

# The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

50¢

**UP  
COMING**

**Thursday, 5-8:30 p.m.**



**"Evening of the Arts"** will be held on the Plew Elementary campus. This event will feature classroom galleries, live music and dinner catered by Ruby Tuesday. Proceeds from this event support Plew Elementary School and OVAL Art program. Cost: \$2 at the door.

**Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Come cheer with **Ruckel cheerleaders** at a **cheer clinic** in the Ruckel Middle School gym. Girls K-sixth grade will learn jumps, dances, cheers and chants. Cost: \$35. Registration will begin at 8:45 a.m.



**Saturday, 9-11 a.m.**

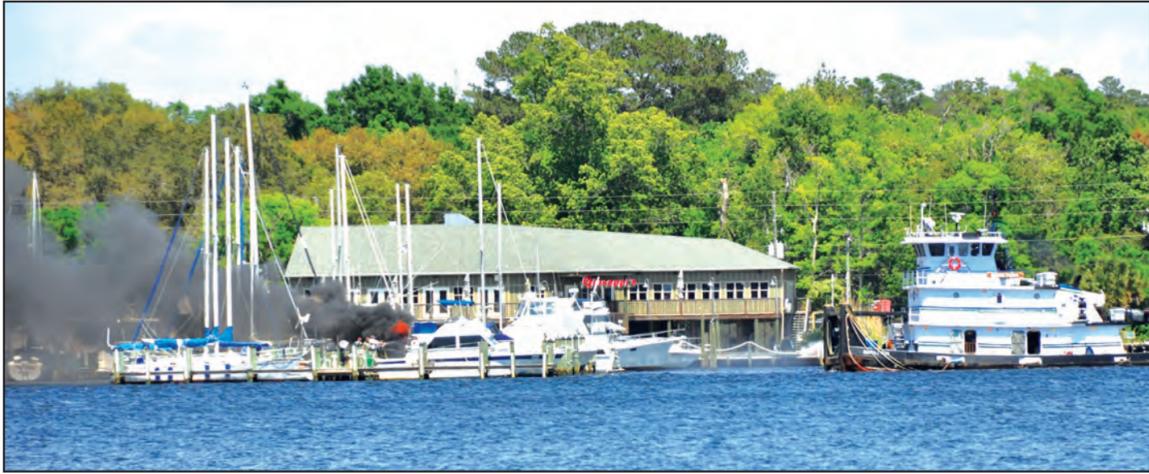
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will hold a **food drive**. Members of the church will collect donations throughout the Niceville community, and will donate items to **Sharing & Caring, Inc.** Leave food on your front porch, and the church will do the rest.

**Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.**

The Mattie Kelly Cultural and Environmental Institute will present the fifth annual **Choctawhatchee Estuary Festival** at Fred Gannon State Park. The event is **free**, and there will be no park entrance fee.

Calendar, B-2

## Man hurt fighting boat flames



The tugboat Marathon, above, approaches the marina behind Giuseppe's restaurant in Niceville Friday to pump water on flames leaping from a 30-foot sailboat. Below, Shannon Losee, pilot of the tug, pours water on the vessel as local firefighters arrive.



### Blaze erupts near fuel barge; tugboat rushes to help as marina standpipe fails

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

One man was hospitalized and a 30-foot sailboat was destroyed in a fire Friday at a Niceville marina, behind the former Giuseppe's Restaurant.

Quick intervention by the crew of a nearby tugboat unloading two million gallons of gasoline from a barge at the Citgo fuel terminal on Boggy Bayou prevented the flames from consuming two adjacent boats and the marina dock, said Niceville Assistant Fire Chief Tony Lohrman.

Local firefighters were hampered by an inoperative marina-owned standpipe, according to a fire official.

"We saw the smoke, stopped the transfer (of the highly flammable barge cargo) and got there before the fire department arrived," said Kirk Montana, of Satsuma, Ala., captain of the 75-foot tugboat, Marathon. "We had it out before they got their hoses out there."

The tug's pilot, Shannon Losee, of Bonifay, and tankerman Kevin Couvillion, of Plaquemine, La., manned firehoses and pumped seawater on the burning

Please see **FLAMES**, page A-4

## C. Walter Ruckel, developer, dies at 85

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

C. Walter Ruckel Jr., 85, a businessman and civic leader best known for developing a large part of Niceville over five decades, died Saturday.

Ruckel, and his family, were deeply involved in developing much of what Niceville and Valparaiso are today, including his grandfather's 1935 gift to the government of the nucleus of the area's economic engine, Eglin Air Force Base.

Ruckel, who went by the nickname Walt, was the only son of Charles Walter



C. Walter Ruckel Jr.

Walter Ruckel and Marion Plew Ruckel of Valparaiso. His grandfather, James E. Plew, was a Chicago businessman who took over a failed real estate development in Valparaiso in the 1920s.

After assuming the presidency of the family-owned bank in 1951 on the death of his father, Ruckel founded a real estate development business, Ruckel Properties Inc., in 1955. The company carved hundreds of residential lots from large parts of Niceville, Valparaiso and Fort Walton Beach.

During the 1970s, Ruckel began development of the upscale Rocky Bayou commu-

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

## Top job at Edge to change hands

### Principal moving to Arizona

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

"Edge is a very easy place to come to," said Edge Elementary School Principal Shelly Arneson, "but this is a tough place to leave."

On Monday, the Okaloosa County School Board approved the appointment of Samantha Dawson as the principal of Lula J. Edge Elementary, Niceville, succeeding Arneson, effective July 1.

Arneson, 46, has been at the helm of Niceville's oldest school for eight years. She was the school's guidance counselor for six years before that.

Her last day as principal is June 30. She and her husband, Dave, a defense contractor, will move to Tucson, Ariz., where he has a new job.

"I have seen Dr. Arneson through the eyes of both a parent

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



Shelly Arneson, left, will step down as principal of Edge Elementary School June 30. Her successor will be Samantha Dawson, right, who currently oversees teacher education at Northwest Florida State College.

Beacon photo by Del Lessard

## Officials wary on e-mails

By Mike Griffith  
Beacon Correspondent

Members of the East Niceville Fire Commission have proposed ending the practice of emailing one another about district business because the correspondence is public record.

In a meeting April 9, commission members discussed whether to email copies of draft meeting minutes.

During the meeting, Fire Commission Treasurer Ed Dunbar suggested that when a member of the commission misses a meeting, a copy of the draft minutes of that meeting could be emailed to the absent commissioner, so that the commissioner can catch up on business that was conducted in his

Please see **E-MAILS**, page A-4

## Festival cut short

This year's Saturday in the Park, an annual festival held each spring in Perrine Park in Valparaiso, was curtailed late Saturday morning by forecasts of approaching severe thunderstorms. The rain caused some scheduled events to be canceled and forced food and crafts vendors to fold their tents as festival visitors looked on. The event was sponsored by the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida. Among those disappointed by the early closure were Naomi Peterson of Robins Air Force Base, Ga., who brought her 5-month-old twin boys, Simon and Dax, to visit their grandmother Regula Baker of Valparaiso.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith



## Kids use BB gun to rob pizza man

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

Valparaiso police arrested two teenagers on robbery charges after they allegedly held up a pizza delivery man with a BB gun for three pizzas and a bottle of soft drink.

The victim told police he believed the weapon, a pistol, was a firearm and that he feared for his life, according to police arrest reports.

A 17-year-old Fort Walton Beach boy and a 15-year-old Niceville boy, both students, were arrested shortly after midnight Sunday, each charged with one count of armed robbery.

Arrest reports from Valparaiso police gave the following account:

The victim, a pizza delivery driver for Hungry Howie's Pizza, arrived with an order of three pizzas and a two-liter bottle of Mountain Dew at a vacant home in the 100 block of Nordberg

Avenue at 10:30 p.m., Saturday. He saw a youth, wearing a dark hoodie and shorts, in front of the residence smoking a cigarette.

As the pizza man approached, a younger boy, also dressed in a dark hoodie and shorts, appeared and drew a "small, black semi-automatic, possibly a 9 mm" gun while telling the delivery man to put the pizzas on the ground.

The victim complied. The armed youth told him to put the soft drink on the ground, stating, "I'm not messing around." Then the man was ordered to leave in his truck.

The victim told police that the two suspects picked up the pizzas and soda and fled on foot toward the Hidden Cove townhouse development.

Two suspects were subsequently found by police at 23-A Hidden Cove Circle among a group of other juveniles. During a search of the residence, a Hungry

Please see **KIDS**, page A-4

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## RUCKEL

From page A-1  
nity in northeast Niceville. In the 1990s he launched development of the Swift Creek residential community and built Heritage Gardens Cemetery and Funeral Home.

He died before development of the family's biggest remaining local asset, some 1,100 acres in northwest Niceville, the biggest expanse of vacant private land in Okaloosa County south of Interstate 10.

Ruckel's passing "is the end of an era," said David Goetsch, an educator with extensive area business ties.

"I can't name a person with bigger influence building Niceville from a small fishing village to the community it's become," said Goetsch, former provost of Northwest Florida State College, who worked with Ruckel in civic affairs for almost 40 years.

In addition to its extensive land holdings, Ruckel Properties, now headed by son Jim Ruckel, owns a number of Twin Cities business properties, including Palm Plaza. Walt Ruckel was a "very benevolent landlord," Goetsch said.

For years the company was landlord of Rocky Bayou Christian School, North Partin Drive, Niceville, before selling the property to the school on



For over 50 years Walt Ruckel and his development company, Ruckel Properties, developed upscale, family-friendly residential communities in the Niceville area. Pictured, Walt in bulldozer, with son Jim Ruckel, now president of Ruckel Properties, which remains in family hands.

generous terms.

"The economic impact that Walt and his family had in Okaloosa County for 67 years by founding and running one of the largest banks in the county is tremendous," said Martha Miller, local president of Coastal Bank and Trust, successor to Valparaiso State Bank,

which the Ruckel family controlled before selling to a Georgia holding company in 1989.

"Always graciously, he shared what he knew of the business, of the world, of family life, of personal living," Miller said. "And he knew volumes."

With the exception of Bluewater Bay, it is difficult to think of a major real estate development in the Twin Cities area in which Ruckel or his sister, Rae Williams, Plew's other heir, who died last year, did not have a hand.

Rae Williams' daughter, Judy Byrne Riley, said that Ruckel Properties and her mother's development company Valparaiso Realty, shaped the future of Niceville and Valparaiso as a quality family community because both branches of the family have lived here for generations.

"It makes a difference," Riley said, contrasting their philosophy with that of some others whom, she said, "buy, build, cut and run."

Ruckel was a founder in 1948 of the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club, serving as president from 1954-55. He was active in local civic affairs, including the Boy Scouts, the chamber of commerce and United Way, all for which he was past president.

He was chairman of the Air Force Armament Museum Foundation and was campaign chairman of the successful funds drive that raised \$1.2 million for the building of the museum on Eglin Air Force Base property in 1985. He was a lieutenant colonel in the Civil Air Patrol.

A pilot who owned an airstrip, Ruckel traveled extensively abroad. He was a genealogist, studied local history and collected old maps. With some of those maps, he once visited a local newspaper office to correct the publication's misstatement of the name of a Niceville creek.

Married three times, Ruckel is survived by eight children, 12 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be today from 5 to 7 p.m. at Heritage Gardens Funeral Home, Niceville. Funeral services will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Niceville.



James E. Plew, pictured with his grandson Walt Ruckel, shared a love of aviation. Plew donated 1,600 acres of his Valparaiso area development as an aerial gunnery range for the Army Air Corps. The tract later became Eglin Air Force Base. Ruckel piloted a variety of private aircraft and was instrumental in raising funds for the Air Force Armament Museum on Eglin.

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Walt Ruckel with his parents, Charles Walter and Marion Plew Ruckel. Walt became president of Valparaiso State Bank at the age of 24, succeeding his father, who died in 1951.

# Voters to pick a circuit judge

## Other bench candidates unopposed

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

The five-day election-qualification period for judicial positions ended Friday, including qualifying for 10 circuit court judgeships in the First Judicial Circuit, and one Okaloosa County judgeship.



John Jay Gontarek

Also qualifying last week were candidates for First Circuit State Attorney, for which the incumbent was unopposed, and Public Defender, for which there are two candidates.

Okaloosa County will see two new circuit judges in November, while voters will get to decide a third, contested circuit court judgeship Nov. 6.

Two people qualified for the Group 15 Circuit Court seat in Okaloosa County, so the non-partisan race will be determined by voters in November's general

election. Incumbent Circuit Judge Terry Ketchel qualified last week and will face challenger Thomas Murphy, an attorney who lives in Choctaw Beach.

John Jay Gontarek, a Niceville attorney, was the only person to qualify for the Group 1 circuit court judgeship in Okaloosa County. He will succeed retiring Circuit Court Judge Thomas Remington in November.

Mary Polson, a Fort Walton Beach attorney, was the only person to qualify for the Group 13 circuit court judge-



Mary Polson



Terry Ketchel

ship in Okaloosa County. She will replace retiring Circuit Court Judge Jack R. Heflin.

Niceville attorney Michael Anthony Jones had prefiled for the Group 13 position but decided not to formally qualify last week.

Also qualifying last week, without opposition, was incumbent Okaloosa County Judge Patricia Grinstead.

Candidates for seven other judgeships in the First Judicial Circuit also qualified last week. In each case the incumbent judges won re-election without opposition:

Group 6 Santa Rosa Circuit Court Judge David Rimmer.

Group 7 Santa Rosa Circuit Court Judge Marci Levin Goodman.

Group 9 Walton County Circuit Court Judge Kelvin Clyde Wells.

Group 14 Escambia County Circuit Court Judge Linda L. Nobles.

Group 18 Santa Rosa Circuit Court Judge John L. Miller.

Group 23 Escambia County Circuit Court Judge Gary L. Bergosh.

Group 24 Escambia County Circuit Court Judge Ross M. Goodman.

In other qualifying races last week:

Incumbent First Judicial District State Attorney Bill Eddins won another four-year term when no one else qualified at the end of the qualifying period Friday.

James Owens, the incumbent Public Defender for the First Judicial Circuit qualified last week and will face challenger Bruce Miller on the Nov. 6 general election ballot.



Thomas Murphy



Patricia Grinstead

# Burglary spree ends in boy's arrest

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

A day-long crime spree ended after police arrested a 16-year-old Niceville boy who was caught red-handed burglarizing a car in a restaurant parking lot, according to Niceville police arrest reports.

The youth was arrested April 10 and charged with burglary to a vehicle, six counts; possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, one count; possession of drug paraphernalia, one count; grand theft, two counts; and petit theft, one count. The charges stem from seven incidents which all occurred April 10, according to arrest reports.

Niceville police arrest reports gave the following account:

A police officer saw the boy in a car in the parking lot behind Po' Folks restaurant, 1170 E. John Sims Parkway, at 2:27 p.m., April 10. The boy was arrested after the car's owner said the teen didn't

have permission to be in it.

During a search of the youth subsequent to the arrest, police found a smoking pipe with marijuana residue and 14 pills of Clonazepam, a schedule IV controlled substance, as well as other items connected to unsolved burglaries that all occurred earlier the same day.

The boy later confessed to six more alleged burglaries or thefts:

—An unlocked pickup truck parked at a business at 1173 E. John Sims Parkway, in which a \$500 cell phone, a \$150 GPS unit and \$300 were stolen. The cell phone was later found in the suspect's pocket.

—An unlocked 2005 Nissan parked in the parking lot of a business at 112 Wise Ave. in which a wallet containing \$113 was stolen.

—An unlocked 2008 GMC truck parked in the parking lot of 112 Wise Ave. The victim stated the contents of his wallet and con-

tents of his truck were thrown about, but nothing was missing. A bag containing \$9.87 in change and \$39 in bills were left in the front passenger seat of the truck.

—A 2010 Ford Expedition parked at a business at 113 Bailey Drive with the doors locked, but window left open allowing entry. All the items from the glove compartment and the center console were removed and found scattered throughout the vehicle. Nothing was reported missing.

—An unlocked 2008 Volkswagen parked in the parking lot of a business at 910 S. Palm Blvd. Stolen from the vehicle was an iPod, 40 Clonazepam pills and \$100. Police recovered 14 Clonazepam pills from the boy's pocket.

—The youth was allowed in a home in the 1600 block of 26th Street earlier in the day, and a bag and jewelry valued at \$900 was reported stolen after he left. He

later admitted taking the bag, but denied knowledge of any jewelry.

The youth, who was released to the Department of Juvenile Justice, is scheduled to appear in a Crestview courthouse May 30.

## Plane crash report revised

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

The National Transportation Safety Board has revised its preliminary report of the March 15 plane crash in Niceville that killed pilots Donald Marco, 59, of Niceville, and Stanley Bloyer, 66, of Fort Walton Beach.

The original preliminary report, detailed in a Bay Beacon article April 11, included a statement that Marco, in flight, had called his wife to advise that there was "too much military traffic in the area" and that he and Bloyer had changed their destination, an airport in Holt, and were returning to Ruckel Airport. The statement was subsequently removed from the NTSB preliminary report.

Authorities now say no such phone call was made.

## EDGE

From page A-1

and as a member of the School Advisory Committee and she has always thought about the children first," said Joseph Bowers, parent cochair of the SAC. "She has worked relentlessly as the principal at Edge Elementary to ensure that the students were always first, but also that Edge Elementary was a home away from home for students, staff and parents."

The Arnesons moved to Niceville 16 years ago for what they thought to be a five-year assignment. They live in the Rocky Bayou section of Niceville with their three pet Labradors. An accomplished soprano, she was a member of the Northwest Florida Symphony Chorale until she gave it up to finish her doctorate.

Arneson said she hopes to continue a career in education in Tucson. She recently completed her doctoral degree in education at the University of West Florida. She said she may teach future teachers. She published a book on educational leadership last year.

"Mentoring folks. I so enjoy that," she said. "I don't know what

life will be like without elementary school. Every day here is so different."

The stress of making tough decisions can disappear in an instant when a student comes up and hugs her, Arneson said.

Dawson, 44, was the founding principal at Liza Jackson Preparatory School, a K-8 charter school in Fort Walton Beach. For the past five years, and until May 5, Dawson is employed at Northwest Florida State College, where she is chairman of the Department of Teacher Education. She helped start the college's baccalaureate program in teaching.

In her current job, Dawson said, she supervised teacher interns in schools throughout Okaloosa County.

"I chose Edge because it's such a family-oriented school," she said.

Dawson, who grew up in Fort Walton Beach and returned to the area in 1999, lives in Rocky Bayou with her husband, Greg, daughter Sydney and son Nick, who attend, respectively, Ruckel Middle and Niceville High schools.

"Dr. Dawson's experience from preschool through college gives her a broad perspective on public education," said Okaloosa County Schools Superintendent Alexis Tibbetts. "Her work at NWFSC in launching the new baccalaureate program in teacher education is significant. Samantha knows curriculum and how to assist teachers in improving instruction to increase student performance."

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**THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER** —by Mike Griffith

Location:  
Saturday in the  
Park

*What do you think about Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law?*



*"There are pros and cons, but I haven't seen enough about it to make a firm judgment. Taking a life should always be a last resort, even in self-defense."*

Raymond Sturdivant, 72, Valparaiso, retired



*"As far as the law itself is concerned, people have the right to self defense. But, one must really be threatened and not use the law as an excuse to be a vigilante."*

Doug Leathem, 50, Fort Walton Beach, defense contractor



*"I'm all for it when used appropriately, but the devil is in the details as to what is appropriate."*

Randy Nelson, Valparaiso



*"I would have to read the actual text of the law to make an informed judgment."*

Billie Chapman, 79, Niceville, retired



*"I think it's a common-sense law that gives people the right to protect their own rights."*

S.I. Nelson, 26, Valparaiso, insurance salesman



*"It makes sense to me. I don't see anything wrong with it. If you don't have it, all the crooks will know that we can't fight back."*

Nelson Walker, 60, Fort Walton Beach, pool service

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

**E-MAILS**

From page A-1  
and thus be prepared for the next meeting.

Other commissioners, however, expressed doubts about the proposal.

Commission Chairman Mike Marcolongo said he had checked Florida's rules regarding emails by public officials, and concluded that, "It would be better if we just don't send any emails" to one another about commission business, since any such emails become public records. In addition, he said, making draft minutes public could lead to erroneous information reaching the public and causing confusion.

Although notes are taken during fire commission meetings, the minutes, or official record, of such meetings are not approved by the commissioners until the following meeting, when the draft minutes are read aloud and commissioners can make corrections to any errors in the draft. If draft minutes became public, Marcolongo said, an as-yet uncorrected error could be perceived as fact and

mislead whoever reads it.

Dunbar said he understood Marcolongo's concern, but not emailing draft minutes "doesn't help the commissioner" who missed a meeting to catch up, and the commissioner cannot simply ask a fellow commissioner what happened at the last meeting, because commissioners are only allowed to discuss commission business with fellow commissioners during open public meetings, according to Florida's Sunshine Law.

Marcolongo suggested that an absent commissioner could simply ask Fire Chief Michael Wright what happened at a missed meeting, since Wright attends each commission meeting, but as a staff member of the fire district rather than an elected official, Wright may communicate with individual commissioners privately without violating the Sunshine Law.

Dunbar said that he thinks the Sunshine Law applies even to draft minutes, as well as those approved by the commission during subsequent meetings.

"Once the notes are taken," Dunbar said, "even draft minutes are public records, so any-



East Niceville Fire District officials recite the Pledge of Allegiance before beginning a contentious meeting concerning e-mail policy.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

one who wants to see them can make a public records request and we must produce them within a couple of days," even if the minutes are only in draft form.

Other commissioners, however, said they doubted Dunbar's interpretation of the law, so

Dunbar offered to look into the matter further and let them know what he finds out. No decisions were made at the meeting regarding how to handle draft minutes.

In other business, Dunbar reported that with the 2012 fiscal

year about half complete, the fire district has spent \$18,000 less than forecasted to be spent by this time of year when the FY 2012 budget was prepared last year. This, he said, is good news, indicating that the fire district is handling its money well and that

expenses have been below expectations.

Like many other government entities, the East Niceville Fire Commission, which operates a self-governing fire district that levies a property tax, operates on a fiscal year that begins Oct. 1.

Wright reported that there was no unusual firefighting activity during the past month, but that his regular report of emergency calls was not available this month, due to a computer problem that is being corrected.

Marcolongo told fellow commissioners that election packages for commissioners planning to run for re-election are now available at the Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections Office, and that those seeking re-election must obtain 25 or more signatures on a petition to be eligible to run. None of the commissioners explicitly stated during Monday's meeting whether they plan to run for re-election.

The next meeting of the East Niceville fire commission is scheduled for May 14, at 7 p.m., at the East Niceville fire station, 27th Street.

**KIDS**

From page A-1  
Howie's delivery bag, three pizzas, a two-liter Mountain Dew, a blue hoodie, a black hoodie and two black semi-automatic BB guns were discovered in the garage.

A witness told police that the two suspects left the residence on foot and returned about 15 minutes later with the pizzas and soda. Police said two shoeprints from the crime scene resembled prints from the suspects' shoes. The 17-year-old teen gave an

address on Yacht Club Drive in Fort Walton Beach, while the 15-year-old gave an address on Ruckel Drive, in the Rocky Bayou section of Niceville. Both were turned over to the Department of Juvenile Justice and are scheduled for a court appearance May 23.

**FLAMES**

From page A-1  
sailboat as Montana maneuvered the three-story tug.

"Once we got it out we backed off," said Losee, relieving concern about the powerful tug colliding with other recreational boats moored at the marina.

Firefighters received the alarm at 1:45 p.m. and arrived six minutes later, Lohrman said. Because the standpipe at the marina was inoperative, firefighters had to walk about 400 feet of hose to a city hydrant the far end of the dock, he said. The fire, which was

still burning inside the boat although the exterior flames had been extinguished by the tug, was out by 2:08 p.m., he said.

Three people who tried to extinguish the flames from the dock with garden hoses suffered smoke inhalation, including the vessel's owner, John Elliot, whom authorities said lived aboard.

Elliot was taken by ambulance to Twin Cities Hospital, then transferred to West Florida Regional Medical Center in Pensacola, where he was released Monday. The other two people declined medical assistance.

Investigators with the State Fire Marshal's Office determined

that an overloaded extension cord was the cause of the blaze, Lohrman said.

Responding were firefighters from Niceville, East Niceville, North Bay, Eglin Air Force Base, Valparaiso and Destin, which sent a fireboat. An Okaloosa County special operations team also was dispatched because of potential pollution from fuel aboard the boat, Lohrman said.

Fire Chief Tommy Mayville said that a few days before the fire the city had asked the inoperative standpipe's owner, a bank, to repair it. Repairs were underway when Friday's blaze occurred, Mayville said.

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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

Troy Adams, 37, of 1417 29th St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 12 on a contempt of court charge on original charges of leaving the scene of an accident involving damage to property, refusing to accept/sign a citation, resisting arrest without violence and driving while license suspended or revoked.

Teresa Ann Quappe, 55, of 1107 Palm Blvd., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 10 on misdemeanor worthless check charges, related to checks for \$44.39, and \$34.08, and \$35.75.

Antwan Terrell Smith, a restaurant busser, 26, of 621 Piedmont St., Orlando, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 13 on a charge of violating pretrial release conditions on the original domestic violence charge, which occurred at an address in Niceville.

William Caleb Borthwick, 29, of 154 Fanny Ann Way, Freeport, was arrested by Valparaiso police, subsequent to a traffic stop for a seat belt violation, April 15, on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

Rebecca Elizabeth Sailer, 25, of 73 Easter St., Freeport, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 5 on charges of burglary and larceny. On Feb. 18, after deputies took Sailer into custody on an unrelated charge, she allegedly admitted entering the occupied Niceville home of a relative and stealing several pieces of jewelry valued at \$1,051.

Patricia Ann Mullen, unemployed, 46, of 502 22nd St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 2 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge.

A 13-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 4 on a charge of petit theft that allegedly occurred July 27, 2010, in Niceville.

Cynthia Lynn Lawson, a receptionist, 23, of 640

Crestview Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 3 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge.

Julious Dominick Whisler, 27, of 4274 Calinda Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on an Escambia County warrant on charges of violation of probation and petit theft.

Angelo Kriengsak Vogel, 21, of 1541 Valparaiso Blvd., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop, April 7, on charges of possession of controlled substance without a prescription, possession of drug paraphernalia and violation of probation on an original charge of burglary. During a search of Vogel's vehicle, deputies found seven small blue pills hidden in the driver's side fuse compartment in a dark blue pill bottle. The bottle also contained a cut straw with a melted end. Vogel denied knowing about the pill bottle or its contents.

McLain William Malone, a restaurant server, 21, of 207 Bay Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop for weaving onto the shoulder several times while crossing the Mid-Bay Bridge, April 6, on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana.

Joshua Timothy Nelson, unemployed, 34, of 390 W. Edge Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 5 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge, four counts.

Theodore James Edwards, a manager, 46, of 5403 Fairchild Road, Crestview, was arrested by Niceville police April 15 on a Dothan, Ala., warrant for violation of probation on the original charge of fraud/insufficient funds.

Daniel Joseph Thomas, a landscaper, 27, of 1485 Cypress St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop for making a left turn with an inoperable turn signal/brake light, April 15, on a

unharmful. When the victim arrived at work, Clary allegedly emerged from the shadows, dressed in black, and struck her with a large oak branch, causing bruising and redness to the victim's back.

Clary allegedly continued his attack until another employee, a 60-year-old cook, heard the victim's scream and gave chase to Clary. The cook broke off the chase when Clary ran down a dark alley leading to the rear of Badcock Furniture.

The victim told police after the attack that a year-long relationship with Clary had recently ended.

At the direction of police, the victim made a monitored phone call to Clary during which he allegedly stated she "must have brought the stick" from his residence. During the call Clary also stated that he parked his truck behind Badcock and "remembers being chased by Mike" (the cook) after the "attack." However, Clary said he didn't recall committing the attack due to taking his medication and drinking alcohol.

On April 20, Clary was being held at the Okaloosa County Jail without bond. He is scheduled to appear in court June 5.

# Fire Department Reports

## Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from April 16, 2012 through April 22, 2012.

0 Structure Fire	18 Emergency Medical Calls	0 Vehicle Fire	10 Vehicle Crash
5 Other Fire	0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication	0 Illegal Burn	6 Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms	0 Hazardous Conditions		

Street	Situation	Date	Time
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/16/12	06:34
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/16/12	08:02
22nd Street	Canceled	04/16/12	14:57
N. Partin Drive	Good intent call	04/16/12	16:40
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/16/12	16:45
Ellis Avenue	Cooking fire	04/16/12	17:45
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/16/12	19:49
Little John Court	Cooking fire	04/16/12	21:25
S. Cedar Avenue	Medical	04/17/12	07:16
E. College Blvd.	Medical	04/17/12	09:20
Matthew Street	Medical	04/17/12	11:03
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Dumpster fire	04/17/12	14:33
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/17/12	15:32
Partin Drive/Palm Blvd.	Vehicle crash	04/17/12	16:09
S. Palm Blvd.	Vehicle crash	04/17/12	18:10
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/17/12	21:59
Peachtree Way	Medical	04/18/12	10:12
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Alarm activation	04/18/12	10:31
Madison Street	Fire in mobile home	04/18/12	10:54
3rd Street	Medical	04/18/12	12:10
Kelly Road	Medical	04/18/12	13:32
26th Street	Medical	04/18/12	15:07
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/18/12	18:38
College Blvd.	Medical	04/18/12	20:08
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	04/18/12	20:36
Linden Avenue	Medical	04/18/12	22:10
Gum Creek Cove	Medical	04/19/12	16:44
Bayshore Drive	Boat fire	04/20/12	13:45
Reeves Street	Medical	04/20/12	00:22
Coldwater Creek Circle	Medical	04/20/12	19:33
Reeves Street	Medical	04/21/12	01:25
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	04/21/12	14:54
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	04/21/12	20:30
Valparaiso Blvd.	Alarm activation	04/21/12	21:53
Christy Drive	Medical	04/22/12	11:43
Bayshore/Georgia Ave	Service call	04/22/12	13:54
Evans Street	Medical	04/22/12	16:49
SR85N/College Blvd.	Vehicle crash	04/22/12	21:05
Woodlow Road	Service call	04/22/12	21:47

Weekly Safety Tip: If an electrical appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it immediately and have it serviced before using it again. Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed. 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 16, 2012 through April 22, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Mainsail Drive	EMS call	04/16/12	07:48
Ridgewood Cove South	Cooking fire	04/16/12	13:32
Canal Drive and Hwy. 20	Motor vehicle accident	04/16/12	16:48
Ellis Avenue	Cooking fire	04/16/12	17:45
White Point Road	EMS call	04/16/12	20:34
Little John Court	Dispatched and canceled	04/16/12	21:25
Tumberly Place	Public service	04/17/12	16:35
North White Point Road	Medical assist	04/17/12	19:54
Caribbean Way	Medical assist	04/17/12	21:18
Madison Street	Dispatched and canceled	04/18/12	10:56
North White Point Road	Medical assist	04/18/12	21:11
Blue Pine Lane	EMS call	04/19/12	08:47
White Point Road	Medical assist	04/19/12	11:51
Caribbean Way	EMS call	04/19/12	17:12
Antigua Way	Public service	04/20/12	09:23
Muirfield Drive	EMS call	04/20/12	09:25
Pinehurst Cove	EMS call	04/20/12	09:52
Bluelake Cove	EMS call	04/20/12	13:45
Bayshore Drive	Water vehicle fire	04/20/12	13:47
Southminster Circle	EMS call	04/20/12	14:36
E. Highway 20	EMS call	04/20/12	16:46
North White Point Road	Resusc. EMS incident	04/20/12	18:56
Whitewood Way	Medical assist	04/21/12	04:46
Troon Drive West	Assist invalid	04/21/12	09:28
Bay Drive	EMS call	04/22/12	14:03

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

charge of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription. After being charged with driving on a license that had expired for more than four months, police found a plastic bag in Thomas' vehicle containing a dozen oxycodone pills.

Jessie Lee Davis, also known as Jesse Lee Davis, 26, no address listed, was arrested by Niceville police April 6 on a charge of robbery by sudden snatching. On April 21, 2011, Davis allegedly visited the Woodstock Herbal store, 311 Government Ave., and requested one gram of XXX sense. While the store clerk was running a gift card through the credit card machine, Davis allegedly reached over the counter into a drawer and stole a plastic bag containing 10 one-gram bags of Tiger Blood Herbs valued at \$800.

Andrew Loyal Reed, 23, of 2512 8th St., White Bear Lake, Minn., was arrested by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop for speeding in which Reed was a passenger, April 11, on charges of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Reed was also arrested on an Isanti County, Minn., warrant for failure to appear on the original charge of receiving stolen property.

Maurice James Coughlin, a stucco worker, 47, of 108 21st St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police April 11 on a charge of felony battery, second

or subsequent offense. Coughlin allegedly struck another man in the face with a beer mug while the two men were playing pool at Tisa's Friendly Inn, 626 W. John Sims Parkway.

Patrick Wallace Campbell, 47, of 10313 Katy Did Lane, Woodville, was arrested by Niceville police April 12 on a charge of providing false information to a law enforcement officer. While investigating a suspicious person report at a Niceville convenience store, Campbell allegedly gave police two false names.

## DUI arrests

Victor Andrew Weimorts, 30, of 149 Wright Circle, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police for DUI at 1090 E. John Sims Parkway, subsequent to a crash that caused \$700 but no injury to others, April 8 at 5:50 a.m.

## Thefts

A Niceville resident from the 100 block of Harding Road reported that he saw an unknown male enter his unlocked truck, while it was parked in front of his house about 5:15 a.m., March 31. The resident yelled at the man, whom he saw reaching inside the passenger side of the truck. The man ran back to a large diesel-powered pickup truck driven by another person and the two drove away.

The resident called deputies and gave a description of the diesel truck, but officers were unable to find it. Later the same

Please see BLOTTER, page A-6



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## Rocky, Niceville in National Latin Exam



Courtesy photo

Rocky Bayou Christian Academy Latin students placed on the National Latin Exam that was taken on March 13. Individual winners from left: James Sung, Michelle Earls, Izabella Foreman, Amanda Hart, Wade Wiederhold, Ian Kampert and Trevor Knie.



Courtesy photo

The Niceville High School Latin Club competed in the 2012 Florida Junior Classical League State Latin Forum in Orlando. Forty-five Florida schools attended the competition. Front, from left: Hudson Pearce, Ricky Gal, Maddy Smith, Anna Maria Vaccaro and Jessica Kepple. Back, from left: Sydney Cunningham, Andrew Surry, Nathan Battels, Madison Brake and club sponsor Keith Stafford.

Rocky Bayou Christian Academy Latin students placed well on the National Latin Exam, taken on March 13. Individual winners for the academic testing include: silver medal winners, Maxima Cum Laude, Latin I, Izabella Foreman; Latin III, Amanda Hart; Magna Cum Laude, Latin I, James Sung; Cum Laude, Latin I, Michelle Earls, Ian Kampert, Trevor Knie and Wade

Wiederhold. More than 148,000 students worldwide took the exam, which covered grammar, vocabulary, classical history, geography, mythology, literature and sight translations. The Niceville High School Latin Club participated in the national exam, and subsequently in the 2012 Florida Junior Classical League State Latin Forum. Forty-five schools gath-

ered in Orlando on April 12 to compete in academic and creative categories. The following students won awards at the competition: Nathan Battles, ninth, Geography I; Sophia Bergmann, first, Greek Derivatives I, fifth, Greek Literature I; Madison Brake, first, Creative Art, seventh, Vocabulary I; Ricky Gal, seventh, Classical Art I, ninth, Customs I; Jessica Kepple, third, Greek Literature Advanced,

ninth, Reading Comprehension-Prose; Hudson Pearce, fourth, Latin Literature I, 10th, History of the Republic I; Andrew Surry, sixth, Latin Literature I, ninth, History of the Republic I; Anna Maria Vaccaro, eighth, Hellenic History I. The four-member Certamen (Academic) Team consisted of Sophia Bergmann, Madison Brake, Ricky Gal and Hudson Pearce.

## Chelco trustee steps down

By Tess Hollis  
Beacon Staff Writer

After serving for 15 years as Chelco's District 7 Trustee, Don McKnight stepped down to give someone else a chance at the seat.

James "Jim" Miller, the North Bay Fire District Commission chairman, and retired business owner Karl Welhart, vied for McKnight's spot on Chelco's Board of Trustees, and Miller came out on top. District 7 covers parts of Bluewater Bay and Seminole.

"Fifteen years seemed like it'd be long enough," McKnight said. "It's time to get some new blood in there."

The most challenging part of

McKnight's job, he said, was knowing what he was talking about during meetings.

"There are over 100 employees at Chelco, who all know their job extremely well," he said. "Whatever they do, universally they are really professional people, and when you're dealing with professional people you need to at least carry on an intelligent conversation with them."

His advice to Miller is simple.



Don McKnight

See Chelco winner, page B-5

"If you don't know, ask questions, or get a book and read about it," he said.

The best part of the job, McKnight said, were the new experiences and the opportunities to meet people.

Please see CHELCO, page B-5

## Who's News

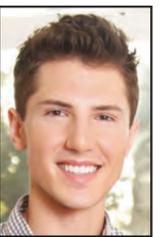
Joseph Feduccia, a senior at Collegiate High School, Niceville, was named the 2012 President of the Snowden-Horne Chapter of the Children of the American Revolution. Joseph is also an Eagle Scout and a member of Niceville United Methodist Church.



Joseph Feduccia

Jarrod Tredway, a 2008 Niceville High School graduate, was selected as the University of Florida's School of Art/Art History's 2011-12 Outstanding Graduating Senior. Jarrod will speak on behalf of the College of Fine Arts at the commencement ceremony on May 5. Jarrod will

remain at the University of Florida through the fall of 2012 to complete a master's degree in business. Jarrod is the son of Chris and Michelle Tredway, of Niceville.



Jarrod Tredway

Frank Walker, of Niceville, gave a monetary donation toward the purchase of the State Championship rings for the Niceville High School girl's golf team. Walker often supports local schools in the community, and wanted to give back to the talented ladies on the golf team.



Frank Walker

## Park to host environmental festival

The 2012 Choctawhatchee Estuary Festival will be April 28, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park. Participants create a rain barrel at the 2011 Estuary Festival. See page B-3 for the story.

Courtesy photo



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**Senior activities**

The Walton/Okaloosa County Council on Aging will hold the following activities for seniors age 60 and older at Valparaiso Senior Center, 268 Glenview Ave., 833-9291. April 25, bingo, 9:30 a.m.; April 26, Wii bowling, 9:30 a.m.; April 27, bingo, 9:30 a.m.; April 30, dominoes and socializing, 9:30 a.m.; May 1, bingo, 9:30 a.m.

**Alzheimer's support group**

Alzheimer's Family Services will hold a support group on April 25, at 10:30 a.m., at the First United Methodist Church, Chandler Center, 214 S. Partin Drive. The support group is free and respite care is available. To register or for additional information, call 478-7790, or AlzFamServ.org.

**Magnolia Golf Classic**

The Bluewater Bay Ladies Golf Association will present the Magnolia Classic on April 25 and 26. Info: 897-4808, or 897-8444.

**'Change Management'**

The Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host a "Change Management" seminar on April 25, from 1-5 p.m., at the Niceville campus. Registration will be accepted until the session date, space permitting. Info: 729-6880, or nwfsc.edu/LI. The seminar will present a comprehensive model organizations can use to ensure that their personnel buy into changes, support them

and cooperate with making them succeed. Cost: \$70.

**'Evening of the Arts'**

Evening of the Arts will be held on the Plew Elementary campus April 26, from 5-8:30 p.m. This event will feature classroom galleries, live and silent auctions, a gallery store, live music, dinner catered by Ruby Tuesday and a dessert bar. Proceeds from this event support Plew Elementary School and OVAL Art program. Tickets are \$2 and will be available for purchase at the door. Dinner tickets are available for pre-purchase only by contacting eveningofthearts@aol.com.

**Embroiderer's Guild**

The Sand Dunes Chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America night group will meet on April 26, from 6-9 p.m., at Niceville United Methodist Church. Visitors are welcome.

**District 5 candidate forum**

The Okaloosa Republican Club will host a candidate forum on April 26, for County Commission District 5. The Club meeting and forum will be at the American Legion on Hollywood Boulevard, Fort Walton Beach. There will be a social hour at 6:15 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:55 p.m. Info: 651-5049. The price of the dinner is \$10.

**Couponing workshop**

The Niceville Library will host a couponing workshop in the Youth Service's Program Room on April 26, at 5:30 p.m. The program is free, provided by GotCoupons? USA. The class is designed to educate people on how to cut their grocery bills from 50-90 percent. Call the library at 279-4863, ext. 1507 to reserve a spot.

**Niceville blood drive**

Northwest Florida Blood Services will hold a blood drive on April 26, from 1-6 p.m., at the Walmart in Niceville. A free gift card will be given to all donors.

**Wounded Warrior benefit**

The Air Commando Association will sponsor the Taste of North Bay Alaska Seafood Tapas and Wine Pairing on April 26, at 6 p.m., at North Light Yacht Club, Niceville. Funds raised will benefit the Air Commando Association's Wounded Warrior Support Program. Tickets are \$50, and includes drink samples and food. To purchase tickets, visit aircommando.org, or call 581-0099. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**'Communicating' seminar**

The Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host a "Communicating Effectively with Your Target Audiences to Improve the Bottom Line" seminar on April 26, from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., on the Niceville campus. Registration will be accepted until the session date, space permitting. Info: 729-6880, or nwfsc.edu/LI. The workshop will include strategies and practical tactics that businesses may adopt to communicate successfully with internal and external audiences, ultimately enhancing the corporate reputation and bottom line. Cost: \$70.

**Piggy bank contest**

The Niceville Library will have a Piggy Bank Contest for school kids and teens, K-12. Rules and application forms are available in the Youth Services Department, or in the library lobby. The themes are: prettiest, most creative and celebrity look-alike. Prizes for first, second and third place will be awarded. Judging will be on April 26.

**'Dining Out for Life'**

"Dining Out for Life" will be held on April 26. Several local restaurants in Okaloosa, Walton, Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties will be teaming up with the Okaloosa AIDS Support and Informational Services, Inc. (OASIS), and OASIS CommUNITY Center of Pensacola to host this once-a-year nationwide event to raise funds for the fight against AIDS. Participating restaurants will donate a percentage of their proceeds that day to OASIS to be used locally in its mission of preventing the spread of HIV, and supporting those affected by HIV and AIDS in Northwest Florida. Volunteer greeters are needed. For a list of restaurants, or to volunteer, call OASIS at 314-0950, or visit facebook.com/AIDSOASIS, or diningoutforlife.com, and click "Fort Walton Beach."

**Church dinner**

Rosemont Baptist Church will hold "Dinner with Nida," from Nida's Thai and More. The dinner will be on April 27, at 5 p.m. All proceeds will benefit Operation Child Shoeboxes. Info: RBCNiceville.org, or 678-1611.

**Larkin Cleveland lecture**

The Friends of the Niceville Library will host "The H.L. Mencken of the South: Larkin Cleveland of Florida." The guest speaker will be Dean DeBolt, University Librarian for Special Collections at University of West Florida, who will share the colorful life of newspaper editor and writer Larkin Cleveland. This free program will be held at the Niceville Community Center, 204 N. Partin Drive, on April 27, at 11 a.m. Info: 279-4863, ext. 1504.

**Golf Classic**

The Niceville-Valparaiso Coastal Bank and Trust Boggy Bayou Golf Classic will be April 27, at Rocky Bayou Country Club. Check-in time will be at 11 a.m., and tee time will be at noon. For more information, or to register, email events@nicevillechamber.com, or call 678-2323.

**Website seminar**

The Costa Leadership Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host a website SEO, and "How to monetize your website" seminar on April 27, from 8 a.m.-noon, at the Niceville campus. Registration will be accepted until the session date, space permitting. Info: 729-6880, or nwfsc.edu/LI. This course will cover SEO, the advantages and potential damage that irresponsible SEO can do to your site, technical advice on site development, online business development campaigns, advice on how to get your site "to the top" and more. Cost: \$80.

**RWOF meeting**

Reservations for the Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated meeting are requested by April 27. RWOF will meet on May 2 at the Holiday Inn Resort on Okaloosa Island. Socializing will begin at 11:30 a.m., and lunch will be served at noon. Ben Anderson and Bill Roberts, candidates for the office of Okaloosa County Tax Collector will participate in a forum at the meeting. Info and reservation: Donna Pattison, 651-5416, or donnapattison@cox.net. Cost: \$16 for members and \$18 for guests.

**Environmental Symposium**

The Mattie M. Kelly Cultural and Environmental Institute at Northwest Florida State College's will host the fifth annual Environmental



Courtesy photo

**College to offer free dental X-rays**

The Dental Assisting Program at Northwest Florida State College will offer free dental X-rays in May and June, as a service to the public, and to provide practicum experience for Dental Radiography students. A written request or prescription from a dentist stating the specific X-rays needed is required. Appointments will be available May 21-June 19, Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday, from 7:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m.; Tuesday and Thursdays, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 729-6480.

Symposium on the Choctawhatchee Basin on April 27, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., at the college's Niceville campus. This year's symposium theme is "Comparing Estuaries of Northwest Florida." The symposium is open to the public. The registration fee is \$25, and will include all symposium materials, a continental breakfast and lunch.

**NHS zombie play**

The Niceville High School first-year drama department members will present "I, Xombi" on April 27 and 28, at 7 p.m., in the Niceville High School auditorium. The play is about the perils of the walking dead. Tickets will be \$5 at the door.

**Adult horse camp**

Deep South Dressage and Combined Training Association will hold an adult horse camp, April 27-29, Camp Timpoochee, 4750 Timpoochee Lane, Niceville. Info: Jan Fernald, janf@mchsi.com, or 803-8632.

**'Avengers Party'**

The Valparaiso Community Library invites tweens and teens to its "Avengers Party" on April 27, at 2:45 p.m. Compete in a superhero costume contest and watch "Thor," and eat snacks. Sign up at eruff@valp.org, or 729-5406.

**Democratic Caucus**

The Okaloosa County Democratic Executive Committee is looking for delegates to attend the State Convention in Tampa on June 1, and subsequently compete to become delegates to the National Convention in Charlotte. If you desire to become a state delegate, visit the Okaloosa Democrats website, okaloosademocrats.com, and download the required forms. Return the forms to the county party headquarters, 60 2nd St., Unit #305, Shalimar, no later than April 27. The Democratic Executive Committee will host a Caucus on May 5, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the party headquarters office to determine the delegates to send to the state convention. All Democrats who are registered to vote in Okaloosa County are eligible to participate in the caucus. Forms may also be mailed to Okaloosa Democrats Headquarters, P.O. Box 2052, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-2052. Info: fladems.com/page/content/floridas-timetoshine.

**Spring Renewal**

The Holy Name of Jesus Christ Parish, Niceville, 1200 Valparaiso Blvd., will hold a Spring Day of Renewal on April 28. The guest speaker will be the Rev. Monsignor Stephen Bosso. The theme will be "The Kingdom of God." Mass will begin at 8 a.m. in the Family Life Center; the lecture will be from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. There will be a break with refreshments provided. Info: Helen, 543-1751.

**RMS cheer clinic**

Come cheer with Ruckel cheerleaders at a cheer clinic on April 28, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Ruckel Middle School gym. Girls K-sixth grade will learn jumps, dances, cheers

\$22.50. Info: 729-6000, or mattiekellyartscenter.org.

**Day of Service food drive**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will hold a food drive on April 28. Members of the church will collect donations throughout the Niceville community from 9-11 a.m., and will donate the items to Sharing & Caring, Inc., Niceville. Leave food on your front porch, and the church will do the rest. Sharing & Caring is specifically in need of meal mixes such as Hamburger Helper or Rice-A-Roni, pasta sauce, cold cereals, peanut butter, laundry detergent, dish soap, diapers, toilet paper, wipes and cleaning products. Info: Melynda, NicevilleDayofService@gmail.com, or 897-0064.

**Niceville Market Day**

Niceville Community Guild will hold Community Market Day on April 28, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at City Hall. There will be a selection of vendors, crafts, jewelry, books, rugs, handmade furniture, children's clothing, accessories and more. Info, or to rent a space: Nicevillechristmas@cox.net. Cost: \$15 to rent a space.

**Healthy Kids Day**

The YMCA of Florida's Coast Inc. will hold a Healthy Kids Day on April 28, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Join the Y for fun at Fort Walton Family YMCA, Niceville Family YMCA, Crestview Family YMCA and Destin YMCA Aquatic Center. There will be class demonstrations, games, open swim, health vendors, summer camp registrations, food and fun. Free to the public. There will be a YMCA membership special—join the Y for \$1.

**Feasting Families**

Dine out at Ruby Tuesday, Niceville, on April 30 in support of the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast. As part of Ruby Tuesday's Community Give Back Program, they will donate 20 percent of purchases that day to the local Fisher House. Print out a flyer from fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org, and present it to a server while dining. The funds will be used to support local military. Info: Kim Henderson, 259-4956, or Kim@FisherHouseEmeraldCoast.org

**PAWS fundraiser**

In support of the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Papa John's will donate 10 percent of orders to the organization. Order online at papajohns.com between now and April 30, and use the promo code PAWSOKA. For a coupon for a free order of breadsticks, Papa John's will also accept food, toys or cleaning supplies at local locations. Pizza lovers will also have the option of signing a PAW at local Papa John's locations for a \$1 donation.

**OAA poster contest**

The Okaloosa Arts Alliance is accepting artwork for its fourth annual Okaloosa County School Poster Contest. This year's theme is "Summer Fun," and can be anything you can create on paper with markers, paint, pastels, charcoal or crayons. Digital artwork will be accepted. There will be a first, second and third place winner for three students in each category: elementary, middle and high school. All of the entries will be on display at the Family Fun Arts Fest on May 12, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., at Henderson Beach State Park, Destin. Entries can be mailed through an Okaloosa County school, or to Okaloosa Arts Alliance, Attention: School Poster Contest, P.O. Box 4426, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549. The deadline is April 30. Only one entry per student, and posters should be standard size (8-by-11) and include the name of the artist, grade and school name.

**Paddle safety course**

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 1-4, Destin, will hold a paddle safety course on May 3, from 5-8 p.m., at West Marine Uptown Station, 99 Eglin Parkway NE, Fort Walton Beach. The course is available to address the needs of canoeists, kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders. Topics will include: know your paddle craft, before you get underway, operating your boat safely, the legal requirements of boating-vessel registration, and boating emergencies. Pre-registration is requested by April 30. Cost: Free to sit-in, \$10 for the book and exam. Info: John Ryan, ryanjohnj@hotmail.com.

**EOD conference**

Registration is ongoing for the NDIA Global Explosive Ordnance Conference and Exhibition that will be held on May 2-3, at the Emerald Coast Conference Center. For more information, or to register, visit ndia.org/meetings/2950, or contact Laura Yuska at lyuska@ndia.org, or 703-247-2596.

**Movie day**

The Valparaiso Community Library will show "Joyful Noise," on May 3, at 1:30 p.m. Families are invited, and popcorn and drinks will be served. The film is rated PG-13.

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The Niceville High School first-year drama department members will put on a production of "I, Xombi," a play about the perils of the walking dead. From left: Annabelle Agnew, Alexander Valencia and Rachel Lee.

Courtesy photo

## 'Walking dead' production comes to Niceville High

### Special to the Beacon

On the last weekend in April, a mind-tingling new play about the perils of the walking dead comes to the Niceville High School stage. The brainchild of Charles Williams, Niceville High Forensics, Speech and Debate coach, "I, Xombi" follows the Xomboskis—Ted, Zelda, Candy and Junior, as they attempt to lead a normal

American life among the living. Normal in most aspects—save for being zombies—their every experience, from Junior's mid-night brain thievery, to Candy's hazardous prom night, is a mind-expanding adventure.

"I, Xombi" allegorically explores the accepted norms of such issues as illegal immigration and "mixed" relationships.

The rising young stars of the

Niceville High School first-year drama department members will impress with their acting talent.

Don't miss the life-like costumes and makeup of the living dead, all designed and constructed by the students. Showing April 27 and 28, at 7 p.m., in the Niceville High auditorium, "I, Xombi" will stimulate the minds of all ages. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

## Rocky Bayou choirs, bands perform



Beacon photos

Rocky Bayou Christian School held its spring bands concert April 14. The Symphonic Band, pictured, the Jazz Band, the Concert Band, the Beginning Band and select ensembles each performed.



Rocky Bayou Christian School held its choirs concert April 13. The Concert Choir, pictured, Beginning Choir, Campus Chorale, Chamber Choir and Praise Band each performed.

## College to host environmental symposium, estuary fest

The Mattie M. Kelly Cultural & Environmental Institute at Northwest Florida State College will host the Choctawhatchee Estuary Family Festival on April 28, at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park, Niceville, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. During the same weekend, the College will also host the fifth annual Mattie Kelly Environmental Symposium on the Choctawhatchee Basin on April 27, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the college's Niceville campus.

The symposium is part of a two-day emphasis on the Choctawhatchee Basin, which also includes the fifth annual Choctawhatchee Estuary Family Festival. The festival is a free family and community event for all ages. There is no park entrance fee for the festival which offers fun activities, hands-on displays and environmental awareness. The event is hosted by the Mattie M. Kelly Cultural & Environmental Institute at Northwest Florida State College. For more information on the festival, contact Meredith Fingarson at 729-4915, or visit matiekellyinstitute.org.

This year's Environmental Symposium theme is "Comparing the Estuaries of Northwest Florida." The symposium is open to the public and geared toward scientists, ecologists, conservation groups, city and regional developers, transportation planners, residents and landowners. The registration fee is \$25, and includes all symposium materials, a continental breakfast and lunch.

### In the Service



1st Lt. Robert Clary, left, and Capt. Rich Clary

1st Lt. Robert Clary, United States Marine Corps, received his pilot "Wings of Gold" on March 30, at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. His brother, Capt. Rich Clary, a UH-1Y helicopter pilot, who recently completed a tour in Afghanistan, was on hand and presented a set of his wings to his brother during the ceremony. 1st Lt. Clary is now assigned to MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., where he will fly the newest USMC version of the C-130, the KC-130J. The Clary's are graduates of Niceville High School and the University of West Florida. They are the sons of Rich and Cathy Clary, of Bluewater Bay.



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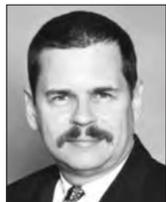


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Niceville's Newspaper

# Tea Party questions four sheriff candidates

## Incumbent Larry Ashley faces Steve Menchel, Tony Taylor and Sheridan Lowery

By Mike Griffith  
Beacon Correspondent

Four candidates for Okaloosa County Sheriff faced nearly 100 potential voters Monday at Niceville City Hall, as part of a candidates forum sponsored by the Niceville-Valparaiso Tea Party.

Incumbent Larry Ashley and challengers Steve Menchel, Sheridan Lowery and Tony Taylor answered questions posed by forum moderator Dave Scholl, and also gave their own closing statements and had the opportunity to ask questions of one another. The entire forum was video-recorded and can be watched at [cvcvtv.com](http://cvcvtv.com).

The first question posed to candidates, all Republicans vying in the Aug. 14 primary election, was why they are running for sheriff.

Lowery replied that he is running as "a conservative Christian American."

"During the last two-and-a-half years," Lowery said, "there has been a war on Christian values."

The sworn duty of a county sheriff, he said, is to help "protect the United States and its Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and with my very life I will do just that."

Taylor cited his 35 years of experience with the Fort Walton Beach police department, during which he worked his way up from patrolman through every rank in the department.

"I am a consummate professional," he said, and promised "consistent performance" and professional leadership of the sheriff's office.

Menchel said he also has experience—38 years—as a federal law enforcement agent and manager. Originally from New Orleans, Menchel said he moved to Okaloosa County because of the local quality of life. While here, he said, "I saw the situation with the

Okaloosa Sheriff's Office, and I want to make a good department a better department." He also said he has "an executable action plan" for improving the sheriff's office, which voters can read in detail on his website.

Ashley said he has served in the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office for 28 years, starting as a patrol officer and moving up to chief deputy before running for sheriff himself. His goal, he said, is "to make sure the community stays safe," and to help Okaloosa County remain one of America's best places to live. "I am a good sheriff," he said, "and I will remain a good sheriff."

Menchel said the top threat facing Okaloosa residents is that law enforcement has changed nationally since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Today, he said, "There are enemy agents trying to steal military secrets from Eglin Air Force Base," something that wasn't an issue before for local civilian law enforcement. Other threats, he said include drug trafficking and child pornography.

Ashley said the top threat is the national economic recession. The best way to reduce crime, he said, is "to put people back to work." The sheriff's role in keeping the community safe, he said, includes preventing gang activity, sexual crimes and curtailing drug abuse, while funding his office with a budget that was cut by 15 percent last year, despite a 13 percent increase in calls for service. He said the Okaloosa County Commission needs to prioritize its own spending, giving public safety higher priority than such things as parks and libraries.

Lowery said the top threat to public safety is "the destruction of the conservative community. It all goes back to conservative family values." He cited his prior experience as a businessman for the last 23 years. In business, he said, one learns to plan for overcoming obstacles, and he wants to change the emphasis in the sheriff's office from law enforcement to crime prevention.

The top threat to public safety, Taylor said, is "Politicians." He said law enforcement agencies must learn to work more closely together, and that as sheriff, he would form a coalition of local police chiefs and other police executives, as well as a metropolitan task force on major cases.

Asked about consolidating city



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Four Republican candidates for Okaloosa County Sheriff faced questions from a Tea Party audience during a forum in Niceville Monday.

police departments with the sheriff's office, only Ashley favored that idea. He said it makes sense from a budgetary and management standpoint to eliminate the waste and duplication of effort that comes from having each city police department with its own dispatch, administration, record keeping, vehicle maintenance, training and supervision, along with other support functions that could be centralized, allowing more officers and resources to be used for actual crime fighting.

The other candidates disagreed.

Lowery said police consolidation would infringe on the sovereignty of locally elected municipal governments.



Sheridan Lowery

Taylor urged voters to read a recent report by the police chief of Fort Walton Beach, which said consolidating that department with the sheriff's office would not produce the savings originally forecasted.

Menchel said his own plans to save money would include eliminating the position of chief deputy within the sheriff's office, and using technology, and better gathering and analysis of intelligence to target patrols to areas where crimes are most likely to occur.

Regarding drug activity such as the manufacture and selling of methamphetamine, Lowery said

the meth problem is "pervasive." The solution, he said, includes using the "prying eyes" of community-minded citizens, and encouraging people to be aware of drug dealing and other crimes, and to be more willing to report suspicious activity to police.

"Meth ruins lives," Taylor said. Once addicted to meth or other drugs, he said, "People will do anything to chase that high," to include committing crimes to get money for drugs. He cited his own experience as the leader of a counter-drug task force, saying that he is well qualified to tackle drug enforcement in Okaloosa County.

Menchel said that educating the public about drugs and other crime is important, as is gathering information from citizens about crime in their neighborhoods. Many citizens hesitate to call police about suspicious activity, he said, because "they don't want to 'bother' the police" unless they are certain a crime has been committed. He also advocated better information sharing among law enforcement agencies.

Ashley said that abuse of meth and other drugs "is actually not growing locally," although neighboring Walton County is currently fighting a growing level of meth activity.

Okaloosa County, he said, currently has more sexual predators than meth dealers. However, Ashley said that a cut in federal funding for the cleanup of meth labs has made enforcement more difficult, as meth labs contaminate its surroundings with toxic

byproducts, rendering entire buildings, including houses and even large hotels, uninhabitable after any room has been used as a meth lab. Currently, the cost of cleaning up a former meth site falls on the owner of the property, including landlords who unknowingly rent property to someone who uses it to make meth. Fortunately, Ashley said, federal funding for meth lab cleanup may be restored in the coming year's budget.

Asked about the role of county sheriffs dealing with illegal immigration and human trafficking, Lowery said that illegal immigration is, in fact, a crime and he favors deportation of illegal immigrants. He said he has specific plans for dealing with illegal immigration on his website.

Taylor said that while crimes such as human trafficking and abuse of immigrants is within local jurisdiction, illegal immigration is a federal matter and should be left to federal agencies, although local police should support federal agencies as requested.

Menchel said local sheriffs "cannot arrest people just for being illegal immigrants." What can be done, he said, is to share information with federal agencies, especially about businesses that employ illegal immigrants, and enforce state and local laws con-

cerning fraudulent identification documents and other crimes.

Ashley said the sheriff's office enforces state law, while federal agencies handle immigration. However, he also said that the Okaloosa Sheriff's Office found 110 illegal immigrants laying sheet rock during construction of the 7th Special Forces compound near Crestview, and worked closely with federal officials on that case.

Ashley also advocated a county ordinance to allow vehicles to be seized when drivers are caught without valid licenses, and kept until the vehicle owner produces proper documentation of themselves and the vehicle. He said local law enforcement can focus attention on crimes committed by illegal immigrants or by those transporting or exploiting them.

During closing statements, all the candidates urged voters to not rely solely on media accounts of their campaigns, but to read each candidate's website and research issues on their own, and to call candidates with questions. Candidate contact information:

—Larry Ashley: [larryashley-forsheriff.com](mailto:larryashley-forsheriff.com), 850-461-0426.

—Sheridan Lowery: [CelebBroker.com](http://CelebBroker.com), [CelebBroker@gmail.com](mailto:CelebBroker@gmail.com), 850-650-2353 ext. 2.

—Steven Menchel: [menchelforsheriff.com](http://menchelforsheriff.com), [stevenc@menchelforsheriff.com](mailto:stevenc@menchelforsheriff.com), 850-837-3838.

—Tony Taylor: [TonyRTaylorforSheriff.com](http://TonyRTaylorforSheriff.com), [WWW.TaylorforSheriff@cox.net](http://WWW.TaylorforSheriff@cox.net), 850-259-9321.



Larry Ashley



Steve Menchel



Tony Taylor

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### FDD cagers runners-up in tourney

The Niceville FDD (Faithfulness, Discipline, Diligence) fourth grade basketball team came in second in its first tournament of the year, the Crestview Invitational, April 6-8. From left: front, coach Clarence May, Dominic Prestarri, Derrick Laird, Nathan Miller and Will Tidwell; rear, Nathan Hutchings, Troy Gulley, Roman Prestarri, Bryce Moor and Jai May.

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### Briefs

**Rocky student, 12, places third in state free throw**

Kammrin Mahoney, a 12-year-old student at Rocky Bayou Christian School, placed third at the Knights of Columbus 2012 State Basketball Free Throw Championship March 17 at Osceola High School in Kissimmee, competing against other 12-year-olds from other regions. Kammrin won first place at the council, district, and regional levels to qualify for the state competition.

**Ruckel golfers win pair**

The Ruckel Middle School girls golf team defeated the Bruner girls, 159-173, April 2 at the Fort Walton Beach Golf Club. Ruckel was led by Sarah Pabst (36) and Carmen Little (38).

The Ruckel boys team also won, 121 to 163. Ruckel was led by Patrick Poate (25) and Austin Pettibone (31).

In the April 10 match against Davidson, held at Foxwood Country Club, the Ruckel girls defeated the Davidson girls 164-188. Ruckel was led by Pabst (36) and Meghan Horrigan (40).

The Ruckel boys team won, 105 to 117. Ruckel was led by Poate (24) and a host of boys at 27.

# CHELCO

From page B-1

"There are over 1,000 electric co-ops like Chelco in the U.S.," he said, "and nine to 11 people on each of those boards, so that's about 10,000 people who are doing this job every week in the country. In this job you have the opportunity to meet those people, and you find out that maybe you're doing better in some things, and maybe they're doing better in other things."

McKnight said he would like to congratulate Miller.

"People, when they do win,

don't win by a whole lot," he said. "It's something to be proud of."

McKnight, who retired from the Army 31 years ago, said the thing he will miss most about the position is the association with the people on and off the board.

As for McKnight's future, he said he has plenty to keep him occupied.

"If I lose track or run out of things to do, my wife will come up with four or five things for me that will keep me busy the rest of the year," he joked.

McKnight's term ended on April 21, at the Chelco annual meeting.

# Soria named director of STEMM Center

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

On Monday the Okaloosa County School board approved the appointment of Rick Soria as the director of the STEMM (science, technology, engineering, math and medical) Center in Valparaiso.

The STEMM Center, to be located in the former Valparaiso Elementary School, includes a magnet middle school that will open in August for 66 sixth graders, as well as a teacher's

training center and an elementary school engineering program also opening by summer.

Soria, 61, is currently the assistant principal at Choctawhatchee High School. He retired from the United States Air Force with almost 24 years of military service and earned a bachelor's degree from Troy State University, and a master's in educational leadership from the University of West Florida.

Soria was the architect of the Engineers for America program, a

partnership with the Armament Museum, which was recognized in 2010 as the S T E M F l o r i d a I m p r o v e d S t u d e n t



Rick Soria

Outcome Award, according to Alexis Tibbetts, Okaloosa County Schools Superintendent. He also coordinated many STEMM

teacher workshops through his work with Engineers for America, she said, and has been a grant writer, STEMM summer camp organizer and advocate of STEMM education across the district and state.

"The STEMM Center has poised our county to be a leader in STEMM innovation and Mr. Soria is the administrator to take us there with teacher training, student hands-on learning, and partnerships with local business and military," Tibbetts said.

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# Bluewater second graders donate to Fisher House



Courtesy photo

Students from Michelle Strickland and Tammy Williams' second grade Team Quest classes at Bluewater Elementary donated \$130.01 to Fisher House.

Michelle Strickland and Tammy Williams' second grade Team Quest classes at Bluewater Elementary presented a \$130.01 check to Kim Henderson of Fisher House, a facility that pro-

vides free or low cost lodging to veterans and military families receiving treatment at military medical centers.

The classes at Bluewater recently wrapped up a unit where

students discussed spending, saving and donating for the common good. The classes collected money to donate to Fisher House, because Bluewater Bay is a military community, and the

students wanted to give back to those who serve. The donations given by the children came from lemonade stands, chores done around the house and gifts from their own piggy banks.



Courtesy photo

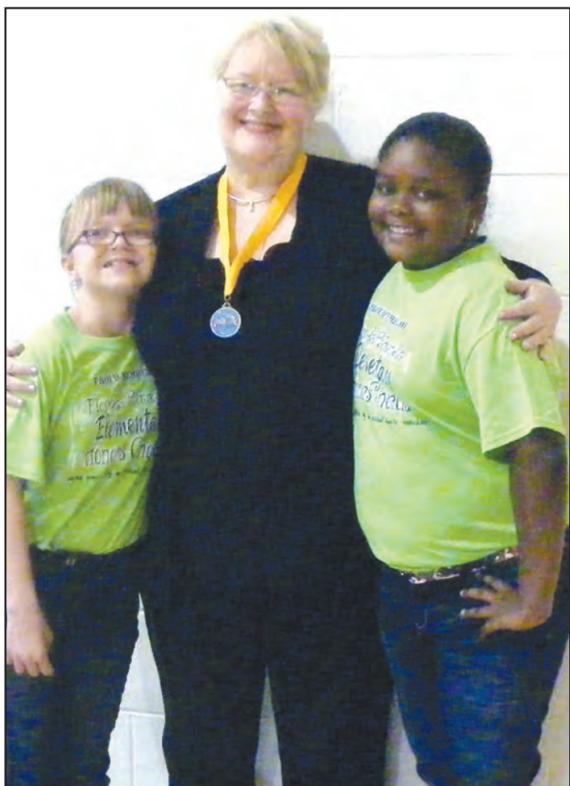
## Student wins Best in School

Samantha Snowden, a senior at Niceville High School, won Best in School at the annual Niceville Art School. Her piece was titled, "Less is More?" Samantha is an Advanced Placement 2D student, taught by Kim Nihill-Taylor. Each high school in Okaloosa County hosts a school art show, open to all students at that school, before the district show in May.

## Lewis students participate in Panhandle Honor Chorus

Two Lewis Middle School fifth graders participated in the 2nd Annual Panhandle Honor Chorus on April 14. Eighty students participated in the all-day event, which included singing and movement games, in addition to a final performance for parents at the conclusion of the day. The Honor Chorus was held at Florida Baptist College in Graceville, and was conducted/directed by Dr. Judy Bowers, a Florida State University Choral Music Professor. Pictured with Bowers are Lewis fifth graders Reanna Havard (left) and Sydney Green. The Lewis chorus teacher is Michelle Tredway, who attended the event with the students.

Courtesy photo



## Miller wins Chelco District 7 seat

James "Jim" Miller now holds the District 7 seat on the Choctawhatchee Electrical Cooperative (Chelco) Board of Trustees.

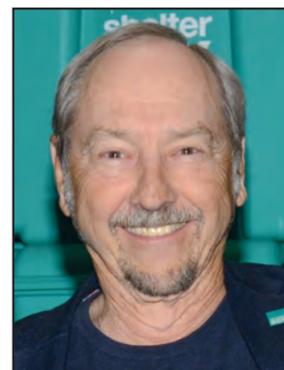
Miller ran against Karl Welhart for the district seat that covers parts of Bluewater Bay and Seminole, and was announced the winner at the April 21 Chelco annual meeting. Don McKnight, who served in the position for 15 years, did not seek re-election.

The Chelco Board of Trustees is responsible for the governance of the electric coop-

erative.

According to Chelco, Board members policy decisions assure that the organization safely provides reliable service that members expect at a competitive price.

Miller, who is completing his fourth year as Commissioner for the North Bay Fire Department, is a member of the Mid-Bay Rotary Club and volunteers with ShelterBox International, a charity that provides shelter and warmth to families who have lost their homes to natural or man-made disasters.

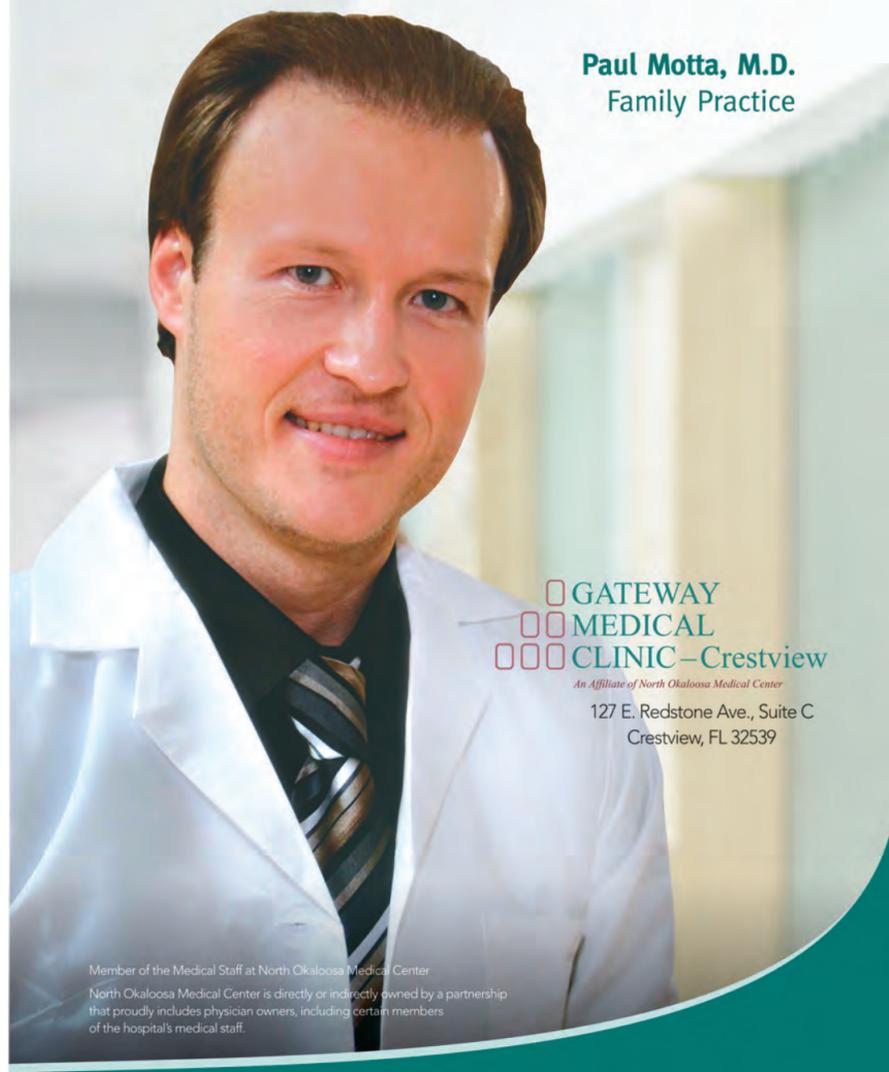


James "Jim" Miller

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