

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, April 11, 2012

50¢

UP COMING

Friday, 7 p.m.

Rocky Bayou Christian School will hold its **choirs concert at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church. Admission is **free**, and the public is invited. Performing will be the Concert Choir, Chamber Choir and the Chorale.**

Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon

The Niceville YMCA will hold a benefit yard sale at the YMCA, 1031 E. John Sims Parkway. Info: 897-9622.

Saturday, 6 p.m.

The Niceville High School Jazz Band dinner and silent auction will be at the Community Life Center at Niceville United Methodist Church. The cost is \$35 per plate, or \$325 for a premier reserved table for eight. For tickets, contact csarnosky@yahoo.com.

Sunday, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

The fourth annual Tea Party **Tax Day Rally, hosted by the **Niceville-Valparaiso Tea Party**, will be held at Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive. Booths will open at 12:30 p.m., and the program will be from 1-3:30 p.m. Info: 729-2873, or info@emerald-coastpatriots.org.**

Calendar, B-4

Niceville sees more sewer fee hikes

Rising costs fueled by buyout, plant upgrade

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Niceville sewer customers may see their monthly bills jump by \$4.84 a month or more over the next two years.

The increase would raise the monthly cost to the average Niceville sewer customer to about \$39.66, or some \$476 a year, 13.9 percent higher than today.

Earlier projections called for increases of about 3 percent a year due to other factors, but the city now expects capital costs to soar because of its share of a \$6.5 million sewer-plant upgrade, and the city's planned \$2.3 mil-

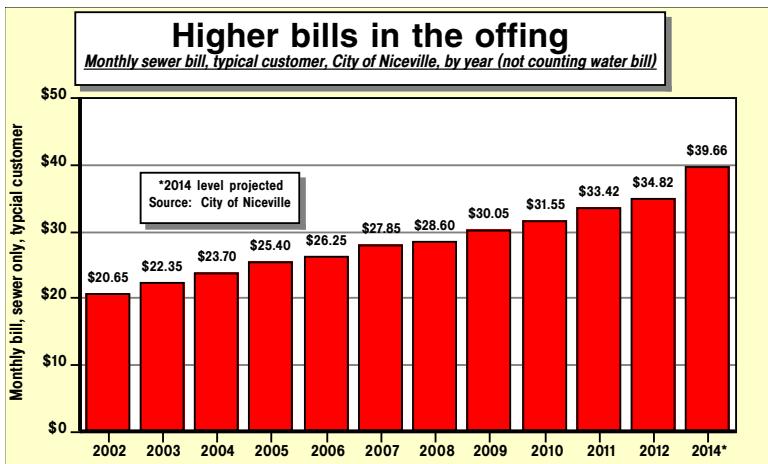
lion buyout of Okaloosa County's share of the regional sewer plant.

The projected rate hikes would be higher for customers living outside the city limits. They pay the city an additional 10 percent "administrative fee" on their sewer bills.

Officials indicated that the increase, which is subject to approval by the Niceville City Council, would be phased in over two years.

The projected rate hikes will be needed to pay for increased operations and maintenance costs of an upgrade at the Niceville, Valparaiso, Okaloosa County (NVOC) Regional

Please see **FEE HIKES**, page A-4



Helping hands

Students from Lesley Vance's third grade class at Rocky Bayou Christian School participated in the school's annual Work-a-Thon Thursday by cleaning up a yard at a house on Niceville Avenue. During the Work-a-Thon, students performed clean-up tasks for the elderly and families in need of assistance. This year, 677 RBCS students, kindergarten through 12th grade, participated in the event at various places in the area. Bagging leaves, from left: Jonah Horton, Jamil Bowles, Jacob Rice and Tyler Filewich. More photos, Page B-1.

Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

Niceville grad thrives as appeals-court judge

By Tess Hollis
Beacon Staff Writer

For one Tallahassee judge who graduated from Niceville High School, her interest in law and politics started as a girl of 10 during Ronald Reagan's first presidential campaign.

That same interest drove her to obtain a law degree and earn her current title as a judge on Florida's First District Court of Appeal.

Lori Rowe, 41, became one of Florida's youngest appeals-court judges in 2009.

Rowe spent most of her childhood in Florida, attended Ruckel Middle School and graduated from Niceville High

School in 1988. Rowe's father was in the military.

"I was first interested in law in 1980, when Reagan was president," said Rowe, who says she has always been motivated by public service. "I was a great admirer of his, and that's what sparked my interest in politics and government when I was about 10 years old."

Rowe, who is married with



Lori Rowe

two children, became involved with the Youth in Government program sponsored by Niceville High School and the YMCA, which allowed her to participate in a mock legislative session in Tallahassee.

Not long after that, Rowe completed an externship with Shalimar law firm, Cotton, Wesley, Poche and Gates.

"That confirmed that I wanted to practice law," she said. "Having the understanding of the impact lawyers have on the legislative process, and the impact of judges in the interpretation of the law, set me on my

Please see **JUDGE**, page A-3

Cops seize drugs, pistol in 3 arrests

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Three people were arrested by Niceville police on drug and gun charges following a traffic stop on Marc Smith Boulevard.

Police seized a loaded pistol, cocaine and marijuana.

Angela Sue Mawhir, 38, of 908 47th St., Niceville, and Joshua Kim Bailey, 30, of 308 SW Miracle Strip Parkway, #10C, Fort Walton Beach were arrested by Niceville police March 31, each charged with possession of cocaine, possession of a concealed firearm

without a permit and possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana. In addition, Bailey was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

A 22-year-old Fort Walton Beach man was also arrested, but later released without bail from Okaloosa County Jail because of a judge's finding of "no probable cause," according to jail officials. An assistant state attorney said Monday that his office was evaluating whether to press charges in the

Please see **ARRESTS**, page A-6

Teachers, schools continue pay wrangle

In closed hearing, district argues that union ineligible to appeal 'step' denial

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

No decision was reached during a closed arbitration hearing Friday, originally intended to resolve a pay dispute between the Okaloosa School District and the Okaloosa County Education Association (OCEA), the union that represents most local public school teachers.

A key issue discussed at the hearing, which was closed to the press at the insistence of the

union, is whether the proceedings were a suitable forum to resolve the OCEA's bid to overturn a Jan. 4 school board decision rejecting the traditional annual teacher "step" pay increases of 3 percent this year.

The union had 15 days to appeal the decision, but failed to do so within the allotted time, according to district officials.

The union's president, how-

Please see **TEACHERS**, page A-2



A hearing on an Okaloosa County School Board teacher-pay freeze was closed to the press and public Friday. Far left, a sign posted on the hearing-room door at school board headquarters, Fort Walton Beach. No results were announced.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith



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TEACHERS

From page A-1

ever, said the arbitrator had jurisdiction in the matter even though no impasse appeal may have been filed.

Both sides will now file briefs with the arbitrator, who may issue a decision by late May or early June. If the arbitrator is unable to decide the issue, the dispute may eventually end up in court.

Although the hearing, held at the Okaloosa County School Board chamber in Fort Walton Beach, had previously been announced as open to the public by district Personnel Director Mike Foxworthy, OCEA Executive Director Greg Butler told a Beacon reporter who came to cover the hearing that it would be closed to the press and public.

Barney O. Spurlock Jr., the state-certified arbitrator presiding over the hearing, said that either party to the dispute could ask that the hearing be closed to the press and public, and that he had therefore agreed to the union request that the hearing be closed.

Participants in Friday's hearing included Foxworthy, Chief Financial Officer Rita Scallan, school district attorney Mike Mattimore, Butler and OCEA President Karen Peek.

The closed hearing lasted for over an hour, after which participants emerged and said that nothing had been decided.

Following the hearing, Spurlock told the Beacon that as arbitrator, his role was to listen to oral statements from both sides, gather post-hearing briefs and other documents submitted by the school district and the union, and if the two parties did not reach an agreement of their own, "to weigh the evidence and issue an award within 30 to 90 days."

Mattimore told the Beacon that most of the discussion Friday was devoted to "procedural issues," and that the next step in the proceedings will be some time in late May or early June—possibly on May 24. The school district lawyer said the main procedural issue discussed had been whether Spurlock, as arbitrator, actually has the authority to make a binding judgment about the pay dispute, or whether a Jan. 4, 2012, hearing before the elected members of the Okaloosa School Board had produced a final and binding decision when the school board unanimously rejected the step pay increases.

Events leading up to Friday's arbitration hearing were:

In October 2011, the school board declared an impasse in negotiations with the OCEA over pay issues. The school board argued that it didn't have enough money for seniority, or "step" pay raises for veteran teachers, and froze teachers' salaries for the current school year. OCEA argued that step increases, which on average give returning teachers an annual pay raise of about 3 percent, were required under the existing contract between the union and the school district.

A special magistrate attempted to mediate the impasse, and after hearing arguments from each side in October, issued a report and recommendations in November. However, both the school board and the union rejected the special magistrate's recommendations.

With the rejection of the special magistrate's report, the next step toward resolving the

pay dispute was a "quasi-judicial hearing" during a special meeting of the Okaloosa School board held Jan. 4 in the Niceville High School auditorium, in which the elected school board members moved from being one of the antagonists in the pay dispute to being the judge and jury.

During the Jan. 4 hearing at Niceville High, which was attended by many teachers, the position of the school district administration was presented by Mattimore, a labor-relations lawyer for the district. Mattimore showed budget figures indicating that the school district has lost revenue during the last several years from local property taxes, state aid to education, and federal economic stimulus programs, while costs for such things as utilities, insurance and school operations have steadily increased. He said the district cannot sustain the recurring costs of the proposed step pay hikes.

Also presented were figures showing that Okaloosa teachers last year were the fifth highest-paid among Florida's 67 school districts. The figures showed the average Okaloosa teacher was paid \$51,082 for about nine months of work, behind only the high-cost counties of Monroe, Sarasota, Collier and Dade.

If pay were raised further, Mattimore said at the Jan. 4 meeting, it would probably force the district to take other, more-painful cost-cutting measures such as across-the-board pay cuts, furloughs or layoffs of some teachers. He said the contract between the district and the union permits the district to move teachers up to higher pay "steps" based on time in service, but without actually adding to their pay at this time.

Butler spoke next at the Jan. 4 meeting, presenting the union's position, with a different interpretation of the numbers. He said the school district has routinely budgeted more money for teacher pay than it has actually spent each year, and has about \$14 million available to cover teacher pay hikes. He said that the contract between the teachers union and the school district mandates step pay increases, and that the district is obligated

to live up to the labor contract.

Peek also spoke, saying she knew the district faces a tough financial situation, but "it is time to get creative, to plan and work together" to find the money needed for the step increases.

Peek said the union and its members have done their best to help the district cut costs by using more associate rather than regular teachers, using cheaper computers and other measures.

Peek also reminded the school board that at a previous meeting she had promised them that if the time came to withhold pay raises for teachers, she and other OCEA members would understand. But, she said, "This is not the time, and we do not understand!" and displayed a briefing slide to emphasize her statement.

At the conclusion of the Jan. 4 presentations, the school board immediately put the proposed step pay hikes to a vote, deciding unanimously against the increases.

Dissatisfied with that outcome, the OCEA filed a grievance and requested the binding arbitration hearing which was held Friday. Mattimore, however, said there is no way that an arbitrator can reverse what the elected school board decided. He said that state law gives the elected school board the final say on pay issues.

Following Friday's hearing, Mattimore again told the Beacon that he believes the school board's Jan. 4 decision to be the final and binding word on the pay dispute.

Peek also spoke briefly with the Beacon following Friday's arbitration hearing, saying only that the next step toward resolving the dispute will be for both sides to file briefs with Spurlock, and then to meet again in late May or early June to see what Spurlock has decided by then.

Spurlock, asked what could happen if no decision is reached through arbitration, said the two parties could then file suit against each other in circuit court. He added, however, that resolving such disputes through binding arbitration, if possible, is usually much quicker and less expensive than a lawsuit.

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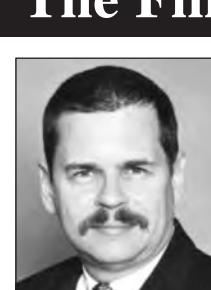


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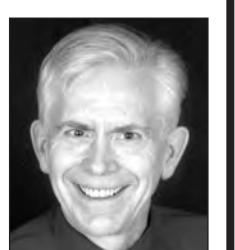
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Getting better with age

Hal Pruett, Niceville, spent part of the afternoon of Monday, his 80th birthday, windsurfing on Boggy Bayou. The Korean War veteran has been windsurfing for 30 years. He tries to spend at least an hour on the water each day.

Beacon photo by Tess Hollis



JUDGE

From page A-1

path."

Although Rowe graduated from Vanderbilt University with a bachelor of arts in classical languages, she found herself back in Florida, where she received a joint master's of business administration and Juris Doctor from Florida State University's College of Law.

"I knew I wanted to practice law in Florida, and I only applied to law schools in Florida," she said.

Rowe began her career in 1997 as an Assistant Attorney General in the Antitrust Section of the Florida Attorney General's office, working on "white-collar" crime cases, under Attorney General Bob Butterworth, a Democrat.

After a brief stint at a law firm, Rowe again worked for the Attorney General as Director of Multistate Litigation, and then as Assistant Deputy Attorney General. She was subsequently appointed Executive Deputy Attorney General by Attorney General Charlie Crist.

Later, Rowe worked on Crist's campaign for governor. After the Republican was elected Florida's 44th governor in 2006, Crist asked Rowe to serve as his Deputy Chief of Staff overseeing 10 state agencies.

"I was exposed to the legislative process while working in the governor's office, and I was able to work with constituents and see how legislation affected them," Rowe said.

In 2009, two vacancies opened on the Tallahassee-based First District Court of Appeal, where 15 judges sit. The First District spans North Florida, from Escambia County to Duval County, and is the largest of Florida's five appeals-court districts. It is also the busiest as measured by case filings—6,855 in fiscal year 2010, the most recent figures available.

When Rowe made the decision to submit an application for the judgeship, she was pregnant with her second child.

After submitting the application, Rowe was nominated by the First District Judicial Nominating Commission for the position, then appointed by Crist. At the age of 39, Rowe was one of the youngest appeals judges in Florida. Shortly after being nominated, she gave birth and began her tenure.

Every six years during elections, Florida appellate judges go through a retention election, in which their names appear on the ballot. The voter is asked to check "yes" or "no" to retain the judge for another six years. Rowe was retained in 2010, and will come up on the ballot again in 2016.

"This is my dream job," she said. "I would love to retire on the First District Court of Appeal."

The state's five courts of appeal chiefly handle civil and criminal appeals from the state's trial courts. Because it is headquartered in Florida's capital, the First District Court of Appeal also handles the bulk of appeals of decisions of state agencies—1,459 in fiscal 2010.

"As an appellate judge, you have the ability to think about the law, and provide guidance to the trial court," Rowe said. "It's stimulating from an academic standpoint."

A typical day for Rowe consists of "lots of reading." For each case, there are typically three briefs that each judge must read, which range from 30 to 50 pages apiece. She must also look at the complete record of each case, including all proceedings before the trial court. Each case, Rowe said, requires some level of analysis.

"The most rewarding part of my job is providing a resolution to important disputes for the people we serve," she said. "Most of the time, district court is the end of the line for cases, that brings finality to the dispute."

The most important part of her job, Rowe said, is exercis-

ing proper judgment in deciding each case before the court, while recognizing the limits of judicial authority.

"Appellate courts are courts of limited jurisdiction," she said, "and it is critical that judges exercise proper restraint in performing the responsibilities of their offices."

While Rowe deals with many difficult cases, including child-abuse and violent crimes, she said she does not allow her personal feelings to affect her vote on the outcome, which is

typically decided by a three-judge panel.

"Our job is to look at the law and look at the facts of each case," she said. "Sometimes those facts stay with you, of an individual case, but no personal bias enters into it. As a judge, I am bound to follow the rule of law."

The First District Court of Appeal has traveling panels, which Rowe said she would like to see more of. The traveling three-judge panels hear cases in different parts of the district.



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THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith

What do you think about the shooting death of Trayvon Martin?

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"I think a Neighborhood Watch person should have just called the police and let them handle it."



"I honestly think that poor family needs justice by now. He shouldn't have been shot."



"Any time a human being is shot it disgusts me. The fact that there has been no arrest really makes me angry."



"I have a Florida concealed weapons permit myself, and you have to use restraint in using a weapon unless it's really a matter of life or death. I would be more likely to use my weapon to defend someone else than myself. I think Zimmerman should have shown more restraint."



"I don't think it's right. Trayvon Martin wasn't doing anything wrong."

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William Clements, 55,
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engineer

Alexia Hinds, 16,
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Niceville High School
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First report released on fatal plane crash

Kit-built craft had turned back to Ruckel Airport when it hit treetops

By Del Lessard

Beacon Staff Writer

Federal aviation inspectors released a preliminary report on a plane crash in Niceville that killed the two men aboard.

Donald Marco, 59, of Niceville, and Stanley Bloyer, 66, of Fort Walton Beach, were identified by sheriff's deputies as the two who died March 15 when Marco's small kit-built plane crashed and burned in the woods of Eglin's military reservation north of Forest Road in Niceville.

The National Transportation Safety Board report, released Sunday, does not give the cause of the crash, which occurred at about 12:55 p.m. as the amateur-built Emeraude CP-130 approached the grass airstrip at Ruckel Airport. Visual flight conditions prevailed at the time of the crash, meaning visibility was considered good. No flight

plan had been filed.

The two men had been flying to Holt to submit the plane to a condition inspection by a mechanic, according to the NTSB, but turned around to return to Ruckel Airport because of "too much military traffic in the area," according to the NTSB report.

Both men were certified airline pilots, according to the NTSB report.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration inspector, Marco, owner of the single-engine airplane, had lost his FAA medical certificate due to injuries he sustained in an earlier accident, but was about two weeks from qualifying for a new one. He sustained severe head injuries in June 2008 when the kit-built airplane he was piloting crashed at Ruckel Airport. Visual flight conditions prevailed at the time of the crash, meaning visibility was considered good. No flight

the fatal crash.

Marco, who was not the airplane's builder of the craft that crashed last month, had intended to fly it to the Yellow River Airstrip in Holt, but needed the other pilot to act as the pilot in command, according to the NTSB report.

The FAA inspector told the NTSB that the mechanic who was going to conduct the condition inspection reported that Marco had not expressed any concerns about the craft's airworthiness.

The FAA inspector also reported that Marco's wife was on her way to Holt to pick up the two men when her husband called her on a cell phone to advise that there was "too much military traffic in the area" and that they were going to return to Ruckel Airport.

There were no witnesses to the ensuing crash, the NTSB



Beacon photo by Del Lessard

Federal officials released a preliminary report on a small-plane crash in Niceville March 15 that killed the two men aboard.

report stated.

Preliminary information didn't indicate which pilot was in which seat. It was not immediately clear whether the plane had dual controls.

The plane crashed a little more than a half mile north of

the Ruckel Airport. The craft was oriented on a heading of about 80 degrees when it hit treetops about 15 feet above the ground, leaving a two-foot section of the right wing in a tree.

Sheriff's deputies found the wreckage ablaze. The bodies of

both occupants were found about 60 feet in front of the main fuselage, according to the NTSB.

The NTSB said the report contained preliminary information, and was subject to correction in a forthcoming final report.

would cause the estimated \$4.84 monthly rate increase to customers over the next two years.

There are two things in play causing the expected rate hikes, Stephens said.

First, the NVOC Regional Sewer Board recently awarded a \$6 million construction contract to improve the existing treatment plant and build a Rapid Infiltration Bed System (RIBS) to dispose of the treated effluent in the ground. Engineering and design costs bring the total upgrade to about \$6.5 million.

The modification uses a different technology to remove more nitrates and phosphorus from the treated sewage. The upgrade became necessary because the regional utility was ordered by state environmental regulators to reduce effluent polluting groundwater at its sprayfields near Niceville.

The RIBS portion of the upgrade is also expected to reduce the size of sprayfields on leased Eglin land, thereby avoiding expected rental fees from the base, which implemented a new policy charging market value for leasing military land.

The second factor behind the expected rate hike is that Niceville recently accepted a

Please see SEWER, page A-5

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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

Neal Edward Goodrich, unemployed, 24, of 362-B Lincoln Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by Valparaiso police March 22 on charges of domestic violence battery and resisting arrest without violence.

Jessica Renee Jones, 31, of 601 Cinco Terrace Lane, Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Valparaiso police April 1 on a charge of battery on a law enforcement officer. While being detained in a holding cell at the police station, Jones allegedly slipped off her handcuffs and began striking the cell bars and cell wall with a closed fist. When two officers entered the cell to re-cuff Jones she allegedly kneed one of the officers in the groin. She was subsequently restrained with leg restraints and handcuffs.

James Melvin Garner, a deck hand, 36, of 1026 Everglade Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 20 on misdemeanor worthless check charges, three counts.

Randall Keith Patrick, a landscaper, 33, of 1339 Treasure Cove, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 21 on a charge of failure to appear on an original misdemeanor charge.

James Tobias Smit, a roofer, 36, of 304 Reeves St., Lot B20, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 26 on a charge of failure to appear on an original charge of shoplifting.

Richard Scott Chancey, 46, of 211 Edrehi Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 27 on a charge of violation of probation on the original charge of grand theft from a person 65 or older.

A 14-year-old Niceville boy, a student, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 29 on a charge of battery, domestic violence. The boy allegedly sprayed his father in the mouth with bug spray subsequent to a verbal altercation over an iPod that had been taken away from the boy as punishment.

Wesley Loren Hughes, 38, of 346 Chicago Ave., Valparaiso,

was arrested by sheriff's deputies in Mary Esther, March 28, on a charge of loitering or prowling.

Cassandra Jean Novinski, 21, of 304 Reeves St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 23 on a charge of violation of probation on the original charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and offer to commit prostitution.

Aaron Deering Odle, unemployed, 25, of 282 Washington Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 30 on a charge of failure to appear on an original charge of shoplifting.

Kayla Mechelle Ailey, unemployed, 21, of 282 Washington Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by Niceville police April 2 on charges of possession of controlled substance without prescription, two counts, and possession of drug paraphernalia, one count. Subsequent to a traffic stop for a seat belt violation Ailey, a passenger in the vehicle, allegedly consented to a search of her purse in which a methadone pill and an Alprazolam pill were located.

Bradley Grimland Wendt, a landscaper, 37, of 1 Stafford Circle, Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Niceville police March 27 on charges of violation of a domestic violence injunction and knowingly driving while license suspended or revoked.

Evin Farrel Pace, 27, who was listed with two addresses, 515 Nassau Drive, Niceville, and 823 Saint Pierre Cove, Niceville, and Michael J. Ryan, 46, of 107 Kelly Road, Niceville, were arrested by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop, March 30, each charged with possession of controlled substance without a prescription.

Pace allegedly had a container in his right front watch pocket containing Dilaudid and Oxycodone pills. He allegedly told police that there were more prescription pills in a cigarette pack in the center console belonging to Ryan, the passenger. Pace was also cited for violating the business-purposes-only restriction on his driver's license.

A Niceville resident from the 400 block of Kelly Road reported March 27 that a video game

THE BAY BEACON

DUI arrests

Erin Colleen Ellis, 28, of 155 Glenegles Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI, third violation in 10 years, on Highway 85, south of Highway 123, northbound on Highway 85, March 29 at 4:02 a.m.

Brandon Michael Grim, 24, of 310 St. Andrews Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI on Emerald Coast Parkway west of Trista Terrace Court, Destin, March 28 at 1:48 a.m.

Caitlyn Hueston Worthen, 22, of 142 Baywind Drive, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police for DUI at State Road 285 and College Boulevard, March 31 at 1:51 p.m. Worthen was also charged with knowingly driving while license suspended or revoked, and was cited for failure to signal during a lane change.

Thefts

A Valparaiso resident from the 300 block of Okaloosa Avenue reported that sometime March 26-27 unknown person(s) stole his son's BMX style bicycle from the front yard of the residence. The bike was valued at \$120.

A Niceville resident from the 1600 block of Gum Creek Cove reported that sometime March 19-25 unknown person(s) stole his golf clubs from his parked vehicle while he was out of town.

A Niceville resident from the 1900 block of Palmetto Palm Circle reported that \$250 in change was stolen from his vehicle sometime March 23-24.

A Niceville resident from the 1600 block of Date Palm Drive reported that at least \$10 in change was stolen from her vehicle sometime March 22-23.

A Niceville resident from the 300 block of Evergreen Avenue reported that unknown person(s) stole a lawn spreader, three bicycles, two plastic storage bins of Christmas ornaments and a clear bin containing four Airsoft guns, two BB guns, three baseball gloves and three tennis rackets March 27. The victim was cleaning out the garage and left the items on the driveway for approximately an hour while he and a relative ate lunch at a local restaurant.

A Niceville resident from the 400 block of Kelly Road reported March 27 that a video game

of the \$2.3 million deal, while Okaloosa County commissioners gave their approval to the transfer on April 3. The county has asked the city of Valparaiso to also approve the transfer of ownership.

The \$2.3 million deal will be paid for out of Niceville's sewer extension fund reserves, officials said. The reserves are funded by money developers pay as sewer impact fees on new construction.

An estimated \$2.53 increase in Niceville customers monthly sewer bills will come as a result of Niceville buying the county's share of the NVOC treatment capacity, Stephens said. Niceville's current 43.6 percent ownership of the regional utility will increase to 80 percent when it takes over the county's share, meaning the city will be responsible for paying a much bigger share of day-to-day operations and maintenance costs.

Stephens said Niceville sewer customers could expect to pay an additional \$2.31 per

month over the next two years because of the increased operations and maintenance costs, including higher chemical and electrical costs, associated with the \$6.5 million upgrade to the regional sewer treatment plant.

Currently Niceville's average water and sewer customer uses 7,000 gallons of water each month, according to City Clerk Dan Doucet. Niceville sewer customer currently pay \$2.46 per thousand for sewer, or \$17.22 per month. In addition, there is a flat rate sewer charge of \$17.60 whether customers use any water, bringing the current total sewer charge to \$34.82.

Stephens said purchasing the county's sewer capacity means Niceville sewer customers can avoid an even bigger rate hike by 2018, the year Niceville would be forced to expand the regional sewer treatment plant by 1 million gallons if it didn't buy the county's sewer treatment capacity.

system and \$22 in currency had been stolen.

A Niceville resident reported that unknown person(s) burglarized her vehicle and stole her purse, wallet and miscellaneous credit cards April 1 while the vehicle was parked at a local convenience store, 146 N. Palm Blvd.

A Valparaiso resident from the 200 block of Washington Avenue reported that unknown person(s) stole a prepaid cell phone valued at \$90, prescription medication valued at \$104, a \$50 DVD player and a bag of miscellaneous clothing valued at \$200, sometime March 30-31 while the victim was gone and the door to the residence was unsecured.

Criminal Mischief

Vandal(s) broke a window on a county water and sewer sanitation lift station in the 1800 block of East John Sims Parkway, Niceville, sometime March 23-26. Damage was estimated at more than \$200.

Other

Weston Anderson Payne, 19, of 8304 County Road 24, Fairhope, Ala., Taylor Ashton Fleming, 19, of 9720 Chariot Ave., Fairhope, Ala., and a 17-year-old Alabama boy were issued criminal summons by Niceville police March 23, each charged with underage possession of alcohol.

Susan Rebecca Akers, 48, of 107 21st St., Niceville, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies March 25 on a charge of giving false information to a law enforcement officer.

On March 25, a motorcyclist on the Mid-Bay Bridge reported one of two "chopper" style bikes following him pulled alongside and tried to force him into the wall of the bridge at 7:30 p.m. The motorcyclist said he accelerated and passed a couple of cars while in the break-down lane, at speeds up to 80 mph, in an effort to get away from the suspect, who was following him.

When the motorcyclist got to the toll booth at the north end of the bridge, the driver of the "chopper" got in front of him and knocked him off his motorcycle with a blow to the chest, while cursing and yelling about the motorcyclist "cutting him off." The "chopper" driver and his female passenger, plus the second "chopper" then left the scene, according to a witness.

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from April 1, 2012 through April 8, 2012.

1 Structure Fire	25 Emergency Medical Calls	Date	Time
0 Vehicle Fire	3 Vehicle Crash	04/01/12	09:03
0 Other Fire	0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication	04/01/12	16:01
0 Illegal Burn	2 Other Emergency Calls	04/01/12	17:44
0 False Alarms	0 Hazardous Conditions	04/01/12	19:12
Street	Situation	Date	Time
Linden Avenue	Medical	04/01/12	19:12
Elderberry Lane	Medical	04/01/12	16:01
Mullet Creek Run	Medical	04/01/12	17:44
SR 85 North	Medical	04/01/12	19:12
N. Palm Blvd.	Medical	04/02/12	13:35
S. Palm Blvd.	Medical	04/02/12	14:43
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	04/02/12	15:49
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/03/12	12:21
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/03/12	13:49
Honeysuckle Way	Medical	04/03/12	19:20
Iowa Street	Medical	04/04/12	08:36
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Structure Fire	04/04/12	15:21
Azalea Drive	Medical	04/04/12	17:44
Yellow Pine Court	Medical	04/04/12	18:18
Hart Street	Alarm Activation	04/04/12	22:50
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/05/12	00:57
Linden Avenue	Medical	04/05/12	12:14
E. College Blvd.	Medical	04/05/12	16:07
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/05/12	21:14
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/05/12	22:30
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/06/12	14:19
23rd Street	Medical	04/06/12	14:29
Oak Avenue	Medical	04/06/12	19:01
Allen Street	Medical	04/06/12	19:40
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/07/12	01:56
Kendrick Lane	Medical	04/07/12	14:35
Garden Lane	Medical	04/07/12	19:14
Sparkleberry Cove	Smoke Scare	04/08/12	08:00
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	04/08/12	11:58
Reeves Street	Medical	04/08/12	15:29
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	04/08/12	21:42

Weekly Safety Tip: Run cool water over a burn for 10 to 15 minutes, never apply ice. It is dangerous to put butter or any other grease on a burn, because it seals in the heat and can damage the tissue further, if the burned skin blisters or is charred see a doctor immediately. Please look at the Niceville Fire Department web page on Facebook.

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from April 2, 2012 through April 8, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
SR 293 & Lancaster Drive	Motor vehicle accident	04/02/12	01:07
Lancaster Drive	Passenger vehicle fire	04/02/12	09:36
Merchants Way	Dispatched and canceled	04/02/12	11:43
Merchants Way	Medical assist	04/04/12	01:51
North White Point Road	Rescue, EMS incident	04/04/12	03:24
Sailboat Drive	Bomb scare, no bomb	04/04/12	10:09
John Sims Parkway	Dispatched and canceled	04/04/12	15:22
Northridge Road	EMS call	04/04/12	22:16
23rd Street	EMS call	04/06/	

RBCS students participate in annual Work-A-Thon



Beacon photos by Tess Hollis

Teachers, parents and students from Rocky Bayou Christian School served the elderly in the Niceville-Valparaiso communities by participating in the school's annual Work-A-Thon on April 5. During the Work-A-Thon, students perform clean-up tasks for the elderly and families in need of assistance. Above left; from left, RBCS juniors Mariah Colvin and Peyton Preston hold a lawn bag for parent volunteer Curt Christianson at a house in Valparaiso. Above right; from left, RBCS third graders Anne Marie Mistretta, Payton Fowler and Miranda Hood take a break from bagging leaves at a house in Niceville.

Who's News

Victoria Marks, a junior at Niceville High School, won the Florida Christopher Columbus Essay Contest for the second year in a row, after winning the Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter competition. Victoria was honored at the March 2012 Florida State Society Daughters of the American Revolution State Conference in Orlando. Victoria's essay topic was "Christopher Columbus in his own time in history and today."



Steven Foster of Niceville received his First Class Rank Award from Boy Scout Troop

157, Niceville, on April 2. John Snell is Foster's scoutmaster.

The **parishioners** of Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church on Whitepoint Road donated more than 100 Easter baskets to **Sharing & Caring**, Niceville, which distributed the donations to clients the week before Easter. Each basket contained Easter

Please see WHO'S, page B-2

Ruckel student wins regional cooking contest

By Tess Hollis
Beacon Staff Writer

A Ruckel Middle School student, who recently won the Sodexo Future Chefs contest in Niceville, was surprised to learn that she is a regional winner of the contest.

Larry Haile, local Sodexo general manager, gave seventh-grader Lauren Matthews the good news on April 4 at the school, surrounded by her parents John and Louisa, and principal Dr. Debra Goolsby.

"I am very surprised," said Lauren, who was the only winner from Florida.

Lauren's winning dish was a "Scrumptious Breakfast Frittata," complete with jalapenos, spinach, tomatoes, onions and mushrooms. Haile said judges rate the food on the basis of originality, ease of preparation, kid appeal, healthy attributes, and use of featured ingredients and presentation. This year's theme was breakfast foods.

"The purpose of this contest is to educate students about nutrition," Haile said.

As one of 30 regional winners, Lauren won a 3M Shoot & Share video camera and projector. Lauren also had a chance to become one of five national finalists, but did not make the cut.

The five finalists will compete in the national competition in May, and will be required to shoot a video with the new camera for the judging panel at the Sodexo headquarters in Gaithersburg, Md. The video will include the winner preparing and talking about their winning recipe.

"There were some really close battles in the scoring, and the judges were impressed with all of the entries," said Sodexo Director



The recipe for Lauren's award-winning "Scrumptious Breakfast Frittata." Right, Lauren's presentation of the frittata dish during the Sodexo Future Chefs contest.

of Offer Development Brian Finn. "Unfortunately, at the end of the day, only five finalists could advance. In the coming weeks, we will review all 79 winning event recipes for consideration for use in the Promotion Series."

Even though Lauren did not

Please see CONTEST, page B-2

Recipe for Scrumptious Breakfast Frittata

Recipe Ingredients:

— eggs, 8	— sharp cheddar cheese, 1/2 cup
— olive oil, 1 tbsp.	— rosemary, 1 tsp.
— milk, skimmed, 1/4 cup	— garlic, 1 clove crushed
— green bell pepper and Serrano pepper	— onion, 1 medium
— spinach, 8 oz.	— pinch of salt and pepper
— mushrooms, 8	— tomato (garnish)
— potatoes, 3 medium	



Preparation Method:

1. Wash all vegetables, in a large deep frying pan turn on low heat.
2. Dice potatoes (skin on), add oil to pan and stir in potatoes, turn heat to medium.
3. Dice onion, green bell pepper and add to pan. Lightly chop and
4. Crush garlic, add to mixture. Test potatoes and adjust heat. Add salt and pepper.
5. Finely dice Serrano pepper, add to pan. Wash hands, DO NOT touch your face.
6. Slice mushrooms (thick), add to pan; add spinach, turn temperature to low and cover.
7. Break 8 eggs into large bowl and whisk, pour egg mixture into pan, mix lightly.
8. Leave on medium setting until cooked, turn broiler onto high temperature, when eggs have a very slight movement of top eggs, put under broiler. Remove from broiler.



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RMS seventh-graders win reef naming contest

Students from Carol Szklarski's seventh grade advanced life sciences class display their certificates after winning the Okaloosa County reef naming contest. The name, "ALE Reef," was student Desreee Manard's idea.

Beacon photo by Tess Hollis



Students from Carol Szklarski's seventh grade advanced life sciences class at Ruckel Middle School recently won a reef naming contest sponsored by the Okaloosa County Public Works Department.

Scott Henson, environmental regulation manager and artificial reef program manager for the county, presented the class on April 3 with a plaque and certificates. The name of the artificial reef, the idea of student Desreee Manard, will be "ALE Reef," which stands for Aquatic Life Eco-System.

The plaque will be attached to the reef, which will be deployed into the Gulf of

Mexico this summer. The artificial reefs, Henson said, attract fish and create a marine life habitat, in an otherwise "desert" that is the Gulf of Mexico. Fishermen are also made aware of the reefs, therefore it is easier to locate large schools of fish.

The reefs are made from materials such as concrete and metal, and are sometimes old ships that are deployed to the bottom of the Gulf. Because of the migratory patterns of Gulf Sturgeon, fish that move from rivers to the Gulf, reefs are placed at least a mile off shore.

Henson said reefs are often monitored by divers to clear old fishing lines, and also ensure

there is no pollution surrounding the reefs.

"Thirty years might go by, and one day you may be diving off the coast and see the plaque attached to your reef," Henson told the class. "It may not mean a lot to you now, but one day it will."

Henson said it's important to raise awareness about reef projects, because it benefits everyone in the community.

"We want to make sure that students are aware of these programs, and know they are out there," he said. "We try to do as much public outreach as possible."

Henson added that the county

plans to hold another reef naming contest next year, but he wants to make it more challenging.

"We might have them write an essay next year, or do something a little bit harder," he said. "We want them to do something that connects the students to the reef."

Szklarski said programs such as the reef naming contest are important because it gets students excited about science at a young age.

"They're our future scientists," she said. "I hope they will carry this through their adulthood, and it will eventually effect their career paths."



Military members support Children in Crisis

Volunteers from Hurlburt Field Detachment 3, 342nd Training Squadron of the Tactical Airlift Control Party (TACP), assisted Ken Hair, Niceville, president/CEO of Children in Crisis, in the sixth annual CIC Charity Golf Tournament. The tournament raised more than \$40,000 in funds.

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Courtesy photo

Members of one of Niceville High School's choral ensembles prepares for their assessment on March 29 at the Music Performance Assessment Concerts.

NHS choirs receive Superior ratings at festival

Special to the Beacon

The Florida Vocal Association's District 1 (Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties) Choral Music Performance Assessment Concerts were held March 29 and 30 at the First Baptist Church of Niceville. More than 40 middle school and high school choruses sang during the two-day evaluation.

Niceville High School entered six choruses in the non-competitive assessment, an annual festival designed to evaluate secondary level choruses by certified adjudicators. Three women's choruses performed: Kantorai (freshmen), Bel Canto (sophomores), and Select Women (juniors and seniors). In addition, Camerata (men), Niceville Singers and Chamber Singers (auditioned mixed chorus selected from all grades).

Ratings are awarded along with written commentary that details the strengths and weakness of each choruses from three judges.

Also included in the adjudication is sight-reading. The sight-reading judge scores each chorus as they read a rhythmic

and harmonic exercise that they have never seen before. The assessment is often referred to as the chorus FCAT.

The highest rating is Superior, a performance with few faults and considered an example of the top tier of presentation. Other ratings include Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor. Overall final scores are obtained by averaging all four of the judges final rating.

All six choirs from Niceville High School received Superior ratings from all judges for the performance of their prepared selections, as well as in sight-reading. This spring marks the 21st consecutive year that each chorus from the Niceville Choral Music Department has earned overall Superior ratings at the District 1 Music Performance Assessment.

The choral music program at Niceville High School has 160 singers and is a part of the music department that includes the Niceville bands. The combined number of musicians receiving instruction at Niceville High School is nearly 500, one of the largest and most recognized music programs in Florida.

CONTEST

From page B-1



Sharing & Caring

candy, a toothbrush and toothpaste. The church members provided the basket fillings, with church members Tom Okuly, Paul Dooley, Rhonda Wercinski, Ashleigh Ebner and Kayla Ebner lending assistance in basket preparation. Also assisting were Ruthie Reynoso and Maria Lewis, of Holy Name of Jesus Christ Catholic Church, Niceville; Gary and Gloria Witkos of St. Jude's Episcopal Church, Niceville; and Lisa Gamon of Niceville United Methodist Church. The purpose of Sharing & Caring is to meet emergency needs of families in the Niceville and Valparaiso area.

the news.

The competitors in the local contest were selected from recipes submitted to Sodexo. This year, more than 50 local students applied, and 11 were chosen to compete. Nationally, about 600 students entered the contest.

"Ruckel students are multidimensional and have traditionally shown excellence in academic, athletics and the arts," Goolsby said. "...Now, I'm so proud to say that Lauren Matthews has championed yet a new area of excellence; culinary."

Haile said only middle schools competed in the contest, but Sodexo hopes to expand to include elementary schools next year.

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Niceville twirlers win at state competition

Three of Niceville's Twinkling Twirlers competed and won at the National Baton Twirler's Association Florida State Solo Baton Twirling Championship. The competition was held in Winter Haven on March 31. Jessica Warsheski (ninth grade Niceville High School) earned first place in the State Novice 13-15 solo category, and won the overall Twirl Off for the novice category.

Kylee Saltsman (first grade Plew Elementary) earned several first place awards including State Novice 0-6 Solo, Open Solo, Marching, Modeling and the overall Novice 0-6 Basic Skills title.

Lexi Kirkpatrick (seventh grade Rocky Bayou Christian School) earned second place in Novice 10-12 State Strut Queen. All three of these girls, in addition to nine other Twinkling Twirlers are now preparing for the Miss Majorette of Florida competition on April 28 in Orlando. The Twinkling Twirlers are coached by Amanda Saltsman at Niceville United Methodist Church.



Three of the Twinkling Twirlers who won at the Florida Solo Baton Twirling Championship. From left: Jessica Warsheski, Kylee Saltsman, Lexi Kirkpatrick.

Courtesy photo



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Bluewater students raise funds for Relay for Life

Bluewater Elementary fourth graders Cole Pearson and Emmaline Moye spent part of their spring break raising money for the American Cancer Society. Their frozen lemonade stand raised \$65 in less than three hours. They donated the money to their school's Relay for Life team. Relay for Life will be May 4 and 5, at Niceville High School.

Courtesy photo



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Niceville High School testing schedule

The following is the testing schedule for Niceville High School:

—April 16: ROTC ASVAB Test, 11th and 12th grades

—April 16-19: FCAT 2.0 Reading, 9th and 10th grades

—April 23-27: U.S. History Field Test EOC

—April 30-May 4: Geometry EOC

—May 7-11: Biology EOC

—May 14-18: Algebra I EOC

Senior Exams:

—May 21: 1st Period, 7-8:45 a.m.; 2nd Period, noon-1:45 p.m.

—May 22: 3rd Period, 7-8:45 a.m.; 4th Period, noon-1:45 p.m.

—May 23: 5th Period, 7-8:45 a.m.; 6th Period, noon-1:45 p.m.

—May 24: 7th Period, 7-8:45 a.m.

Grades 9-11 Exams:

—May 29: 1st Period, 7-8:40 a.m.; 2nd Period, 9:50-11:30 a.m.

—May 30: 3rd Period, 7-8:40 a.m.; 4th Period, 9:50-11:30 a.m.

—May 31: 5th Period, 7-8:40 a.m.; 6th Period, 9:50-11:30 a.m.

—June 1: Last day of school, school begins at 7 a.m.; 7th Period exam 7:45-9:25 a.m.



Courtesy photo

Senior Center holds St. Patrick's party

The Valparaiso Senior Center held a St. Patrick's Day party on March 16. A going away party was also held for Mary Russel, of Glenview Avenue, who is going to visit her other children in Las Vegas and California. Mary was the Wii bowling tournament winner for the week, and was presented a regulation bowling pin, which was signed by all members present. Tom Jackley, site manager, right, presented the pin to Mary. If you are 60 or older, and are looking for some fun, entertainment and daily lunches, please call the office for more information at 833-9291.

Engagement

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.

Peacock-Griswold

Robin and Kathy Peacock of Niceville announce the engagement of their daughter, Erin Elizabeth, to Andrew Wood Griswold, son of Matthew and Tweedie Griswold of Roswell, Ga.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Niceville High School and Auburn University, where she received a bachelor of arts degree in psychology. She is currently employed as a Technical Recruiter with Veredus Corporation in Atlanta, Ga.

The prospective groom is a



Andrew Griswold and Erin Peacock

graduate of Roswell High School and the University of Tennessee, where he received a bachelor of science degree in history. He is currently employed as a Lead Recruiter with Prestige Staffing in Atlanta, Ga.

The wedding will take place June 2, 2012, at The Chapel at Crosspoint, Santa Rosa Beach.

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NHS ranks high among Florida high schools

Niceville High School has been placed in the top 10 percent of all high schools in Florida in the 2011 ranking of Florida schools by the Florida Department of Education.

"It is an honor for Niceville High School to be ranked in the top 10 percent of schools in the state of Florida," said NHS

Principal Marcus Chambers. "NHS is a very high achieving school with very talented students, faculty and staff. Our community expects nothing but the best from us, and we expect nothing but the best from our students. NHS focuses on student achievement, exceeding educational standards, and striving to be the best."

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CALENDAR

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

Free tax preparation

Tax-aide volunteers are providing free income tax preparation for taxpayers with low-to-moderate income, with special attention to those age 60 and older at the Niceville Library, Monday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.;

Wednesday and

Saturday from 9 a.m.-1

p.m., by appointment only. Make your

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 if you want your refund direct deposited.

Nicotine Anonymous

Want to quit smoking? If you have a desire to stop using nicotine, or stay stopped, join Nicotine Anonymous on

Thursdays at 7 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 1800 John Sims Parkway. Info: Gwynn or Andy, 897-4721, or show up to the meetings.

Senior activities

The Walton-Okalooa County Council on Aging Senior Programs will offer the following for people 60 and older at Valparaiso Senior Center, 268 Glenview Ave., 833-9291. April 11, bingo, 9:30 a.m.; April 12, Wii bowling, 9:30 a.m.; April 13, bingo, 9:30 a.m.; April 16, dominoes and socializing; April 17, bingo, 9:30 a.m.

Mystery book group

The Mystery Lovers book discussion group at the Valparaiso Community Library will meet on April 12, at 10:30 a.m. The library is encouraging new readers from around Okaloosa County and visitors to the area to join the discussion, with Jill White moderating.

"The Secret History" by Donna Tarrt will be the featured book. Info: 729-5406. Reading the book is not mandatory for first-time visitors.

DAR meeting

The Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution will meet April 12, at 10 a.m., at St. Simons on the Sound Episcopal Church, Fort Walton Beach. The Chapter will celebrate its 45th anniversary. State Recording Secretary Cheryl Field will be in attendance for the installation of officers, and a potluck will follow. Open to all women who are lineally descended from a Revolutionary War Patriot. Info: 796-0783.

Twin Cities Seniors

Twin Cities Senior Citizens will meet April 12, at 1 p.m., at 268 Glenview Ave., Valparaiso. Ages 50 and older welcome, and an entree will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share. There will be an Easter hat parade with prizes. Info: 678-4346.

Leadership seminar

The Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host a Servant Leadership seminar on April 12, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the Niceville campus. Registration will be accepted until the session date, space permitting. Info: 729-6880, or nwfsc.edu/LI. The course will cover the servant leadership style that has been practiced across the globe in many successful companies. Cost: \$105.

Garden club meeting

The Bluewater Bay Garden Club will meet on April 12, at 9:30 a.m., at the clubhouse on Bluewater Bay Boulevard. Larry Williams will be there, and members will have a plant sharing. Visitors and new members are welcome. Info: bluewaterbaygardenclub.com.

Fort Walton Beach Aglow

The Fort Walton Beach Aglow will be April 12, at Marina Bay Resort, 80 Miracle Strip Parkway, Fort Walton Beach. The speaker will be Janice Morrisette from Mobile, Ala. Coffee and fellowship will begin at 9:30 a.m., and the meeting will start at 10 a.m. Info: Barbara Williams, 678-1335, or ddubaglow@yahoo.com.

Junior Essentials Night

The transition for juniors becoming seniors can be overwhelming. In an effort to make this transition smooth, Niceville High School will offer its annual Junior Essentials Night on April 12, at 6 p.m., in the NHS Auditorium. This is a night for all juniors and their parents to learn the essentials to be better prepared for the post-secondary process. Topics covered include: Senior resume, senior newsletter, ACT/SAT/CPT testing, college entrance requirements, applying to college, financial aid and Florida Bright Futures scholarships.

RBCS choirs concert

Rocky Bayou Christian School will hold its choirs concert on April 13, at 7 p.m., at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church. Admission is free, and the public is invited. Performing will be the Concert Choir, Chamber Choir and the Chorale.

Audubon annual retreat

The Choctawhatchee Audubon Society will hold its annual retreat April 13-14, at the Shell Island Fish Camp near St. Marks. For reservations, contact Shell Island Fish Camp at 925-6226. Info: Margaret Benner, 678-6665.

NHS Jazz Band dinner

The NHS Jazz Band dinner and silent auction will be April 14, at 6 p.m., at the Community Life Center at Niceville UMC. The cost is \$35 per plate, or \$325 for a premier reserved table for eight. Menu, by Chef Meghan Gordon, includes chicken san marino, roasted potatoes, a salad, vegetable medley, a roll and orange dream or chocolate cake. No special requests, please. For tickets, contact Carol Sarnosky at csarnosky@yahoo.com, or 897-0990.

Genealogical meeting

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County will meet on April



Hannah lost 120 pounds on The Biggest Loser.



Before
After

NWFSC presents 'Women on Wellness' on Friday

A "Women on Wellness" one-day symposium will be held April 13, from 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at Northwest Florida State College's Costa Leadership Institute, Niceville. This educational conference will help women achieve balance and success in life, work and health. The keynote speaker will be Hannah Curlee, "The Biggest Loser" Season 11 runner-up. For information, or to register, visit WomenOnWellness.org, or call 729-6880.

14, at 10 a.m., at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Drive, Valparaiso. The program will be a members' "Show n' Tell." Anyone in the community who is interested in family history is invited to join the group. An optional Dutch treat lunch at a local restaurant will follow the meeting. Info: 678-2023.

Garden club meeting

The Bluewater Bay Sailing Club will hold a "Pick Your Poison" Regatta on April 14. Registration will begin at 10:30 a.m., followed by a Skippers' meeting at 11 a.m., and the start at noon. Entry fee is \$25, with a \$5 credit to U.S. Sailing members, or members of a GYA club. All entrants should have a valid PHRF or X-PHRF certificate. Boats without a valid certificate will be assigned the lowest GYA or national rating for that boat, minus 6 seconds. The regatta headquarters will be at the Bluewater Bay Marina, and the racing area will be located on Choctawhatchee Bay. Info: Denis Duhaime, 855-3285, or dduhaime@gmail.com.

Pregnancy Center 5K

The Pregnancy Center will hold a 5K run/walk, April 14, at 8:30 a.m., Old Spanish Trail Park, Crestview. Registration: \$20 late entry/race day, \$10 kids' fun run. Online registration: active.com. Info: schumann.lori@gmail.com.

YMCA yard sale

The Niceville YMCA will hold a yard sale on April 14, from 8 a.m.-noon, to benefit the YMCA. Bring donations to the Niceville YMCA, 1031 E. John Sims Parkway, or visit the yard sale on April 14. Info: 897-9622.

Birds of Prey

Lisa Miller will present her Birds of Prey at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, 4956 State Highway 20 East, Freeport, on April 14, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Lisa is the Center's Birds of Prey Rehabilitator. Standard admission rates apply. Info: eowlsoncenter.org.

Relay for Life fundraiser

Enjoy lunch or dinner at Cafe Bienville, Niceville, on April 14, from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., and 10 percent of all proceeds will benefit Relay for Life. Info: 678-2223.

Scout-O-Rama

The Choctawhatchee District of the Gulf Coast Council, Boy Scouts of America, will hold its annual Scout-O-Rama on April 14, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., at Uptown Station, Fort Walton Beach. This event is open to all and admission is free. There will be free games, demonstrations, crafts and community information booths. Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and Venture crews will have activities to challenge participants' skills.

Inflatable attractions will be available for children to enjoy at a cost of \$10 per person, or \$25 for the family.

NHS Jazz Band dinner

The NHS Jazz Band dinner and silent auction will be April 14, at 6 p.m., at the Community Life Center at Niceville UMC. The cost is \$35 per plate, or \$325 for a premier reserved table for eight. Menu, by Chef Meghan Gordon, includes chicken san marino, roasted potatoes, a salad, vegetable medley, a roll and orange dream or chocolate cake. No special requests, please. For tickets, contact Carol Sarnosky at csarnosky@yahoo.com, or 897-0990.

Genealogical meeting

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County will meet on April

14, at 10 a.m., at the Tyler Recital Hall in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center on the college's Niceville campus, and again on April 15, at 2:30 p.m., in the atrium of Westwood Retirement Resort at 1001 Mar Walt Drive, Fort Walton Beach. Both concerts are free and open to the public. Info: Robin Horne, 243-2609, or NWFSC Fine Arts, 729-5382.

Navigation class

The USCG Auxiliary Flotilla 1-4

Destin will conduct a navigation/how

to read a nautical chart class on April 18, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Bass Pro Shop in Destin. This course will provide the navigator with the knowledge

to interpret the chart's contents to navigate safely to the destination and return to port. Cost: \$25 per person, and includes a text book and training chart. Pre-registration is requested by April 15. Info: flotilla4.org. To register contact John Ryan at ryanjohnj@hotmail.com, or 623-980-8782.

10th church anniversary

Pastors Walter and Barbara Williams, and the members of All God's Children and the Living Word Worship Center invites the public to the 10th church anniversary celebration on April 15, at 3 p.m., at 40 S. John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso. The special guest will be Pastor W. Earl Williams and the New Hope Church of Laurel Hill. Dinner will be served prior to the service. Info: 678-7632.

Tax Day Rally

The fourth annual Tea Party Tax Day Rally, hosted by the Niceville-Valparaiso Tea Party, will be April 15, from 12:30-3:30 p.m., at Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive. Booths will open at 12:30 p.m., and the program will be from 1-3:30 p.m., rain or shine. Bring lawn chairs. Vendors will be available with food for sale. Visors, books, T-shirts, buttons and U.S. Constitutions will be available for a donation. Info: Joseph Pascarella, 729-2873, or info@emeraldcoastpatriots.org.

Yard sale extravaganza

Saint Paul Lutheran Church will accept donations for its Annual Yard Sale Extravaganza April 15-April 19, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The church will accept anything in usable condition for the sale including: furniture, toys, household items, books, clothing, accessories, electronics and yard tools. The yard sale will be April 21, from 7 a.m.-noon, in the church parking lot, 1407 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville. Proceeds from the yard sale will be used for a Lutheran Scholarship fund, and various other charitable purposes. Info, or for large item pickups, call the church office at 678-1298.

Square dancing

Grab a partner and head over for an introduction to Square Dancing. There will be a free open house on April 16, at 6 p.m., at the Community Life Center, Niceville United Methodist Church. Classes will begin on April 26. Have fun, meet new friends, and enjoy the mental and physical health benefits of square dancing. Info: 678-4515.

Management seminar

The Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host a "Getting the Best Out of Your People" seminar on April 17, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the Niceville campus. Registration will be accepted until the session date, space permitting. Info: 729-6880, or nwfsc.edu/LI. The one-day seminar will cover managing and motivating people successfully to close the gaps between your team's current outcomes and your desired results. Cost: \$105.

Holocaust Remembrance

The Niceville Library, in partnership with the Florida Humanities Council, will sponsor a program of Remembrance for the National Days of Holocaust. The program will be April 17, from 6:30-8 p.m., in the Niceville Community Center. The guest speaker will be Pam Smith, who will provide information on the Holocaust Remembrance. Also, Okaloosa County Sheriff Inspector George Collins will address the issue of human trafficking in Okaloosa County. This event is free and open to the public. Info: Pam Smith, pamsmith2@cox.net, or 678-5484.

Relay for Life meeting

Team captains, volunteers, cancer survivors, and potential sponsors are all invited to attend the last Relay for Life team meeting on April 17, from 6-7 p.m., at Niceville Church of Christ. This will be the last team meeting before the event on May 4. Info: Shelly Nightengale, 244-3813, ext. 3556, or Shelly.Nightengale@cancer.org.

Saltwater Seminar

This month's Emerald Coast Saltwater Seminar Series will be April 18, at 7 p.m., at North Light Marina, Niceville. The seminar will focus on tips and techniques to help catch more king mackerel, as well as proven ways to target bigger fish. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., and there will be free raffles. The seminar is open to everyone. Info: saltwater-events.com, or Joe Z., 516-0709.

Volunteer Day

Northwest Florida State College's PRIME Time program will host Volunteer Day on April 18, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Student Services Center, rooms 132-133, on the college's Niceville campus. Local representatives from a large variety of agencies will be on hand to answer questions about volunteering for their program, or volunteering in the local area. Info: Laura Schultze, 729-6084.

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BEACONSPORTS



Rain halts Ram-Marlin tennis bout

Hatten Huff prepares to return a volley during Thursday's tennis match with Destin at Bluewater Bay Tennis Center. She dropped her match, 6-5. The boys were tied, 2-2, and the girls led, 2-1, before rain halted the matchup. The contest will resume on a date to be determined.

Beacon photo by Jeff Gammons



Knights fall to Ponce

Rocky Bayou Christian School freshman Josh Preston delivers a pitch during Thursday's home baseball game against Ponce de Leon. The Knights couldn't keep the visitors down, though, losing the game, 17-2.

Beacon photo by Jeff Gammons



Lifter seeks state title

Adam Downing, a senior at Rocky Bayou Christian School, earned first place in the 183-pound class at the sectional meet Monday, April 2, at Arnold High School in Panama City. He will compete in the State Championship Weight Meet on April 20 in Kissimmee.

11U Mustangs sweep Kentucky visitors

The 11U Niceville Florida Mustangs and Campbellsville, Ky., Eagles stood for a group picture after Niceville won a doubleheader at Rarick Little League Field on Sunday, April 1, 5-2 and 5-0. The Mustangs are in purple jerseys with gold tops. After the games, the teams shared a barbecue cookout. This was one of several Kentucky baseball teams that came down to play during their spring break week. The Emerald Coast has been a popular destination for numerous Kentucky baseball teams for more than 10 years.

Schedules

Wednesday, April 11

RBCS@Jay, weightlifting, 4
NHS-Louisville, softball, 6

Ruckel-Meigs, track, 3:30

Lewis@Pryor, track, 3:30

Destin@L. Jackson, track, 3:30

Thursday, April 12

RBCS@Vernon, softball, 5
NHS-Mercy Academic, Ky., softball, 6

Ruckel-Shoal River, tennis, 3

Destin-Pryor, tennis, 4

Lewis@Davidson, tennis, 3

Lewis-Bruner, golf, 3

Ruckel-Destin, golf, 3:30

Friday, April 13

NHS-Kentucky Game, baseball, TBA

NHS@Pace, softball, 6:30

RBCS@Bethlehem, baseball, 5

Monday, April 16

NHS@Districts (FWB), softball, TBA

Monday-Tuesday, April 16, 17

RBCS@District (N. Florida Christian), softball TBA

Monday, Wednesday, April 16, 18

NHS@State, tennis, TBA

Tuesday, April 17

NHS@Pace, baseball, 7

NHS@District (FWB), softball, TBA

Insurance agent provides rings for golf champs

Members of the Niceville High School golf team, which won the Florida high School Athletic Association Class 2A state championship during this school year, received their championship rings last week during an NHS softball game. State Farm Insurance agent Frank Walker provided the rings, which cost roughly \$1,000.

The Eagle golf championship was their first since 1960.

Bluewater golfers take '12 state championship

Bluewater Bay Resort went wire-to-wire to win the 2012 Men's Interclub Team Championship at Grand Cypress Golf Club & Walt Disney's Lake Buena Vista Course in Orlando, March 31-April 1. After six weeks of matches and two rounds of playoffs, Bluewater Bay Resort beat out seven other regional champions to be crowned the Men's Interclub State Champions.

Bluewater earned 202 points in the first round to take a 12-point lead heading into the final round. In the final round, Bluewater Bay was led by Rolf Klam and his 41 stabelford points, to help his team finish with 217 points on the day,

and a tournament total of 419 points to capture the title by three points.

This is Bluewater Bay's second Men's Interclub Championship title after claiming the inaugural championship. The Palencia Club finished in second place with 416 points, while defending champion Wentworth Golf Club and The Evergreen Club finished tied for third place with 395 points.

After two rounds, Bluewater won the Panhandle Region, Lake Ashton Golf Club, Lake Wales, won the Central Region, the Palencia Club, Saint Augustine, won the Northeast Region, Golden Hills Golf & Turf Club, Ocala, won the Greater Ocala Region, the Evergreen Club, Palm City, won Southeast Region, Forest Glen Golf and Country Club, Naples, won the Naples Region, Wentworth Golf Club, Tarpon Springs, won the Tampa Bay Region, and Pelican Sound Golf & River Club, Estero, won the Suncoast Region.

The Men's Interclub Team Matches began in January and included six weeks of home and away matches, followed by regional playoffs and a state championship match at Grand Cypress Golf Club and Walt Disney's Lake Buena Vista Course.

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