

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 6 Inserts

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

50c

**UP
COMING**

Wednesday, 6 p.m.



The **Emerald Coast Saltwater series** will present a seminar on **sheepshead fish** at Northlight Marina, Niceville. The seminar is free to the public, and includes free food at 5:30 p.m.
Info: 516-0709.

Friday, 11 a.m.-noon



The Sciences Division at **NWFSC**, Niceville, will present its **Science Friday seminar**, "Reconstructing Climates of the Geologic Past: Implications for Future Climate Change." The seminar is free and open to the public.
Info: 729-5376.

Friday, 6 - 10 p.m.

Radiant Life Church, Niceville, will throw a party for children in the community. The event is free for kids ages 5 through fifth grade, and parents are not required to stay. Included: **entertainment, snacks and games**. Sign-up in the church's office.
Info: 729-8600.

Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon



Parkway Veterinary Hospital, Niceville, will hold a fundraiser **nail trim clinic** for cats and dogs. Cost is \$8 per pet, \$6 each additional pet. Rabies certificates required. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society's **Relay for Life**.

Calendar, B-4.

Board OKs science school in Valp.

Vote may derail charter school

By Del Lessard and Mike Griffith
Beacon Staff

Two years after deciding to close Valparaiso Elementary School because of falling

enrollments, the Okaloosa County School Board voted Monday to open a science school in the same building.

In August, as many as 88 academically advanced sixth

grade students could begin attending classes in a new Science Technology, Engineering, Math and Medical (STEMM) Academy in the former Valparaiso Elementary School.

The school board's decision

may derail a proposal by a company to use the site on Edge Avenue to house a new charter elementary school.

Monday's vote to approve the STEMM center in Valparaiso was preceded by some criticism, and by an

unsuccessful motion by school board member Melissa Thrush, who wanted to delay approval to allow more time to study the proposal.

"We need to do something

Please see BOARD, page A-2

Hosed



A Niceville firefighter who got covered with fallen insulation while extinguishing an attic fire at 201 Jones Ave. Monday gets a firehose shower. No one was injured in the blaze, the second house fire in Niceville in five days. The fire was caused by a nail driven through an electrical wire, according to the fire chief. Damage was estimated at \$5,000. Separately, a family of four lost their home to fire (Page A-3).

Beacon photo by Del Lessard

Air Force spending cuts eyed

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Congress began hearings Tuesday on a proposed Defense Department budget of \$613.9 billion, which includes two construction projects at local military bases and a slowdown in procurement of the F-35 warplane.

Among the three military departments, the Air Force took the biggest hit in next year's proposed budget, a cut of \$4.8 billion, or 3.3 percent. Under the plan proposed by President Barack Obama, the cuts would be the first of several years of Pentagon belt-tightening.

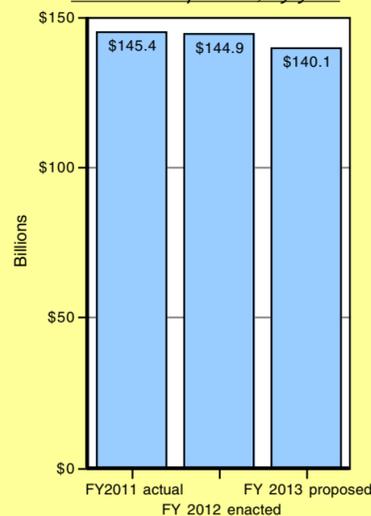
The spending plan also would institute new fees for military retiree participants in Tricare, the military medical-care program.

Locally, the president's budget includes \$16 million for construction of a fuel storage facility

Please see CUTS, page A-2

Cutting back

Air Force expenses, by year



Commission receives election results

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

The Valparaiso City Commission Monday received election results, approved road-repair work, and appointed a planning commissioner.

The city clerk read official Jan. 31 election results. Of

1,051 ballots cast, Kay Hamilton garnered 546 votes, and Joe Morgan 553, winning the two city commission seats, Mayor Bruce Arnold said.

Morgan and Hamilton will be sworn in March 20 at noon, with an organizational meeting to follow at 6 p.m. the same

day, Arnold said.

The incumbents they defeated, Neal Shermer, with 392 votes, and Thomas Miller, with 205 votes, will serve out their terms with their last meeting as commissioners currently set for March 12. Shermer served two years on the commission after

being appointed to serve out the term of former commission Brent Smith, who had resigned to run for mayor. Miller served since first being elected in 1996.

Challenger Keith Roberts received 149 votes. City Clerk Tammy Johnson told the com-

mission that depositions were scheduled later this month in a lawsuit Roberts filed last year against the city in a waterfront land use case.

In other business Monday, the commission:

Please see ELECTION, page A-6

Another mobile drug lab busted

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Police arrested a Niceville woman after they discovered a suspected mobile meth lab in the car she was driving, according to arrest reports.

The arrest is the second in Niceville in the past four months involving discovery of a mobile meth lab in an automobile. Lawmen say the



Tara Lee Stokes

moving labs are becoming more popular as manufacturers try new ways to avoid detection.

Tara Lee Stokes, 25, with an at-large address, but who was booked into the Okaloosa County Jail with an address of 4600 Range Road, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Feb. 9, on charges of manufacture of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription (methamphetamine) and possession of drug paraphernalia, according to police reports. Stokes was also arrested on an earlier warrant and charged with

Please see DRUG, page A-3



'I'm in love with you'

Lois Blakeslee, left, is serenaded by a barbershop quartet Monday at Bayou Book, Niceville, during her once-a-month book club. Lois' husband, Jim, hired the quartet to sing "My Wild Irish Rose," and "Let Me Call you Sweetheart" as a valentine. Lois and Jim, Niceville, have been married for 52 years, and he has hired the group for the past six years to sing to Lois for Valentine's Day. Members of the quartet, part of the Emerald Coast Chorus, are: Jack Hefflin, Harvey Fleming, Bob Hixson and Darrell James. Five quartets from the chorus delivered singing valentines Monday and Tuesday.

Beacon photo

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Vera Bradley

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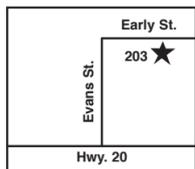
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BOARD

From page A-1

about STEM, Thrush told her fellow board members, "but I'm concerned about spending so much money on only four percent of our students." Thrush said it might be better to have a broader approach to STEM education, to awaken interest in science among rank and file students throughout the district rather than focusing on only the relative few who can qualify for the advanced STEM program planned for Valparaiso's former elementary school.

"Thirty percent of our eighth graders currently are rated as not proficient in STEM subjects," Thrush said. "We need to enrich our existing programs."

Some citizens also objected to the STEM plan during Monday's meeting.

Dr. Lynn Keefe, a local physician, objected to the STEM plan. Keefe said, "There's something fishy" about the STEM plan, which appeared only after Valparaiso put forward its plan for a charter school at the former elementary school. "It looks like a political move to save your real estate in Valparaiso."

Keefe questioned whether a plan that will only benefit 88 students is best for the school district as a whole. "It will take resources from other schools," she said, some of which do not even have any science text books at present. She also questioned the financial viability of the STEM plan, saying that "grants expire." Keefe said the district should promote science education for all students, not "spend money on only the smart, advantaged few."

Rob English, who lives near Laurel Hill and recently began a campaign to run against Cathy Thippen for her seat on the school board, also objected to the STEM plan Monday evening, saying more research is needed before a final decision is made.

"The STEM program is not ready for a vote," English said. "Its financial support is not certain. Only four percent of students have expressed interest."

English now teaches in Embry Riddle University's aerospace science program at Crestview High School.

"As a leader," English said, "I would never recommend approval of a single solution to a problem without exploring all the available options." He said there may be "more than one solution" to improving science education in the Okaloosa school district, but that such other options have not been explored or considered.



The closed Valparaiso Elementary School may get new life this fall if a science school opens there as planned.

Beacon photo by Del Lessard

English, like Thrush and Keefe, also objected to the narrow focus of the STEM plan. "We need to implement STEM across all our schools, not just for four percent of our students." English also questioned the sense of closing Valparaiso Elementary School, then reopening it just for the STEM program. "Why close, then reopen a school, at the same time you're claiming a financial impasse over teacher pay?"

Thrush's motion to delay a decision on the STEM plan, however, failed for lack of a second from any other board member, and the board proceeded to approve the STEM plan.

Response from fifth grade students interested in taking advanced STEM classes next year exceeded expectations, Rodney Nobles, assistant superintendent of schools told the Beacon Monday, causing the district to reserve the entire elementary school property for future expansion of the STEM Center. The center at Valparaiso would include a teacher's training center, an existing elementary engineering program and the STEM Academy.

Okaloosa County Schools Superintendent Alexis Tibbetts first broached the idea of a STEM center in October, after a Miami-based operator of charter schools, Academica, proposed a city-backed charter school for the site.

School board members tentatively approved the concept Nov. 14 but asked for more details on cost, number of students and other details before granting full approval to open the center next school year.

Eighty-seven fifth grade students and their families have expressed interest in the program, according to district officials. So the school district is planning on an initial class of 88

sixth graders. A second meeting of interested students and families is planned for March, she said.

Thirty of the 87 expressing interest come from schools in the Twin Cities area, including 15 from Bluewater Elementary, eight from Plew Elementary, three from Edge Elementary, two from Lewis School and two from Destin Middle School. The school district plans to provide bus service to STEM Academy from at least two hub sites, yet to be determined.

District science administrator Shawna Tallman said the STEM Academy's initial budget would need an additional \$165,000 from the school district.

Separately, the STEM Center at Valparaiso includes expansion of two existing programs:

—A center to train teachers how to bring STEM subjects into classrooms in other county schools.

—Engineers for America (EFA), a part-time elementary school program now housed at the Air Force Armament Museum.

Tallman said there are already \$134,000 in grants for the two existing projects, with another \$71,000 of grants in progress. Both the teachers center and EFA are expected to open inside Valparaiso Elementary next school year.

At a school board meeting Thursday, Valparaiso City Commissioner Neal Shermer, a backer of the proposal to open a charter school at the vacant school site, asked the school board to leave enough room in the building for a charter elementary school, too.

Since January 2011 Shermer has worked to bring a charter school to fill the void left by the closing of Valparaiso Elementary. He said the school

district had opposed the charter school from the start, first saying there weren't enough students living in Valparaiso, or that it would cause a decline in enrollment at existing district schools. The district then proposed STEM Center that could only be located at Valparaiso Elementary, he said, and now says it needs to reserve all the classroom space for future expansion.

School Board Member Chuck Kelley responded that the citizens of Valparaiso had sent a mixed message to the school board by voting to change the leadership of the city during municipal elections Jan. 31. Shermer and fellow incumbent Tom Miller, two of the three commissioners who had supported the charter school plan, lost their bids for election.

Officials of the charter school company, Academica, did not answer requests from the Beacon last week seeking comment on whether they still plan to open a charter school in Okaloosa County next year. Shermer told the Beacon Friday that Valparaiso Elementary was the only facility Academica had studied for its proposed Valparaiso charter school.

Separately, the school board Monday approved forwarding two grant requests from Academica, one for an elementary charter school in Valparaiso, the other for a middle school component. Both requests said the charter school projected an enrollment of 550 students in the upcoming school year.

The approval given by the school board on Monday, however, does not mean a charter school will ever actually open. That decision is in the hands of Academica and depends on the market and the company's success in finding quarters.

CUTS

From page A-1

at Hurlburt Field and \$41.7 million for an Air Force Special Operations Command operations and maintenance facility.

Obama proposed the 2012-13 spending plan Monday. It includes \$88.5 billion to support overseas military action, primarily in Afghanistan, a reduction of \$26.6 billion from the current budget and a reflection of the pullout of U.S. forces from Iraq at the end of 2011.

The budget calls for a \$6.7 billion reduction in military personnel spending. The budget downsizes the military by 102,400 people next year: 72,000 in the Army; 20,000 in the Marines, 6,200 in the Navy, and 4,200 in the Air Force.

The spending plan also would cut \$5.7 billion in procurement throughout the Defense Department, much of it in the tri-service F-35 program, the Pentagon's biggest weapons project. Air Force procurement would be reduced by \$2.6 billion. Eglin Air Force Base is scheduled to receive 59 of the stealthy fighter planes for a training wing.

The budget calls for a restructuring of the F-35 strike fighter program to allow more time for development and testing, a reduction of \$15.1 billion over five years. That equates to 179 fewer F-35s over the next five years.

Joe Dellavedova, spokesman for the F-35 Program Office,

Department of Defense spending				
	FY2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	% change
	actual	enacted	proposed	2012-13
Army	\$136.2	\$133.9	\$134.6	0.52%
Navy	\$156.0	\$156.8	\$155.9	-0.57%
Air Force	\$145.4	\$144.9	\$140.1	-3.31%
Defensewide	\$90.7	\$95.0	\$94.9	-0.11%
Totals	\$528.3	\$530.6	\$525.5	-0.96%
In billions \$	Source: DoD	Totals may not add due to rounding.		

said the Defense Department remains fully committed to the F-35, but recognizes that there has been too much "concurrency" risk, that is, buying production aircraft even as testing and development continue to find and correct problems with the new aircraft.

The program will buy 13 fewer F-35s in fiscal 2013 than projected, or 29 instead of 42, a \$1.6 billion reduction, Dellavedova said. He said the U.S. remains committed to buying the previously planned total of 2,443 F-35s in coming years.

The proposed budget also: —Calls for two new rounds of base closure, one in 2013 and another in 2015.

—Cuts seven Air Force tactical air squadrons.

—Gives military members a 1.7 percent pay hike starting in January 2013, and an average 4.2 percent increase in the basic allowance for housing.

—Increases the cost of the military health care system for retirees. It proposes annual enrollment fees for retirees under age 65, starting in FY 2013 for Tricare Standard, and larger annual deductibles.

Annual enrollment fees for retirees in Tricare Standard would increase from the current zero to \$70 per individual next year, boosting that fee to \$130 per year in 2017. Family enrollment fees would also apply, going from \$140 in FY 2013 to \$250 in 2017.

Deductibles would also nearly double over the next five years. Tricare-for Life benefits for military retirees age 65 and older would also see first ever enrollment fees based on a sliding income scale of retirement income. Increases in co-pays for pharmacy benefits are also included in the president's proposed budget.

—The Defense Department civilian pay raise for FY 2013 is limited to a half of one percent.

No changes in the military retirement system are included in the budget but the Defense Department has asked Congress to create a BRAC-like commission to review military retirement and pay.

District 1 Congressman Jeff Miller, R., Chumuckla, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said Northwest Florida military

bases escaped any disproportionate cuts in the proposed budget.

"I am disappointed that the only cuts this administration are willing to put on the table are to the Department of Defense," Miller said. "However, given the proposed cuts, Northwest Florida is well positioned to continue as a leader."

"The president's budget proposal cuts heavily from the Marine Corps and the Army. It focuses on a lighter, faster force with an emphasis on Special Operations, unmanned aerial vehicles, and naval aviation," Miller stated.

"AFSOC (Air Force Special Operations Command) at Hurlburt Field and the 7th (Special Forces) Group could both see growth in Northwest Florida. Unmanned drones have increasingly played a crucial role in U.S. military strategy. Some drone training currently takes place at Eglin Air Force Base and I think we are likely to see an increase in this area," the congressman said.

"Carrier-based aviation appears to be an area of significant focus. And I would say that this suggests the training missions in and around Northwest Florida will remain healthy as the demand for naval aviators remains robust," Miller said.

"Further, all of the services are heavily invested in the F-35. I expect the F-35 mission to remain strong in the future," the lawmaker said.

Family of four loses their home to fire



By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

A Niceville family of four escaped harm, but lost their home to fire Thursday.

Firefighters received the alarm at 12:37 p.m., Feb. 9, and were on the scene two minutes later at 307 Niceville Ave. where they found the single-

family home engulfed in flames, said Niceville Fire Chief Tommy Mayville.

It took firefighters nine minutes to "knock down" the flames, he said. The fire was declared extinguished at 1:22 p.m.

Dennis and Sandra Monogan and their two children, ages 5 and 7, fled the flames, Mayville said.

The home is owned by Flora Saxon, Mayville said. He estimated \$95,000 in damages.

Sandra Monogan said her daughter alerted the family to the fire. The house was also equipped with functioning smoke detectors, according to the fire chief.

Firefighters from Niceville, East Niceville, North Bay, Valparaiso and Eglin fire departments responded to the fire.

The 307 Niceville Ave., Niceville, home engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived. A family of four escaped injury Thursday when their home was destroyed. Cause of the fire, which started in a front bedroom, is still under investigation, officials said.

Photo by Josh Mayville

DRUG

From page A-1

felony larceny and fraud, according to the reports.

Niceville police arrest reports gave the following account:

While on patrol Feb. 9, a Niceville police officer saw a car driven by a person he recognized as Stokes. The officer knew that there was an active Okaloosa County felony warrant on Stokes and subsequently performed a traffic stop on the car. After asking Stokes to exit the car, police arrested her on the active warrant.

During the search of the vehicle, police found a black cloth bag in the passenger-side rear floorboard area.

Inside the cloth bag police found a small zip-up bag with a hypodermic needle inside that contained a clear liquid, and another plastic bag containing a tablespoon and a small white cotton-like substance that appeared to be wet. The wet cotton-like substance tested positive for methamphetamine.

Another small zip-up bag was found that contained a piece of drinking straw cut into a 2-inch length, something that police described as commonly used for "snorting" illegal narcotics. There were also numerous small jeweler's bags, commonly used for packaging narcotics for sale, and a small digital scale. Another plastic bag contained multiple round paper filters with a white powder residue and two small vials containing a white powder residue believed to be methamphetamine.

Also inside the black cloth bag, police found a plastic bottle in a neoprene insulator, which police suspected was a "one-pot" methamphetamine lab.

An Okaloosa County sheriff's report gave the following additional information:

Agents from the Okaloosa County Multi-Agency Drug Task Force searched Stokes' vehicle and found precursor chemicals used in the production of methamphetamine in the trunk of the car, including: sulfuric acid, sodium hydroxide, Coleman fuel, lithium metal, ammonium nitrate/sulfate and ephedrine/pseudoephedrine. They also found plastic soda bottles that had previously been used as cooking vessels, which contained waste from "one-pot cooks" and a coffee grinder with suspected ephedrine/pseudoephedrine powder.

Sheriff's Lt. Mike Card, a member of the Okaloosa Drug Task Force, said "one-pot" meth labs—also known as "shake and bake" meth labs—typically use

plastic drink bottles, such as 2-liter soda bottles, or smaller, but sturdier plastic bottles, such as Gatorade bottles, to make the highly addictive drug. One-pot labs have become increasingly common in the local area even though the method puts the drug maker, or cook, law enforcement officers and the general public at risk from burns and toxic chemicals.

The one-pot, or "shake and bake," method of making the highly addictive drug requires fewer pills of pseudoephedrine or ephedrine—both non-prescription allergy or cold pills that many states, including Florida, control said Card. All the pills and chemical ingredients for making meth in the one-pot labs can be purchased in a single trip to a drug store. One-pot meth labs result in smaller amounts of crystal methamphetamine, Card said, typically only enough for just the "cook" and one other person, depending on the number of pills in the recipe. Nonetheless, the

method creates a number of highly toxic byproducts.

Chemical reactions inside the plastic bottle cause toxic gases to build up inside the bottle, causing some bottles to explode.

While "cooking" the toxic stew, a two-layer liquid is created inside the bottle, Card said. The "cook" then siphons off the meth oil layer and has one more step outside the bottle in order to create crystal meth.

According to a number of websites concerning the dangers of meth, most people using this method do so in their car, driving around while the drug is being made to release the fumes. When the process is over, 40 minutes later, they toss the used container filled with toxic chemical residue out the window.

Authorities in Okaloosa County have begun teaching first responders, such as firefighters, how to recognize one-pot or "shake and bake" meth labs and the procedures to make them safe, Card said.



Niceville police say this is a mobile methamphetamine lab discovered in a car.

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Drug arrest in Valp.

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Valparaiso police said they arrested a Fort Walton Beach man after they found half a pound of marijuana in a vehicle he was riding in.

Ryan Matthew Hester, unemployed, 18, of 520 Santa Rosa Blvd., Apt. 705, Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Valparaiso police Feb. 10 on charges of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, one count, and possession of drug paraphernalia, two counts, according to police reports.

Valparaiso arrest reports gave the following account:

On Friday at 5:22 p.m., police stopped a Toyota Celica for speeding and other traffic infractions. Questioning the driver, the officer smelled a strong odor of burnt marijuana coming from inside the car and detained the four occupants.

Police found a black satchel on the rear floorboard, directly in front of where Hester was

sitting. Inside the satchel officers found a digital scale and three plastic bags of marijuana, as well as empty bags commonly used for packaging and distributing marijuana.

The seized drugs weighed

about half a pound and had a street value of about \$3,600.

When the four occupants



Ryan M. Hester declined to speak without an attorney, the officer warned that all four would be arrested for constructive possession of marijuana. At that point Hester allegedly admitted, "It's mine."

On Tuesday morning Hester was being held at the Okaloosa County Jail under a \$10,500 bond. A March 20 court date has been scheduled.

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THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —Mike Griffith

Location:
Wal-Mart



What do you think about the Obama administration's new requirement that medical insurers for faith-based organizations and other employers offer insured workers free birth-control and "morning after" pills?



"I disagree with it. It's like forcing someone to believe in a particular religion."

Iris Hague, 44, Niceville, housewife



"I think it's just another bad surprise that will come out of the Obamacare package as it sees the light of day."

Janice Heyen, 65, Bluewater Bay, retired



"It interferes with the Constitution, and the First Amendment separation of state and church."

Damon Hudson, 39, Mossy Head, restaurant employee



"I think birth control should be up to the individual. If insurers are required to provide it, more people will use it."

Stephanie King, 28, Niceville, server



"I think contraception is a vital health care tool. People don't have to take it if they don't want to. It's a choice between you and your doctor, not you and your employer."

Rebecca Paige, 22, Bluewater Bay, child care provider

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE
FILING DEADLINE
MARCH 1, 2012
(FIRST-TIME FILERS ONLY)**

The following ad valorem tax exemptions are available to qualifying properties, individuals, and institutions. To receive an exemption this tax year, proper application must be made in the Property Appraiser's Office no later than March 1, 2012.

- Homestead Exemption
- Additional Homestead Exemption for those 65 years of age and older with a household adjusted gross income of \$27,030 or less. Social Security income may not count (call for details)
- Deployed Military Discount (requires preceding year deployment overseas)
- Widows, widowers, and blind persons exemptions
- Exemption for total and permanently disabled persons
- Exemption for certain total and permanently disabled veterans and their surviving spouses
- Exemption for disabled veterans with 10 percent or greater service connected disabilities (also applies to surviving spouses)
- Exemption for disabled veterans confined to wheelchairs
- Charitable, religious, scientific, and literary exemptions
- Historic property exemption
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- Nonprofit homes for the aged exemption
- Proprietary continuing care facility exemption
- Low-Income housing property exemption
- Educational property exemption
- Labor organization property exemption
- Charter school exemption
- Community center exemption
- Economic development exemption
- Not-for-profit sewer and water company property exemption

For additional information, call the Exemption Department in Fort Walton Beach at (850) 651-7240; or in Crestview at (850) 689-5900; or visit our Web site at www.okaloosapa.com



Pete Smith, CFA, Okaloosa County Property Appraiser

Our office makes every effort to insure that property owners are made aware of all exemptions for which they may qualify. Again, as stated above, in order to receive the exemptions this year, applications must be filed in our office by the March 1, 2012 statutory deadline.

Looking Back @ Niceville's History with guest speaker, Elisa Mitchiner

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Okaloosa News Journal
April 8, 1921

We invite you to come spend an evening with Elisa Mitchiner as she "Looks Back" on the rich heritage of historic Niceville, Florida originally known as Boggy, Florida.



Elisa Mitchiner has researched and compiled information for the Niceville, Florida Online History Center. <http://boggyflorida.com/Niceville/>

**CALENDAR
2012**

Donations for troops

Bluewater Elementary and VMFAT-501, F-35B training squadron, Eglin Air Force Base, are accepting donations for the Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., while they are deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Donations will be accepted at Bluewater Elementary until Feb. 29, and at the VMFAT-501 Squadron, 1005 Nomad Way, Building 1312, Eglin.



Items needed include: toiletries, snacks, baby wipes, powder, reading materials, coffee, white crew socks and playing cards.

Info: Kelly Liberman, 389-4045, Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Watson, 885-5133.

Prismacolor workshops

Art Orr, MFA, will offer two classes using Prismacolor (colored pencil) media at the Arts and Design Society's (ADSOS) Art Center Studio, Fort Walton Beach, Feb. 23 and March 1, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Students may sign up for one or both classes. The course covers many different techniques of color pencil drawing. Cost of each class is \$30/ADSOS members, \$35/non-members. Info: artsdesignsociety.org or 244-1271 during office hours, Tuesday-Friday, noon-4 p.m.



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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

Michael Austin Milum, a stock clerk, 21, of 15 Riverview Road, Panacea, was arrested by Niceville police Jan. 31 on a charge of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, 39 Xanax bars.

Kenneth Brian Cain, 43, of 2416 Parker Drive, Niceville, was arrested by Valparaiso police Feb. 3 on a charge of driving on a suspended or revoked driver's license.

Joshua Craig Looney, 26, of 94 7th St., Shalimar, was arrested by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop for a suspended license, Feb. 3, on charges of possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.



Joshua C. Looney

After receiving information that Looney was driving on a suspended license, police made a traffic stop and arrested Looney on that charge. During a search, a bag was found inside of the back area of his pants. The bag contained marijuana, cocaine and prescription pills. The items in the bag were individually packaged for sale, including four bags of marijuana and one bag containing four large rocks of crack cocaine. Looney's bail was set at \$60,000.

Christopher Bryan Hinojosa, 29, of 500 Kelly Mill Road, Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 2 on charges of worthless check, 16 counts, and failure to appear on the original charge of worthless checks, seven counts.

Robert George Harris III, 47, of 2709 Edgewater Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 2 on charges of theft of utility services and grand theft, more than \$300, but less than \$10,000.

On Jan. 3 Harris was arrested at 2709 Edgewater Drive for illegally taking possession of the home without the owner's permission. The victim, who lives out of state, contacted the city of Niceville and said Harris had used her water and power for two months. City employees later discovered the water meter lock at the residence had been broken and the water turned on. Between Nov. 28 and Jan. 3, 33,420 gallons of water, worth \$152, were consumed at the residence.

Harris was also charged with taking a large oriental hutch valued at \$10,000, that the victim had left in the house. Harris is

alleged to have shown neighbors the hutch, while it was in the dining room, Nov. 29, and told them he was planning to sell it. The hutch was later seen in the garage Dec. 20, but was not inside the garage Dec. 30. Harris allegedly denied the hutch was ever in the residence.

James Ryan Rimkus, 36, of 432 Barbados Way, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 5 on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of felony battery on a law enforcement officer.

Amanda Michelle Hagan, unemployed, 24, of 707 32nd St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 3 on a charge of failure to appear on the original charge of passing a forged or altered bill or promissory note.

Andre Philmon Tucker Jr., 26, of 1470 30th St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 1 on a misdemeanor violation of probation charge.

Tucker Raymond Robinson, 21, of 1115 Rita Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 5 on charges of battery on a law enforcement officer and resisting an officer without violence.

DUI arrests

Jeremy Andrew Ramirez, 23, of 318 Biscayne Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI on State Road 293 northbound on the Mid-Bay Bridge, Jan. 30 at 12:41 a.m.

Thefts

A Niceville resident from the 400 block of Paradise Road reported that someone stole several pieces of jewelry from a jewelry box between May 2011 and Jan. 23. Stolen items included: four rings and three necklaces valued at \$3,800.

A man reported Feb. 3 that someone stole his \$1,500 Tag Heuer watch from a residence in the 500 block of 22nd Street, Niceville.

A Niceville man reported a case of identity theft Feb. 2 after a tax return service notified him that someone had already filed a federal income tax return using his Social Security number. The victim called the IRS and they confirmed that a tax return had been filed using his Social Security number, but could not release details, saying only that they would investigate the matter. The victim said he filed a similar complaint with deputies last year when he reported being charged for a telephone account he had never signed for.

Unknown person(s) stole nine spare air conditioner units that were used for parts at an assisted living center, 1551 Merchants Way, Niceville sometime Feb. 1-2. Also reported

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 6, 2012 through February 12, 2012.

1 Structure Fire 19 Emergency Medical Calls
0 Vehicle Fire 0 Vehicle Crash
1 Other Fire 0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication
0 Illegal Burn 5 Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms 0 Hazardous Conditions

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Dolphin Point Road	Medical	02/06/12	09:29
N. Partin Drive	Medical	02/06/12	11:51
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Cooking Fire	02/07/12	10:08
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/07/12	14:29
Spence Circle	Medical	02/07/12	16:50
SR123	Cancelled	02/08/12	08:37
Ellis Avenue	Medical	02/08/12	10:36
Twin Cities Blvd.	Medical	02/08/12	12:51
Hudson Circle	Service Call	02/08/12	14:02
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Alarm Activation	02/08/12	17:28
45th St./Fir Avenue	Service Call	02/09/12	04:05
N. Partin Drive	Medical	02/09/12	10:10
Park Avenue	Medical	02/09/12	11:59
Niceville Avenue	Structure Fire	02/09/12	12:33
Friar Tuck Drive	Medical	02/09/12	19:32
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/10/12	09:18
N. Partin Drive	Medical	02/10/12	09:38
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Alarm Activation	02/10/12	17:52
Coral Drive	Medical	02/11/12	13:01
Coral Drive	Medical	02/11/12	15:26
Finck Road	Medical	02/11/12	15:54
Bayshore Drive	Medical	02/11/12	18:38
Government Avenue	Medical	02/11/12	18:50
Linden Avenue	Medical	02/11/12	23:44
Woodlow Road	Medical	02/12/12	13:28
Als Drive	Medical	02/12/12	18:45

Weekly Safety Tip: Watch what you heat. Stay with the stove when you are cooking. The reason most cooking fires happen is that someone leaves the kitchen when there is something cooking on the stove. Watch the stove, so you'll be able to respond quickly if food bubbles up or if something goes wrong. Please look at the Niceville Fire Department web page on Facebook.

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 5, 2012 through February 13, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Olde Post Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/05/12	08:41
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/05/12	10:55
Pine Street	Dispatched canceled	02/05/12	11:12
Sandalwood Circle	EMS excluding vehicle	02/05/12	14:22
East Dominica Circle	EMS excluding vehicle	02/05/12	23:26
East Highway 20	Dispatched canceled	02/06/12	05:17
Ida Coon Circle	Medical assist EMS	02/06/12	08:14
N. White Point Road	Medical assist EMS	02/06/12	23:59
Highway 20	Dispatched canceled	02/07/12	10:09
Highway 20	Motor vehicle accident	02/07/12	14:48
Ridgewood Way	Unauthorized burning	02/07/12	16:06
Highway 20	EMS excluding vehicle	02/07/12	16:44
White Point Road	Dispatched canceled	02/07/12	22:11
Range Road	Explosive, bomb removal	02/08/12	17:44
The Crossings	Service call	02/09/12	06:39
Merchants Way	Dispatched canceled	02/09/12	07:08
Troon Drive West	EMS excluding vehicle	02/09/12	10:01
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/09/12	12:23
Niceville Avenue	Building fire	02/09/12	12:35
Marina Cove Drive	Alarm system activation	02/09/12	13:01
Olde Post Road	Good intent call	02/09/12	13:37
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/09/12	19:13
Birkdale Circle	EMS excluding vehicle	02/10/12	07:01
E. Highway 20	Motor vehicle accident	02/10/12	13:24
Springacres Cove	EMS excluding vehicle	02/11/12	00:10
Prestwick Drive	Medical assist EMS	02/12/12	17:54
Parkwood Court	Dispatched canceled	02/12/12	18:27
Merchants Way	Medical assist EMS	02/12/12	21:10

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

stolen were seven bi-fold metal louvered closet doors and a 12-foot steel railing. All the stolen items, valued at \$1,200, were stored outside in a fenced area.

Unknown person(s) entered an unlocked vehicle parked in the 4200 block of Calinda Lane sometime Feb. 6-7 and stole a black bag containing several items of military clothing and uniforms, combat boots, two Gerber knives, a multi-tool and a wallet containing a military ID, a Social Security card, a driver's license and five personal and government credit cards. The victim said he returned home from work and intended to retrieve the bag from his car, but forgot.

Another Niceville resident from the 4200 block of Calinda Lane also reported his unlocked vehicle was burglarized sometime overnight Feb. 6-7. The victim was alerted to the burglary at 8:20 a.m., Feb. 7, when his credit card company's fraud department advised him of

recent charges on his account.

The victim went to the parking lot where his vehicle was parked and discovered missing were an iPod, an electric razor, two .45 caliber magazines with 26 rounds of ammunition, a backpack, a Camelback pack, a PT uniform, \$300 running shoes, a military ID, a driver's license, a concealed carry license and three credit cards, including one government issued card.

Criminal Mischief

A Niceville resident from the 1400 block of Scott Street reported Feb. 2 that the front left side of his truck was damaged and the headlights busted out. The victim stated he believed the damage was done when someone hit the truck with a baseball bat.

On Feb. 3 a Niceville resident from the 1000 block of Julia Avenue reported unknown person(s) spray painted and underlined some initials on the exterior of the house.



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Niceville's Newspaper

FIRE COMMISSIONER VACANCY
North Bay Fire Control District
Okaloosa County
Niceville, Florida
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

The North Bay Fire Control District is currently accepting Letters of Intent for the position of Fire Commissioner. The requirements are: (1) be a Florida registered voter and (2) live within the jurisdiction of the North Bay Fire Control District. The North Bay Fire Control District is a Drug Free Workplace and an Equal Opportunity Employer. For more information, contact the Administration Office at (850) 897-3689. Please submit your Letter of Intent to the North Bay Fire Control District, 1024 White Point Road, Niceville, Florida 32578 by Monday, March 5, 2012. All applicants must be present for consideration at the next Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., at the North Bay Fire Control District.

ELECTION

From page A-1

—Appointed Jack Carson to the city's planning commission through Sept. 30, 2014. In his volunteer application Carson said he had more than 40 years experience in the construction industry. He is currently

employed by the city in the sanitation department.

Commissioners last month appointed two other city residents to the city's Planning Commission, Clark "Tom" Browning and John Miller. Their terms also expire Sept. 30, 2014.

—Approved an estimated \$21,485 street repair contract

with Construction Services Company of Florida to remedy subsidence in the vicinity of Arrowpoint Cove in the Indian Shores subdivision.

The city's engineer said the subsidence was likely caused by



Jack Carson

paving over burn pit areas when the subdivision was built 20 years ago. Construction Services was the original contractor and offered to provide much of the materials to correct the problems at cost. Because the

proposed cost is less than \$25,000, Miller, the roads commissioner, can approve the work on his own authority.

Miller said the city is looking for two volunteers to represent the city on the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization, one to serve on the Technical Coordinating

Committee, the other on the Citizen's Advisory Committee. The TPO board is comprised of elected officials from Okaloosa and Walton counties to identify improvements on state and federal roads within the two counties. Interested individuals should contact the Valparaiso city clerk.



State Farm Frank Walker Agency
Seven factors affecting your auto insurance premiums

Advertising Feature

Seven Factors Affecting Your Auto Insurance Premiums

There are a number of key factors most insurance companies use to calculate how much you'll end up paying for your auto insurance. What's important to remember is that you can control many of these factors.

Your location, age, driving habits, and credit history all play a major role, as do the types of vehicles you drive and your record of accidents. In many cases, the choices you make about the coverage you want determine the cost of your premium.

Below is a more detailed look at seven key factors that affect your auto insurance premiums, as well as some suggestions for keeping the costs down:

1. Your Coverage And Deductibles

Auto insurance providers allow you to choose your deductible and decide whether to add additional coverage that isn't necessarily required by the laws in your state. The specifics of your coverage and deductibles play a major role in your monthly payment.

Typically, choosing a higher deductible means a lower monthly payment; choosing a lower deductible means a higher monthly payment. Additional coverage



The Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on January 13, 2012 welcomed Frank Walker State Farm and his team to his new Niceville location.

gives you added financial protection, depending on the claim, but will also add to your monthly costs.

2. What You Drive

By collecting a large amount of data from customer claims and analyzing industry safety reports, auto insurance providers often develop vehicle safety ratings and offer discounts to customers who drive safer vehicles.

Some insurers increase premiums for cars more susceptible to damage, occupant injury, or theft, and lower rates for those that fare better than the norm.

2010 Toyota 4Runners, for example, rate highly in terms of driver protection and passenger protection, which means discounts

on insurance. And while two-door Honda Civics are one of the country's most popular vehicles, their lower-than-average safety ratings and desirability to car thieves make them more expensive to insure.

Before you head down to the dealership, do some research. Does the vehicle that has caught your eye have strong safety ratings? Is the same particular model often stolen? Knowing the answers to a few simple questions can go a long way in keeping your rates low.

3. How Often, And How Far, You Drive

People who use their car for business and long-distance commuting normally pay more than those who drive less. The more miles you drive in a year, the higher the chances of an accident — regardless of how safe a driver you are.

Consider joining a car or van pool, riding your bike, or taking public transportation to work. If you reduce your total annual driving mileage enough, you may lower your premiums.

4. Where You Drive

Generally, due to higher rates of vandalism, theft, and accidents, urban drivers pay more for auto insurance than do those in small towns or rural areas.

5. Your Driving Record

Drivers who cause accidents generally must pay more than those who are accident-free for several years.

If you've been accident-free for a long period of time, don't get complacent! Remain vigilant and maintain your good driving habits. And even though you can't

rewrite your driving history, having an accident on your record can be an important reminder always to drive with caution and care. As time goes on, the effect of past accidents on your premiums will decrease.

6. Your Age, Sex, And Marital Status

Accident rates are higher for all drivers under age 25, especially young males and single males. Insurance prices in most states reflect these differences.

If you're a student, you might also be in line for a discount. Most auto insurers provide discounts to student-drivers who maintain strong grades. In some states, younger drivers are also able to take driver safety courses that will lower premiums.

7. Your Credit Score

There's no doubt about it: Your credit score has an impact on your auto insurance rates. Studies have shown that credit history is a powerful predictor of future auto insurance losses, and so your score is one of many factors that insurers use to calculate risk. Another way to keep your rates down is to get your credit score up.

How can you do that? While consumers aren't privy to the exact details of how FICO scores are calculated, there are a number of reliable strategies to improve your credit score. Consider paying down revolving debt, cultivating a long credit history, and disputing erroneous charges — just a few ways to improve your score.

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Who's News

Kristin Dean Muldowney of Niceville has been named to the Dean's List at Clemson University for the fall 2011 semester.

Muldowney is majoring in prehabilitation sciences.

To be named to the Dean's List, a student achieved a grade-point average between 3.50 and 3.99 on a 4.0 scale.

Christopher M. Hinson of Niceville has been named to the Dean's List for the fall semester at Samford University.

To qualify for the honor, a student must have earned a minimum 3.5 grade point average out of a possible 4.0 while attempting at least 12 credit hours of coursework. The Dean's List is the highest academic recognition given by the school at the end of each semester.

Sophia Stevenson, 2011 Niceville High School graduate, was named to the Dean's List at



Loyola University in New Orleans, with a 3.5 grade point average. Sophia is majoring in music industries and is attending

Sophia Stevenson

Loyola on an academic scholarship. She is the daughter of Ann and Randy Newton of Niceville and Adam Stevenson of New Orleans.

Two Lewis School students, siblings **Alison and Ryan Thomas**, participated in the Americanism Essay Contest sponsored by the Twin Cities Elks Lodge #2747. Alison, an eighth grader, won first place in the middle school division, and Ryan, a fifth grader, won second place in the elementary school division.



Local cheerleaders win trophies

The Krewe of Ruckus, above, junior cheerleader team from Amped Elite All Stars, Bluewater Bay, placed third out of nine teams in the JAMfest Nationals in Mobile, Ala. Feb. 5-6. The senior team, Krewe of Excalibur, were national champions in their division bringing home a trophy, jackets, a banner and the Spirit Award. The mini team, Krewe of Chaos, took home a trophy for a fourth-place finish. All three teams are preparing for their next competition, Cheersport Nationals, in Atlanta, Feb. 17-19, where more than 900 teams are expected to compete.

Basketball fundraiser

A Harlem Ambassador goes for a stiff-legged layup during a recent charity basketball game. The Harlem Ambassadors comedy basketball team will perform Friday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m., at Northwest Florida State College arena, in support of Opportunity Knocks, Inc., helping the homeless. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for children and students. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.



Camellia workshop set for Saturday

The 13th annual Camellia Workshop/Open House, presented by the Greater Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society, will be held Saturday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to noon.

The free workshop will be at the Okaloosa County Extension Service Building, W. 127 Hollywood Ave., Fort Walton Beach. This is an open house type event, so participants may arrive and leave any time.

Attendees will receive one-on-one, hands-on instruction from local Camellia Society members on various aspects of growing camellias, including pruning, air-layering, propagation, etc. Information about planting and caring for camellias throughout

the year will also be provided. Visitors are encouraged to bring samples of leaves, blooms for evaluation of pest or disease problems.

Camellia plants will be available for purchase. Additionally, visitors will have the opportunity to join the Greater Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society, the Gulf Coast Camellia Society and the American Camellia Society.

The Greater Fort Walton Beach Camellia Society holds its regular meetings the third Tuesday of each month at the Okaloosa County Extension Service Building.

For more information, call Joe Jenus at 862-4526 or email camelliafbw@cox.net.



Superior rock stars take 2 prizes

For the second year in a row, employees of Superior Residences of Niceville took home two first place trophies in the United Way Chili Competition Feb. 4 at Santa Rosa Mall. The theme was the Flintstones and the impersonators wowed the judges with a song and a skit that won them first place in showmanship. They also took home the People's Choice Award.

In the Service

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.

Air Force Airman **Jason D. Laufer** graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force

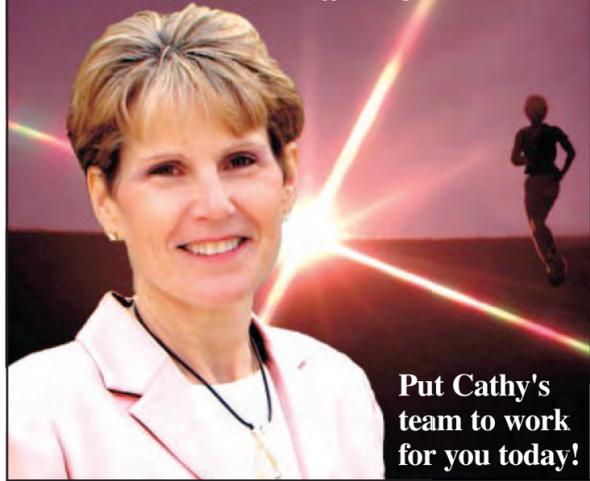
core values, physical fitness and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Laufer is the son of Jennifer Laufer of Ruckel Drive, Niceville.

The airman is a 2011 graduate of Prattville High School, Ala.

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Rocky mathletes score big at Mu Alpha Theta

50 students attend regional competition

Fifty Rocky Bayou Christian School mathletes attended the Jan. 21 regional Mu Alpha Theta competition held at Pensacola State College's Milton campus.

Eighth grade team members Marcus Fort, Dylan Paskell, Seth Kerstein and Duncan Foster took the fifth place Algebra I team trophy.

The Algebra II team, Geon Ho Yoo (10th), James Sung (9th), Natalie Ouma (11th) and Cameron Esses (9th), claimed the fifth place team trophy in that category.

The unclassified competition challenged mathematicians from 17 schools, of all sizes, seating 30 teams. RBCS' team ranked seventh in the overall sweepstakes. RBCS high scorers included: Marcus Fort and Dylan Paskell (Algebra I); Josh Preston and Abigail Alldredge

(Geometry); Ashley Lee and Laura Herndon (PreCal); Geon Ho Yoo and James Sung (Algebra 2); and William Hudson and Tim Sung (Calculus). Carla Alldredge is the team's coach.

"I am very proud of our students and their performance at these challenging competitions," Alldredge said. "Pitted against large 5A and 6A schools, they give their best. I feel very privileged to be their coach."

Florida's Mu Alpha Theta Association publishes combined regional results for the entire state. It organizes competitions in Florida including 15 regionals.

Every January, February and March, one school from each of the five regions hosts a competition. Between 20 to 30 schools attend each regional and compete in team and individual tests.



Photo by Paula Mims

NHS mural showcases school's spirit

The Niceville High School girls' JV basketball team sits under the protective wings of its school mascot. At the team's request, the NHS eagle was brought to life in the girls' locker room. The team completed the season 11-5. From left: back row, Katie O'Dowd, Njera Frazier, Rhea Azamar, Madison Brake, the freshman artist who painted the mural, Trendi Guley, Elise Stuart, Kacii Hill, Sami Mims. Front row, Amber Fling, Taylor Reece, Coach Dave Vardaman, Coach Joan O'Dowd, Annie DeLaFuente, Ameila Baffa, Coach Reagan Westenbarger, Adrianna Ruffin, Kiyana Gee.

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Snow-day fun at Wesley Academy



Photo by Lisa Parnell

The students in Lisa Parnell's and Sherri Cadenhead's Pre-K4 class at Niceville United Methodist Church's Wesley Academy enjoyed some "faux" snowball fun, despite the unseasonably warm temperatures. The snowballs were made of rolled-up socks. From left: back row, Amaya Moses, Sierra Quinn, Taylor Wolfenden, Ian Barfield, Tristan Lopez, Kaitlyn Saltsman, Caden Dolgner and Jake Olmstead. Front row, Sarah Piel, Caden Young, Shane Walters, Elise Winston, Anina Sanford, Adam St. Amant and Carson Vogler.



The first place MathCounts winners, from left: Natassia Flegal, Alex Tolbert, Sarah Pabst and Nick Zimmerman.

Ruckel MathCounts takes home 1st place

The Ruckel Middle School Varsity MathCounts Team won first place on Feb. 4 at the Regional Tournament hosted in Niceville. The Emerald Coast Chapter of the Florida Engineering Society hosted the event for Middle School teams throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties. The team of Natassia Flegal, Alex Tolbert, Sarah Pabst and Nick Zimmerman won first place and will compete at the State competition in Orlando in March. Nick had the highest individual score with six out of eight of Ruckel's participants scoring in the top 10.

Twin Cities receives award One of the top 50 U.S. hospitals

Twin Cities Hospital, Niceville, was selected as a recipient of the 2011-2012 Hospital of Choice Award from The American Alliance of Healthcare Providers (AAHCP). For the third consecutive year, Twin Cities Hospital proudly shares this recognition with 50 other hospitals in the nation. This award is designed to find America's most customer-friendly hospitals based on an extensive application process, or by a secret review of a facility's public communication and staff interaction with customers.

Correction

On page B-2 of the Feb. 1 Beacon, a Lewis Middle School science and engineering fair participant was misidentified by the school.

Lewis seventh-grader Garrett Oden entered a project titled "Is buying and using compost starter really necessary to increase compost output?"

NHS students qualify for state at Thespian fest

Nine Niceville High School students qualified for state as a result of their performances at the Florida District One Thespian Festival.

Qualifying for state with superior ratings were: Kendra Jablonski for costume design, Jessica Haney for solo musical and Ashley Meyers for monologue.

Qualifying for state with excellent ratings were: Annie Clifton for monologue, Kyle Clements for monologue, Ryan Collister for duet acting, Nana Shaer for duet acting, Elizabeth de la Fuente for duet acting and Jaimi Smith for duet acting. Jason Choate also earned an excellent rating for duet acting, but did not qualify for state.

Earning ratings of good were: Ariana Rose for solo musical and duet acting, Caity McDonald for duet acting, Erin Kearney for duet acting, Jessica King for duet acting, Katherine Sturim for ensemble acting, Chris Roll for ensemble acting, Olivia Montgomery for ensemble acting, Jason Choate for pantomime, Ryan Collpitts for pantomime and Madison Booth for playwrighting.

Earning ratings of fair were Kendra Jablonski for playwrighting and Desiree Walls for publicist.

Earning student director ratings were Trevor Barnes and Annie Clifton, each for one-act plays.

2012
CALENDAR

E-mail items to
info@baybeacon.com
before 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Moms-in-Prayer meetings

Moms-in-Prayer for Niceville High School meets every Thursday, 7:30 a.m., Niceville United Methodist Church, Room 801. Info: Pia Elsesser, 729-0872.

Tax preparation

Tax-aide volunteers are providing free income tax preparation at Niceville Library for taxpayers with low to moderate income, with attention to those age 60 and older.



Monday 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday and Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m., by appointment only. Make an appointment at the reference desk in the library or call 279-4863 ext. 1504. Bring all your tax documents, last year's return, a picture ID, Social Security Card and checkbook for a direct deposited refund.

Exhibit at Niceville Library

The artwork of Joe Oliver will be on exhibit until Feb. 29 at the Niceville Public Library, North Partin Drive. Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Wednesday/Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

'Brigadoon' at Arts Center

"Brigadoon," a national touring production of the musical, will be performed at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville, main stage, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45.

Driver safety course

The AARP Driver Safety Classroom Course for mature drivers will be Feb. 15-16, 12:30-3:30 p.m., at Bob Gates Welcome Center at Bob Hope Village, 92 Sunset Lane, Shalimar. Open to drivers age 50 or older. Florida auto insurance providers offer discounts to those certified. Cost is \$12 for AARP members, \$14 for others. Each student must attend both sessions and should bring cash or check to the class, along with a driver's license and valid AARP card.

Free saltwater seminar

The Emerald Coast Saltwater series will present a seminar on sheephead fish, Feb. 15, 6 p.m., Northlight Marina, Niceville. The seminar is free to the public.

Hearing screenings

Dr. Sabrina Kaestle, an audiologist, will present a free seminar on "Hearing Loss, Tinnitus and Treatment Options," Feb. 15, 10 a.m., suite 3, Resource Center conference room at Sacred Heart Hospital. Free hearing screenings will be provided after the seminar. Info: 278-3600.

Library Story Time

Join Ms. Karen and Ms. Christina, Feb. 15 and 16, 10:30 a.m., for Niceville Public Library's Story Time in the Youth Services Program Room. Each session is free and lasts 30 minutes. Ages 3-5. Info: 279-4863, ext. 1514.

Horticulture Study Group

The Horticulture Study Group will meet Feb. 16 at Eden State Park between Destin and Panama City Beach in Point Washington. The group will meet at the pavilion for a program about camellias. Following the lecture, participants will tour the gardens. The fee is \$4 per car. Info: 678-2842 or marieharrison@valp.net.



NFSO presents musicians Friday

The Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra will present "The Stars of Tomorrow" at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m. Winners of the 2011 Concerto Competition will be the featured soloists. The show will also include a tribute to the Old West. Tickets are \$22.50. Info: 729-6000 or mattiekellyartscenter.org.

3-day backpacking trip

The Florida Trail Association plans a three-day, two-night backpacking trip on the Nokuse section of Walton County, Feb. 17-19, beginning at 9 a.m. Info: 492-8258 or 865-7075, or choctaw.floridatrail.org.

Church hosts kids' night

Radiant Life Church will hold a Radiant Kids Celebration night, Feb. 17, 6-10 p.m. The event is free for ages 5 through fifth grade. Sign-up is encouraged in the front office, 100 Hart St., Niceville. Info: 729-8600.

Red dress contest

The Filipino American Association of Okaloosa will kickoff 2012 with a Valentine red dress contest and party, Feb. 17, 6 p.m., Compass Rose Restaurant, Valparaiso. The cost is \$25 per person. Info: Annie Cameron, 586-1552.

Pasta dinner fundraiser

The Joseph B. Franzalia Sons and Daughters of Italy, Lodge #2422, will host a pasta dinner, Feb. 17, 5-7:30 p.m., 808 S. Drive, Fort Walton Beach. Proceeds will be donated to the Wounded Warrior Project. Info: 862-2758.

Climate change seminar

The Sciences Division at Northwest Florida State College, Niceville, presents its Science Friday seminar series, Feb. 17, 11 a.m.-noon, Robert E. Greene Jr. Science building, room 110. The seminar, "Reconstructing Climates of the Geologic Past: Implications for Future Climate Change," is free to the public. The featured speaker is Dr. Mark Horrell, a professor of earth sciences at NWFSC.

ADSO show opening

Opening reception for "Human Palette," the Arts and Design Society's gallery show reflecting the diversity of human cultures, will be Feb. 17, 5-7 p.m., 17 First St., SE, Fort Walton Beach. The show will run through February 29. Gallery hours: noon-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday, and 1-4 p.m., Saturday. Admission is free to the public. Info: 244-1271 or artsdesignsociety.org.

Doo-Wah Riders

The Doo-Wah Riders will perform at the Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. After the concert, the audience is invited to a reception at the Magnolia Grill in Fort Walton Beach where they can meet all the band members. Tickets, \$22 per person, are available at Kitchenique,

Destin/Sandestin; P.S. Gifts, Fort Walton Beach; Connect with Flowers, Shalimar; and Artful Things, Niceville.

Info: 362-936. Tickets are \$25 at the door.

Tri-Delta alumni meeting

The quarterly luncheon meeting of the Delta Delta Delta Alumnae of the Emerald Coast will be Feb. 18, 10:30 a.m., at the Sandestin Beach Club. The hostesses will be Gertie Sheaffer, Judy LaMarche and Margaret Carlen.

For reservations, gate code and directions, contact Margaret Carlen, 654-5008 or robinca@cox.net.

Wild game dinner

The Cinco Baptist Church Men's Ministry will hold a wild game dinner, Feb. 18, Whitetail deer seminar, 4 p.m., wild game dinner, 5 p.m., and "Life and Death" adventures, 6 p.m., with guest speaker Wade Nolan. Tickets, \$10. Info: 243-7656.

Fair Tax meeting

The Florida Fair Tax Educational Association (FFTEA) meet-up will be Feb. 18, 10 a.m., in the Niceville Council chambers, North Partin Drive.

Life guard class

This 30-hour course includes certification in life guarding, CPR and first aid. Cost is \$80 and includes manual, pocket mask, certification cards, Red Cross provider fee and supplies. The class will be Feb. 18-19, and Feb. 25-26, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Bring a swimsuit, towel and goggles. Sign-up at Destin YMCA, 4645 Commons Drive, Destin. Info: 837-8440.

Birds of Prey

Lisa Miller, the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center's Birds of Prey rehabilitator, will show and discuss several birds that are under her care. The discussion will be Feb. 18, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., 4965 Highway 20 East,

Freeport. Info: 835-1824, eowilsoncenter.org.

Nail trim clinic for pets

Parkway Veterinary Hospital, 1101 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, will hold a fundraiser nail trim clinic, Feb. 18, 9 a.m.-noon. Cost is \$8 per pet, \$6 each additional pet. Cats should be in carriers and dogs should be on a retractable leash. Rabies certificates required; tags will not suffice. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Tennis court meeting

Niceville High School and Ruckel Middle School are working together to build home tennis courts for their schools and community. Help bring vision to action by buying a brick, making a donation, or volunteering. For more information, attend the kick-off meeting, Feb. 19, 5 p.m., Bluewater Bay Golf Clubhouse. Info: 737-1083.

Beachcomber concert

Fourth Annual Beachcomber music awards and concert will be Feb. 19, 5 p.m., HarborWalk Village, 10 Harbor Blvd., Destin. Celebrating the Coast's regional and local music scene. Info: 424-0600, HarborWalkDestin.com.

Men's baseball league

The Okaloosa Men's Baseball League will kick off its season with registration Feb. 19-26, 3 p.m., Twin Oaks baseball field, Niceville. These sessions are for 18 and older, and 30 and older divisions. Info: www.ombl.org, 864-7529.

Cheerleaders host 5K

The Fort Walton Beach High School Viking Cheerleaders will host

Please see CALENDAR, page B-5

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The Beacon Newspapers

BEACONSPORTS

Two NHS grapplers head to state wrestling tourney



Photo courtesy of coach Strutchen

From left: The District 2-6A basketball champion Eagles: coach Clarence May, coach Jerome Strutchen, Shane Horton, Chris Forbes, Christian Redmond, Devin Vasquez, Christian Vardaman, Connor Ellis, Kolt Drautz, Jalen Douglas, McKinley Stephens, Andrew Mitchell, Kyle Koszuta, Iain Persaud, Ryan Colpitts, Nick Haynes, coach Ramone Jordan and coach Jerome McIntosh.

Eagles defeat pair of foes to take District 2-6A crown

By David Middleton

With back-to-back playoff wins over the weekend, the Niceville High School boys basketball team earned its second District 2-6A championship in three years. Both contests were highly competitive and went down to the wire.

The campaign began on Friday with a thrilling 49-44 double-overtime victory over the Fort Walton Beach Vikings. With eight different players scoring in a relatively low-scoring affair, the Eagles used every resource to advance. There was significant action throughout the game, but the final frames were where the price of admission was earned, and that is when the Eagles defense rose to the occasion. With the score tied and the Vikings holding the ball for a

potential game-winning basket during the fourth quarter and again during the first overtime, the Eagles locked down the goal in order to remain alive. Eventually Niceville gained a single-point advantage in the second overtime and fought to kill the clock. Maneuvering the ball throughout the court as the clock continued to run; the Eagles added a basket under-

More sports, B-6

neath and then sealed the game at the free-throw line. It was the second time in two weeks NHS beat FWB in double overtime.

Saturday's championship game pitted the Eagles against the high-scoring Choctaw Indians. Niceville's defense was

key as the Indians were held more than 10 points below their season average and the Eagles eventually pulled away with a 58-54 win. Likewise, Choctaw applied staunch defense against the Eagles. Its strategy of hounding the Niceville guards had moments of success but eventually led to fouls as Niceville secured the win from the free-throw line, converting 22 of its 28 attempts. Four players scored in double figures as Niceville used a balanced attack to circumvent the Indians' defensive pressure.

During both games an impressive showing from the NHS student section helped push the Eagles to victory. The Eagles advance to the Regional playoff round and host Milton on Thursday at 7 p.m.

By Kenneth Books

Beacon Staff Writer

Two Niceville High School wrestlers will compete in the state wrestling tournament in Lakeland Friday and Saturday.

Taylor Bartleson, a 160-pound junior, and Eric Altreche, a 105-pound freshman, finished second and third, respectively, in the Class 2A regional matchup at Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, last weekend.

Niceville took seven wrestlers to the regional tournament, said head coach Morrie Geselter, six of whom placed. Only those who finished first through third advanced to the state tournament.

"We finished ninth as a team out of 36 schools," Geselter said. "We scored 65 points, had two state qualifiers and four wrestlers who finished fifth and sixth."

Geselter lamented that Bartleson should have won his final match and placed first in

the region.

"He was winning 3-1 with 15 seconds to go, but he lost in triple overtime," Geselter said. "He just went blank for a second and let the kid reverse him."

Altreche took third by defeating a wrestler he had lost to in the first round, Geselter said.

"(Altreche) made a tactical error the first time he wrestled him," he said. "He chose the top when he's really good on the bottom and the other kid escaped."

But Altreche won, 6-4, in the deciding bout.

"He did just exactly what I told him to do," Geselter said. "He listened and he won."

Altreche will be the first Niceville High School freshman ever to go to the state tournament, Geselter said.

Also placing but failing to qualify for the state tournament were:

—113-pound sophomore Matt Berger, who won three

bouts, two on pins and one on a major decision, finished fifth. "He's probably the most improved kid on the team," Geselter said.

—132-pound junior Trenton Miller, who also won three bouts, including two pins and a major decision, finished fifth.

—145-pound junior Tanner Aull, who finished 3-2 in the tournament. "It was really sad because he lost to the same kid twice by one point," Geselter said. "I thought he was a better wrestler than the other kid, but he let the kid reverse him."

—220-pound senior Zack Jenkins, who finished fifth with one pin and one major decision. "We'll miss him," Geselter said. "He's a first-year varsity and did great job. He won 37 matches."

Geselter was effusive in his praise for the team.

"Overall, we did a very good job," he said. "Everyone on the team scored points. I couldn't be more proud of the kids. They fought their hearts out."

Obituary

Teresa Weitzel-Trybalski

Teresa Weitzel-Trybalski, 48, Columbia, Tenn., was born in Baltimore, Md. and died Feb. 9, 2012, after a long battle with brain cancer. Teresa leaves a legacy of loving others unconditionally, and her acts of kindness were shared by many at work, in the community and at church. During her lifetime, she served on parish councils in Catholic churches in Michigan and Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Columbia. She was a member of the 10:30 contemporary choir and Ladies Group at Saint Catherine, and was known to volunteer her time, treasures and talents at many church functions. She not only gave in life, but also in death as an organ donor. Teresa strongly supported organ donation, and a part of her will live on in others. She also excelled in the professional world, working for Electronic Data



Teresa Weitzel-Trybalski

Systems in Michigan and Spring Hill, Tenn., and ending her career as a senior business analyst with Asurion in Nashville, Tenn.

A graduate of Niceville High School in Niceville, Fla., where she served as Senior Class treasurer and Senior Council treasurer, worked on the school newspaper and was a member of the Honor Society, Math Club, Foreign Language Club and Spanish Club. She also competed on the school track team.

Teresa went on to complete her education at Okaloosa-Walton Junior College and the University of Southern Mississippi. Later in life, she completed her MBA at Middle Tennessee State University. Education was very important to Teresa, and she shared her love of learning by participating in a mentoring program for young women soon after arriv-

ing in Tennessee.

Family, friends, and co-workers remember Teresa as someone who would light up a room when she walked in, and they remember her infectious laugh that could be heard for miles. Preceded in death by her father, Lawrence Weitzel, she leaves behind her loving husband, Bob Trybalski, of Columbia, Tenn.; mother Julia of Niceville, Fla.; brother Lawrence A. Weitzel of Niceville, Fla.; Julie (Patrick) McDermon and nephew Joseph Harris of Freeport, Fla.; as well as other extended family members.

A funeral Mass took place on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012, at Saint Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church in Columbia, Tenn. Burial of cremated remains will take place at Heritage Gardens, Niceville, Fla., on Friday, Feb. 17, at 10 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations should be made to the cancer support community Gilda's Club, 1707 Division Street, Nashville, Tenn. 37203-2701 or Pet Pals of Maury County, P.O. Box 1623, Columbia, Tenn. 38402-1603.



Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

Eagles win home softball opener

Niceville's Courtney Adams rounds third en route to a score on Stephanie Hartness' fifth-inning triple Friday in the Eagles' first home softball game of the season. Niceville defeated Pace, 2-0.



Niceville shuts out Mosley

Niceville varsity tennis player Alexis Hruby returns a mid-court volley during her singles match against Mosley Friday at Bluewater Bay Tennis Center. She won her match 6-1, 6-1. The Eagles shut out the Dolphins, with both the boys and girls scoring 7-0 victories.

Beacon photo by Norman Wolf

Engagement

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.

Murray-Jopling

Alice Hale Murray of Valparaiso and Jamison Everett Murray of Beverly, Mass., announce the engagement of their daughter, Heather Michelle Murray, to Joel Anthony Jopling, son of

Thomas and Valerie Jopling of Bowling Green, Ky.

The bride is a 2008 graduate of Niceville High School. She is a senior at the University of West Florida, pursuing a degree in public relations. The groom is a 2008 graduate of Greenwood High School. He is also a senior at the University of West Florida, pursuing a degree in hospitality management. The groom has participated in Army ROTC during



Heather Michelle Murray and Joel Anthony Jopling college and is scheduled to receive his commission in May 2012.



Sons of Italy donate to hospice

Gloria Troiano presents a \$250 check from the Sons of Italy Lodge 2422 of Fort Walton Beach to Lill Jennings, development specialist for Covenant Hospice. Donations help fund Covenant Hospice's special programs in Okaloosa and Walton counties. These programs include bereavement services, children's support programs, chaplain services and indigent patient care. In 2011, the organization provided more than \$1.4 million in care for uninsured or underinsured patients facing a terminal illness.

CALENDAR

From page B-3

the 5K Viking Run/Walk at Uptown Station, Feb. 19, 3 p.m. The cost for early registration is \$20 and \$25 on race day; the first 200 registrants receive a free T-shirt. Registration and package pick-up will be Feb. 17 at the Fort Walton Beach High School guidance counselor office. Race day registration will be from 2-3 p.m. at Uptown Station. Payment and registration forms can be

dropped off at the Fort Walton Beach High School guidance counselor office.

Food and wine festival

The Food and Wine Tasting Festival will be Feb. 19, 1-4 p.m., Emerald Coast Convention Center, Okaloosa Island. Tickets are \$35 in advance, or \$40 at the door. Tickets are on sale now at: Bayou Book, Niceville; Chan's Wine World at Publix Shopping Center and on Grand Boulevard, Destin; Magnolia Grill, Fort Walton; Playground Music Center at Uptown

Station, Fort Walton; and Vandegriff Jewelers on Racetrack Road, Fort Walton. Info: Theresa, 621-4093; Vern, 244-3433; David, 621-7377.

Look back at city history

Join Friends of the Niceville Library as they host "Looking Back at Niceville's History" with guest speaker Elisa Mitchiner, who researched and compiled information for the Niceville, Florida On-line History Center.

This free program will be at the Niceville Community Center, 204 N. Partin Drive, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m.

Info, or to reserve a spot call the library at 279-4863, ext. 1504.

"The History of 88 Keys"

"Better Listening" will meet Feb. 21, 7-9 p.m., Valparaiso Unitarian Church, 1295 Bayshore Drive. John Drury will lead the session, "The History of 88 Keys," which will include CDs, as well as live piano and harpsichord selections. Info: Lou Johnson, music-study@uufec.com.

Mardi Gras celebration

Join this wild and vibrant Fat Tuesday celebration, Feb. 21, 6 p.m., at HarborWalk Village, 10 Harbor

Blvd., Destin. Enjoy free red beans and rice from Poppy's Crazy Lobster, street performers and live music. Pets are welcome. March through the Harbor with your four-legged friends at the Party Animal Parade, 6:30 p.m. Info: 424-0600, HarborWalk Destin.com.

Relay team meeting

Want to learn more about Relay For Life in Niceville-Valparaiso? Attend a meeting, Feb. 21, 6-7 p.m.,

St. Paul Lutheran Church. Info: Shelly Nightengale, American Cancer Society, 244-3813 ext. 3556, or Shelly.Nightengale@CANCER.ORG.

ADSO Luncheon

Elia Saxer, award-winning illustrator, muralist and portrait painter, will be the speaker at the Arts and Design Society's luncheon, Feb. 22, 11:30 a.m., Art Center Gallery, 17 First St., SE, Fort Walton Beach. Cost is \$12. Reservations must be made by Feb. 20. Please send reservations request to: adsoluncheon@yahoo.com or call Marcy at 585-4967.

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Beacon Newspapers, publisher of The Bay Beacon, The Eglin Flyer, The Hurlbut Patriot, and The Green Beret, seeks a graphic artist to create ads on Macintosh computers, paginate news, Photoshop images, and perform other production, office and mailroom duties. Experience with QuarkXpress or another page-layout program required. Applicants should be organized, detail-oriented, and able to work efficiently to meet deadlines. This is a small-business environment that rewards the ability to master new challenges. Nonsmokers. Apply in person at the Bay Beacon, 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville. 850-678-1080.

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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Niceville softball coach wins his 200th game



Beacon photos by Kenneth Books
Niceville High School softball coach Danny Hensley hits fungoes to his infielders during a recent practice.

By Kenneth Books
Beacon Staff Writer

After eight seasons, Niceville High School softball coach Danny Hensley has reached a number of plateaus. His team is the defending 2011 state champion squad. And on Feb. 7, he won his 200th game as a coach, defeating Tate, 8-4.

"I'm living a dream," Hensley, 54, said during a recent practice. "I couldn't be happier." The 2012 team, he said, is solid in regard to pitching and hitting, but "we're going to have to work on our defense."

Last year's state championship team included six seniors, each of whom are now in college. Even so, Hensley anticipates that his team this year will be excellent—possibly even going into the state finals for the third year in a row. The team lost the state championship game in 2010.

"This bunch is certainly going to make a run at things," said Hensley, who also teaches ROTC. But he doesn't expect it to be a cakewalk.

"Fort Walton Beach and Mosley have improved," he said. "Plus, we have that target on our backs."

If all else fails, the team may be able to bludgeon its way to victories.

"I'm really excited about the offense on this team," Hensley said, noting that his players bashed two home runs in the Tate game.

The 200th victory of his career—now in its ninth year—was "very rewarding," Hensley said, although he added that last year's state championship "was huge."

That title also resulted in an addition to his family. After the state tournament, his players gave Hensley a bulldog puppy that he named Champ.

"He was eight pounds when I got him," said Hensley, who sometimes brings the dog with him to school. "Now he weighs about 50."

Hensley expects discipline and hard work from his players. They seem to appreciate that approach.

"He raises the bar a little bit every year," said senior outfielder-shortstop Stephanie Hartness. "He always has a positive attitude."

Teammate Courtney Adams, a senior center fielder, agreed. "Each year, he has high



Courtney Adams, left, and Stephanie Hartness.

expectations," she said. "Since we won state, we have to work harder."

Both Hartness and Adams have signed to play softball for Florida State University next year.

Hensley, a retired Air Force master sergeant, played catcher and first base in college. After he had two daughters, he transferred his interest to fast-pitch softball.

"I found I liked it better," he said.

Hensley said one reason for his teams' success is that they seem to be more than just a bunch of ballplayers.

"We have a family bond," he said. "We really kind of cling to each other."

With the softball season just under way, Hensley and his players hope to repeat last year's success and cling to another state championship trophy. That would be a good start toward the coach's 300th victory.

Ram swimmers win meets, break record



Ruckel Middle School's Michael Bartley breaks the County 50 fly record Feb. 4 in a swim meet against Meigs.

Ruckel Middle School's boys and girls swim teams opened the season Jan. 11 with a victory over Pryor with scores of 174 girls and 186 boys, then followed up with a second meet win against Bruner Jan. 21, as the girls scored 144 and the boys scored 135.

At the third meet of the season against Meigs Feb. 4, the Rams continued their winning streak. There were some exciting races, with Michael Bartley recording a Ruckel record on the 200 freestyle and a county record on the 50 fly. The girls team scored 152 and the boys scored 165.

"This has been a very exciting season so far," said coach Kathy Ritacco. "I am so pleased with so many great swims and good progress for the new swimmers."

Ritacco said she is looking forward to the timed finals Wednesday, Feb. 15 at the Ft. Walton Beach YMCA.

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