re-election in the fall 2012 general election, when all seats of the Florida Legislature will be on the ballot following the redistricting of the state to reflect results of the 2010 U.S. census. If Gaetz is not re-elected, or if Democrats win a majority in the Senate during the 2012 election, Gaetz will not become Senate president after all.

Current Senate President Mike Haridopolos, from Indialantic, will remain in that position through the 2012 term.

Gaetz, now 63, was first elected Florida's District 4 senator in 2007. The North Dakota native had a successful business career in Miami, then moved to Niceville in 1990. He entered politics here, winning elections to the Okaloosa County School Board, and then to the post of schools superintendent. His son, Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, is a member of the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 4, which includes part of the Twin Cities area.

In a Sept. 6 phone interview with the Beacon, Don Gaetz discussed the duties of a senate president. "The president of the senate, he said, "is one of the three top officials in state government, including the governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and president of the senate. He or she presides over meetings of the senate, and appoints all other state senators to their committee positions within the senate. He or she also decides which pieces of legislation move from committees to the floor of the senate to be voted upon.

"When the legislature is not in session," said Gaetz, "key decisions of state government must be agreed upon by the governor, senate president, and the speaker, especially decisions that involve state finances or spending." In an emergency, he said, the senate president is third in line to become governor if the elected governor dies or becomes incapacitated.

Senate presidents are elected by their fellow senators, said Gaetz. Although such elections are usually contested among senators of the majority party, Gaetz said that in his case, no one opposed him for election as president when GOP senators voted in late June, and he was therefore elected unanimously.

"I consider myself very fortunate," Gaetz said, "to have been elected without opposition." Asked if such a mandate will increase his influence in state government, Gaetz replied, "Yes—for the first couple of days."

Gaetz also outlined some of his goals as the next Senate president.

"Job one will be to help our economy to recover. In Northwest Florida, we are fortunate to be seeing an uptick in our economy due to the arrival of the 7th Special Forces Group and the repurposed 33rd Fighter Wing, as well as the beginning of a recovery in tourism. These are bringing an economic infusion to our area."

However, he said, "The overall Florida economy continues to stagnate," along with the rest of the nation. "There were no new jobs added to the national economy last month. The U.S. economy, once the envy of the world, has come to a dead stop."

Gaetz acknowledged that no official in any one state can turn the economy around by himself. "Florida can't fix the national economy," he said, "but what we can do in Florida is avoid the mistakes that have

harmled other states." Gaetz cited Illinois, which raised state taxes, and drove many jobs out of the state. Other large states, he said, have made similar mistakes, raising taxes or imposing new regulations on businesses, and also have lost jobs as a result.

"As president of the Florida Senate," Gaetz said, "I can stop bad ideas from being implemented in Florida." In addition, he said, "Florida can take actions to be ready for economic recovery. Government cannot create jobs, but we can improve the environment for businesses to create jobs."

In addition to keeping taxes low and minimizing regulations, Gaetz said he wants to reform Florida's education system, especially at the university level. "I want to lash our higher education system to the realities of our economy. We have record unemployment, but there are a million jobs going unfilled right now because there are currently no Americans qualified to fill them." Such jobs, he said, are in science, mathematics and engineering fields, but according to a recent report from the board of governors of the state college system, none of the ten most-awarded degrees at state colleges and universities were in science, math or technology.

"There is a disconnect between our education system and our economy," Gaetz said. "Last year only 20 percent of university graduates in Florida found jobs in the fields in which they had earned their degrees.

"I will pursue a policy to reward higher education institutions for relating their curricula and degrees to the needs of our economy. We must ensure that when a graduate walks across the stage and receives their diploma,

their degree qualifies them for a real job in the real economy.

"There is nothing wrong with getting a bachelor's degree in political science or psychology," Gaetz said, "but we don't need as many of those in our economy. We should pay colleges more when they shape their curricula to allow graduates to get real jobs."

Gaetz was asked what such an approach could mean for public secondary schools. For example, should public school districts pay high school science and math teachers more than football coaches or band directors? "When tax money is used," he replied, "we should pay more for what we need—a high-quality work force."

Gaetz was also asked how his new level of influence in state government will affect Northwest Florida. "If anyone who has supported me did so expecting me to pursue a self-serving, pork-barrel agenda, they will be disappointed," he answered. "For one thing, there is no more pork. We cut \$3 billion from the state budget during the last legislative session, and I expect to pursue a tight budget, just like businesses and families must do. Government needs to get leaner, and leave more money in the pockets of those who have earned it."

In the past, Gaetz said, "Many of the state's funding formulas have leaned east and south. I will ensure that Northwest Florida gets its fair share of state funding, but there will be no new buildings or bridges with my name on them just because I was president of the Senate."

Gaetz concluded by saying he could never have been elected to any public office without the support of people in the Twin Cities area. "I'm just a guy from Niceville, Valparaiso and Bluewater Bay have lifted me on their shoulders. They have supported, guided and inspired me."

Some other local political leaders were also contacted to learn their views on what Gaetz's new position will mean for Northwest Florida.

"I wish he was a Democrat," said Judy Byrne Riley, president of the Okaloosa Democratic Women's Club and state committeewoman for the Okaloosa County Democratic Executive Committee. She added, however, "The more, stronger representation Northwest Florida has in Tallahassee, the better for our part of the state to balance the clout of central and south Florida."

Riley was then asked what would happen if a Democratic challenger was to defeat Gaetz in the 2012 election, resulting in a Democratic senate president from

some other region of the state. "If a Democrat was elected," she said, "I am confident that person would be able to have substantial influence in Tallahassee."

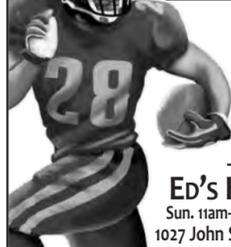
Steve Czonstka, the state committeeman for the Okaloosa County Republican Party, said, "Don Gaetz is an unusual person, in that he was elected as Senate president without opposition, and after such a short time as a state senator. I think this is an outstanding opportunity for the Florida Panhandle to address its needs, and to gain a higher priority in the Legislature. However, I don't expect Gaetz's new position to produce 'goodies' for Northwest Florida. The state has budget problems."

"I think Don Gaetz will do a great job," Czonstka said. "He is already doing a great job as chairman of the Senate Redistricting Committee. His way of doing business exudes calmness and defuses dissent."

The Beacon also called the office of Mike Haridopolos, the current Senate president, for his comments on Gaetz's selection to succeed him in 2013. Haridopolos had not replied by press time.

Ceremony details, B-6.

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Eagles score 14-13 win in 4th-quarter comeback



Niceville High School's Denzel Applewhite gains 15 yards, breaking through the middle, during Friday's 14-13 victory over Pace. Below, sophomore quarterback Ashton Hooker scored on an 11-yard QB keeper for Niceville's first touchdown, with 8:21 left in game.

Beacon photos by Sarah Clauson



By Sarah Clauson
Beacon correspondent

In their second game of the season, the Niceville High School Eagles traveled to Pace and pulled off a nail-biting comeback to continue their winning record. In the face of what looked to be a shutout, the Eagles rallied hard and gave a fourth-quarter fight that looked more like a playoff battle than an early season game. They overcame a 13-point deficit, turnovers, and an injured quarterback, but with their winning reputation on the line, they prevailed.

The Patriots got things going early in the second quarter with a quick touchdown. The Eagle offense, unable to make a good drive at the ball, was forced to punt, which led to another successful drive for Pace, 10-0. Pace's momentum carried throughout the quarter, while the Eagles struggled to find their rhythm. The defense held strong and made big plays to slow the Patriots down.

The Eagles returned after half-time with sophomore Ashton Hooker in as quarterback, due to

an injured Andrew Mitchell. The change in lineup had fans and coaches alike sweating. If their challenge wasn't difficult enough, the Patriots managed another field goal, just before the third-quarter buzzer, to widen the gap to 13-0.

The fourth quarter brought out a renewed sense of focus and determination in the Eagle offense. They bounced back from an early quarter turnover by recovering a Pace fumble on the very next play. On a 3rd and 11 inside Pace territory, Ashton Hooker, on a QB keeper, powered

the ball into the end zone. The defense hit the field with the same strength they'd used all game long to force a punt, thanks in part to a quarterback sack by Steven Mayo on a 3rd and 8.

With less than six minutes left in the game, the Eagles offense took the field and went to work. A critical completion to Tyree McCants put them on the 35-yard line. A fourth-down conversion and another key completion to McCants put the Eagles on the two-yard line, and after a handoff to Denzel Applewhite, they were

in the end zone with 1:12 left in the game. The touchdown tied the game, and a kick by Alex Alford, in for Mitchell, gave the Eagle's a 14-13 lead.

The impressive defense stepped out once again and made certain the Patriots would not threaten the small lead. A quarterback sack and an interception by Sebastian Schutte solidified the win.

Defensive Coordinator Rod Taylor was excited about the win, and his defense. "They were incredible tonight," he said. "They

played hard for 48 minutes. They gave us a chance to win and the offense came through in the end."

Head Coach John Hicks also applauded the defense. As for having to call in Ashton Hooker to replace Andrew Mitchell, "He did a great job. We had confidence in him."

Was the sophomore nervous about stepping into the game? "I was confident," Hooker said. "I knew the line had my back."

The Eagles hit the road again this Friday to face off against Pine Forest at 7:30.

Lewis boy harriers win; girls fall to St. Mary's

The Lewis School boys cross-country team defeated St. Mary's 15-53, while the Lewis girls lost to St. Mary's

23-38 Sept. 7. The top runner for the boys was Mitch Morken, while Mackenzie Reid led the girls squad.

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Photo by Arnie Fonseca

Rocky Bayou loses, 40-0

Rocky Bayou Christian School's Nathan McCullough runs the ball during Friday's game with Baker. The Knights fell to the visitors, 40-0.

Foundation gives gridders protective gear

The Taylor Haugen Foundation presented Rocky Bayou Christian School's entire seventh- to 12th-grade football teams with EvoShield's revolutionary rib-shirts. This grant was initiated after one of their players suffered an internal injury similar to the one sustained by Taylor Haugen three years earlier.

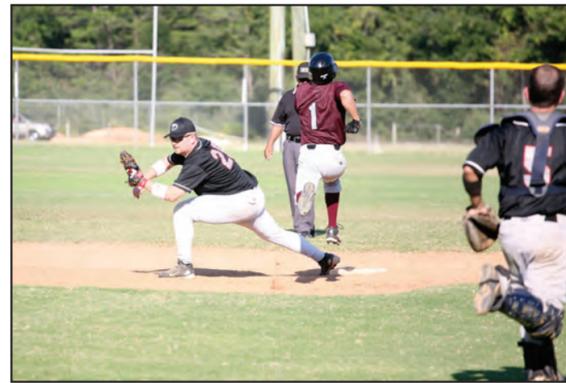
The Taylor Haugen Foundation was started to carry on Taylor's legacy, to spread his determination and courage other athletes, and to spread awareness about similar life-threatening injuries. With a key vision being to prevent the same kind of injuries as the one that led to Taylor's death, The Taylor Haugen Foundation has striven to increase awareness of the kinds of equipment that can help prevent these life threatening injuries.

Using a lightweight custom-molding composite material, EvoShield's wide array of equipment form fits to the unique shape of each individual athlete's body, removing the element of added weight or hindrance caused by many traditional forms of protection. The composite comes soft, sealed in a foil bag, and once removed reacts with elements in the air and hardens into a custom-fit, protective shield that is lighter and more durable than other protective equipment previously available. Rather than absorbing the shockwaves of impact like its foam predecessors.

Safe at first

Dragons first baseman Erik Harwood waits for the ball as Cougar runner Dustin Moore beats the throw to first during Sunday's Okaloosa Men's Baseball League action at Twin Oaks. The Dragons won the game, 17-6.

Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson



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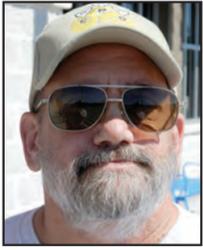
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THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —Mike Griffith



What do you think about the start of football season?

Location: Walmart



"Even though I watch pro football for entertainment, I don't follow it that closely. I couldn't say that I've got a favorite team."

Bob Mills, 64, Shalimar, retired



"If it weren't for football, the nation would really be in a depression right now."

Kevin Moriarty, 48, Niceville, civil servant



"I don't follow football. It's just not my thing."

Brandon Kaminske, 17, Bluewater Bay, Niceville High School student



"I'm excited. I love all football, college or pro."

Cheryl Marotta, 63, Fort Walton Beach, domestic engineer



"I love football. Both of my sons played for Niceville High School—Damon and Marcel West—running back and wide receiver. Marcel also played for Alabama."

Sandy West, 60, Valparaiso, assistant retail manager



"I don't really watch football."

P.J. Walker, 47, Niceville, civil servant

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

SCHOOL

From page A-1

represents teachers in labor matters, filed a grievance with the school district Thursday. The grievance states that teachers did not receive a step increase in their Aug. 31 paychecks.

The teachers union is seeking step increases it says are required under the current collective bargaining agreement, and that they be paid retroactive to July 1, the start of the pay year.

Peek also spoke to the school board during a meeting Thursday. She said teachers are not asking for a cost-of-living increase this year, but are demanding that teachers be given the annual step raises, as provided in the contract.

Tibbetts said that the grievance means that the school district's chief negotiator, Foxworthy, and its chief financial officer, Rita Scallan, will talk to union officials over the issue.

Scallan said that if the school

board were to grant teachers the step increase, it would cost an estimated \$1,165,000, money that would have to be taken from reserves, or from other reductions in the district's annual budget.

The average Okaloosa County public schoolteacher is paid \$51,753 for about nine months' work, a sum that is among the highest among Florida's 67 school districts. Counting payroll taxes, worker's compensation insurance, and employer-paid pension contributions and medical-insurance premiums, the average annual cost to the taxpayer is \$64,400 per nine-month teacher, according to Scallan.

Scallan said the school district has reached an agreement with non-teaching workers in which the union, the Okaloosa County Educational Support Professionals Association, agreed to a two-year freeze on raises, and no step increases. The cost of giving step increases to both teaching and support personnel would cost a total of \$1.8 million, she said.

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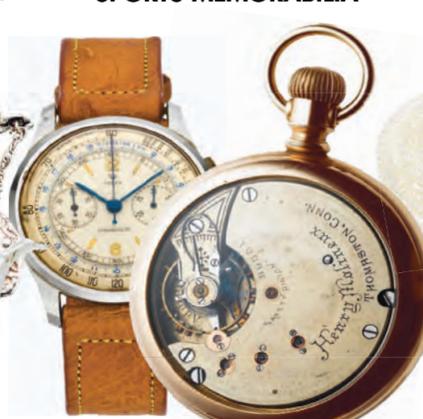


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Mid-Bay Rotary donates shelter

Jim Miller, Rotarian in District 6940 and ShelterBox volunteer, has gone above and beyond when supporting international disaster relief charity ShelterBox and its mission. The Mid-Bay Rotary Club of Niceville has sponsored a ShelterBox for each member of their club—a first-ever accomplishment for ShelterBox.

Thanks to their efforts, 49 ShelterBoxes, which included tented shelter and other life-saving equipment, have been provided to families displaced by disasters throughout the world.

Miller has worked with ShelterBox USA over the past six years. He is a member of the ShelterBox Response Team, a highly trained team of volunteers who deliver aid firsthand to disaster survivors worldwide. In September 2008, Miller delivered aid to

the families affected by widespread flooding in Nepal. Miller has also served as a SRT training manager, helping candidates acquire the skills and knowledge needed when deploying into countries that have been hit by disasters.

"ShelterBox is an amazing story in and of itself. It's been a pleasure to be a part of the growth—an incredible achievement in such a short amount of time," said Miller.

"I enjoy being a Rotarian; I believe it's one of the finest service organizations in the world with a simple motto, Service above Self. That is why our Rotary Club has been a great supporter of ShelterBox throughout the years," added Miller. "Mid-Bay Rotary Club is full of committed and energetic Rotarians—they are truly a special group of people."



Each of the 49 Mid-Bay Rotarians donated a ShelterBox to aid and house disaster victims.



Lewis chorus council selected

The Lewis Falcon Chorus announced its newly elected chorus council for the 2011-12 school year. The council includes Blake Dean, president; Kinley Childress, vice president; McKenna Dean and Ali Hlatky, secretaries; Tanner Dean, Alison Thomas, Katelin Koenigkramer and Veronica Whitfield, librarians; Markiana Bibb, Kelsey Howell, Miranda Hohman and Ken-Jacob Angel, media.

Anniversary

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.



Evelyn and Thornton Peck

Evelyn and Thornton Peck

Colonel (Ret.) and Mrs. Thornton C. Peck are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Peck and Evelyn were married in Dallas by Evelyn's father Sept. 14, 1941. They have lived in this area since 1963, and Peck was the base commander of Eglin Air Force Base from 1966 to 1970. Currently, they live at Westwood Retirement Resort in Fort Walton Beach where friends and family came together recently to celebrate their lives together.



Ruckel honors first responders at pep rally

Ruckel Middle School held a Super Hero Pep Rally Thursday, Sept. 8, in honor of Okaloosa County first responders to 9/11. Principal Debra Collins Goolsby joined students, staff and parents in the tribute. The pep rally capped off a week of learning about the events of Sept. 11, 2011. The Ruckel Ram Cheerleaders posed with the first responders after honoring them with a token of their appreciation.

Rotarians give scholarships

The Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club presented recent high school graduates with scholarships.

Carissa Hagberg and her mother, Kris Hagberg, were in attendance at the June 16 meeting of the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club to



Carissa Hagberg

Carissa for her high school achievements and community service performed during her high school career. Carissa is furthering her education at the University of Central Florida. Carissa is the daughter of Lynn and Kris Hagberg of Niceville.

The Niceville-Valparaiso

Rotary Club presented Ryan Burns a \$1,000 scholarship check. At a July meeting of the club, Ryan was recognized for his outstanding high school career and his plans for his future. Ryan is attending Covenant College and majoring in business, and biblical and theological studies. Ryan is the son of Kevin and Debi Burns.



Ryan Burns

The Rotary Club raises money to present to local high school students each year in recognition of their high school achievements and their community service. Last year the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club presented \$5,000 in scholarship checks.

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College summer students excel

Northwest Florida State College recognized the superior scholastic achievement of students completing the summer 2011 term by naming them to the President's List and Dean's List. The President's List names those students with nine or more credits in the term who earned a grade point average of 3.8 to 4.0 during the semester. The Dean's List names students with nine or more credits in the term who earned a GPA of 3.5 to 3.79. Around 348 NWFSC students were named as honors students

for the Summer Term.

President's List

Niceville: Janice J. Anglin, Mark Boutwell, Lori M. Burgess, Kimberly A. Castriotta, Victoria Doan, Mary P. Eichler, Karen L. Fournier, Cindy L. Fuchs, Milan D. Germany, Natalie Harris, Shelly A. Hayes, Michael D. Hicks, Maranatha R. Horvath, Emily Huston, Trevor M. Jones, Theron P. Lennon, Cheryl L. Maness, Michael A. Manley, Deborah A. Mobley, Beth C.



Patel, Jeri Y. Perry, Monica L. Ramon, Matthew J. Ruff, Alisha A.

Sepsey, Stacey L. Van Houten, Crystal Wheeler and Sydnee E. White

Valparaiso: Derry Devlin, Anne-Marie Miller and Colleen R. Provost

Dean's List

Niceville: Nakara Beliveau,

Karen L. Berkeley, Daniel R. Dunlap, Amy C. Ewen, Danielle A. Fisher, Joelle N. Hollenbaugh, Rachel A. Miller, Kristen A. Moore, Robert W. Neyendorf, Shiena Marie E. Normand, Kristie Scarborough, Joseph H. Settle, Katrina I. Sterner, Dana N. Stiverson, Aubrey L. Sundstrom, Stephanie D. Thomas and Aline Viljoen

Valparaiso: Ashley C. Devault, Carlene E. Hudson, William M. Lancaster and Michelle K. Sinicrope

Volunteers help 'Save History'

Volunteers from the Niceville-Valparaiso Kiwanis and NHS Key Club helped the museum "Save History!" The event was a huge success thanks to these organizations and the community for their donations. More than 200 people came to browse and buy at the sale. The proceeds will go toward the Heritage Museum's preservation efforts.

Volunteers included, Kiwanis: Vern McGraw, Judy Boudreaux, Ed Dunbar, Bill Landsberg, Dusty Rhodes, George Murphy and Lynn Stephens. Key Club: Kayln Worsham, Bekah Frisbee, Caroline Armstrong, Kris Holguin and Jennifer Williams.



Kiwanis volunteers Ed Dunbar and Lynn Stephens helped set up for the Aug. 27 Yard Sale Spectacular at the Heritage Museum.

Niceville artist's work on display at FWB Library

The artwork of Marla Armstrong will be on display in the Fort Walton Beach Library lobby through September. Armstrong, who lives in Bluewater Bay, is an artist painting the people, places, ideas, activities, emotions, and feelings she has encountered in travels around the world.

Armstrong paints the people, places, ideas, activities, emotions and feelings she has encountered in travels around the world.

Born in West Virginia, Armstrong graduated from Marshall University in Huntington, W.V. She married, taught school and led a military wife's life of living, working, raising her children and traveling throughout the world. She has lived in and traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe, and traveled to Asia, and South and Central

America, all of which have influenced her art.

"My work comes from my life's experiences, the things that live in my heart and are part of

"Often the best medium is watercolor, at other times oils or acrylics, sometimes something else. Using the right materials and techniques to capture the



Marla Armstrong's works will be on display through September at the Fort Walton Beach Library. Pictured, "Whale's Tail."

my soul. My goal is to capture the 'feeling' I get from my subjects, not merely to paint a photograph of what I see," Armstrong said.

right color, texture and feel is what drives my efforts."

While living in Paris, she began painting in oils, studying

with noted artist and instructor Burt Lancaster. Upon her return to the U.S., she continued her work in oils, studying with Suzanne French-Luker in Occoquan, Va. When she moved to Florida, her commissioned work was primarily oils and acrylics, but her focus began to shift to watercolor and mixed media.

Her works have been on display at various shows including the Southeast Regional Juried Fine Arts Exhibition, Juried Art Shows at Northwest Florida State College, an award-winning display at Art on the Main and multiple shows at the Arts and Design Society Gallery in Fort Walton Beach.

Take time to stop by the Fort Walton Beach Library, 185 Miracle Strip Parkway, to see Armstrong's works.

Garden club season opens

The 2011-12 board members of the Valparaiso Garden Club include, from left, Darolyn Weiss, Mary Lee Morris, June Jones, AnnaBelle James, Kay Parsons, Carole Smith, Marie Harrison, Beth Wilson, Marianne Coil. Not pictured: Marion Bushey. The club's season will begin Sept. 14. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month with socializing at 9 a.m., and the program at 9:30.



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Library art exhibit

The Niceville Library will have an exhibit of native wildlife and landscape drawings by local artist Bart Wood on display through the month of September.

Chamber breakfast

The Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce will hold its second Wednesday breakfast Sept. 14 at the Niceville Community



Center, 204 N. Partin Drive. The event will begin at 7:15 a.m. with coffee and conversation, followed by breakfast at 7:30. This month's sponsor is The Manor at Bluewater Bay. Chamber members, their guests and prospective members are invited to attend.

College info session

College Night, a free annual event which features representatives from more than 60 colleges and universities from across the nation, will be held Sept. 14, 6-8 p.m. in Building K of Northwest Florida State College, Niceville. College Night provides NWFSC students, high school students, their parents and others the opportunity to gather information, ask questions and plan for college or university transfer. Info: 729-6467.

Concerto competition

The Northwest Florida Symphony Guild, in conjunction with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and Northwest Florida State College, announces the 25th annual Concerto Competition, open to students of orchestral instruments, piano and voice who are 23 years of age or younger.



Youth who enter compete for prize money and the opportunity to perform with the NFSO in a live "Stars of Tomorrow" concert. For registration information, visit nfsymphony.org. Performers must submit a videotaped performance of their selection by Sept. 15. Info: Lois Van Dam, vandaml@nwfsc.edu or 729-6009.

Buchenwald documentary

A showing of the documentary film "Lost Airmen of Buchenwald" will be held at 3 p.m. Sept. 15 at the Air Force Armament Museum. "Lost Airmen of Buchenwald" chronicles the little-known story of Allied airmen imprisoned at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp during World War II. In the summer of 1944, 168 airmen from the U.S., England, Canada and other Allied

Barbershop chorus concert

Barbershop singers from throughout Northwest Florida and Alabama will perform a show at the Niceville High School auditorium Sept. 17 at 7 p.m. The chorus will be joined on stage by Camerata, the NHS male chorus led by Michael Dye. Tickets are \$10 and available at Bayou Books, Niceville, or at the door.



countries were captured in Paris by the Gestapo and sent to the infamous "Konzentrationslager Buchenwald" in Germany.

During this showing, three of the WWII POW's in the documentary will be present for questions, Ed Carter-Edwards, Don Shearer and the director's grandfather, E. C. "Easy" Freeman.

Take-out steak dinner

Coastal Bank and Trust will hold a "Steak on the Take for Heartwalk" takeaway steak dinner fundraiser Sept. 15, 4:30-7 p.m.

The dinner will include steak, baked potato casserole, salad and a roll, and can be picked up at Say Cake in Valparaiso.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at any Coastal Bank and Trust location. All proceeds will benefit the American Heart Association's Heartwalk.

Info: Valerie Manley, 729-5570.

Volunteer training workshop

Covenant Hospice will hold a volunteer training workshop Sept. 15, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Niceville Assembly of God Church, 108 Highway 85 N. The workshop is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided.

Info: Kappy Smith, 729-1800.

American Girls book club

This club for girls in second through sixth grades will meet the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. until noon in the Youth Services program room at the Niceville Library. Registration is required. The first meeting will be Sept. 17. The book is "Clue in the Castle Tower: A Samantha Mystery" by Sarah Masters Buckley.

Info: 279-4863, ext. 1514.

Panhandle job fair

The Panhandle Job Fair will be held Thursday, Sept. 15. Doors will be open to the public from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Info: FLPanhandlejobfair@cox.net.

Panhandle Patriots meeting

The Florida Panhandle Patriots Tea Party will hold its semi-monthly meeting Sept. 15 at the Elks Lodge on Okaloosa Island, 1335 Miracle

Strip Parkway, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Speaker Jonathan Maney will discuss "The Second Amendment—How the right to bear arms keeps us free." A donation of \$1 is requested for the meeting room. Beverages and snacks are available for purchase from the Elk's Lodge.

Info: 865-8777 or info@panhandlepatriots.com.

Rotary club meeting

Todd Gordon, head coach and general manager, and Willa Licata, merchandise coordinator, of the Pensacola Ice Flyers will be at the noon Sept. 15 meeting of the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club.

Gordon and Licata will share some of the exciting things the Pensacola Ice Flyers will be doing this year. Visitors welcome. The Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club meets every Thursday at noon in Building K of Northwest Florida State College. Info: nicevalrotary@yahoo.com.

Science Friday seminar

Dr. Thomas Kelley, director of the underwater crime scene investigation program at Florida State University, Panama City, and coordinator of the criminology and criminal justice degree programs, will be the Science Friday speaker at Northwest Florida State College. Kelley will present "Underwater Crime Scene Investigation: Forging Science and Technology" Sept. 16 at 11 a.m. The program will be held on the Niceville campus in the S building, room 110. The program is free and open to all.

Buy the Bayou event

The Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce in partnership Northwest Florida Regional Airport will host the 12th annual Buy the Bayou Auction & Wine Tasting Friday, Sept. 16. This event will include a silent and live auction, celebrity dessert auction, wine tasting, food and plenty of networking.

It will be held at the Fine Art Gallery at Northwest Florida State College, Niceville, at 6 p.m. Tickets are on sale at the chamber office for \$25.

Info: 678-2323.

Book and bake sale

The Friends of the Niceville Library will hold a book sale at the Niceville Community Center, 204 N. Partin Drive. The sale will begin Sept. 16 with a Friends only presale, 4-6 p.m. Nonmembers can join the club at the door. Sept. 17 the sale will be open to the public from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Cub Scouts shooting day

Cub Scouts will hold a shooting day Sept. 17 at the Mullet Festival Site, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be archery, BBs, slingshots and water balloon slingshots. Shoot as much as you like for \$10. Each participant must be a Cub Scout, but those interested can join on the spot.

Info: John Weaver, 850-683-0330.

Fair Tax Meet Up

The Niceville Fair Tax Meet Up will be at 10 a.m. Sept. 17 in the Niceville City Council Chambers, 208 N. Partin Drive. Tax reform is a high interest item in the current economic recovery effort. The public is invited.

Info: Terry Shoemaker, 362-0043.

Barbershop chorus event

Barbershop singers from Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Pensacola, Panama City, Tallahassee and Mobile, Ala., will perform a one time show at the Niceville High School auditorium Sept. 17 at 7 p.m. This will be the 23rd annual Joe Breedon Sunshine District Music Festival, or the "Harvest of Harmony." As a bonus, the chorus will be joined on stage by Camerata,

the Niceville High School male chorus led by Michael Dye.

Tickets are \$10 and available at Bayou Books in Niceville, at emeraldcoastchorus.com or from any barbershopper. They are also available at the door on the night of the show.

Relay for Life benefit 5K

The sixth annual Twin Cities Relay for Life 5K/1 mile Fun Run will be held Sept. 17 at 8 a.m. at Lewis School, Valparaiso. Early registration for the 5K is \$15 and \$5 for the Fun Run. There will be a special rate for groups of 10 or more. T-shirts for the first 250 entries. Registration available online at active.com. Info: samacd@valp.net.

Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society.

Rock-A-Thon benefit

A Boys & Girls Club benefit, the Rock-A-Thon, will take place at the DeFuniak Springs Teen Center, 435 N. 9th Street, Sept. 17, 7 p.m., through Sept. 18, 1 p.m. Activities will include a DJ, a basketball shootout and movies.

Make a pledge and help the teens in their effort to raise money to attend the Keystone Conference. Pledges are based on an hourly amount or donation. Any contribu-

tion is appreciated.

Info: Bobbie Smith, 850-892-3752, or email your pledge to bsmith@bgccc.com.

Christian college fair

The 2011 National Christian College Fair will come to the Niceville United Methodist Church, 214 Partin Drive S., Sept. 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Info: nccf.us.

Republican Club meeting

The Okaloosa Republican Club will host a presentation by the mayor of Fort Walton Beach, Mike Anderson, Sept. 22 at the American Legion Hall, 105 Hollywood Blvd. A social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:55. Reservations will be accepted through Sept. 19. Call Ginny Mills, 609-1179, or Jane Dale, 651-5049. The price of the dinner is \$10.

TV turn-off week

The Niceville Library, 206 N. Partin Drive, will celebrate national TV turn-off week beginning Sept. 20 in the Youth Services Department. Come find some "tv-less" inspiration including specially selected books to check out, activity and coloring sheets, guides and lists of great screen time alternatives, and favorite audio books on display.

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 -Love, Mom & Dad

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We are required to monitor your drinking water for total coliform bacteria on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. On July 06, 2011, two (2) distribution compliance samples were collected which indicated the presence of total coliform bacteria. Since our system may have no more than **one (1)** sample collected in a compliance month test positive for coliform bacteria, our system exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for total coliform for June 2011. **All required additional repeat samples taken on July 13, 2011, were absent of total coliform bacteria.**

What Should I Do?
 There is nothing you need to do at this time. *Total coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves. Coliforms are bacteria that are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, bacteria may be present.*

What happened? What is being done?
 We have since taken the required additional repeat samples, as described in the paragraph above. The additional repeat samples showed we are meeting drinking water standards. If you have further questions or for more information, please contact: **Mike Mosley, 897-4937.**

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Hopefuls gather at West Point info session

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

High school students hoping to become the next generation of American military leaders came from as far away as Enterprise, Ala., to attend an admissions meeting in Niceville Aug. 30 for the U.S. Military Academy. The academy combines a four-year university curriculum with constant military training, and is the most prestigious, and probably the most challenging, route to becoming an Army officer.

Maj. Tom Tolman, a 2001 graduate of the academy and the academy's admissions officer, gave the presentation and answered questions from students and their parents. He said potential cadets should begin the application process during their junior year of high school by writing to the academy and to their congressman, their two senators, and to the president and vice president to request applications and instructional materials. Tolman said each member of Congress, as well as the president, vice president and the academy itself, has the authority to nominate several students for possible admission each year.

An applicant who is not offered an appointment out of high school can apply each year until age 22. Tolman said he did not gain admission on his first try, so he enrolled in a civilian college with an Army ROTC program, and got in on his second attempt.

Those who win appointments to West Point then face the challenge of graduating. The academy is unlike other colleges, Tolman said. New cadets arrive early in the summer to go through a grueling basic training program known by cadets as "Beast."

Academic courses are rigorous, as well, but despite the difficulty, said Tolman, more than 80 percent of cadets graduate and earn commissions. If you're good enough to get in, he said, you're good enough to graduate, as long as you don't give up. He also said the academy is structured to help cadets succeed.

Classes are small and professors, most of whom are active-duty military officers, are on call day and night to help cadets complete assignments and overcome academic difficulties. Cadets pay no tuition, and in fact are paid to go to school, traditionally earning half the pay of a second lieutenant, although much of that money is held in trust until the cadet graduates.

Charles Merkel Jr., Ph.D., Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at West Point. Although not an academy graduate himself, he did serve in the Army, beginning as an enlisted soldier and earning a direct commission to second lieutenant while serving in the Vietnam War—a rare distinction among soldiers. He later served as a helicopter test pilot. He now works as a civilian with the 53rd Wing at Eglin Air Force



A crowd of potential West Point students came to a U.S. Military Academy information session in Niceville. Maj. Tom Tolman, USMA '01, gave a slide presentation about the school and its admissions process, and answered questions from participants.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Base. Helping high school students become West Point cadets is a labor of love, he said.

"The best advice I can give to prospective candidates," Merkel said, "is to start early in the admissions process and do not procrastinate with their application. Seek leadership opportunities within school sports, extracurricular and community activities. Stay physically fit, and practice each of the events on the candidate fitness assessment."



Chuck Merkel Jr.

Merkel also offered advice for parents of prospective cadets. "The West Point experience involves the entire family," he said. "My advice to parents would be to get involved with the West Point Parents Club of Northwest Florida to gain the perspectives and insights from parents who have visited the academy. The members of the West Point Society of Northwest

Florida can also be a great source of information for the families of the new plebes (freshmen). Bottom line: They are not alone and many resources are at their disposal."

Blaine Underwood, 18, of Niceville, said, "I grew up in a military family. My mom is an Air Force Academy graduate." He said he understands what a military career is all about, and wants to follow that path himself. He said he has also applied to the other service academies, and hopes to become a pilot.



Blaine Underwood

Brooke Durden, 17, also from Niceville, is being recruited by West Point as a potential member of the academy's NCAA tennis team. She said she is attracted to West Point "because of the leadership opportunity. I also like the traditions of the school—the discipline and focus. I've always been driven."

Durden said she has uncles in both the Marines and Navy, and likes the family-like aspects of military life. "I also look forward to serving my country," she said. "My dad is retired Army," she said, "and I have done four years in Junior ROTC. I have also applied to the Air Force Academy." Sarah said her main reason for pursuing a military career is that, "I want to give back—to serve my country. I know that sounds like a cliché, but it's true."



Brooke Durden

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Sarah Gold

Who's News

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.

Christina Laird, a 2005 graduate of Niceville High School, and daughter of John Laird and Sarine Hitchens of Niceville, was honored at an Auburn University ceremony to induct the Harrison School of Pharmacy class of 2015.

Christina Laird

Judy Wiseman, Niceville, earned the Florida Achievement Award from the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, which recognizes women who have improved the lives of other women and served as community role models. Wiseman, one of only two Northwest Florida women selected, was honored Sept. 10 in Fort Lauderdale.

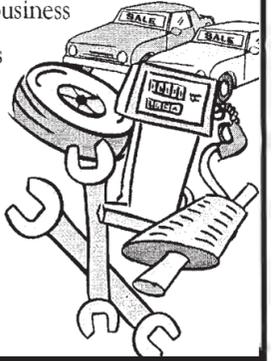


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Locals to help in Gaetz ceremony

When Sen. Don Gaetz is designated as Florida's next Senate president Monday the focus of the ceremony and many of the participants will be from Northwest Florida.

Gaetz, a Niceville Republican, will be named as the 2012-14 Senate president at Florida's Capitol Sept. 19. He will be the first Senate president from Okaloosa County since 1949, when Newman Brackin Sr. was chosen to lead the upper chamber.

The day will begin with a private Senate prayer breakfast in the old Senate chamber in Florida's Historic Capitol. The homily speaker at the prayer breakfast will be Fort Walton Beach attorney Don Anchors, a longtime friend and counselor to the Gaetz family.

Niceville High School's nationally honored Opus One, under the direction of Michael Dye, will perform at the breakfast and will sing the national anthem

and "America the Beautiful," accompanied by Pensacola's Perdido Brass, later in the day at the designation ceremony in the Senate Chamber.

Gaetz's pastor, Rev. John Underdahl of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Niceville, will offer the invocation and benediction at the prayer breakfast and will open the designation ceremony with prayer.

Niceville resident Air Force Col. (ret.) Howard Hill, Vietnam War POW, will lead the Senate,

governor, cabinet and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance. Hill and Gaetz served together on the Okaloosa School Board for 10 years.

The national and state colors will be presented on the Senate floor by the Air Force Special Operations Color Guard from Hurlburt Field, which is one of five military bases in Gaetz's district.

Nominating Gaetz for president will be senators John

Thrasher of Jacksonville and Joe Negron of Stuart.

According to a historic tradition, senators will one by one call out Gaetz's name to elect him their next leader. Gaetz will be joined on the Senate floor by his wife, Vicky, and son, Representative Matt Gaetz (R-Fort Walton Beach) and daughter, Erin. Don and Matt Gaetz are the first father-son, senator-representative team to serve concurrently in the state's history.



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Advertising Feature by Gerri Norris

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Additional services include: haul out/transport, surveys/inspection, vessel care, maintenance, and repairs for diesel engines as well as inboard/outboard engines, HVAC, pump-out stations and fuel services. Aesthetics services available at SYB include:

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According to dockmaster Vito Tomasello, "One of the values we give back to boaters is our measurably low fuel prices and dock services. We offer the lowest prices within the Choctawhatchee Bay on 89 octane ethanol fuel with

ValveTech additive." Not a boat owner yet, but ready to be? Paulette Peterson can handle all your brokerage needs. For those who haven't committed to the joys of the sea, sailboat rentals are always an option. Also, military families wanting to share the "good life on the water" can count on no gate wait for their guests, as well as a military discount for active duty service members.

In business for over a decade, SYB recognizes the importance of giving back to the community. SYB participates in events such as the annual Emerald Coast Poker Run, to raise funds and donate to groups such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Whatever your love for the sea may be, Vito invites you to "get your boat in the water. If you have a passion for boating, there's only one place your boat should be—that's Shalimar Yacht Basin."

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