

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 6 Inserts

Wednesday, August 15, 2012

50¢

**UP
COMING**

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



The Valparaiso Community Library invites children and families of all ages to its **Summer Back To School Party**. Pizza, snacks and drinks will be provided. Movie and playtime for little ones; Wii and crafts for older children. Free.

Friday, 2-4 p.m.

To celebrate his 96th birthday, well-known **Bluewater Bay** illustrator **Marlin Griffin** will have a showing of some of his world travels and fantasy illustrations at **Sandy & Ray Realty** in Merchants Walk, Bluewater Bay, across from Bank of America and a few doors from the Post Office.

No cost.

Friday, 7-10 p.m.



Henderson Beach State Park will host a **star gazing** program Aug. 17, from 7-10 p.m. Volunteers from the Northwest Florida Astronomy Association will set up several telescopes for public viewing of star clusters, plants and galaxies. They will also answer questions about the night sky. Program included with paid park admission. Info: 837-7550.

Saturday, noon-6 p.m.



A **benefit meal** is planned at the **Docksides & Oyster Bar, North Light Yacht Club**, Niceville, for Yvonne B. Davenport and family. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, went into remission and in March 2010 was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer.

The cost is \$10 for barbecued chicken, pulled pork or fried catfish, with jambalaya, potato salad, a roll and drink.

Calendar, B-2

Union challenges 2nd teacher pay freeze

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

The teachers union filed a new labor grievance against the Okaloosa County School District Aug. 7 after noting that for the second year in a row, no "step" raise was given to teachers in their July 31 paychecks.

Karen Peek, president of the Okaloosa County Education

Association (OCEA), said the union had learned its lesson and filed the new pay grievance Aug. 7 after 12-month teachers received their first pay checks of this school year July 31, without any step pay hike.

Teachers learned the day before that they will not get a step pay raise for the just-past school year, said Peek, because

their filing of a grievance last year was filed too late.

In 2011 OCEA had filed a grievance over pay on Sept. 8, eight days after 10-month teachers' paychecks on Aug. 31, 2011, did not contain a step pay raise, an average annual 3 percent pay hike based on each additional year of teaching experience in the school dis-

trict. Earlier, on July 31, 2011, 12-month teachers in the school district also received checks without the hike.

The school board said it didn't have the money for a raise last year. It hasn't stated its intentions this year.

OCEA argued that the annual step pay hikes were required under the three-year contract

between teachers and the school district.

The school district however told OCEA officials Aug. 9 last year that it would not pay a 2011-12 step raise, and declared the issue at impasse. School district officials said the annual step raises were not

Please see UNION, page A-6

Liquid sunshine



Summer in the "Sunshine State" features near-daily "30 percent chance" of thunderstorms. But lately the downpours have been heavier than usual. In the seven days that ended Monday at 6 a.m., a total of 9.74 inches of rain was recorded in Niceville at the regional wastewater plant, eclipsing the 6.52 inches that fell during the entire month of July. Year to date, Niceville recorded a total of 47.72 inches of rain as of Monday, or more than 9 inches above normal. Above, shoppers did the best they could to stay dry during a thundershower at the Niceville Walmart parking lot Friday afternoon.

Beacon photo by Del Lessard

'Vale of Paradise' old hat? Eglin's neighbor eyes rebranding

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

Forget about the Vale of Paradise?

That's what Valparaiso Mayor Bruce Arnold suggested the city should do.

"Vale of Paradise" is the city's motto, words it includes on the municipal seal.

But Arnold said the phrase makes the city sound like a real estate development. Instead,

Please see VALE, page A-2



Valparaiso's seal, featuring the motto "Vale of Paradise" at bottom, seems behind the times, city officials say.

Alarm alerts occupants to apt. blaze

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

No one was hurt Saturday night when a mattress caught fire and caused \$20,000 damage to a two-story apartment in Niceville.

"Thank God for smoke detectors and good firemen," said Tony Lohrman, assistant chief, Niceville Fire Department.

Lohrman said a smoke detector alerted the occupants to a fire in the upstairs master bedroom in Apartment 22 at the Wildwood Apartments, 400 Kelly Road. The occupants got out safely, he said.

Please see ALARM, page A-3

Resort drops plan for stores on golf course

Houses still planned; Residents raise funds for possible legal action

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

A proposal by Bluewater Bay Resort to shorten its Magnolia nine-hole golf course and develop a combination of residential and commercial development on

parts of two fairways has changed, and now is wholly residential, according to the resort's general manager.

Meantime, a majority of Magnolia Plantation property owners have approved a one-

time assessment of \$200 each, money to be set aside in case the homeowners association needs legal assistance in dealing with the resort's development plans.

In March, Bluewater Bay Resort Chairman Helmut

Werner and General Manager Tom Hanks announced plans to shorten the Magnolia golf course and develop a combination of residential and commercial on two fairways. Sixteen homes were proposed on

Fairway 9, with a mixed commercial and residential development on Fairway 7, which fronts along Highway 20. The Magnolia is the newest of the

Please see DROPS, page A-3

Water quality declines, health official says

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Declining water quality at area beaches was the top subject of discussion during the Okaloosa County Commission's final public budget workshop, held Thursday in Fort Walton Beach.

County public works director Doug Hofstad and health department director Dr. Karen Chapman discussed the county's stormwater runoff control program and its effect on water qual-

ity at beaches and in local waterways.

Chapman told commissioners that because of budget constraints, her department now plans to test water quality at county beaches only from February through October, rather than year-round, during fiscal year 2013, which begins Oct. 1.

Chapman said the reduced testing will save money, and that

Please see WATER, page A-2



Swimmers Saturday at Lincoln Park, Valparaiso. Rain, health director Karen Chapman told county officials last week, usually worsens water quality by washing contaminants into waterways.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

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WATER

From page A-1

because most people do not actually go swimming at local beaches during the colder months of November through January, the lack of water testing during that period should have little effect on public health.

She also said her department is dropping testing at Camp Timpochee, east of Niceville, since that is not actually a public county beach, but is part of a camp operated by the University of Florida and the 4-H Club. The health department is adding two new test sites, she said, along beaches in Destin and Okaloosa Island.

Chapman warned commissioners that water quality at county beaches has been in steady decline since 2010, with fewer days each year when it is safe for people to swim at local beaches without risk of contracting illness from fecal coliform bacteria and other contaminants. She said such bacteria results from several sources of contamination, foremost of which is stormwater runoff into streams and bayous.

"We are going the wrong direction for beach water quality," Chapman told commissioners Thursday. She said the levels of contamination found in testing has been going up for the last several years, and that the number of "advisory days," when the health department posts signs warning people not to swim at a county beach, has also been going up.

For example, said Chapman, between 2010 and 2011, the last years for which she had complete data, the percentage of water samples that exceeded state standards for contaminant levels climbed from 10 to 19 percent for samples taken at Rocky Bayou State Park, from 10 to 15 percent at Lincoln Park in Valparaiso, and from zero to 6 percent at James Lee Park, the free public beach along the Gulf of Mexico closest to the Niceville-Valparaiso area via the Mid-Bay Bridge.

During the same period, said Chapman, the number of advisory days, when swimming is warned against at those beaches, went from 29 to 112 at Rocky Bayou State Park, from 35 to 96 at Lincoln Park, and from zero to 27 at James Lee Park. Chapman also said that water quality readings may be affected by numerous factors, including "rain events" which tend to increase readings of contaminant levels if a storm washes a lot of stormwater into local waterways shortly before a reading is



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith
There were few spectators as the Okaloosa County Commission thrashed out its budget plans for the coming fiscal year during a meeting Thursday in Fort Walton Beach.

taken. The Okaloosa Health Department usually issues weekly test results on Thursday mornings, emailing them to local news media and posting them on the health department web site at HealthyOkaloosa.com.

Chapman said Okaloosa County's "exceedance rate" for water contamination is currently 3rd among Florida's 34 coastal counties, and that the exceedance rate at Rocky Bayou State Park ranks 4th among 306 beaches tested throughout Florida. The beach at Garnier Park in Fort Walton Beach, Chapman said, was number 1 in the state for exceedance rate.

Some county commissioners challenged Chapman's statements, saying she may have been over-emphasizing the actual health implications of her test results.

"Aren't our beaches actually safer than most other beaches in the United States?" asked Commissioner James Campbell of Niceville.

"I'm not trying to create a fear factor here," Chapman replied, "but we must address the reasons for contamination." The foremost such reason, she said, is stormwater runoff.

"Aren't our beaches also safer than those in Tampa or Jacksonville?" Campbell asked. "After all, there is a newswoman present here today," Campbell said, "and we don't want him going back to his newspaper and telling everyone in the county, 'Don't swim! It's too dangerous!'"

"Stormwater runoff," Chapman repeated, "is the most frequent source of contamination.

We have to decide if we want clean water, and if we want to address stormwater. This is an issue that should be addressed at both the local and state level."

The doctor said she was not trying to create unwarranted fear, and said, "Water quality correlates with rain events, and this summer a number of coastal beaches have failed because of excessive sargassum (seaweed) growth." However, she said, "This is an opportunity to educate the public," and added, "Our beaches are where our residents go to play and bathe with their children and families."

In a briefing from the county public works department, commissioners were told that the county's stormwater management program is short of funds. "We could spend \$50,000 on stormwater needs, said Hofstad, "but we don't have it. We're living on our reserves now, and will eventually reach a point in time where funding doesn't meet our needs. We are now a hundred percent reactionary—if something fails, we fix it. We currently have no pro-active programs or projects, and our reserves continue to dwindle."

Commissioners discussed various options for finding more money for stormwater control. Commissioner Dave Parisot suggested diverting some money from the county's parks and recreation MSTU, but Commissioner

Wayne Harris objected, saying "I don't want to rob Peter to pay Paul."

Parisot then suggested seeking state or federal grant money, but Campbell reminded him that the commission is trying to keep taxes low, and that grant money, from whatever source, "is still a tax."

Commissioner Bill Roberts suggested using money allocated to the county from BP oil spill funds under the Restore Act, but Parisot said, "BP is not funding stormwater projects to help counties balance their budgets," but will only fund projects directly related to mitigating actual harm done by the 2010 oil spill.

Roberts, however, said, "Our economy is not getting any better. Our best hope is to use Restore Act money. We'll be using it to address our environment, not just to balance our budget."

Parisot recommended splitting property tax revenue from the county's parks and recreation MSTU between stormwater control and regular parks and recreation projects. That way, he said, water quality can be improved while not raising taxes, and the county would still have some money for regular parks projects.

In other business during Thursday's budget workshop, commissioners heard budget briefings on such functions as road maintenance, traffic control, mosquito control, information systems, maintenance of the county vehicle fleet, and the county's agricultural extension service. All departments said they are making modest cuts to their budget for FY 2013, but that such cuts require delays in replacing old equipment or in maintaining county facilities—things that cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Thursday was the last of the county commission's budget workshops for the coming fiscal year. Final public hearings on the proposed FY 2013 budget will be held at 6 p.m. Sept. 6 in Crestview, and at 6 p.m. Sept. 18 in Fort Walton.

Information about the Okaloosa County budget and county government is available at www.OkaloosaFL.com.

Data presented by Susan Chapman, Okaloosa County Health Department director, to the Okaloosa County Commission last week indicated that pollution worsened last year in area waterways. Rain runoff was blamed.

Okaloosa County Health Dept.

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2011 Data In 2011 in Florida, 3% of all reported beach monitoring samples exceeded the state's daily maximum bacteria standards.

Test Site	% Samples Exceeding FL Standards		# Advisory Days	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
Garniers Park	42	31	70	246
Rocky Bayou (Fred Gannon State Park)	10	19	29	112
Liza Jackson	13	10	50	68
Lincoln Park	10	15	35	96
Gulf Island National Seashore	8	12	27	43
Camp Timpochee	6	6	14	27
East Pass	4	12	13	41
Poquito Park	2	2	8	5
Marler Park	0	4	0	14
Brackin Wayside	0	4	0	15
Henderson State Park Beach	0	6	0	20
James Lee Park Beach	0	6	0	27

VALE

From page A-1

the city should consider a new moniker that would attract new businesses and residents.

The mayor said the county's Economic Development Council recently suggested a new slogan for the city, such as "Home of Eglin Air Force Base," a phrase that is already on city letterhead.

Also on the letterhead is "Vale of Paradise," a translation of the city's Spanish-derived name, which was indeed bestowed by Chicago real estate promoter John B. Perrine when he founded the city in 1921.

Emphasizing Valparaiso's historic connection to Eglin—the main economic driver for the entire area—would promote the city to businesses looking to locate near the base, said Arnold, a retired Eglin employee who

has clashed with the Air Force over jet-noise issues in recent years.

"Image and brand," said Carl Scott, are the keys to marketing. But, he added, Valparaiso doesn't have an image and brand that can be marketed.

Commissioner Joe Morgan said the Internet and other electronic media would make it easy to change the city's marketing pitch.

Vale of Paradise was used as a marketing tool back in the 1920s and 1930s when the city was being developed as a warm-weather home for Chicagoans.

"Do we have an economic development committee?" asked Morgan.

"No," replied Scott. To have such a committee the city would need a "real" strategic plan, he said.

"That's why I put 'Valparaiso

vision" on the agenda," said Arnold. In view of falling property values, a failure to attract new businesses and with no room to expand its boundaries, Arnold said, the city should form a "blue ribbon" vision committee. Its task, he said, would be to define "where do we go from here?" Arnold proposed a 10-member committee, with each commissioner selecting two volunteers.

However, Commissioner Kay Hamilton said such a panel should be opened up to anyone interested in promoting the city's future.

"We have a lot of talented people in our community," agreed Arnold, citing a number of people who hold, or held, high-ranking positions at Eglin.

Arnold suggested that commission members discuss the matter further at a meeting next

month.

In other business at Monday's city commission meeting, the panel approved a rate hike for basic cable television services while at the same time lowering the "pole attachment fee" portion of cable bills. The net result will be a five-cent average reduction to monthly cable bills, said City Clerk Tammy Johnson.

The new rate boosts the charge for basic cable, channels 3-78, from \$31.50 to \$32.85 per month. The pole attachment fee—a charge to pay Gulf Power for allowing the city cable system to hang its cable TV lines on the utility's poles—drops from \$2.20 pr month to 55 cents.

The lower pole attachment fee is a result of an April 1 agreement with Gulf Power, reducing the pole attachment fee, following a long battle, said Commissioner Heyward Strong.

Preparing for new crop of students

Teachers reported back to their classrooms Monday, a week before Okaloosa County public-school students start classes Aug. 20. Above, Lewis School fifth grade teacher Eva Ratley couldn't wait to begin preparing her new classroom and began moving supplies in Friday. With eight years teaching in other states and overseas in Korea as a military wife, she she begins her third year at the Valparaiso K-8 school.

Beacon photo by Del Lessard



Valp. sets another closed meeting

Beacon Staff Writer

Bruce Bowman, a member of Conerly, Bowman and Dykes, the Destin law firm that is the city attorney, Monday requested a closed-door meeting with the Valparaiso Commission to, he said, discuss settlement negotiations in the recently concluded Bradley case, an open-government lawsuit that the city lost last month.

The commission set the meet-

ing for Aug. 20 at 6 p.m.

Circuit Judge Thomas Remington on July 27 issued final judgment against the city in the Bradley lawsuit, in which a citizen sued over a previous secret commission proceeding.

The Bay Beacon, in protesting an Aug. 2 closed commission meeting which officials said concerned the same recently concluded case, argued that Florida's open-gov-

ernment law permits closed meetings by elected officials to discuss legal action only when the action is actually pending in court—not before it has been filed or after it has been concluded.

Through a lawyer, the city replied that the commission was entitled to exclude the public from such a meeting because, even though Remington had issued what he

called "final judgment," his ruling was not actually final because city officials hadn't decided whether to appeal.

Bowman said Monday that no appeal had been filed.

The Beacon last week offered to join with the city to submit the dispute to an open-government mediation program operated by the Florida Attorney General. The newspaper received no response.

the blaze to the upstairs bedroom, he said.

The fire was out by 10:35 p.m.

A smoldering cigarette on or near the mattress is believed have caused the fire, Lohrman

said.

Damage to the room and contents was listed at \$20,000. The owner of the apartment is Napier Realty, Pensacola, Lohrman said. The occupant was listed as Johnathan Brophy. Lohrman

said there were two or three people in the apartment when the smoke detector sounded.

Responding to the fire were firefighters from Niceville, East Niceville, North Bay and Eglin fire departments.

ALARM

From page A-1

Firefighters received the alarm at 10:20 p.m., and were on the scene six minutes later, Lohrman said. They contained

DROPS

From page A-1

four segments that make up the resort's 36-hole course.

The resort lost money for the past three years, Werner said, a result of changes in the economy, and demographics, as fewer people have the time or money to play golf all day and existing golfers continue to age. There's also a glut of golf courses in the area, said Hanks.

It's a trend nationally as well as locally, as golf courses close down and manicured courses are left to go back to nature, Hanks said last March, mentioning a former courses in Crestview that was once part of a gated community. Since March, the 18-hole Shalimar Pointe Golf Course was also put on the market, and adjoining homeowners expressed their concerns that a buyer could build up to 200 homes on the course, changing their quality of life and reducing the value of their own homes.

Late last month Hanks told the Beacon the resort's development plans have changed. The resort has eliminated any commercial from future development plans on the shortened Magnolia golf course, he said, and only residential development is now under consideration. However, no one outside the resort has seen the redesigned plans yet, he said, including the county's growth management department. He said the owners were also waiting to hear from the Magnolia Plantation homeowners association.

Hanks said he couldn't divulge how many homes are now planned on portions of the shortened golf course as renderings and designs aren't ready



Beacon photo by Del Lessard

The back yard of Norma Rethlake's home on Armadillo Trail in Magnolia Plantation, Bluewater Bay, backs up to the seventh fairway of the Magnolia golf course, part of which the course owner, Bluewater Bay Resort, wants convert to homesites.

yet. Werner could not be reached for comment.

The resort will first release future plans to the Magnolia Plantation homeowners, Hanks said, but he could not say when those letters would be sent out.

Jane Rainwater president of the 266-unit Magnolia Plantation Homeowners Association, said 165 owners voted yes, a majority, in favor of a one-time, binding assessment on each owner. She said the money would be placed in a fund in case the association decided it needed legal assistance in anything the resort planned for the Magnolia course.

Rainwater said other homeowner associations in Bluewater Bay are also concerned about

the resort's development plans, or the alternative of letting the golf course fall into disrepair.

Elliott Kampert, Okaloosa County's Growth Development director, told the Beacon that the resort has not yet formally given notice to the county of any proposed development of the golf course. Notice of such proposed changes is required by the state-mandated Development of Regional Impact (DRI) which controls development of the entire Bluewater Bay development, he said. Kampert said it is his understanding that the resort wants any proposed development to be "palatable" to affected homeowners.

Rainwater said they've checked the DRI for Bluewater Bay and learned that to go that

route the resort needs to notify Walton County and Crestview, because the development could impact traffic, water, and so on. She said they've been told their best offense is to attend en masse when the Okaloosa County Commission meets to discuss any proposal. She said they have said the resort won't fight Magnolia Plantation homeowners but instead threaten to close the golf courses at Magnolia Plantation, and possibly the Marsh course as well.

Hanks said the resort's plans were in the best interests of all, including the homeowners. "Survival of the resort" is the primary concern of the development, Hanks said. "We don't need 36 holes of golf, especially in this economy."

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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

Cynthia Susan Wilkinson, a restaurant employee, 46, of 365 Washington Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 27 on a misdemeanor worthless check charge related to a \$50 check.

Joshua Timothy Nelson, 34, of 390 Edge Ave. Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 30 on charges of failure to appear on a misdemeanor offense, four counts.

Brandon Edward Zemsch, 21, of 700 32nd St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 20 on a violation of probation charge on the original offenses of burglary, grand theft auto, grand theft and criminal mischief.

Sedrick Leonard Lowe, unemployed, 42, of 304 Reeves St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 27 on misdemeanor worthless check charges, three counts, related to checks written for \$30.59, \$27.29 and \$29.09.

Michael Julian Dampier, unemployed, 31, of 1119 Rita Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 28 on a violation of probation charge on the original offenses of DUI and resisting an officer without vio-

lence.

William Richard Davis Jr., a cook, 21, of 2 Jonathan Circle, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 28 on a violation of probation charge on the original offenses of trafficking in stolen property, petit theft and trespass.

Holly Nicole Tharp, a business owner/operator, 29, of 616 Ginkgo Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 28 on a violation of probation charge on the original offense of driving while license suspended or revoked.

Latoya Denise Tape, 24, of 400 Kelly Road, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies July 26 on charges of petit theft and providing a false name to law enforcement. Tape allegedly put a \$70 necklace in her front left pocket, walked out of the Sears store, 300 Mary Esther Blvd., Mary Esther, without paying, then gave a false name.

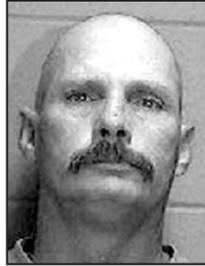
Scott Eason Bacheller, unemployed, 55, of 2425 Roberts Drive, was arrested by sheriff's deputies in Fort Walton Beach July 12 on charges of trespassing and resisting an officer without violence.

Lisa Marie Emanuele, 36, of 1853 Taft St., Hollywood, was arrested by sheriff's deputies at the

Okaloosa seeks fugitives

This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Name: Stephen Vance
Cartwright
Wanted for: violation of probation on the original charges of two counts of grand theft.
Height: 6-foot
Weight: 180 pounds
Age: 49
Date of birth: 02-09-1963
Hair: brown
Eyes: hazel



Name: Joe "J" Fernandez
Wanted for: attempted murder, robbery and possession of a weapon by a convicted felon.
Height: 5-feet, 6-inches
Weight: 175 pounds
Age: 36
Date of birth: 10-08-1975
Hair: brown
Eyes: hazel



This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. A reward is offered by Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers, 863-8477, or 1-888-654-8477. Information can also be provided anonymously by texting "TIP214 plus the message" to CRIMES (274637)

Okaloosa County Jail July 27 on a charge of fraudulently using another person's ID without consent. Emanuele is allegedly part of an organized fraud ring and was arrested on multiple fraud charges July 6 after attempting to cash a fraudulent check at a Niceville bank using someone else's driver's license. On July 12 a woman filed an affidavit of complaint stating her wallet and purse were stolen from her vehicle June 25. Emanuele is alleged to have subsequently had possession and/or used the victim's personal identification fraudulently.

Jeremy Phillip White, 21, of 4483 Woodbridge Road, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 2 on a petit theft charge. On June 10 White allegedly entered a Destin convenience store, 53 Harbor Blvd., picked up two 24-can cases of beer and walked out of the store without paying.

Kedreem Deshown Andrews, 25, of 122 Evans St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 7 on charges of domestic violence battery, false imprisonment, domestic violence related, and resisting an officer without violence.

Michael Robert Andrews, a student, 18, of 517 27th St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 3 on charges of burglary, criminal mischief upon or within a church, and theft. On May 23 Andrews allegedly entered a Niceville church through an open window, then kicked in the door to an office and stole about \$15 from a desk drawer.

Andrews was also charged Aug. 3 with theft, fraudulent use of a credit card and receiving money or property through illegal use of a credit card. On June 10 Andrews allegedly found credit cards and other personal information in a church bathroom. Although he knew the owner, Andrews did not return the property but used the credit card to make two online purchases. Andrews later returned the credit card to the victim and admitted he had used it.

A 15-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 4 on charges of unlawful possession of a firearm by a minor and grand theft of a firearm. The boy allegedly stole a semi-automatic handgun and multiple rounds of ammunition from the desk where his grandfather had stored it. The boy told police he wanted to go shooting with his friends but didn't want his grandparents to know.

Mason Garrett Riley, 20, of 2021 Mary Ann Court, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 4 on two violation of probation charges on the original offenses of driving while license suspended or revoked and misdemeanor possession of marijuana.

Jason Christopher Coulthart, an electrician, 29 of 500 Kelly Mill Road, Apt. 114, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 5 on charges of battery and criminal mischief. Coulthart allegedly hit another man in Fort Walton Beach then punctured two

tires on the man's vehicle.

Joshua Correy Young, a fabricator, 27, of 2718 Ridgeway Drive, Gautier, Miss., was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 4 on charges of possession of controlled substance without a prescription, six counts, trafficking in opium derivative, 4 grams or more but under 30 kilograms, one count, and trespassing, one count.

About 6:56 p.m. deputies responded to the 1400 block of Pine Street, Niceville, where witnesses allegedly saw Young wearing a backpack and entering a vehicle, take something out of the vehicle, then ditch the backpack in some bushes and walk toward Highway 20.

Based on witnesses' description, deputies detained Young and located the backpack, which contained bottles of controlled substances, including: 1,350 pills of Methylphenidate, 5 mg; 90 pills of Methylphenidate, 36 mg; 90 pills of Adderall, 15 mg; six pills of Oxycodone, 10 mg; nine pills of Oxycodone, 5 mg; and, four pills of Alprazolam, .5 mg. The combined weight of the Oxycodone was approximately 4.98 grams.

As of Friday afternoon Young was being held in the Okaloosa County Jail in lieu of \$16,500 bail.

Richard Lee Garner, a maintenance tech, 46, of 284 Washington Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 6 on a violation of probation charge on the original offense of grand theft auto.

DUI arrests

Alexander Linton Currington, a truck loader, 19, of 380 W. Edge Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI on East Highway 20 at Lancaster Drive, Aug. 5 at 5:05 a.m. Subsequent to a search of Currington's vehicle he was also charged with possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Thefts

A local woman reported that a juvenile stole and used her credit/debit card July 29. The victim noticed her debit card missing and thought originally that she had misplaced it, but the next day discovered an unauthorized \$13 charge at a Niceville fast food restaurant. A friend's child later admitted stealing the victim's card while keeping an eye on the victim's purse at Lincoln Park, then later using it to purchase food.

A Niceville resident from the 800 block of Sweetwater Run, reported that unknown person(s) stole a radar detector and pair of sunglasses from his vehicle sometime Aug. 4-5.

A Niceville resident who told police he left a house key under a door mat reported Aug. 6 that someone stole about 50 pills of generic Xanax from his bedroom while no one was home.

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from July 30, 2012 through August 5, 2012.

1 Structure Fire	14 Emergency Medical Calls
0 Vehicle Fire	2 Vehicle Crash
0 Other Fire	0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication
0 Illegal Burn	5 Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms	1 Hazardous Conditions

STREET	SITUATION	DATE	TIME
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	08/06/12	12:12
McEwen Drive	Medical	08/06/12	13:59
McEwen Drive	Medical	08/06/12	18:51
Bullock Blvd.	False Call	08/07/12	13:36
Azalea Dr.	Electrical Problem	08/07/12	17:50
37th Street	Medical	08/08/12	02:41
College Blvd.	Medical	08/08/12	12:04
Woodlow Road	Medical	08/08/12	16:53
Deer Avenue	False Call	08/08/12	19:05
SR 85 N.	Medical	08/08/12	19:32
Rocky Bayou Bridge	Vehicle Crash	08/09/12	10:42
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Cancelled	08/09/12	12:55
Tee Street	Medical	08/09/12	20:37
N. Partin Drive	Medical	08/10/12	09:38
Hickory Avenue	Medical	08/10/12	14:44
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	08/10/12	21:47
SR 85 N/SR 123	False Call	08/10/12	23:29
SR 85 N/SR 123	Vehicle Crash	08/11/12	07:44
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	08/11/12	10:45
Kelly Road	Structure Fire	08/11/12	22:19
Government Avenue	Cancelled	08/12/12	01:23
N. Partin Drive	Medical	08/12/12	07:16
Coral Drive	Medical	08/12/12	22:05

Weekly Safety Tip: Cooking is the leading cause of home fires. Never leave cooking unattended. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames and turn off the burner.
Like the Niceville Fire Department on Facebook

East Niceville

The East Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls during the month of July 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Oak Avenue	False alarm	7/2/12	1225
Redwood Ave.	Medical EMS call	7/2/12	1231
47th Street	Medical assist	7/2/12	1433
Union Avenue	Medical assist	7/2/12	1930
E. John Sims Parkway	Hazardous condition	7/3/12	0052
Madison Street	Fire, other	7/3/12	1157
Langman Road	Medical assist	7/3/12	1253
Malta Cove	Excessive heat	7/3/12	1732
Dolphin Point	Building fire	7/6/12	0800
Oak Lake Lane	Dispatched & canceled	7/6/12	1106
23rd Street	Medical assist	7/6/12	2200
Niceville Avenue	Dispatched & canceled	7/7/12	1004
E. SR 20 Highway	Detector activation, no fire	7/7/12	1013
Cat Mar Avenue	Medical assist	7/7/12	1026
Kristin Circle	Vehicle accident	7/8/12	1936
Winlake Court	Detector activation, no fire	7/8/12	2044
Reeves Street	Medical assist	7/11/12	2019
Ginkgo Avenue	Unauthorized burning	7/14/12	2040
Edgewater Drive	Medical assist	7/15/12	1233
Edgewater Drive	CO detector activation, malfunction	7/17/12	0811
Winward Lane	Dispatched & canceled	7/21/12	1214
Oakmont Circle	Heat from short circuit	7/23/12	2004
White Point Road	Detector activation, no fire	7/29/12	0714
White Point Road	Dispatched & canceled	7/29/12	1725
White Point Road	Dispatched & canceled	7/30/12	1631

Visit our website at www.enfd.net.

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from July 30, 2012 through August 5, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Shadow Lane	Dispatched & cancelled	08/06/12	14:34
West Parkwood Lane	Unintentional transmission	08/06/12	17:23
Ida Coon Circle	EMS call	08/07/12	11:55
Calinda Lane	Medical assist	08/07/12	13:24
Pine Street	Medical assist	08/07/12	17:22
Azalea Drive	Dispatched & cancelled	08/07/12	17:56
N. White Point Road	EMS call	08/08/12	08:00
Olde Post Road	EMS call	08/08/12	10:50
Windrush Drive	EMS call	08/09/12	01:34
Rocky Bayou Bridge	Dispatched & cancelled	08/09/12	10:43
Highway 20 & Lancaster Dr.	EMS call	08/10/12	05:48
Cedar Street	Unintentional transmission	08/10/12	14:22
E. Hwy. 98/Destin, FL	Dispatched & cancelled	08/10/12	14:31
Parkside Circle	EMS call	08/10/12	20:58
Windard Lane	Fire, other	08/11/12	02:59
Birkdale Circle	EMS call	08/11/12	04:02
Highway 20	EMS call	08/11/12	10:15
N. Lakeshore Drive	Vehicle accident	08/11/12	15:13
Kelly Road	Building fire	08/11/12	22:20
Birkdale Circle	EMS call	08/12/12	03:25
Fairway Lakes Drive	EMS call	08/12/12	09:16
Range Road	EMS call	08/12/12	10:32
State Road 293	Vehicle accident	08/21/12	20:44

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

Sewage field work remains in firm's hands

By Del Lessard
Beacon Staff Writer

The Niceville-Valparaiso Regional Sewer Board voted this month to continue using a contractor to maintain the utility's sprayfields until next summer.

The board had previously eyed ending the annual sprayfield maintenance agreement with Gulf Star Contracting in the hope it would be cheaper to maintain the fields using in-house personnel. The regional utility spends nearly \$120,000 a year for sprayfield maintenance.

Wastewater treatment plant manager Rick Helms told board members that it would be beneficial to continue the contract with Gulf Star through June 30. He said the utility's own personnel won't have time to take over the work because they will be training on new equipment currently being installed at the plant under a \$5.24 million upgrade. The upgrade is expected to come on line early next year.

Helms said he also needed to see what Eglin Air Force Base will require of the sewer board under an enhanced use lease of the sprayfield land to the board. In the past the Department of Environmental Protection has required certain types of hay be grown on the sprayfield to take up nutrients from the effluent the utility sends to the sprayfield. The hay cuts down on the amount of nitrogen and other pollutants that get into the ground-water and subsequently into streams on Eglin that are home to the Okaloosa darter, a small minnow that was until recently on the endangered species list.

What's changed, Helms said, is that the utility is upgrading its treatment facility to remove most of the nitrogen and other nutrients from the discharged wastewater. It may be possible, he said, to merely cut the hay and leave it on the ground, rather than bale and harvest it. He said until those details are known it would be difficult to complete a cost analysis between contractor and in-house maintenance of

the sprayfields.

Mike Spaits, environmental spokesman for Eglin said the lease for the sprayfield hasn't been completed.

The board agreed to extend the current sprayfield maintenance contract until June 30, 2013.

The regional utility also received a clean audit report from its outside CPA firm, Warren Averett O'Sullivan Creel at the board's Aug. 1 meeting. Auditors found no material weaknesses and no deficiencies of the internal controls the utility maintains over its financial reports.

For the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012, the regional utility had annual operating revenues of \$1,885,623, up \$22,329 from the previous year. It had net operating expenses of \$1,604,853, down \$28,716 from the previous year.

Overall the utility had increased its net assets from \$2,189,666 to \$2,481,272, auditors noted.

In other business, sewer board members said they expect both the Valparaiso City Commission and the Niceville City Council this month to formally approve a new operational agreement governing the regional utility.

The previous operational agreement expired in June and was revised to delete Okaloosa County as a member. Niceville bought out the county's share of treatment capacity and the county opted to discontinue treating sewage from the unincorporated areas east of Rocky Bayou and instead pump its sewage to its new sewage treatment plant north of Fort Walton Beach.

Until the county constructs additional sewer mains from Niceville to the Arbenie Pritchett plant in Fort Walton, the county will continue send sewage at the Niceville-Valparaiso plant, paying the same rate as both cities, but no longer as a co-owner and governing partner. The county is expected to divert the sewage flow by 2015.

THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith



What do you think about the United States sending a \$2.5 billion probe to Mars to determine whether life ever existed there?

Location: KMart



"I'd rather keep the \$2.5 billion here on earth. A lot of people here could use it."

Brenda Coleman, 70, Winter Park, retired



"I think it's stupid. Who the heck cares about Mars? We need the money here in the U.S., where there are homeless families and people going hungry."

Rhonda Wood, 52, Portland, Florida, business owner



"That's crazy. We can't feed people here, but we're sending \$2.5 billion to Mars."

Joe Riley, 26, Crestview, student



"The country is in debt. We can't afford to spend money on outer space."

Wayne Crider, 23, Niceville, fisherman



"Awesome! It's great for us to learn more about Mars. It would be surprising if anything lived on Mars — and it would be a wonderful thing for kids to know."

Raigen Wright, 11, Niceville, Plew Elementary School student



"They could use that money to pay down our national debt. When the debt is paid, Mars will still be there, and we can go for it."

Janel Wright, 43, Niceville, retired

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

E. Niceville seeks to hold line on millage

By Mike Griffith

Beacon Correspondent

The East Niceville Fire Commission Monday discussed ways to avoid a possible tax hike during the fiscal year which will start Oct. 1.

Commissioners made it clear during Monday's meeting that they prefer to keep the fire district's property tax rate, which has risen dramatically since 2005, at its current rate, if they can do so while still paying necessary expenses for their fire department.

At the current millage rate of 2.37, property owners in the East Niceville Fire District, between the Niceville city limits and the shore of Rocky Bayou, pay \$2.37 for each \$1,000 of appraised taxable value of their property, after homestead exemptions and other discounts. For example, the owner of a home appraised at a taxable value of \$200,000 currently pays \$474 per year in property tax to the East Niceville fire district, in addition to other taxes collected by Okaloosa County, the school district, and others.

A final decision on fire district taxes will be made next month.

At a previous meeting held July 9, the East Niceville commissioners authorized themselves to hike the millage rate to a maximum of 2.44 if necessary, but said then that they preferred to keep the current rate if that can be done despite declines in property values and increased expenses in such areas as insurance. At a 2.44 millage rate, the property owner mentioned above would pay \$488 in property tax to the East Niceville fire district.

No decisions were made during Monday's meeting about the coming year's budget, except for the passage of a motion to modify the budget to include 27 line items rather than the current 22. This, said commission treasurer Ed Dunbar, will standardize the

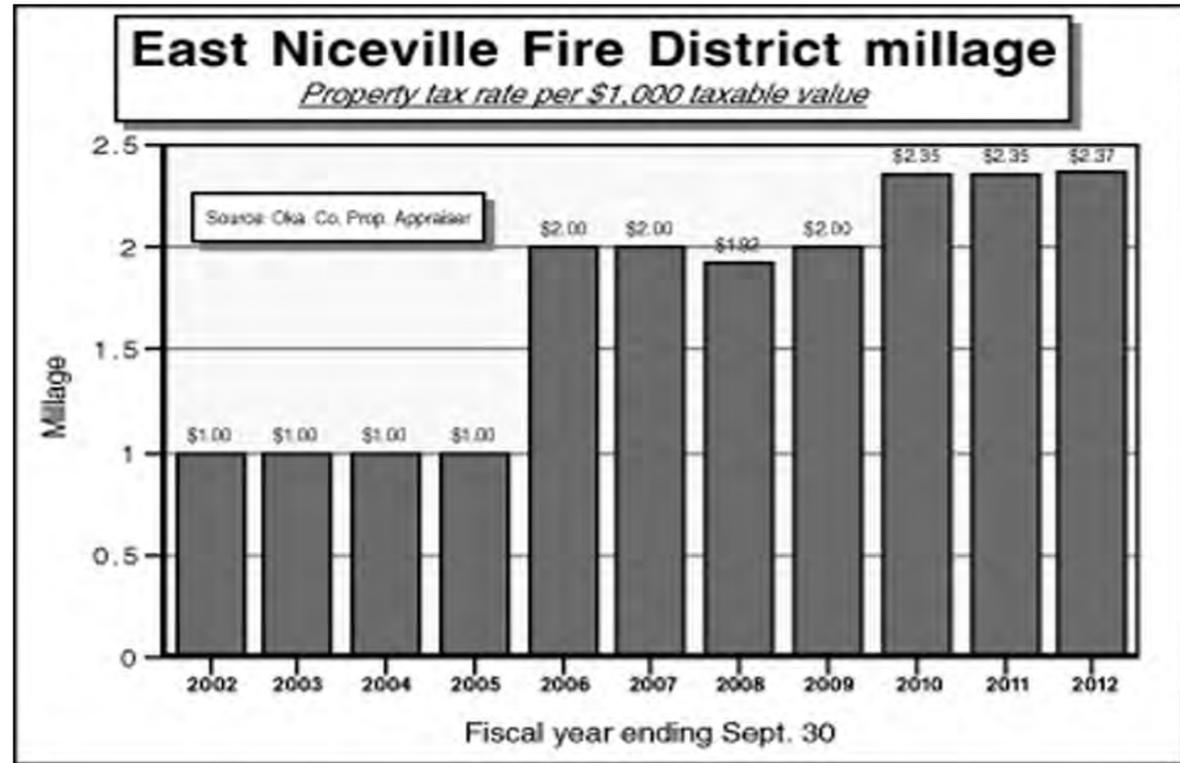
East Niceville budget to match the state budgeting format, making it easier to translate day-to-day budgeting with annual audits that use the state format.

As for next year's spending, commission chairman Mike Marcolongo said he has studied the district's finances and come up with additional cuts that can be made to such areas as operational reserves, utilities, services, fuel, and the district's equipment reserve fund, which should be enough to allow the district to operate for another year without a tax rate hike. At last month's meeting, it was estimated that the FY 2012 budget would have to be cut by about \$39,000 to match spending with expected revenue in FY 2013.

Dunbar, however, warned against cutting too deeply, saying, "I'd be willing to take a little tax increase, to have a little less cuts. We have liabilities that actually exist right now." Dunbar also suggested that if cuts are needed, they should include at least a partial reduction of fire commissioner's current \$500 per month pay. He suggested that the pay cut might be less for the commission chairman and treasurer than for other commissioners.

"This would provide an incentive," he said, "for other commissioners to volunteer for the chair and treasurer jobs," which typically consume more time and effort than that required of the other three commissioners. At the current pay level, Dunbar said, the five fire commissioners, together, cost the district \$30,000 per year. "That's a lot of money, as tight as we are right now," he said.

Commissioner John Root said he has recently "asked some hard questions of local businesses," whose leaders told him they do not pay full health benefits for their employees, as most fire districts, including East Niceville, do for their firefighters. He said it may no longer be



possible to provide benefits to firefighters that are not available in the private sector.

The fire district switched from a largely volunteer force to a paid force in 2005, and the tax rate doubled to 2 mills at that time.

Commissioner Leonard Martin, however, said it would be more practical to compare the pay and benefits at East Niceville to those offered by other fire departments. Those, he said, usually do offer complete health coverage, partly because of the dangerous and difficult nature of firefighting compared to most civilian jobs, but also because such benefits may be necessary if East Niceville is to compete for experienced, quality firefighters against other neighboring districts.

Root acknowledged Martin's

point, and said that an advantage to offering health care and other non-salary benefits is that they increase the value of a worker's total compensation, but without the added cost to the employer of increasing the worker's actual salary. Salary increases, he said, must also include increases in government-mandated costs like social security payments and workers compensation insurance, the costs of which are legally tied to pay levels.

Marcolongo said that while it may be possible to operate for another year without a tax hike, the district has been cutting its budget each year since the national economic recession began. "Sooner or later we're going to hit a wall," he said, and if local property values do not

begin a significant recovery in the coming year, "We're going to face some difficult choices down the road."

In other business during Monday's meeting, the fire commission discussed a proposal from firefighters to change their state retirement program to a "local law" retirement program, which would allow the fire commission and firefighters a greater role in managing East Niceville firefighters' retirement funds. Assistant Fire Chief David Birch said similar local programs have been implemented at other fire districts with good results.

Commissioners, however, were uncertain. "I hope the firefighters know what they're getting into," said Commissioner

Martin. He said his own research thus far has shown that local law retirement systems can be very complex and difficult for local firefighters to manage. After some discussion, commissioners decided to table the proposal until a later meeting, after everyone has more time to study how such a program would actually work and whether it would be beneficial.

Final decisions about East Niceville's FY 2013 property taxes and budget will be made during two public budget hearings, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on September 5 and September 19. Both hearings will take place at the East Niceville fire station at 1709 East 27th Street. For information about the East Niceville Fire District, call 678-2311.

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From page A-1
guaranteed by the three-year contract but were negotiated annually.
An attempt to mediate the issue failed when both the school district and OCEA, in December 2011, rejected proposals to grant teachers step pay raises half a year. The school board then met

Jan. 4 in Niceville High School and unanimously voted to deny the annual pay raise, ending the impasse they had declared earlier.
Even though the school district argued that the Jan. 4 school board ruling ended the impasse, OCEA pursued the grievance process under binding arbitration procedures.
On Aug. 6, 2012, the teacher's

union learned that binding arbitration of the pay issue ruled against the union's appeal because it had failed to file a grievance over the pay issue in a timely manner. In a letter dated July 30 arbitrator Barney Spurlock said that the union failed to file its grievance within 15 working days of the first alleged violation, the July 31, 2011 pay checks for a handful of

12-month teachers.
Spurlock said that two other issues—whether the use of the impasse process by the school district had resolved the pay issue, and whether the filing of an Unfair Labor Practices complaint by the union removed authority for the arbitrator to resolve the issue—were rendered moot by OCEA's failure to file the grievance in a timely manner.

In past years OCEA and the school district have negotiated issues such as the annual step pay raise during the summer, resulting in teachers not getting past step pay raises in their first few pay checks, Peek said. In the past step pay raises have been approved, retroactively, as late as December.
School district officials are in negotiations with OCEA over a

new three-year contract between teachers and the school district.
As of the Beacon's press deadline, neither Peek, nor school district negotiator Mike Foxworthy returned calls asking if there was money in the current budget for teacher's step pay raises. The school district's budget for the current school year won't be finalized until a public hearing Sept. 10.



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Dr. Olivier Broutin

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Courtesy photo

Among the shows scheduled for the Mattie Kelly Arts Center Broadway Series is the popular "Fiddler on the Roof."

Rock, humor, circus on Arts Center playbill

Special to the Beacon

Season packages are now available for the largest series ever of Broadway shows and artist events to appear at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center at Northwest Florida State College in Niceville. The lineup of a dozen national and internationally touring shows is a record for the \$25 million performing arts venue, and includes award-winning hits such as "Fiddler on the Roof," "Menopause the Musical," "Hair," and "Shrek the Musical," as well as the

Each of the 12 nationally touring shows appear at 7:30 p.m. for one performance only. Individual tickets are \$45 each for Broadway events, and \$35 each for Artist Series events.

The 2012-13 Broadway and Artist Season starts Sept. 26 with "Menopause the Musical"—a musical parody set to classic tunes from the '60s, '70s, and '80s. The season continues Oct. 11 with "Broadway Rox," celebrating the contemporary pop and rock musicals of Broadway. "Drumline Live"



National Circus of China in "Cirque Chinois," the international tour of a "Women of Ireland" concert and more.

The priority window for season packages and group sales is until Aug. 19, when only season or group packages will be sold.

Continuing a popular option started last season, patrons may choose their own selection of five or more national shows for a Custom Season Package to receive a 10 percent discount off the ticket price of each show. A discount of \$5 off per ticket is available for groups of 10 or more tickets to a single show if the group sale is made by a single purchaser. Packages and group sales must be purchased by phone, mail, or in person from the box office only (packages and discounts are not available by Web sales).

Contact or visit the box office from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday at 729-6000, or toll-free 1-888-838-ARTS (2787).

Individual tickets for all shows go on sale Aug. 20 by Web, phone or in-person from the box office. Purchase tickets online at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center website at mattiekellyartscenter.org.

will appear Nov. 7 with an explosion of energy and athleticism set to contemporary hip hop, R&B and classic Motown tunes, as well as brass marching bands.

"Shrek the Musical" will appear Nov. 19, followed by "Nunset Boulevard" Nov. 29, starring Cindy Williams of "Laverne & Shirley" TV fame as Mother Superior. "Fiddler on the Roof" comes to the Mattie Kelly Arts Center stage Dec. 3; and direct from Beijing, the National Circus of the People's Republic of China, performs "Cirque Chinois" Dec. 12.

On Jan. 12, "New York Tenors" will perform. The groundbreaking musical "Hair" will appear Jan. 30. Parental discretion is advised for this show.

"In the Mood" Feb. 2 will feature a retro 1940s musical with the String of Pearls Big Band Orchestra, vocalists and dancers. Ireland's leading female performers will be featured in "Women of Ireland" Feb. 15; and the musical comedy "Rock of Ages" will appear April 1.

All ticket sales include a \$2 per ticket box office processing fee in addition to the ticket price.

Emerald Coast Autism Center grads heading to local mainstream schools

Corbin Brunson and Megan Triplett of Niceville and Tyler Parkinson of Crestview graduated from the Emerald Coast Autism Center during summer commencement ceremony held Aug. 9 in the Niceville center.

Staci Berryman, executive director at Emerald Coast Autism Center, presided at the ceremony, and each student gave a speech he or she wrote. The ceremony was followed by a reception with friends and family.

Megan Triplett and Corbin Brunson are to attend Rocky Bayou Christian School in Niceville. Tyler Parkinson is to attend Northwood Elementary School in Crestview.



From left, Emerald Coast Autism Center graduates Corbin Brunson, Tyler Parkinson and Megan Triplett.



Kiwanis donates school supplies

Judy Boudreaux and Bill Landsberg, Kiwanis Club of Niceville and Valparaiso members, donated a \$200 check and school supplies to Sharing and Caring, Niceville, Thursday, Aug. 9. Sharing and Caring has collected and filled about 300 backpacks in preparation for the 2012-2013 school year.

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Food donations needed

Sharing & Caring, Niceville, is asking for donations due to a shortage of food. Items needed include, but are not limited to: canned meats, pork and beans, cereal, canned pasta, corn, drinks (juice), side dishes (Hamburger Helper), toilet paper and toothpaste, or any items which cannot be purchased with food stamps. Donations can be dropped of Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., or Friday, 9 a.m.-noon. Info: 678-8459.

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. Info: 897-4721.

Floral Design Studies

The Valparaiso Garden Club is now accepting registrations for Advanced Floral Design Studies classes for anyone interested in learning about floral design. Classes will be held at the Valparaiso Community Library on the first Saturday of each month, September-March, excluding December, from 9-11:30 a.m. Cost of six classes: \$60. Call 897-4011, or email njkam@gmail.com for registration forms, or pick one up at the Valparaiso Community Library. No experience necessary. Info: marieharrison@valp.net.

'Have a Heart' run/walk

Registration is ongoing for the Okaloosa County "Have a Heart" 5K run/walk, Sept. 1, at the 911 Emergency Operations Center. The course will loop around the

Northwest Florida State College Campus, Niceville. Early registration through Aug. 20 is \$15, and late registration, Aug. 21-Sept. 1 is \$20. T-shirts will be presented to the first 200 entries. Info: Ken Wolfe, kwolfe@co.okaloosa.fl.us, or newftc.com/racecalendar. All proceeds benefit the American Heart Association.

Yard Sale Spectacular

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida is accepting donations for their annual Yard Sale Spectacular, Aug. 25, from 7 a.m.-noon. Donations (no clothes) will be accepted during regular museum hours, Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Outside spaces are available for sellers; \$10 for a 10-foot-by-10-foot space. Info: 678-2615.

Bazaar vendors needed

Niceville UMC World Bazaar and Benefit is seeking quality home-craft vendors for its 36th annual event Oct. 27. For information and entry forms, go to nicevilleumc.org/women/bazaar or call 865-4769.

Oktoberfest seeks artists

The 18th Annual Oktoberfest and Crafts Festival at Winn-Dixie Plaza in Bluewater Bay is looking for artists and craftsmen interested in selling their work. The festival, sponsored by the Mid-Bay Rotary Club, will be Sept. 28, from 5-10 p.m., and Sept. 29, from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Cost for both days: \$75. Info: Bert, 897-3190.

Rotary golf tourney

Reservations are being taken for the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club Golf Tournament Oct. 11, at 1 p.m., Rocky Bayou Country Club. The golf tournament will fund scholarships for local students. The goal this year is \$10,000. Corporate sponsor: \$350, four player and hole sign. Individual player: \$90. Hole sign only, \$100. Info: Jimmie Boisjolie, 699-0045, jimgirl@cox.net, or nicevalrotary@yahoo.com.

Back to School party

The Valparaiso Community Library invites children and families of all ages to its Summer Back to School Party Aug. 15, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Pizza, snacks and drinks will be provided. Movie and playtime for little ones; Wii and crafts for older children.

Chorale auditions available

The Northwest Florida Symphony Chorale will hold auditions for the 2012-2013 season Wednesday, Aug. 15, beginning at 6 p.m. in Tyler Recital Hall on the Niceville campus of Northwest Florida State College in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center. The Chorale, under the direction of music professor Lois Van Dam, is a select choral group which performs with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra as well as in independent concerts. This season's repertoire includes work by Brahms, Beethoven, Debussy, Sweelinck, and others. To arrange an audition time and receive audition music, email Chorale administrator Phyllis Lake at lakepa@cox.net. For more information, contact music director Lois Van Dam at vandaml@nwfsc.edu or 729-6009.

Artist sets birthday show

To celebrate his 96th birthday, well-known Bluewater Bay illustrator Marlin Griffin will have a showing of some of his world travels and fantasy illustrations Friday, Aug. 17, 2-4 p.m., at Sandy & Ray Realty in Merchants Walk, Bluewater Bay, across from Bank of America and a few doors from the Post Office.

Come by and wish Marlin a happy birthday. Also, you can review his latest nature illustrations in "Bucky's Adventures," a children's book about this area. No cost to attend.

Ruckel orientation

Ruckel Middle School orientation for all upcoming 6th graders and new 7th and 8th graders will be Aug. 17, 9 a.m.-noon in the gym. Students will receive their schedules at this time.

Air Raid Nights & Radio Days

Author Don Schroeder will present "Air Raid Nights & Radio Days" at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Friday, Aug. 17, noon, for History Sandwiched-In, a free lunchtime lecture.

Experience laugh-out-loud and tear jerking moments of "Air Raid Nights & Radio Days" from a young boy's perspective growing up on the home front during WWII. Even young children will enjoy hearing the stories about days gone by when there existed a corner grocery store, the ragman and deliveries from the milkman and iceman.

Pack a lunch and bring the family to the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida for History Sandwiched-In, an informal lunchtime education program. The lecture is free and open to the public. Space is limited. Call 678-2615 to reserve a seat.

Benefit set for cancer victim

A benefit meal is planned for noon-6 p.m. Aug. 18 at the Dockside & Oyster Bar, North Light Yacht Club, Niceville, for Yvonne B. Davenport and family. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, went into remission and in March 2010 was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer.

The cost is \$10 for barbecued chicken, pulled pork or fried catfish, with jambalaya, potato salad, a roll and drink.

To donate, checks can be made payable to Yvonne B. Davenport, 1085 Forest Lake Terrace, Niceville, FL 32578 or to BBVA Compass, account 2532499057.

Youth orchestra sets auditions

The Fine & Performing Arts Division of Northwest Florida State College is preparing to hold auditions for the Northwest Florida Symphony



Adult musicians needed

Do you already play a musical instrument or are looking to dust off that old violin, flute, trumpet you have wanted to play again, but haven't had a place to play? "Emerald Coast Symphonic Pops" provides an opportunity for local adult musicians to come together and perform light symphonic classics and popular music for enjoyment. Rehearsals are on Monday evenings, 7:15-9 in the choral room of Shalimar United Methodist Church. For more information, please contact Music Director Liz Aylor at 651-4308.

Youth Orchestra. The Northwest Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra is a full orchestra of more than 50 talented young musicians ranging from sixth to 12th grade under the direction of Liz Aylor who is also the director of the Symphonic Strings program of Okaloosa County, Emerald Coast Symphonic Pops, and a member of the Pensacola Symphony, Sinfonia Gulf Coast and Panama City Pops.

Auditions for advanced Strings will be held Sunday, Aug. 19, 10 a.m.-4p.m. Woodwind, Brass and Percussionist auditions will be held Sunday, Aug. 26, 10 a.m.-4p.m. All tryouts take place in the Orchestra room of the Music Wing at The Mattie Kelly Arts Center at the NWF State College Niceville campus. Weekly rehearsals will then begin on Sept. 9 and other scheduled Sunday afternoons from 2:30-4:30.

Registration forms and audition materials are available at imastringteacher.com.

To receive more information and an audition time, please send name, age and instrument to the following email address: imastringteacher@cox.net. Those selected will be required to pay membership fees of \$75-\$125 per semester; some scholarships will be available.

History Mystery book club

The American Girls History Mystery Book Club, for girls in second-sixth grade, meets the third Wednesday of each month from 4:15-5:30 in the Niceville Library YS program room. Registration is required as space is limited. Girls must sign up in YS for each meeting, check out the book or purchase a copy, and finish the book before the meeting date. Registration begins Aug. 21 in Youth Services. Call 279-4863 x1514 or stop by the library to sign up.

Safe boating class

Coast Guard Station Destin on Okaloosa Island plans a safe boating

Correction

A caption in last week's Beacon misidentified a photo of Lynn Watson, one of three people pictured in a presentation involving the Sharing and Caring Cram the Van project. A corrected version appears today on page B-6.

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BEACONSPORTS

NHS grad sets home run mark

Blasts 19 in summer league

By Kenneth Books
Beacon Staff Writer

It's a truism in baseball: If you hit, you'll play.

Danny Collins can hit. The 2009 Niceville High School graduate shattered New England Collegiate Baseball League records this summer, setting new marks for home runs with 19. He also established new ceilings in slugging average (.818), total bases (130) and extra base hits (29) for the Laconia Muskrats, while batting .390. He was named the league all-star team third baseman.

"I can hit," Collins said. "I grew up as a shortstop and I guess I got too slow so they put me at third base."

"Danny was one of our first signings for the 2012 team," said Laconia General Manager Noah Crane. "As a player he consistently barrels the ball, which is the mark of a good hitter. He has power to all fields and has excellent strike zone awareness. He is a fierce competitor and puts in the work to make himself better. His success puts him in a leadership role and he handles that role well."

Many young players have trouble adjusting to wooden bats after growing up with the metal version. Not so Collins.

"It's not much different than the new bat they have these days, other than they can break," he said. "I've played several summers with a wood bat."

Collins is scheduled to graduate from Troy in 2013 with a degree in social science. But his goals have little to do with his major.

"I'm hoping to be drafted (by a major league organization) after next spring," he said.

If his dream comes true, he's already a step ahead of many new professional ballplayers. Not only is he comfortable with a wooden bat, but he's used to playing a long season. Frequently, the schedule—about 75 games for the lowest-level rookie leagues to about 140 in the high minors and 162 in the major leagues—wears down a player who isn't used to the daily grind. This year, Collins played about 100 games between Troy University and the summer college league.

What's the key to becoming a good hitter?

"A lot of practice, I guess," Collins said. "Hitting's always been my strong point in baseball. I've had a lot of good hitting coaches. I'm a big student, and I like to listen to everyone's take and take what I like from it and use it to my advantage."

Hitting can be taught, but power can't. You either have it or you don't. Collins has power and it's been increasing as he matures.

"My power has come on in the last three years," Collins said. Two years ago, while a student at Northwest Florida State College, he hit 11 home runs. This year, he hit 12 at Troy before tacking on 19 in the summer.

"People look at me as a power hitter, but I consider myself more of a gap-to-gap hitter," he said.

As his bat gets better, Collins is working hard to become a better third baseman. Although he describes his fielding as "OK," he adds, "That's been my main focus



Danny Collins, a 2009 graduate of Niceville High School, hammered out a record 19 home runs for the Laconia Muskrats of the New England Collegiate Baseball League this summer.

to get better at; I struggled hard the beginning of the spring but my coach and I worked on it. I buckled down and got better as the year went on."

His main problem fielding, Collins said, is concentration.

"It's lack of focus," he said. "The coaches all say I've got the talent and I've got the arm. I tend to take a pitch off, but I've gotten a lot better at it this past year. But I've always been told as long as you hit, you'll play."

A Yankee fan who used to live in the Tampa area, where the Yankees train, Collins said he's a Derek Jeter fan. "I grew up five minutes from the training field," he said. "My dad's job had free tickets right behind the dugout."

Needless to say, Collins' ultimate dream is "to play for the Yankees in the major leagues."

But, he added, "I'll play for anyone. I just want a chance to prove to someone that I can make it."



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Briefs

Lions golf tourney set

The Sandestin Lions Club Golf Tournament is scheduled for Oct. 28 at Emerald Bay.

The cost is \$90 per player or \$360 for a four-person team. The main hole-in-one prize will be a 2012 Toyota and a silent auction will be held. Ninety-Eight BBQ of Santa Rosa Beach will provide gumbo for lunch. The Lions are looking for sponsors, prizes and players.

Info: Jim Wood 269-0196, armyguyindestin@embarqmail.com.

Relay for Life 5K/Mile Run

The seventh annual Twin-Cities Relay for Life 5K/Mile Fun Run will be held Sept. 15th at 8 a.m. at Lewis School, Valparaiso.

Early registration for the 5K is \$15/Fun Run is \$5. Student price is \$5 for either race. NWFTC members receive a \$2 discount. Special rate for groups of 10 or more. Late fee, add \$5 the day of the race. T-shirts for the first 250 entries. Register on-line at active.com and go to lewisschoolk8.com for a registration form. Email samacd@valp.net with any questions.



Nichols signs letter of intent

Niceville High School's Terrell Nichols, a wide receiver who graduated in 2012, signs a letter of intent to play football and attend college at Warner University, Lake Wales, beginning this year. From left: parents Jose and Faye Rodriguez, sister Jasmine Rodriguez, Terrell Nichols, and Warner University coach Jeff Schaum.

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Coast Aquatics swimmers excel in Knoxville

Finish in 10th place with 428 points

Special to the Beacon

Coast Aquatics, formed in January when the Bluewater Barracudas and Emerald Coast Swimming merged, sent 38 swimmers to Knoxville, Tenn., July 18-22 to compete in the Southeastern Swimming Long Course Championships. The meet gathers the top age group swimmers from Tennessee, Alabama and Northwest Florida. More than 1,000 swimmers from more than 50 teams competed.

For the first time in club history Coast was cast in the "Large" team division by qualifying more than 30 athletes. This meant it would compete against national powers Nashville Aquatic Club, Memphis Tiger Swimming and meet host Pilot Aquatics. The team held its own, scoring 428 points, good enough for 10th place in the division. The finish marked the highest for a Coast Aquatics team and the highest finish of any team from Northwest Florida.

The 10 and under boys led the scoring assault for Coast, amassing 247 points for the

weekend. Their efforts garnered them a prestigious Age Group High Point award, given to the team that scores the most points in any given age group.

CJ Matthews showed his versatility by being top-four in all seven events he competed in and won championships in the 50 free and 50 back.

Nathaniel Rudman added five top-eight finishes, finishing as high as fifth place in the 400 free and 50 fly.

Cameron Turner and Cole Pearson joined Rudman and Matthews for great relays, battling all the way to the finish in the Medley Relay.

On the girls side, Sydney Kale had top-10 performances in the 50 breast, 50 fly and 100 fly.

Nicole Weidemann was 10th in the 100 back. Erin Heapy added a 15th place in the 100 fly, and Paris Binard and Elizabeth Epwright completed two competitive relays to finish in the top 16.

Tatum Hackler notched a fifth-place finish in the 800 free and an eighth-place finish in the 400 free for the 11-12 girls.

Rhiannon Thompson recorded lifetime bests in every event she swam. Lucy Rudman and Ashley Reynolds added lifetime best performances and rounded out two relays that finished in the top 16.

Sarah Markwardt, Evy Brechler and Stephanie Markwardt also registered lifetime best times.

Dylan Hammond finished in sixth place in the 50 free to get the boys in the scoring column. First-timer Kasper Kuzminski joined Hammond, Josh Wood and Jeffrey Sober to finish seventh and eighth in the relays.

In the 13-14 girls, Emma Rudman had top eight performances in the 1,500 free, 400 IM and the 800 free. Emma Strom added a third-place finish in the 400 IM and a fifth place finish in the 1,500 free. The girls also were a part of a medley relay with Jane Parke and Sydney Dawson that finished 12th.

Michael Bartley chose to come to Knoxville to represent Coast Aquatics one more time, even though he moved prior to the meet. He finished third in the 50 free. Kellen Broaderick,



Members of Coast Aquatics, formed in January when the Bluewater Barracudas and Emerald Coast Swimming merged, competed in their first meet "Large" team division in July.

Benson Kuirra and Nick Kartvedt joined Michael in relays that finished 9th in medley relay and 12th in free relay.

Katie Miller was the only Coast senior swimmer to make it to finals, finishing 10th in the 200 breast and 12th in the 100 breast. Milbrey Parke and

Amelia Strom were both also close to achieving second swims in the breaststroke events finishing inside the top 24.

For the guys, Matt Markwardt continues to climb up the ladder in the breaststroke events and Chaz Brechler and

Justin Lewis hope to build on some of their 13-14 success and continue it into the Senior age group. Chase Turner has returned to top form in the backstroke and Wyatt Kartvedt added help in breast and fly events as well as competing on two relays.



West earns scholarship

Brittany West is surrounded by teammates after she won the James Benjamin Strutchen Sr. Memorial Scholarship, which is rewarded to a Faithfulness, Discipline, Diligence, Inc. (FDD) member. The scholarship is offered annually to a deserving FDD member. West played on last year's team and will attend the University of West Florida in the fall. Her coach is Jerome Strutchen, head basketball coach at Niceville High School. From left: Malaya Evans, Lauren Day, Brittany West, Jessica Day, Amanda Demma, Shavonna Spaw, Mercedes Clayborne and Brittany Washington.



Tennis center funds needed

Ruckel Middle School and Niceville High School have signed a usage agreement for a joint tennis facility to be built on Ruckel property. The estimated cost of the eight-court project is \$300,000 with an additional \$90,000 for lighting in a second phase. The majority of these funds must be raised by fall 2012, to break ground during optimal months. The schools are attempting to secure grants from the United States Tennis Association and other organizations, but the majority of this project will be funded by the local community. All founding sponsors will be recognized on a permanent location at the new facility. To donate or for more information, call Cici Hruby at 830-7829 or Shelley Scholl at 737-1083 or visit .

Symphony Chorale holds singer auditions in August

The Northwest Florida Symphony Chorale will hold auditions for the 2012-2013 season on Wednesday, Aug. 15, beginning at 6 p.m. in Tyler Recital Hall on the Niceville campus of Northwest Florida State College in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center.

The Chorale, under the direction of music professor Lois Van Dam, is a select choral group which performs with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra as well as in independent concerts. This season's repertoire includes work by Brahms, Beethoven, Debussy,

Sweetinck, and others. To arrange an audition time and receive audition music, email Chorale administrator Phyllis Lake at lakepa@cox.net. For more information, contact music director Lois Van Dam at vandaml@nwfsc.edu or 729-6009.

NWFSC offering firearms courses

Northwest Florida State College's Criminal Justice Department will offer four sessions of its popular Firearms Safety and Concealed Carry Course this fall. Each non-credit course is eight hours long and includes classroom discussion on legal issues related to firearms safety and gun possession in Florida as well as live fire practice at the Firearms Training Facility on the Niceville campus.

The class is \$156 and includes the use of college firearms (personal firearms are not permitted in the class or on campus), and college-supplied ammunition and eye/ear protection. It is open to the public, including those under age 18 if accompanied by a parent or guardian who also enrolls in the safety course. Successful completion of the course satisfies state requirements for a firearms safety course and may be used as part of an application for a concealed carry permit.

The session dates include three one-day sessions on Saturday, Aug. 11, Friday, Oct. 26, and Saturday, Nov. 17 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is also a two-day session available Wednesday, Sept. 12, from 6 to 10 p.m. (classroom portion) and Friday, Sept. 14, from 8 a.m. to noon (gun range portion).



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In the Service

Brett M. Watson

Air Force Airman 1st Class Brett M. Watson has graduated from the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Aerospace Maintenance Apprentice Course at Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas.

The course is designed to train airmen in aircraft maintenance fundamentals and weapons systems familiarization, security instruction, technical order systems, maintenance management and documentation, aircraft and flight line safety. Training included use of hand tools, hardware, and equipment to perform aircraft ground handling, corrosion, and inspection procedures; instruction and familiarization with particular aircraft airframe, electrical, hydraulic, egress, environmental, fuel, flight and landing controls, engines and related systems and components.

Watson is the son of Robin and Bruce Watson of Ardmore Court, Niceville.

He is a 2007 graduate of Niceville High School.



Rotary installs new officers

The Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club recently installed new officers. From left: Rotary Foundation Chairman, Peter Loffler; Service Projects Chairman, Bill Higginbotham; Membership Chairman, Shirley Daniel; President, Jimmie Boisjolie; Secretary, Jonathan Tallman; Sergeant-at-Arms, Noble Morton; Past-President, Allen Tucker. Not pictured: Treasurer, David Dowden; and Director-at-Large, Carrie Ely.

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Kids on Campus perform 'Aladdin'

Northwest Florida State College Kids on Campus theater students presented a musical version of "Aladdin" recently. From left: Nicole Terry, playing the proprietor, James Baird, playing Aladdin, Kevin Reece, playing Abu, and Jaimi McCrackin, playing Jasmine.



Beacon photo by Kenneth Books

Cramming the van for kids

Sharing & Caring, Niceville, recently held a "Cram the Van" school supplies drive at the Niceville Walmart. More than 2,000 school supplies were donated, as was about \$200 cash. Supplies will be donated Aug. 11 to area school children in need. For their participation, Sharing & Caring presented a plaque to Walmart. From left: Gloria Price, Tasha Striblin and Lynn Watson.

Weddings

Minott-Jones

Danny and Amy Jones, former Niceville residents, announce the marriage of their son, Scott, to Sierra Minott, daughter of Allen and Chris Minott of Fort Myers, Fla. The wedding, officiated by the Rev. T. J. Kollar, pastor of First Baptist Church Valparaiso, took place at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Fort Myers, Fla., on Saturday, Aug. 4, 2012.

Scott graduated from Niceville High School in 2003, from

Okaloosa-Walton College in 2005, and from the University of Florida in 2008, with a bachelor's degree in communications. Sierra graduated from Fort Myers High School in 2006 and from Palm Beach Atlantic University in 2010, with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Sierra was crowned Miss Florida in 2008 and placed as fourth runner-up in the Miss America pageant in 2009.

The couple resides in Wake Forest, N.C., where they both attend and work for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Scott is pursuing a master's of divinity in Christian ministry and Sierra is pursuing a master's in Christian leadership.



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