

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

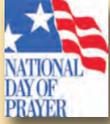
Wednesday, May 2, 2012

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**UP
COMING**

Thursday, noon

The Twin Cities Ministerial Association will host a **National Day of Prayer** service at Niceville City Hall. The theme will be "One Nation Under God," and will include music, an invocation and several prayers. Pre-program music will begin at 11:30 a.m. by the Rocky Bayou Christian School band and ensemble.



Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

Ruckel Middle School will present **Ruckel Idol 2012 Talent Show** in the Niceville High School auditorium. Cost: \$5 at the door. Sponsored by the Ruckel Rockettes Dance Team.

Saturday, 9 a.m.



The Department of Defense Explosive Ordnance Disposal community will host the annual **EOD Memorial Ceremony** at the EOD Memorial, Range D-51, Niceville. Eighteen names will be added to the memorial wall. This year's keynote speaker will be Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz.

Saturday, noon-5 p.m.

North Light Yacht Club and Marina will host the **North Bay Pier Party**. There will be live music, food from Dockside Cafe and Oyster Bar, high performance boats, motorcycles, stand-up paddle boards and more. The event is free to the public. Info: 585-3053, or NorthLightMarina.com.



Calendar, B-3

\$2.3 million sewer-plant buyout completed Valparaiso wins concession to protect its customers from rate hike

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Niceville's \$2.3 million purchase of Okaloosa County's share of the Niceville, Valparaiso,

Okaloosa County Regional Sewer Board was completed last week, but not before Valparaiso won a concession.

Under a side agreement to

facilitate approval of the ownership transfer, Niceville agreed to assume some additional costs so that expenses of its remaining partner in the sewage-treatment

partnership, Valparaiso, won't rise solely because of the county's departure. That could cost Niceville's sewer customers an additional 40 to 50 cents a month

for several years, according to officials.

As previously reported, Niceville sewer customers are

Please see SEWER, page A-3

Walton voters eye sales tax



Beacon photo by Del Lessard

Walton County voters will decide May 8 whether to levy a countywide sales tax to pay to four-lane the Highway 331 bridge over Choctawhatchee Bay. Some have argued for a toll instead.

Ballot may decide proposal to 4-lane bridge

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Walton County voters will decide in a referendum Tuesday whether to levy a sales tax to four-lane the U.S. Highway 331 bridge over Choctawhatchee Bay.

In December the Florida Department of Transportation proposed construction of a second two-lane bridge linking northern and southern Walton County at a cost of \$177 million, provided Walton County pays \$75 million of the cost.

State transportation officials said the county could borrow the money, then repay it with a \$2 toll on the southbound lanes of the four-lane span. That toll, the DOT estimated,

would pay off the county's \$75 million share in about 30 years.

But a number of residents opposed a toll, suggesting instead that the local share be paid with a countywide sales tax increase of one-half percentage point. Such a tax would boost the sales tax in Walton County to 7.5 percent, fully 1.5 percentage points higher than in neighboring Okaloosa County.

On the recommendation of a citizen panel, the Walton County Commission decided to hold a referendum on the proposed sales tax, but reserved a decision on possible toll should the proposed tax fail at the polls.

Transportation officials said the

state required a contribution from Walton County for the project because the DOT has experienced a \$11.7 billion state funding cut since 2006, as well as a slowdown in federal highway funding.

Walton County Commissioner Sara Commander said that if the increased local-option sales tax passes May 8, it would take effect Jan. 1. The tax would be levied until it raises the \$75 million local share—a period estimated at 10 to 15 years, she said.

If the sales tax fails to gain a majority, Commander said, the county commission would have to decide whether to go ahead with the project anyway, funding it with a toll.

Please see VOTERS, page A-2

Candidates sought for 3 tax districts

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Opportunity may be knocking for anyone interested in serving at the most local level of government.

Qualifying to run for election to the governing boards of two fire districts and another special taxing district in unincorporated areas of Niceville will take place in early June.

Electing officers later this year are the East Niceville Fire Control District, the North Bay Fire Control District, and the Bluewater Bay Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU). All three entities are special districts that levy taxes to fund operations. The two fire districts levy an ad valorem property tax. The MSBU imposes a flat-rate tax.

Despite these posts' effect on local pocketbooks,

Please see CANDIDATES, page A-3

College named as among nation's best

Beacon Staff Writer

Northwest Florida State College was named one of the nation's 120 top community colleges by a private foundation, entering the school in competition for a \$1 million prize.

The Aspen Institute said it identified the top 10 percent of all U.S. community colleges, using a formula that assesses performance and improvement in four areas: graduation rates, degrees awarded,



NWFSC President Ty Handy at 2011 commencement.

Please see COLLEGE, page A-5

Niceville woman beats odds in cancer fight

By Tess Hollis
Beacon Staff Writer

Two years ago, it would have been easy for Jillian Arnould to give up, but the 32-year-old made it her mission to beat cancer—and she won the battle.

Arnould, of Niceville, is this year's Honorary Chair of the Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life event, that will be held May 4 and 5 at Niceville High School.

Arnould will join other cancer survivors during the opening ceremony's survivor lap.

"I've been training hard to walk that lap," she said. "It's getting better each day."

But that one lap means the world to Arnould. During her fight against cancer, the single mother of one not only lost her hair—a result of chemotherapy—but also lost her left leg. She now

uses a prosthetic leg.

"I was so sick during my treatments, that I couldn't focus on vanity—I had to focus on survival," she said. "To be able to put on this leg and walk around that field, there's just so many emotions."

In the summer of 2009, Arnould found herself suf-



Jillian Arnould

fering from chronic pain in her left hip. By December 2009, an orthopedic doctor told her she had a broken hip. After having surgery, Arnould noticed the recovery process was slow and painful.

"There was just so much pain," she said. "I knew something was not right.

Relay events, B-1.

Physical therapy got harder and harder, and the pain just got worse."

In March 2010, Arnould was at home, when she got up from the couch and collapsed. After being taken to the emergency room at Sacred Heart Hospital, Arnould learned that she had bro-

ken her hip again, just below the first break.

"The next month after that was just a blur," she said.

The doctor told Arnould that she had a tumor on her femur, and she needed to see an ortho oncologist in Gainesville. By March 11, 2010, Arnould was in Gainesville, with a rod stabilizing her leg,

Please see FIGHT, page A-2

County commission hopefuls voice views

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Members of the Republican Club of Okaloosa County gathered on Thursday to share a supper with one another and hear candidates for the District 5 seat on the Okaloosa County Commission.

Incumbent District 5 Commissioner James Campbell, of Niceville, is not running for reelection this year. Four fellow Republicans are competing for the seat.

Although the District 5 commissioner must live in and repre-

sent District 5, which includes parts of the Niceville and Destin areas, all five county commissioners are elected at large, by voters from all districts of the county.

Thursday's forum included Republicans Larry Hines, Felix Beukenkamp and Kelly Windes. Currently, there are no Democrats listed as candidates, according to the Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections website. If no non-Republican candidate qualifies, and no write-in candidate asks to be put on the

Please see COUNTY, page A-3



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Three candidates for the District 5 Okaloosa County Commission seat stumped before Republican activists Thursday. From left: Kelly Windes, Felix Beukenkamp, Larry Hines.



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Niceville man dies as truck hits tree

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Funeral services were held Monday for Niceville native Billy Harold Goodson Jr.

Goodson, 47, was killed last week in a single-vehicle accident near Northwest Florida Regional Airport.

Memorial services were held at the Niceville Assembly of God, followed by burial in Heritage Gardens Cemetery, Niceville.

He is survived by his wife, Karen, sons Bradlee, 11, and Brandon, 6, his mother, Norma Goodson Howard, two sisters, a brother, and several aunts, uncles,

cousins, nieces and nephews.

"Billy was a hard-working man who was always available for his kids," said his sister Kerry Rateliff, also of Niceville. "He was overly generous. If he saw someone on the streets and he had a dollar, he would give it to them," she said. "He had a lot of friends here. He



Billy H. Goodson Jr.

was always upbeat and happy to see you."

Goodson was killed April 24, at about 12:40 p.m. when his 1997 Chevrolet pickup hit a tree, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.

Rateliff said witnesses said he appeared to have had some type of medical issue just before the crash.

An Florida Highway Patrol report gave the following account:

The accident occurred on a two-lane, one-way service road on the south side of State Road 85. The service road connects the airport with SR 85. At the time of the

crash the inside eastbound lane was closed due to construction. The road is posted at 30 mph.

Goodson was eastbound on the outside eastbound lane of the service road and was stopped at a stop sign at the east entrance/exit of the airport. He traveled through the intersection and accelerated to high speed as he approached a sweeping left hand curve.

He continued traveling straight onto the south shoulder where the truck struck two highway signs, continued down a grass embankment, and struck a large oak tree. The vehicle spun and hit a second oak.

VOTERS

From page A-1

The DOT has stated that if the county cannot raise its share, the state's \$102 million share would be spent elsewhere, possibly not in the county.

Commander said the \$75 million contribution from Walton County is an absolute figure, even if costs exceed estimates. July 1 is the deadline for the county to tell the DOT whether it will fund its share of the proposed bridge improvement project, she said.

In March, DOT District Three Secretary James T. Barfield told the county commission that if the bridge project is approved, the agency would also pay to complete the four-laning of Highway 331 between the north end of the span and Interstate 10 by 2017. That would include widening 13 miles of the 15 miles of Highway 331, according to Ian Satter, DOT spokesman.

In any case, Commander, a member of the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization, said that the DOT is expected to widen Highway 331 from Highway 20 south to the bridge soon. The segment from Highway 20 north to Interstate 10, she said, still



The Highway 331 bridge over Choctawhatchee Bay is the main link between the northern and southern sections of Walton County. The state has proposed doubling its two lanes—provided the county picks up a share of the cost.

requires some right of way to be purchased, and no construction money is budgeted for the work.

Transportation officials last month held public meetings in Walton County to discuss options for a toll, such as what type of discounts might be available. Details of those options however won't be available until later this summer, well after Tuesday's referendum.

Jim Vest, a Walton County resident who is the executive director of the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority, which operates a bay-spanning toll bridge in Okaloosa County, said that Walton County voters should find a way to fund a second span, in part to take

advantage of the offer from the DOT to widen Highway 331 all the way to I-10.

Funding for streets, roads and bridges throughout the U.S. has traditionally relied on revenue from motor-fuels taxes, Vest said. However, he said, the secretary of the Florida DOT—as well as transportation officials in other states—now say that fuels taxes, levied on each gallon sold, aren't keeping pace with needs. As vehicles get more efficient, and more of them travel on untaxed fuels such as natural gas and electricity, transportation officials are looking to tolls to make up the shortfall, he said.

"Traditionally a sales tax is

FIGHT

From page A-1

awaiting a diagnosis. After undergoing exploratory surgery, she learned she had metastatic osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer, that's most common in children and males.

"It's a very aggressive cancer, with a 25 percent survival rate," she said. "I also found out that it had metastasized to my lungs."

She had surgery twice during her fight against cancer to remove nodules from her lungs. She also received chemotherapy that was intense, and required her to be hospitalized for three to seven days each time she received the

treatments.

"I'm a very girlie girl and I still wanted to be myself through all of this," Arnould said of losing her hair to the chemo. "My friend Carrie flew from Spain to help me, and I remember her combing my hair every night, and it would fall out—it just happened so quickly, and it made it final, that I had cancer."

She finally decided to shave her head.

"It felt right," she said of cutting off her long locks. "I felt the presence of the Lord, telling me that I was still beautiful. Looking in the mirror that night, I had a sense of peace."

By April 2010, Arnould was told that the tumor in her leg

was growing, and she had a decision to make—lose her leg, or lose her life.

"I had no other choice," she said. "I have a son to live for, and I knew I had to fight as hard as I could."

On June 17, 2010, her left leg was amputated at the hip. Because the doctor cut her pelvis and took out her hip socket, she describes her prosthetic leg as her "Barbie leg." But she hasn't had the leg long—she received chemotherapy through March 2011, and did not have the strength to learn to use a prosthetic leg, thus relying on a wheelchair or walker.

Arnould received her prosthetic leg on Jan. 3, and she

currently spends three days a week, one hour each day, in physical therapy learning how to use the leg.

"It's a full-time job to learn to use a prosthetic leg," she said. "It's difficult to walk, and it's painful and exhausting."

People also stare at the leg and ask questions.

"My initial feeling was that I was aggravated, but the Lord has blessed me with this life, and I can open doors and share my journey with people," she said.

By the summer of 2011, Arnould learned she was cancer-free.

"The Lord healed me," she said. "I can't really draw a line between my cancer journey and my faith. When people say cancer is a battle, they are not lying, but it was good for me and my son in so many ways."

Surviving cancer has given her a new lease on life.

"I know I shouldn't be here," said said, fighting back tears. "Every day is a gift. I don't like the fact that I have only one leg, but you just have to move on with life. I can't wallow in that."

Every three months, for the next two years, Arnould has to get scans to ensure the cancer has not returned.

"I do get nervous about the scans, but I just have to trust in the Lord," she said. "This is just my reality, and I don't want to spend my time worrying."

This summer, Arnould will receive a C-leg, which uses hydraulic cylinders to control the flexing of the knee. Sensors send signals to the micro-processor that analyzes the signals, and communicates what resistance the hydraulic cylinders should supply. The C-Leg functions through various technological devices incorporated into the components of the prosthesis.

In the meantime, she keeps busy by spending time with her 12-year-old son, Jarred, and serving as a Pampered Chef consultant.

"I'm feeling healthy and doing a lot better," she said. "By the fall I hope to regain some normalcy, but it will be a new type of normal."

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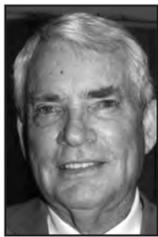
COUNTY

From page A-1

ballot, the election will be decided Aug. 14, in what will become a universal primary open to all registered voters and decided by a plurality.

If another party or write-in candidate qualifies for the District 5 race, the Aug. 14 primary will remain a closed Republican primary, with the party winner going on to the Nov. 6 general election.

A fourth listed Republican candidate, Aaron Weinstock, Niceville, did not appear at the forum. The Beacon reached Weinstock after the meeting.



Kelly Windes

His answers to questions posed by the newspaper will be carried in a future issue.

In opening remarks, Windes, of Destin, cited his 40 years' experience in the Northwest Florida fishing industry and as a charter boat captain, as well as his experience as a Destin City Councilman and a Navy reservist. He said he helped develop the Destin fishing fleet marina to what it is today.

Beukenkamp, of Niceville, said he has a bachelor of arts in economics and a master of business administration in finance, and is the owner and manager of a local construction and develop-

ment firm. He has been vice chairman of the Okaloosa County Planning Commission, and has held leadership positions in the Workforce Development Board, the Florida Homebuilders Association and Habitat for Humanity.

Hines, of Destin, spoke of his 20 years as an Air Force officer and F-15 pilot, and as the officer in charge of the Range Improvement Program at Eglin Air Force Base. He is a member of the Destin City Council, the Eglin Air Force Base Noise Committee, the Florida League of Cities Finance and Taxation Committee, the Okaloosa Tourist Development Council, as well as of several military and aviation organizations. He holds a bachelor of science in chemical engineering and a master of science in human resource management, and is a graduate of several advanced military leadership and management schools, as well as having earned a Distinguished Flying Cross during his more than 184 combat missions during the Vietnam War.



Felix Beukenkamp

"I want to make a difference," Beukenkamp said of the reason he is running for county commissioner. "This is one of the best counties in Florida, and I'd like to see us be excellent." He said he hopes to improve the coun-

ty's use of technology to operate more efficiently in the future.

Hines said he wants to use his background as a city councilman and businessman to solve the county's problems. He said his goals include more efficiency in county government and efforts to bring more jobs to the county. Such businesses as software companies, he said, will help diversify the county's economy in addition to military and tourism-related business, and that such companies can be attracted by Okaloosa's high-quality schools and overall quality of life.



Larry Hines

Windes said he has been encouraged to run by retiring Commissioner James Campbell.

"I got my degree from the docks," Windes said, and promised to bring good judgment and common sense to the county commission—qualities he said he honed while a member of the Destin City Council.

When asked what they think is the most important issue facing the county commission, all three candidates agreed that it is the budget.

Hines said that while economic recessions like the current one are bad for individuals, they can be good for governments, because they force financial discipline on

public officials. He said that while on the Destin council, he helped reduce spending in 23 different areas, including reducing library hours and cutting the city's staff of county sheriff's deputies from 12 to 11.

Windes said he expects the county budget to be cut again this year. He said he advocates focusing tourism development money on attracting more visitors during the fall and winter rather than the traditional spring/summer tourist season, and on attracting more jobs to the county by reducing and simplifying building codes and other regulations, thus bringing more revenue to county government.

Beukenkamp said the county needs creative ideas for improving efficiency, such as issuing building permits electronically rather than as paper copies, consolidating county departments and encouraging the use of pocket computers by county staff members to speed calculations and communication, and to reduce paperwork.

All three candidates agreed that the county should continue to offer tax breaks and similar incentives to encourage selected businesses to come to Okaloosa County, bringing high-tech, well-paying jobs with them. They also agreed that the process by which the county negotiates with such companies should be open to the public except when absolutely necessary—for example to protect prospective companies from having to reveal confidential information to competitors.

SEWER

From page A-1

expected to see their monthly sewer bills rise about \$4.86 to pay increased costs related to the buy-out and higher operating costs of a state-ordered plant upgrade. The Valparaiso agreement would boost that increase to over \$5 a month.

Niceville is now majority owner of the regional sewage-treatment plant that serves the Twin Cities area after agreeing to pay the county's share of a planned upgrade, estimated at \$2.3 million. Previously the city owned 43.6 percent, and now owns 80 percent.

Okaloosa County is no longer a member of the Niceville, Valparaiso, Okaloosa County Regional Sewer Board, but will continue to use the regional treatment facility in Niceville as a customer for as long as three years, until it completes a pipeline to send Bluewater Bay area effluent to the new county treatment plant north of Fort Walton Beach.

County officials wanted to sell its treatment capacity in Niceville because it was deemed excess upon completion of the new county plant to the southwest. Niceville officials rejected a county offer to join the new plant as

well, but were happy to purchase the county's share of the regional plant to serve the expected development of the 1,100-acre Ruckel tract east of the city. That land, the largest undeveloped private tract in the county south of Interstate 10, was in an unincorporated area until 2010, when Niceville annexed it.

Okaloosa County Water and Sewer Department head Jeff Littrell, acting as the NVOC Regional Sewer Board's NVOC president, presided over his last meeting of the board April 25, at which the panel unanimously approved an agreement allowing

Niceville to purchase the county's 32.67 percent share of the regional utility. The purchase agreement had previously been approved by the Okaloosa County Commission, the Niceville City Council, and the Valparaiso City Commission.

For Niceville, the ownership transfer means the city can expand its sewage treatment capacity much more cheaply than building an additional 1 million gallons per day treatment capacity in a few years. The city had already exceeded its owned capacity sev-

Please see PLANT, page A-6

CANDIDATES

From page A-1

competition for them has been the exception, not the rule.

In Okaloosa County, 14 special districts will hold elections this year, including 12 fire districts, the Bluewater Bay MSBU and the Yellow River Soil Conservation Commission, according to Ray Bolden, candidate coordinator for the Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections. All the posts are non-partisan.

North Bay fire commissioners and Bluewater Bay MSBU directors serve without pay. Until last year, so did East Niceville fire commissioners. Now East Niceville commissioners receive \$500 a month. East Niceville commissioners said they enacted the pay, in part, to encourage more people to run for the office.

It is not uncommon for such special districts to lose commissioners by resignation during their four-year terms. When that happens, it's up to the board to appoint a volunteer to serve until the next

election. Also in past elections positions on fire boards and other special districts have gone unfilled when no one qualified. In those cases it's up to commissioners to appoint someone.

"It's hard for people to know about these positions," said Ed Dunbar, an East Niceville fire commissioner who is not up for election this year.

Dunbar urged people to consider public service on such boards. "By the time the public realizes the positions are open, qualifying has already gone by," he said. He added that he has heard complaints about property taxes from two of the largest subdivisions in East Niceville, Rocky Bayou and Huntington Estates, but noted that none of the East Niceville fire commissioners lives in either of them.

Any contested seats will appear on the Nov. 6 general election ballot, with the winner determined by a plurality.

Candidates must run for a particular seat, but may live anywhere in the district.

Three seats on the five-member East Niceville Fire District Commission are up for election this year, all to four-year terms. The positions, incumbents and terms are:

—Group 1, Michael Marcolongo, 2012-2016.

—Group 3, Matthew Schwab, 2012-2016.

—Group 5, Leonard Martin, 2012-2016.

Four fire seats on the five-member North Bay Fire Commission will be filled this year—including three commission seats for four year terms and one for two years:

—Group 1, Steven E. Strait, 2012-2016.

—Group 3, James W. Boswell, 2012-2016.

—Group 4, Lee M. Wetzell, 2012-2014.

—Group 5, James Miller, 2012-2016.

All five directors on the five-member Bluewater Bay MSBU will be up for election this year—three for four-year terms and two for two years:

—Group 1, David Strunk, 2012-2016.

—Group 2, Joan McCarthy, 2012-2014.

—Group 3, Doug Burgess, 2012-2016.

—Group 4, Robert Jellison, 2012-2014.

—Group 5, Dale Blanchard, 2012-2016.

The Supervisor of Elections announced that the ballot-qualification period for the three districts will begin at noon Monday, June 4, and end at noon Friday, June 8.

Candidates for fire seats must

be residents of the respective fire districts. They may qualify by paying \$25 or by obtaining petition signatures of 25 registered voters residing within the district. There is a 10-cent per name fee for petition signature certification by the supervisor of elections. Petitions for fire commissioner candidates must be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections by noon, May 7—that is, a month before the qualifying deadline.

Qualifications for MSBU are stricter, according to the Supervisor of Elections. Candidates for the MSBU must not only pay \$25, but also must collect petition signatures of 10 registered voters residing in the district. Petitions for MSBU candidates must be submitted during qualifying week, said Paul Lux, Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections.

Candidates can pay for petition certification or the qualifying fee out of personal funds, according to Bolden. It is not necessary for candidates to open a campaign account unless he or she intends to accept or spend campaign money, he said.

Anyone interested in running for office in any of the three special districts can get more information by contacting Bolden at the Supervisor of Elections office at 651-7272.

Correction

An April 25 story misstated the date of state judicial and Public Defender elections. It is Aug. 14.

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BOOK SIGNING
 by Martha LaGuardia-Kotite,
 author of *My Name is Old Glory*
Saturday, May 5 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The book takes the poem by WWII marine vet Howard Schnauber and blends it with timeless images – from a civil right march to the 9/11 – that capture the glory embodied in our national treasure. Interlaced throughout with fascinating historical anecdotes and personal reflections about what Old Glory means to Americans of all ages, this is the quintessential tribute to 200 years of the red, white, and blue.

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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, 24, of 362-B Lincoln Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by Valparaiso police April 18 on charges of domestic violence battery, false imprisonment, resisting arrest without violence and felony criminal mischief. Goodrich allegedly became agitated and combative in the holding cell of the police department and later kicked out a squad car window as officers attempted to take him to the county jail. The arrest report indicated Goodrich was under the influence of drugs.

Scott Eason Bacheller, 54, with an at-large address, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police April 20 on a disorderly conduct charge.

Donovan Alexander Black, a model, 31, of 2131 Casa De Oro St., Navarre, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop on Highway 20 in Niceville, April 22, on a Holmes County warrant on the charge of failure to appear on a worthless checks charge.

Willie Patrick Williams, unemployed, 20, of 505 Johnson St., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 22 on a charge of failure to appear on the original charge of battery.

David Michael Thomas, 27, of 1015 Julia Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 13 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge.

Nathan John Querns, a tire alignment worker, 31, of 4600 Range Road, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 13 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge.

Tucker Raymond Robinson, 21, of 1115 Rita Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 16 on a contempt of court charge.

Brandon Sentell Caldwell, an entertainment promoter, 30, of 345 Lincoln Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 15 on a charge of felony battery.

Steven Ray Butler, a tree climber, 36, of 1026 47th St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 17 on a charge of driving while license suspended or revoked, habitual offender.

A 16-year-old Niceville boy, a student, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 17 on a charge of battery.

Originating from a road rage incident on the Mid-Bay Bridge, the 16-year-old boy allegedly approached the victim in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant, 4450 E. Highway 20, Niceville, and after an argument put him in a headlock.

After the initial battery—which was captured on the aggressor's cell phone video camera—the victim retreated to his vehicle. The 16-year-old followed the victim to his car and punched him in the face.

A 17-year-old Crestview boy, a student, was arrested by

Valp. man charged as drug pusher

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

A Valparaiso man was jailed on charges that he sold marijuana and narcotics to someone who was a police informant.

Gary Logan Thomas, 48, of 1175 N. Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 19, in Destin, on charges of sale of marijuana, distribution of controlled substance, possession of controlled substance without a prescription, possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.



Gary Logan Thomas

Sheriff's reports, which said the arrest was the result of an investigation by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Multi-Agency Drug Task Force, gave the following account:

On Jan. 13, a person cooperating with authorities made a

controlled purchase from Thomas of 1.5 grams of oxycodone, a Schedule I controlled drug.

—On Feb. 20, a cooperating source made a controlled purchase from Thomas of oxycodone, 2 grams.

—On April 19, a cooperating source made a controlled purchase of 13 grams of marijuana and a multi-colored glass smoking pipe from Thomas. Thomas, who had driven his 2001 Ford Explorer to the purchase site, was arrested after the transaction.

A search of Thomas' Explorer resulted in discovery of a small jar containing less than 20 grams of marijuana, a multi-colored glass pipe with burnt marijuana residue, and an unmarked pill bottle containing a single pill of acetaminophen and hydrocodone bitartrate, a schedule III controlled drug for which Thomas had no prescription. Deputies also seized \$300 in police-recorded drug-buy money inside the Explorer.

As of April 26, Thomas was being held at the Okaloosa County Jail in lieu of \$34,500 bail.

sheriff's deputies at the same time and place on charges of burglary to a vehicle and petit theft. The 17-year-old, described as an associate of the 16-year-old battery suspect, allegedly entered the victim's vehicle and stole \$100 from the victim's wallet while the victim was defending himself from the battery.

The burglary and theft were recorded by the defendant on a cell phone video camera.

Johnnie Ray Spain, unemployed, 37, with an at-large address, was arrested by sheriff's deputies in Niceville April 16 on a charge of possession of a gun by a convicted felon.

Spain arrived on scene in the 4500 block of Bluewater Boulevard after another man had been taken into custody on unrelated charges while driving Spain's vehicle. A deputy was in the process of disarming a firearm when Spain spontaneously said "that's mine." Spain told deputies he purchased the gun found inside his vehicle to use while hunting and "to shoot snakes."

Luis Diego Prado, 20 of 1409 Cape Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 22 on a felony violation of probation charge.

Victor Andrew Weimorts, 30, of 149 Wright Circle, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies April 20 on a felony violation of probation charge.

Dallas Lee Montgomery, 18, of 1013 Forest Road, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI on Highway 20 at Palm Boulevard, April 17 at 8:20 p.m.

The owner of a Niceville appliance store, 121 N. Partin Drive, reported that someone stole the stoves he left outside next to the road for his scrap hauler. A sign on the fence stated not to take the appliances.

A Niceville resident reported that on April 14 the Internal

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from April 23, 2012 through April 29, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Yacht Club Drive	Medical	04/23/12	08:40
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/23/12	13:13
Reeves Street	Medical	04/23/12	14:12
Cedar Ridge Way	Other fire	04/23/12	20:34
Reeves Street	Vehicle crash	04/23/12	21:35
Kelly Road	Medical	04/23/12	23:02
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/24/12	20:46
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/24/12	10:09
E. John Sims Parkway	Medical	04/24/12	11:51
N. Highway 85	Medical	04/24/12	16:47
Matthew Street	Medical	04/25/12	15:50
Matthew Street	Medical	04/25/12	18:50
St. Andrews Drive	Medical	04/26/12	15:46
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/26/12	16:20
Everglade Drive	Service call	04/26/12	22:18
Nutmeg Avenue	Medical	04/27/12	13:07
E. John Sims Parkway	Vehicle crash	04/27/12	16:55
SR 123/North Bridge	Vehicle crash	04/27/12	22:35
Black Bear Circle	Medical	04/28/12	10:48
Springwood Way	Medical	04/28/12	11:50
Fir Avenue	Medical	04/28/12	13:58
N. Partin Drive	Medical	04/28/12	19:25
Helms/S. Partin Drive	Brush fire	04/28/12	19:54
N. Palm	Medical	04/28/12	23:56
Ellis Avenue	Medical	04/29/12	13:06
Matthew Street	Medical	04/29/12	20:25

Weekly Safety Tip: IA multipurpose dry chemical Class ABC Fire Extinguisher is the best choice for general home use. Mount the extinguisher on a bracket on the wall near an exit, so that anyone using it can escape from the room if a fire spreads. All occupants must know when and how to use the extinguisher. 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 23, 2012 through April 29, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
N. White Point Road	EMS call	04/23/12	08:56
Cedar Ridge Way	Dispatched and canceled	04/23/12	20:36
E. Highway 20	Dispatched and canceled	04/23/12	22:14
Troom Drive West	Medical assist	04/24/12	08:06
Cedar Street	Medical assist	04/24/12	09:28
Merchants Way	EMS call	04/24/12	10:59
Range Road	Explosive, bomb removal	04/24/12	16:49
Ida Coon Circle	EMS call	04/24/12	19:26
N. White Point Road	Medical assist	04/24/12	21:49
Highway 20 East	Alarm system sounded	04/25/12	09:31
County Line Road	EMS call	04/25/12	14:11
Oakmont Drive	EMS call	04/25/12	19:56
Armadillo Trail	EMS call	04/25/12	20:20
White Point Road	Dispatched and canceled	04/25/12	22:08
E. Highway 20	EMS call	04/25/12	23:15
N. White Point Road	Medical assist	04/27/12	19:32
Hampton Court	Extraction, rescue	04/28/12	14:59
Yacht Club Drive	EMS call	04/29/12	00:36
White Point Road	EMS call	04/29/12	03:37
Otter Lake Cove	Dispatched and canceled	04/29/12	06:23
Troom Drive West	Assist invalid	04/29/12	14:26
Winchur Cove	EMS call	04/29/12	16:38
Highway 20 & Range Road	Motor vehicle accident	04/29/12	17:05
West Ridgewood Cove	EMS call	04/29/12	22:16

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

Valparaiso Volunteer

The Valparaiso Volunteer Fire Department responded to the following calls during the month of April:

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Valparaiso Pkwy.	Traumatic injury	04/01/12	02:47
Edge Avenue	Sick call	04/01/12	12:43
Lincoln Avenue	Chest pain	04/01/12	17:56
Davenport Avenue	Choking	04/02/12	05:11
Chicago Avenue	Fall	04/02/12	23:23
Madison Avenue	Diabetic	04/03/12	12:45
Government Avenue	Fire service call	04/05/12	21:21
Edge Avenue	Fall	04/06/12	05:56
North Bayshore Drive	Breathing problem	04/07/12	15:50
Lincoln Avenue	Unconscious	04/07/12	20:10
Illinois Avenue	Abdominal	04/08/12	20:39
Menzel Avenue	Natural gas leak	04/09/12	20:41
South John Sims Pkwy.	Unconscious	04/11/12	11:43
Valparaiso Pkwy.	Fire alarm	04/13/12	09:38
Magnolia Avenue	Fire service call	04/13/12	20:53
Chicago Avenue	Fall	04/16/12	02:18
North Bayshore Drive	Sick call	04/16/12	10:56
Chicago Avenue	Breathing problem	04/18/12	03:01
Grandview Avenue	Structure fire	04/19/12	20:04
Bayshore Drive	Structure fire	04/20/12	13:45
Davenport Avenue	Cardiac arrest	04/20/12	17:13
Judith Drive	Fall	04/21/12	16:22
Hickory Lane	Breathing problem	04/22/12	02:53
South John Sims Pkwy.	Breathing problem	04/23/12	16:26
North Hwy. 85	Motor vehicle accident	04/24/12	12:36
South John Sims Pkwy.	Seizures	04/24/12	19:25
Edward Circle	Fall	04/29/12	20:41
Hidden Cove Circle	Overdose	04/30/12	05:50
Judith Drive	Cardiac arrest	04/30/12	06:28

Contact the Valparaiso Volunteer Fire Department at 729-5410 if you have questions or concerns.

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LESS THAN 1¢ PER READER

Scam targets BWB woman

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

A Niceville woman reported she was the victim of a telephone scam.

On April 12 the Bluewater Bay resident received a call from a woman who identified herself as "Monique" and said she was a representative from Life Time Services National Foundation of Consumer Credit. The caller said that because the victim had an excellent credit rating she qualified for credit card consolidation services at a 6 percent annual rate versus the victim's annual 27 percent rating.

"Monique" claimed the service was available to her because of the 2011 Dodd-Frank Consumer Credit bill listed under the Affordable Care Act, Consumer Credit. The caller said she was working on behalf of the banks that had issued the victim her credit cards.

The victim provided the caller with personal information, including her date of birth, Social Security number, a MasterCard number and expiration dates, as well as the number of another, "maxed-out" credit card.

While the victim was on hold during the phone call, waiting for a "financial analyst" to OK the deal, the line went dead. At that point the victim said she

Please see SCAM, page A-5



THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith

What are your plans for summer vacation?

Location: Turkey Creek Walk



"We just moved here, so we'll be getting to know the Niceville area."

Michael Cross, 26, Niceville, carpenter



"We're going to my uncle's house in Maryland, and we'll visit Washington, D.C."

Christian Torres, 9, Niceville, Bluewater Elementary School student



"I'll be working security here at Turkey Creek, and also running the ice cream boat at Crab Island and at Norriego Point."

Phil Spencer, 47, Valparaiso, security guard



"I'll be going back and forth to Birmingham, mountain climbing and visiting Six Flags."

Raigen Wright, 11, Niceville, Plew Elementary School student



"We have a new baby, so we'll be staying close to home and laying low."

Alison Rigsby, 28, Cocoa Beach, mom



"I'll be doing a lot of water sports, upgrading my house, taking my kids to vacation Bible school and loving on my pregnant wife."

Rafael Stoffel, 29, Niceville, U.S. Army

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

SR 85 closure

Traffic on State Road (S.R.) 85 North between College Boulevard and S.R. 123, north of Niceville, will be closed 11 p.m. Monday, May 7 to 5 a.m. Tuesday, May 8, according to the Florida Department of Transportation. The temporary closure will allow crews to pour the deck for the new overpass bridge currently under construction. Southbound traffic will utilize S.R. 123 and northbound traffic S.R. 20 as a detour route. This work is part of the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector extension and the Range Road resurfacing and shoulder widening project. Work began on the \$50 million construction project in February 2011 and is estimated to be completed in January 2014. Drivers are reminded to pay attention to the speed limit when traveling through the construction area, and to use caution, especially at night when driving in work zones.

COLLEGE

From page A-1 student retention rates and equity in student outcomes. These colleges will compete for the 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence following a year-long research process into how well their students learn, complete degrees, and get jobs with competitive wages after graduating, according to the Washington, D.C.-based organization. The winner will be announced in March 2013. It is the second year in a row that NWFSC has been named to the list. Although still primarily a two-year institution, in recent years Northwest Florida State College has begun offering four-year degrees in a handful of fields, and it dropped "community college" from its name. Community colleges that offer four-year bachelor's degree were once a novelty, said Ty Handy, president of NWFSC, but today more than 10 percent of the 1,200 community colleges considered by

the Aspen Institute also offer some bachelor's programs. About 700 of the 7,500 full-time students enrolled at NWFSC are college juniors or seniors, he said. "This community has a true need for an open-access college that is the gateway to higher education," said Handy. "That's our primary mission," he said, adding that the college "will continue to pursue additional bachelor programs in response to community needs." The first inaugural Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence was awarded to 70,000-student Valencia College, Orlando, in 2011. "It was the first broad national recognition of extraordinary accomplishments at individual community colleges," according to the institute. Some 7 million students enroll in America's nearly 1,200 public and private two-year community colleges every year. "The success of our nation's community colleges is more important than ever before," said Aspen Institute College

Excellence Program Executive Director Josh Wyner. "At a time when a college degree is essential to entering the middle class, community colleges like NWF State College offer the most promising path to education and employment for literally millions of Americans. This competition spotlights excellence and we encourage NWF State College to apply for the nation's top community college prize to help raise the bar for all community colleges to improve student achievement and better prepare the next generation for the job market after college." Northwest Florida State College and 119 other community colleges will be winnowed to about 10 finalists in September based on how much students learn, how many complete their programs on time, and how well students do in the job market after graduating. Northwest Florida State College is now eligible to submit an application containing detailed data on these criteria. It must demonstrate that it delivers exceptional student results, uses data to drive deci-

sions, and continually improves over time, according to the institute. The Aspen Institute will conduct site visits to each of the finalists in the fall. A panel co-chaired by John Engler, president of Business Roundtable, former Michigan governor, and former president of the National Association of Manufacturers and Richard Riley, former South Carolina governor and U.S. Secretary of Education, will select a grand prize winner and four runners-up.

SCAM

From page A-4 realized she had been scammed and immediately called the credit card company to report the incident and cancel the card. Later the same day the credit card company advised her that a \$895 charge had been posted to her account. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office warns residents to never give out personal information when receiving unsolicited calls, emails or letters. Suspected scams should be reported to the OCSO Fraud Hot Line, 651-7674.

BLOTTER

From page A-4 Revenue Service called and informed her that someone else had used her Social Security number to file taxes. The IRS told the victim that she would need to call the sheriff's office to file a report and also report the suspected identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission. The IRS declined to give the victim further information.

Criminal Mischief

A Niceville resident reported that while traveling across Okaloosa Island about 1:40 a.m., April 14, a hitch-hiker threw rocks at his vehicle as he passed. Deputies reported two similar calls the same date. The Niceville resident, later the same day, discovered several fresh scratches on the hood and numerous fresh windshield chips.

A man with permission to camp in a wooded area temporarily reported April 20 to Niceville police that he saw two men walking away from his tent as he was returning to it. The man said he found the tent had been cut up with an unknown device.

Other

A 14-year-old Niceville girl, a student, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies April 9 on the charge of pos-

session of less than 20 grams of marijuana. The girl, who was discovered in possession of the marijuana at Niceville High School, said she was "holding" the marijuana for another girl who was not a student.

A 16-year-old Niceville girl, a student, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies April 11 on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana.

A 17-year-old Niceville boy was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop for speeding, April 7, on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana.

Russell Edward Clary, unemployed, 22, of 304 Reeves St., Lot B-16, and Hillari K. Siler, a store clerk, 20, of the same address, were issued criminal summonses by Niceville police April 11, each charged with shoplifting.

Matthew Delphan Kalch, 40, of 617 McKinney St., Niceville, was issued a criminal summons by Niceville police April 20 on a charge of falsely identifying himself to a law enforcement officer.

Alex James Dallman, a restaurant busser, 21, of 534 Maple Ave., Niceville, was

issued a notice to appear by Niceville police, subsequent to a traffic stop for a seat belt violation, April 16, on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana.

A 15-year-old Niceville boy, a student, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies April 19 on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana. The boy allegedly was observed with a small amount of marijuana in a brown pill bottle in his lunch box at Niceville High School. Marijuana was also located in a clear plastic bag that allegedly had fallen out of the boy's pocket.

A 17-year-old Niceville boy, a student, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies April 19 on a charge of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana. After being detained by a deputy in Fort Walton Beach for trespassing, the boy removed a plastic bag from his pocket that contained a small amount of marijuana.

Abubakr Cristobal, 18, of 1247 Whitewood Way, Niceville, was issued a notice to appear by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop for faulty equipment, April 16, on charges of possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

The Bay Beacon & Beacon Express
 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, Florida 32578
 (850) 678-1080 • Fax: 729-3225
 info@baybeacon.com

Stephen W. Kent
 Editor and Publisher

Sara Kent
 Advertising Director

Ignacio Macasaet
 Graphic Artist

Candice Legge
 Graphic Artist

Karon Dey
 Bookkeeper

Bunni Farnham
 Advertising Representative

Linda McCormick
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Tess Hollis
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Cheryle Valentine
 Receptionist

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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN
 (Never known to fail). Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine.
 The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted. **S.K.**

PLANT

From page A-3

eral months in the past year, but was able to borrow the unused capacity of its two partners.

Valparaiso commissioners approved the ownership transfer between its other two partners April 16, after Niceville provided a memorandum of understanding stating that the transfer would not increase certain costs to Valparaiso.

In the past, each of the three partners in the regional sewer utility paid some treatment costs on pro rata basis, that is based on the percentage of the sewage each entity sends to the treatment plant. Examples of costs shared based on the percentage of sewage flow, are the utilities and chemicals used to treat the sewage.

Other costs, such as personnel expense, transportation, lease payments and other services are not dependent on how

much sewage each partner sends.

Niceville agreed that Valparaiso's payments wouldn't go up just because the county no longer participates in the regional utility. This takes effect once the county diverts its sewage flow, which is expected in one to three years. At that point Valparaiso's share will be fixed based on the last 12 months that the county was sending sewage to the regional plant. Niceville will continue to pay this addi-

tional charge until Niceville's sewage flow equals the combined sewage flow of Niceville and Okaloosa County during that last 12-month period.

As an example, engineers calculated that Valparaiso's share of sewage sent to the plant last year totaled about 11 percent of the total flow going to the regional sewer plant. If the county's flow is eliminated, Valparaiso's share of the flow would increase to 16.42 percent. Niceville's engineer, Glenn

Stephens, of Polyengineering, estimated that the side agreement with Valparaiso will cost Niceville's sewer customers an extra 40 to 50 cents a month during the several years it is likely to be in effect.

In any case, sewer customers in both Niceville and Valparaiso will pay more over the next few years because of the increased costs of chemicals and power needed to use IFAS (integrated fixed-film activated sludge) technology used in the upgraded

sewer treatment plant, and the expected high cost to lease land from Eglin Air Force Base for disposal of the treated effluent under the Air Force's new policy requiring market rent. The current lease is free.

The side agreement will be used in drafting a new operational agreement between the two remaining partners at the regional plant. The existing agreement among the three previous partners expires this summer.



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PoFolks
 Guests can expect to see a different quality of service

Advertising Feature

PoFolks restaurant in Niceville has been known for 18 years as having the best food and service in the area. Recently, the restaurant received honors in the "Finest on The Emerald Coast" competition sponsored by the Northwest Florida Daily News. PoFolks won Finest on The Emerald Coast in four categories, including fried chicken, catering, service, and dessert. Operating Partner Paul Snow gave us insight on how things have improved in the restaurant since August of 2011.

"Our mission statement at PoFolks has always been service-based," says Snow. "A business that has a good product cannot thrive without excellent guest service and relations. At PoFolks, we have refocused our team around that single fact, and the results speak for themselves." PoFolks has seen a dramatic turnaround in both business and guest satisfaction in the past months and Snow believes it is just the beginning. "Our guests are the most important part of our business. We want them to feel that way when they come in or get take out with us."

PoFolks has won several honors for its fried chicken in the past. Nationwide competitions in the 80s



PoFolks, at 1170 John Sims Parkway in Niceville, has been offering delicious country cooking for the past 18 years.

and 90s saw PoFolks fried chicken constantly gaining top votes in major cities. The "Finest on The Emerald Coast" honor is just the latest to show that PoFolks' fried chicken is the best around. "We're not fancy about how we do it," claims Snow. "It's a product that is simple to make and uses the natural flavor of the chicken to give it appeal. It's also the best value in town. Guests can pick up 8 pieces of mixed chicken for just \$7.99, and we have family and bulk packs available as well."

Catering is a great example of how PoFolks branches out to

guests who have a party to throw or just a gathering to feed. "A lot of folks still don't know that we cater just about anything they need. All they have to do is give us a call and we can help them put something together that will make their function a hit," Snow says. The restaurant was active in preparing meals daily for the BP Cleanup crews in 2011, and is counted on each year for several annual events in the area.

Finally, PoFolks took home the finest honor for desserts. "We have Mississippi mud pie, strawberry shortcakes, cobblers, and other desserts you would expect to find in a homestyle cooking establishment," Snow adds. "We have

guests who come in just for dessert because it's hard to find room for it when they come in for a complete meal."

"Winning honors from The Finest On The Emerald Coast competition is humbling," says Snow. It shows us that the work our team has put in to getting PoFolks back to how it should be is paying off. We are thankful for each and every guest who chooses us daily, and look forward to meeting new ones."

PoFolks is located at 1170 John Sims Parkway in Niceville. They are open from 10:30am to 9:00pm 7 days a week. Call them at (850)-729-2262 for information or stop in to say, "HOWDY!"

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Who's News

Matthew Newton, of Niceville, has announced an intent to begin studies at Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne in the fall 2012. Newton will graduate this spring from Niceville High School and plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in forensic psychology.

Sara Morell, of Niceville, graduated on April 21 from Flagler College, St. Augustine, with a bachelor of arts degree in sport management. Sara, a 2008 Niceville High School graduate, will attend Florida State University to pursue a master's degree in sport management.

Sarah Holt, of Valparaiso, recently opened ReRuns 4 Wee Ones in the old Nice-Val Furniture store in Valparaiso. ReRuns 4 Wee Ones carries consignment clothing for children, from infant to size 10, as well as maternity clothing. Holt, a mother of one, graduated from the University of Florida with an accounting degree. The store, which opened Feb. 1, is a mix of new and used, and Holt handpicks each article of consignment clothing.



Sarah Holt

Relay for Life to kick-off on Friday

By Tess Hollis
Beacon Staff Writer

The American Cancer Society is preparing to kick-off its 13th annual Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life.

This year's Relay will be held on May 4 and 5 at the Niceville High School practice fields. The event will kick-off at 6 p.m., and last until noon the following day. The theme will be "Vegas," and the event will include several stage shows and Vegas-style contests.

See page B-2 for 2012 teams

While the event is usually held at the Niceville High School stadium and track, this year's event was moved to the practice fields because of a renovation of the football field, caused by a collapsed drainage system underground.

The opening ceremonies will begin with the survivor's lap at 6:30 p.m.

"The survivor lap is about celebrating our survivors, the VIPs of our event," said American Cancer Society Community Representative Shelly Nightengale.

The entire event will be packed full of entertainment,



File photo

The 2012 Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life Event will be Friday, May 4, and Saturday May 5. The event will kick-off at 6 p.m. at the Niceville High School practice field. Participants from a past Relay for Life event take a lap to celebrate, remember and fight back against cancer.

food and activities for team participants—the public is also invited to attend and show support for the Relay teams.

"The Relay for Life event is about celebrating, remembering and fighting back," Nightengale said.

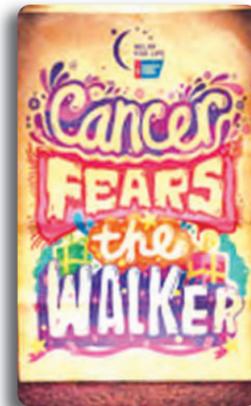
At Relay, teams of people camp out and take turns walking or running around a track

or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because "cancer never sleeps," Relays are overnight events up to 24 hours long.

At 9 p.m. on May 4, there will be a Luminaria Ceremony, to reflect and remember loved ones who have passed, and honor those who are still fighting the fight.

During the ceremony, white Luminaria bags will be transformed and illuminated after dark. Each one will be personalized with the name, photo, message or drawing by a Relay for Life participant, or supporter, in memory or honor of a friend or loved one who has been affected by cancer.

As of April 27, there were 59 teams participating in the



Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life. Each team raises money that will go toward the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life. According to the American Cancer Society, the Niceville-Valparaiso Relay has raised \$66,480 so far this year—last year it raised \$188,413 gross.

Since 2005, the Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life has raised \$1.2 million for the American Cancer Society. The local Relay is No. 13 in the state of more than 350 events, which is determined by how much money is raised. Okaloosa County, which includes Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Crestview and Niceville events, is ranked No. 10 per capita in the nation, out of more than 4,000 events.

This year's Relay hopes to draw 3,000 to 3,500 people.

Niceville woman connects with lifelong blood donor

By Tess Hollis
Beacon Staff Writer

Looking at Nancy Turner, one would never guess that she needs weekly blood and platelet transfusions.

The 72-year-old Niceville woman radiates, and seems as energetic as a 20-year-old. But last year, Turner was diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a condition where bone marrow does not produce sufficient new cells to replenish blood cells. Aplastic anemia patients have lower counts of all three blood cell types: red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Turner describes the disease as "the immune system attacking bone marrow."

As a result of the diagnoses, Turner must spend six-and-a-half hours each Tuesday at Sacred Heart Hospital to receive two units, or two pints, of blood and a unit of platelets.

Because of Turner's need for blood each week, community blood drives, such as the one that will be held at St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Niceville on Sunday, are important.

People like Father Greg Hein of St. Jude's are also important to Turner.

The 56-year-old pastor has donated 12 gallons of blood since he was 18 years old. Hein donates blood every 56 days, the time period a person must wait before donating again. Once again, he will donate his blood at the Northwest Florida Blood Services blood drive during the St. Jude's blood drive.



Beacon photoby Tess Hollis

Father Greg Hein and Nancy Turner share a laugh at St. Jude's Episcopal Church. Hein is a lifelong blood donor, and Turner receives weekly blood transfusions. The Northwest Florida Blood Services blood mobile will be at the church on May 6, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., to take donations.

"There's no way to describe how grateful I am for people like him," said an emotional Turner. "He's giving the gift of life, and it just means the world to me. To think that somebody made this their life mission is just amazing."

Turner was diagnosed with the disease when she went for a routine cholesterol check.

"I didn't have any symptoms, except I noticed I bruised very easily," she said.

Turner said the disease is idiopathic, meaning there is no known cause. While some people are treated for the rare disease through bone marrow trans-

plants, Turner said because of her age, her body doesn't have the stamina and resources to bounce back from such a procedure.

Every Monday, Turner gets her blood drawn at the doctor's office to assess how much blood and platelets she will need to receive the next day. As each Tuesday draws near, Turner said she starts to feel weak—but as soon as she receives her transfusions, through a port in her chest, she's "ready to roll."

Although Turner will have to undergo the transfusions for the rest of her life, she said she feels blessed.

"There are so many positive things in my life," she said. "The nurses who give my transfusions each week are wonderful, and treat you like family," she said. "I am also so lucky, because I don't have any pain with this disease."

Turner said she also counts knowing Hein as a blessing, and encourages people to donate blood if they are able.

"Just try it," she said, of people who may be afraid to donate. "You never know who you might help. Someone could be donating blood to me."

Hein began donating blood because his father's company

asked employees to do so in case of a medical emergency. Hein's father could not donate blood because of medical reasons.

"I found that it was a very easy process," he said. "It's just such a neat feeling to have that warm pouch of blood next to you, and to know where it came from and what it can do for someone else."

For the past three to four years, Hein has organized blood drives twice a year at St. Jude's through Northwest Florida Blood Services.

"It's an opportunity to truly help someone," Hein said.

To date, Northwest Florida Blood Services has collected 71 units of blood from St. Jude's blood drives since 2007, which has helped save 213 lives.



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Niceville City Councilman William Thomas, on behalf of the All Sports Association, presents the YMCA of Florida's Emerald Coast Inc. with a \$30,000 check. From left: Jack Daily, Interim President/CEO of YMCA of Florida's Emerald Coast Inc.; William Thomas, All Sports Association President; Latoya Sheffield, YMCA Child Care, holding Siniya Twitty; and Monty Landingham, Fort Walton Family YMCA Board Chairman.

All Sports Association donates \$30K to youth organizations

Special to the Beacon

On behalf of the All Sports Association, Niceville City Councilman and Association President William Thomas presented the YMCA of Florida's Emerald Coast Inc., the Special Olympics and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast each with a \$30,000 check.

The money was raised throughout the year through donors, business sponsors, an

and a golf tournament.

"It's a real honor to work hard all year to raise money for these organizations and smaller organizations," Thomas said. "These programs are good for Okaloosa County."

The All Sports Association is made up of dues paying volunteers, whose primary mission is to provide a contribution of time to raise money for local youth oriented non-profit organizations,

with an emphasis on sports programs. Along with the "Big Three" agencies that the Association donates to, they also support smaller, local organizations.

"All these men in the Association come from all walks of life, and they are hard working, but they all come together for one common cause," Thomas said. "This is such a generous area, it's just a great blessing."



Courtesy photo

Collegiate senior receives Student of the Month award

The Niceville Exchange Club recognized Elise Shafer, a senior at Collegiate High School, as the April Student of the Month. Youth Chairman, Carol Mullins-Hernandez presented Elise, and told club members of the many reasons Elise was chosen. In addition to her accomplishments academically, Elise has been active in her church's missionary work and is an advocate and volunteer with Grace Rides, a non-profit organization that provides therapeutic horse riding experiences, offering healing and recreation for all kinds of exceptional riders in the community.

Sheriff to offer 'Teen Driver Challenge'

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is offering a new safety program for teen drivers, "Teen Driver Challenge (TDC)."

The TDC is a free driving course designed to help teens boost their driving skills and lessen the chances of being

involved in a crash.

The next class will be May 11 at the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office administration building, and May 12, at the Northwest Florida State College Driving Range.

Teens ages 15-19 are eligible

and must have a valid learner's permit or Florida operator's license, and participants must provide their own car. For online registration and more information, visit sheriff-okaloosa.org, and click on the Services/Courses link.

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Teachers attend literacy conference

Special to the Beacon

The Okaloosa Reading Council hosted, on April 14, a literacy conference at Bluewater Elementary. More than 100 teachers from Okaloosa County attended.

"It was a wonderful success," said Angelle Crosby, president of the council.

When teachers arrived at Bluewater Elementary, they were given the opportunity to shop and browse materials. Carolyn Chesser, owner of Bayou Book Inc., Niceville, had a display of books for sale, specifically chosen with teachers in mind.

Dr. Alexis Tibbetts, Okaloosa Schools Superintendent, welcomed teachers and introduced mem-



Courtesy photo

The Okaloosa Reading Council hosted, on April 14, a literacy conference at Bluewater Elementary. From left: Karen Ott, honor council; Lauren Goodpaster, vice president; Dr. Alexis Tibbetts, superintendent of schools; Angelle Crosby, president; Eleanor Harrington, treasurer; and Dr. Mary Bigler, keynote speaker.

bers of the Okaloosa Reading Council. Dr. Mary Bigler was the inspirational education

keynote speaker.

"Dr. Mary Bigler had the audience in stitches from her

funny stories from the classroom," Crosby said. "Along with her witty comments, she stressed the importance of reading. She stated that the most important thing we can do with our students is read to them, and we shouldn't stop once they leave elementary school."

After the keynote speech, participants were able to choose two sessions to attend. The topics covered writing journals, common core standards and differentiated instruction, complex text, good books for classroom read-aloud, creating strategic readers and more.

"Teachers left the conference feeling energized and inspired," Crosby said. "The ORC is planning to host a conference for teachers in the area every year."

County political events



The following political-related events will take place in Okaloosa County on Saturday, May 5.

Whistle-Stop Tour

The Okaloosa County Republican Executive Committee, with support from the Silver Sands Republican Women Federated and the TEA Party, will hold its 2012 Whistle-Stop Tour to Victory.

The tour will allow residents to meet Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives (Districts 1 and 2); meet local candidates for Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives, Clerk of Court, Sheriff, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Supervisor of Elections, Superintendent of Schools, County Commission, School Board and Judge.

The tour will stop at Twin Hills Park, Crestview, from 10 a.m.-noon; Niceville City Hall, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Liza Jackson Park, Fort Walton Beach, noon-2 p.m.

The Niceville stop will include music, singers and food by Woody's BBQ and Fresh Greece Pizza. Entertainment is

planned with Jim Terrell, Willie Nelson music, and Renee Daniel and Tanya Portier singing the National Anthem and God Bless America. Info: Richard Solt, 897-1814.

State of the County

The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County will hold its 13th Annual State of the County Report (SOTC) from 10 a.m.-noon, at the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce.

The 2012 SOTC will feature Wayne Harris, Board of County Commissioners, Melissa Thrush, County School Board and Judge William Stone, First Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

The three key elected officials will present updates on county government, schools and courts, as well as field questions from the audience. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Democratic Caucus

The Okaloosa County Democratic Executive Committee will host a Caucus from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the party headquarters office to determine delegates to send to the State Convention in Tampa. The Caucus will take place at 60 2nd St., Suite 305, Shalimar. Info: 609-3367.

Niceville-Valparaiso 2012 Relay for Life Teams

Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life teams, sponsored by Dockside Oyster Bar and Grill:
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Nicotine Anonymous

If you 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, between Niceville and Bluewater Bay. Info: 897-4721.

Driver's ed course

Niceville High School will offer summer driver's education June 4-15. The cost will be \$125 per student, and the class will be limited to the first 40 students who sign up.

Niceville High School students will have priority for registration. The student will be required to attend each day from 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in room 630. The prerequisite for this class is a learner's permit and the DATE Course. If the student does not have a permit prior to registration, they can take the date course and permit test through the school. Students must be 15 years old. Once a student has passed the test, they can receive their permit from the DMV. Students should bring pen, pencil, paper and shoes; no sandals can be used when operating the vehicle. Students can begin registering May 2. To reserve a spot, see Ms. Woodcock in the Discipline Office.

RWOF meeting

Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated 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: Donna Pattison, 651-5416, or donnapattison@cox.net. Cost: \$16 for members and \$18 for guests.

National Day of Prayer

The Twin Cities Ministerial Association will host a National Day of Prayer service at Niceville City Hall on May 3, from noon-12:45 p.m. The theme will be "One Nation Under God" and will include music, an invocation and several prayers. Pre-program music will begin at 11:30 a.m. by the Rocky Bayou Christian School band and ensemble.

Ruckel Idol 2012

Ruckel Middle School will present Ruckel Idol 2012 Talent Show on May 3, at 6:30 p.m., in the Niceville High School auditorium. Cost: \$5 at the door. Ruckel Idol votes are \$1 each. Sponsored by the Ruckel Rockettes Dance Team.

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. Cost: Free to sit-in, \$10 for the book and exam. Info: John Ryan, ryanjohnj@hotmail.com.

Audubon Society meeting

The Choctawhatchee Audubon Society will hold a meeting on May 3, with Marianne Korosy, coordinator of Audubon Florida's Important Area Program. Marianne will discuss her initiative that has identified 100 locations in Florida which are significant migration stopover areas. The meeting will be held in room 132 in the Student Services Center at Northwest Florida State College, Niceville. Socializing, refreshments and announcements will begin at 6:30 p.m., with the program at 7 p.m. The meeting and program are free and



'Young Frankenstein' will come to life at Mattie Kelly

"Young Frankenstein," a national tour of the famous production, will come to the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville, on May 10. This re-imagining of the Frankenstein legend is based on Mel Brooks' film comedy. Tickets are \$45. Info: 729-6000 or mattiekellyartscenter.org.

open to the public. Info: Walt Spence, 582-7064.

Scholarship applications

The Emerald Coast Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) will award \$9,000 in scholarships: one, \$2,000 scholarship; two, \$1,500 scholarships; and four, \$1,000 scholarships in May 2012. AFCEA is also accepting nominations for science teachers, with a chance to win a \$1,000 scholarship to use in support of the teacher's school's science program. The deadline for submissions is May 4. Info: emeraldcoastafceachapter.org, or glenda.robinson2@eglin.af.mil.

Relay for Life

The American Cancer Society will hold the 2012 Niceville-Valparaiso Relay for Life event on May 4, at 6 p.m. The event will last until noon on May 5 at Niceville High School. Info: relayforlife.org.

RBCS presents musical

The Rocky Bayou Christian School Thespians for Christ will present Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" on May 4 and 5, at 7 p.m., at the Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium. Tickets will be \$10, and \$5 for RBCS students, at the door. Info: RBCS Drama Director, Tom Hood, 678-7358, ext. 252, or hoodt@rbcbs.org.

Identify Florida wildlife

The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center will present "Solve the Mystery: Tracks, Skulls and Furs: Who do they belong to?" on May 5, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Florida Fish and Wildlife will team up with the Biophilia Center to help identify and examine local Florida wildlife. There will also be an interactive Wildlife Bus at the center. Standard admission rates apply. The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center is located at 4956 State Highway 20 East, Freeport.

EOD Memorial Ceremony

The Department of Defense Explosive Ordnance Disposal community will host the Annual EOD Memorial Ceremony on May 5, at 9 a.m., at the EOD Memorial, Range D-51, Niceville. Eighteen names will be added to the memorial wall. This year's keynote speaker will be Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz.

Book signing

Martha LaGuardia-Kotite will sign copies of her new release "My Name is Old Glory," at Bayou Book Co., Niceville, on May 5, from 1-3 p.m.

The book takes the poem by WWII Marine vet Howard Schnauber and blends it with images from a civil rights march to 9/11 in a tribute to the United States. Info: 678-1593, or bayoubookcompany.com.

Whistle-Stop Tour

The Okaloosa County Republican Executive Committee will hold its 2012 Whistle-Stop Tour to Victory on May 5. The tour will allow residents to meet Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives (Districts 1 and 2); meet local candidates for Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives, Clerk of Court, Sheriff, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Supervisor of Elections, Superintendent of Schools, County Commission, School Board and Judge. The tour will stop at Twin Hills Park Crestview, from 10 a.m.-noon; Niceville City Hall, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Liza Jackson Park, Fort Walton Beach, noon-2 p.m. The Niceville stop will include music, singers and food by Woody's BBQ and Fresh Greece Pizza. Info: okaloosagop.com; Ramsey Chaplin, 897-0031, rctidel@cox.net; Richard Solt, 897-1814, richdulce@aol.com.

Ballet Académie

The Northwest Florida Ballet Académie will hold auditions for incoming third grade students for the 2012-2013 school year on May 5, from 6-8 p.m., and May 6 from 2:30-4:30 p.m., at Northwest Florida Ballet (NFB) studios, 310 Perry Ave., SE, Fort Walton Beach. The Northwest Florida Ballet Académie is a free, integrated arts and academic program for third through eighth grade boys and girls who demonstrate the potential to excel in dance. Certified elementary and middle school teachers, under the direction of the Okaloosa County School District, supervise the academic program. French, art and music are also taught weekly. Auditioning students must be registered in advance. Info: Rhonda Starnes, 664-7787, nfballet.org.

'Horsey Meet and Greet'

The Okaloosa County 4-H Horse Advisory Committee will present a "Horsey Meet and Greet" on May 5, from 9 a.m.-noon, at Camp Timpochee, Niceville. The clinic is designed for kids who want to learn more about horses, but don't have a horse. Participants will need a helmet (bicycle is OK), and shoes/boots with a heel, no sneakers. The event is open to children ages 8-12. Cost:

\$25, or \$15/subsequent child in same family. Info: Susan Simmers, 4horseadvisory@gmail.com.

North Bay Pier Party

North Light Yacht Club and Marina will host the North Bay Pier Party on May 5. There will be live music, food from Dockside Cafe and Oyster Bar, high performance boats, motorcycles, stand-up paddle boards and more. The event will be from noon-5 p.m., and is free to the public. Info: 585-3053, or NorthLightMarina.com.

State of the County

The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County will hold its 13th Annual State of the County Report (SOTC) on May 5, from 10 a.m.-noon, at the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce. The 2012 SOTC will feature Wayne Harris, Board of County Commissioners, Melissa Thrush, County School Board and Judge William Stone, First Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. The three key elected officials will present updates on county government, schools and courts, as well as field questions from the audience. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Democratic Caucus

The Okaloosa County 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 in Tampa. Info: fladems.com/page/content/floridastimetoshine.

NHS cheerleader tryouts

Packets for NHS cheerleading tryouts can be picked up in the attendance office, or online under the "forms" tab. Tryouts for the 2012-2013 school year will be May 8, and clinic dates will be May 5 and 7. Participants must have an updated physical in order to participate in tryouts. Info: Lisa Jones, jonesL2@mail.okaloosa.k12.fl.us.

Blood drive at St. Jude's

Northwest Florida Blood Services will have a blood mobile at St. Jude's Episcopal Church, Niceville, on May 6, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The church will also hold its monthly breakfast the same day from 9-10 a.m.

Tax Collector forum

The Republican candidates for Okaloosa County Tax Collector will participate in a public forum hosted by Niceville's Silver Sands Republican Women. The event will be May 7 at the Bluewater Bay Golf Clubhouse. Social will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the dinner and forum will begin at 6 p.m. Cost: \$15 for dinner and forum. The candidates are incumbent Ben Anderson and Bill Roberts, who currently serves on the County Commission. For dinner reservations (chicken or vegetable lasagna), or info, contact Libby Hill, 678-2182.

Women's Wall of Honor

The Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women (OCCSW) invites the public to attend a ceremony and reception recognizing the 2012 honorees for the Wall of Honor. The ceremony will be May 8, at 10 a.m., in the auditorium at the University of West Florida, Emerald Coast Campus, Fort Walton Beach. The honorees' names will be placed on a plaque in the library at the Emerald Coast campus, with a nearby book containing a biographical page for each woman. To attend the ceremony and reception, RSVP to Shirley Pigott at 651-3095, or woh@occsww.org.

College Cantorum

The Northwest Florida State College Schola Cantorum will perform on May 9, at 7 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church in Crestview. The event is free, with donations accepted. Info: 830-2062.

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BEACONSPORTS



Eagles seek 2nd state crown

Staff reports

Niceville High School was scheduled to face Orange Park at home Tuesday, after press time, in the Region 1-6A final, having dispatched Tate 12-1 Thursday in an impressive display of pitching, hitting and fielding.

"I think we're on a roll again," said Niceville coach Danny Hensley about the game with Orange Park. "Our experience last year is going to help us. The last few games we swung the bat really well and we should be in good shape. Orange Park is a good team. Its record doesn't show it because they lose a few games in the beginning of the season, but they came back and beat those teams later on."

The stars of Thursday's game at Tate were the Ujvari sisters, Jamie and Jessica, who played for Tate in 2011.

Jamie allowed just five hits from the circle, while Jessica, along with Jessie Mullen, reached base four times and drove in three runs.



Outfielder Amber Hudson prepares to throw the ball into the infield during Monday's Niceville High School softball team's practice.

Stephanie Hartness started the scoring with an RBI single in the first inning.

The game was seldom in

doubt as the Eagles built an 8-0 lead, by the third, and led by 11 runs at the end of the fourth.

Niceville fielded flawlessly and pitched well, and its potent offense was too much for Tate as every player reached base at least one time.

If the Eagles won the game last night, they'll head to the state tournament for the third year in a row, having lost in the championship game in 2010 and winning the state crown last year.

If Niceville won last night, the first opponent is likely to be Eau Gallie, a Melbourne high school, with a 27-2 record on the season. The Eagles' record is 26-2.

"They're good ball club," Hensley said of Eau Gallie. "We and they ranked No. 1 and No. 2 all season, so we've been on kind of a collision course. They won 4-A last year we won 5-A. They're probably our toughest game. Whoever wins have great chance to win all."



Lewis outslugs Spartans

Savannah Foster delivers a pitch for Lewis School en route to an 11-1 victory over Bruner Wednesday, April 25, at home.

Beacon photo by Jeff Gammons



Downing lifts 580

Rocky Bayou Christian School senior Adam Downing competed at the state weightlifting competition in Kissimmee on April 20, finishing sixth in the Class 1A FHSAA Finals/183-pound class. Adam hit personal records as he bench pressed 300 pounds and clean-and-jerked 280 pounds for a career high total of 580 pounds.



Gold tops Maroon, 8-5

At left, Gage Bednarik delivers a pitch for the Maroon team against the Gold Thursday in Niceville Little League Major League action at Twin Oaks. Below, Maroon player Ethan Shelton gets back to second on a pickoff play as Michael Martin applies the tag. Gold won the game, 8-5, with some late-inning offensive fireworks.

Beacon photos by Jeff Gammons



Mahoney free throws take third

Kammrin Mahoney, 12, a 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. Kammrin won first place at the council, district, and regional levels to qualify for the state competition.



Beacon photo by Jeff Gammons

Falcons defeat Bruner, 12-5

Lewis School's Aaron Nipper takes a cut at a pitch Wednesday, April 25. The Falcons defeated Bruner at home, 12-5.



FDD cagers take first in tourney

The Niceville FDD (Faithfulness, Discipline, Diligence) fourth grade boys basketball team took first place in the Rock the Court tournament in Pensacola Saturday in the Division 2 bracket. From left: rear, coach Mike Prestarri, Jai May, Troy Gulley, Will Tidwell, Bryce Moorer and coach Clarence May; front, Derrick Laird, Dominic Prestarri, Nathan Miller and Roman Prestarri. Not pictured is Nathan (Tre) Hutchings.

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Democrats seek delegate positions at State Convention

Special to the Beacon

On Saturday, May 5, the Florida Democratic Party will hold, for the first time in its history, county Democratic Caucuses in all 67 counties to elect 1,500 state convention delegates. Seven Okaloosa Democrats will seek election as delegates to the Florida Democratic Party State Convention.

The following Okaloosa County residents have filed as candidates to be elected State

Convention delegates by registered Okaloosa County Democratic Party voters at the county Caucus. From Congressional District 1: Naomi Hardison, Fort Walton Beach; Harriet Humphrey, Shalimar; Clara



Judy Riley

Oates, Shalimar; Judy Bryne Riley, Niceville; and Gary Stelling, Shalimar. Ellen Holt and Jerry Mallory, both of Bluewater Bay, are the candidates from Congressional District 2.



Clara Oates

After being selected at the county level, delegates will proceed to the party's statewide convention, where they will take part in the final phase of the delegate selection process in Tampa June 1-3. At the



Gary Stelling

state convention, those selected at the county level will compete with other delegates from their respective congressional districts to be among Florida's 300 delegates and 23 alternates to attend the



Jerry Mallory

Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., this summer.

The Okaloosa Caucus will be held on Saturday, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the County Party Headquarters, Madak Office Center, 60 Second St., unit 305, Shalimar.

All registered Democrats are urged to attend the caucus, meet the candidates, cast their ballots, and send these delegates to the state and national conventions.

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Yard Sales

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE. Niceville, BWB. Up to 42 homes on Glenlake Circle will be hosting its annual garage sale, Saturday, May 5th, 8:00 a.m.-noon. No telling what will be available. Find your treasures.

Multi-family yard sale. 254 Dominica Circle West, BWB. Sat., May 5th, 8:00-12:00.

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Courtesy photo

Niceville Jazz Band dinner a success

The Niceville High School Jazz I and Jazz II bands performed April 14 at the Community Life Center for the ninth annual Jazz dinner and silent auction. The night was a huge success with music from the Jazz bands conducted by Dan Wooten and Jeff Adams. Guest artist, Tom Walsh also performed with Niceville High School Jazz I. All proceeds, more than \$6,000, from the silent auction benefit the entire Niceville High School Band.

Rocky Thespians to present musical classic



The Rocky Bayou Christian School Thespians for Christ recently rehearsed for Meredith Willson's "The Music Man." The musical will be presented May 4 and 5, at 7 p.m., at the Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium. Advance tickets may be purchased in the Rocky Bayou Christian School office for \$10. Please call the school at 678-7358 for expected availability at the door. Above, Jon Delgado, center, plays the lead role of con man Harold Hill. Shiloh Johns, right, and Mandy Hart, try on their costumes and rehearse their lines for the production.

Beacon photos by Del Lessard

Arts Alliance contest

As of April 16, there were 22 elementary entries, 16 middle school entries and four high school entries in the Okaloosa Arts Alliance poster contest. The schools included: Meigs Middle School, Niceville High School, Shalimar Elementary, Baker School, Ruckel Middle School, Antioch Elementary, Plew Elementary and Laurel Hill School. The winners from each category will be announced and put on display at the Family Fun Arts Fest on May 12, at Henderson Beach State Park.

Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

DAR chapter swears in board members

The Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Executive Board Members were sworn in at the April meeting by Cheryl Field, state recording secretary from Jacksonville. Back, from left: Emily Danker, librarian; Lija Eldridge, historian; Cynthis Wilson, registrar; Sherry Vieth, treasurer; Lori Bergeron, secretary; and Joyce Harrington, second vice regent. Front, from left: Mary Ellen Ahlstrom, parliamentarian; Pauline Waters, chaplain; Joyce Humber, first vice regent; Dotty Burdick, regent; and Cheryl Field, state recording secretary.



Courtesy photo

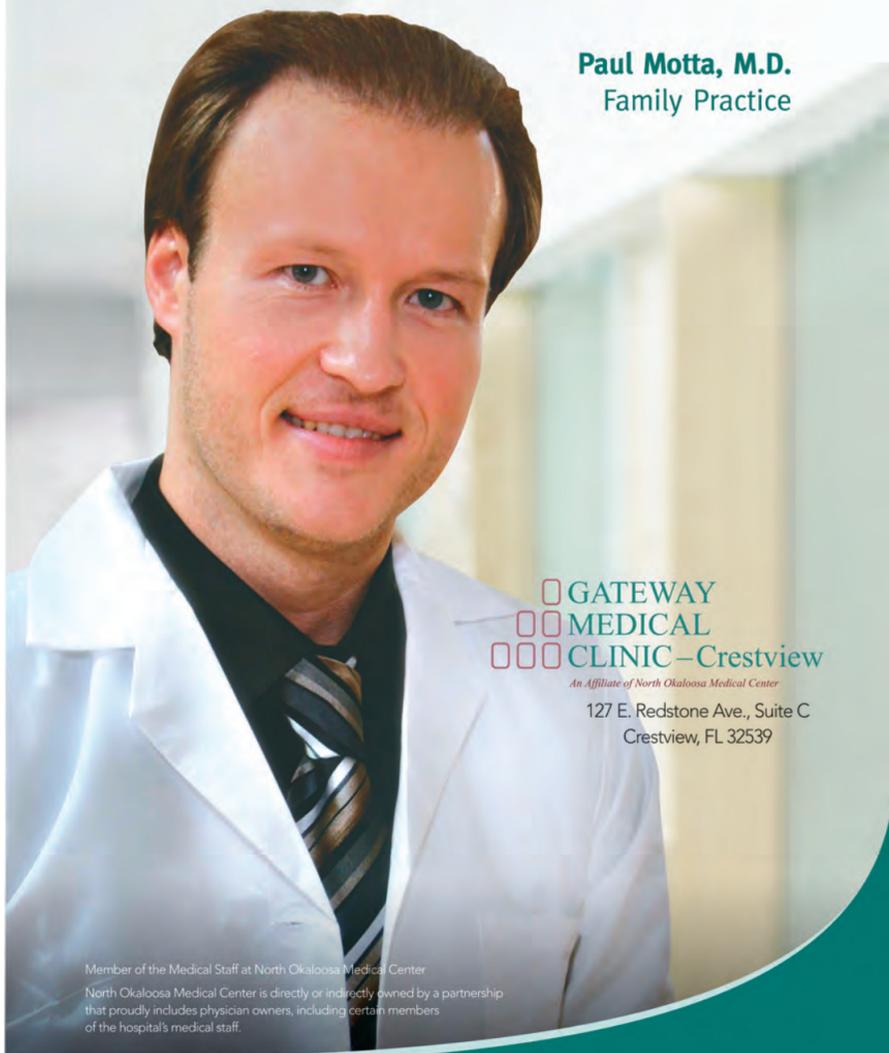
Gaetz visits Emerald Coast Autism Center

In support of National Autism Awareness Month, Rep. Matt Gaetz visited the Emerald Coast Autism Center (ECAC), Niceville, on April 10. ECAC was founded in August 2009 to fulfill a strong need in Northwest Florida for an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy-based, year-round school dedicated to serving the needs of children on the autism spectrum.

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Paul Motta, M.D.
Family Practice



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