

# The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, September 5, 2012

50¢

**UP**  
**COMING**

**Thursday, 1:30 p.m.**



The **Valparaiso Community Library** plans its first Early Release Movie Day of the fall, **"The Pirates: Band of Misfits,"** Snacks and drinks will be provided.

**Thursday, 6:30 p.m.**

The **Choctawhatchee Audubon Society** will feature a presentation on the basics of **bee-keeping** by Niceville native Jeff Dietrich in Room 132 of the Student Services Center (SSC 132) on the Niceville Campus of Northwest Florida State College.

Info: Walt Spence at 582-7064.

**Saturday, 4-5:30 p.m.**

The **League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County** has announced a special informational briefing on the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Emerald Coast, 1295 N. Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

Info: lvvokaloosa.org.

**Sunday, 6:30 p.m.**

**John Rosemond**, syndicated columnist and author of more than 14 best selling parenting books, including his most recent, "Parenting By The Book," will speak at the **Mattie Kelly Art Center**. Tickets are \$25 for general admission or \$45 for VIP seats and reception. Also, a silent auction will be available. For tickets, call 729-6000 or visit mattiekellyartcenter.org/index.cfm.



Calendar, B-2

## One-year term for \$84K tax theft

By Mike Griffith  
*Beacon Correspondent*

A former administrator of the North Bay Fire District was sentenced to nearly a year in the Okaloosa County Jail for stealing more than \$84,000 in taxpayer money from the district. The term was about one-third of what prosecutors had sought.

Ralph Banegas, 60, administrator and bookkeeper for the

fire district, appeared before Circuit Judge John T. Brown Aug. 29 in Fort Walton Beach to be sentenced for taking the money from the fire district over a period from 2006 to 2011. He had previously pleaded no contest to the charge.

Brown also sentenced Banegas to repay \$84,292 to the fire district in monthly

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



After being sentenced to nearly a year in jail for stealing from the North Bay Fire District, Ralph Banegas was fingerprinted by sheriff's deputy in a Fort Walton Beach courtroom.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

## Summer's last splash



Summer closed with a big splash during Labor Day weekend, the season's unofficial end. Clear, hot weather brought many people out to local beaches, such as this one at Valparaiso's Lincoln Park, as well as to picnic grounds, bike trails, and golf courses.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

## Groups want money from city coffers

By Mike Griffith  
*Beacon Correspondent*

The Niceville City Council received funding petitions from local nonprofit organizations.

The council also discussed whether to cut the city's proposed property tax rate.

No action was taken during the meeting Aug. 28.

During the meeting, the council received letters from 10 organizations seeking money, totaling \$22,300, from city taxpayers. The organizations and their requests are:

- Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce: \$5,000
- Okaloosa County Economic Development Council : \$3,000
- Bridgeway Center: \$1,800

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

## BWB delegate sees 'most open' Dem convention

By Mike Griffith  
*Beacon Correspondent*

This year's Democratic National Convention "is the most open convention ever," according to Jerry Mallory, a Bluewater Bay resident who will be among Florida's delegates to the convention this week in Charlotte, N.C.

To ensure such openness, said Mallory, "Fifty percent of the delegates will be female." In addition, he said, delegates from each state have been selected "according to demographics," to ensure proportional representation of races and ethnic groups, including blacks, whites, Hispanics, Native Americans, and gays.

As during the 2004 convention, this year's event will include presenting President

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

# Airman's killer sentenced to life

By Craig Kapitan  
*San Antonio Express-News*

A man who killed a Niceville woman following a purse-snatching in Texas has been found guilty and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Lorenzo Leroy Thompson, 23, faced the death penalty in the April 2010 death of Vanessa Marie Pitts, 25, in San Antonio, if prosecutors had their way.

But the jurors took less than 30 minutes Aug. 21 to reject the death penalty, deciding the killing was not premeditated, a requirement for a death penalty ruling in Texas. Earlier, the jurors had deliberated for only about 2 1/2 hours before finding Thompson guilty of capital murder.

Pitts' parents wept together and embraced as the decision was read



Vanessa Pitts, slain in 2010

aloud by state District Judge Melisa Skinner.

"It's hard to go on without her. What do you do? How do you make up for that?" Charles Pitts testified of his only child as the punishment phase followed. "I don't have any (family) anymore. It's just me and my wife."

Thompson was arrested in April 2010, days after Pitts, an Airman 1st

Class in the Air Force, died of multiple blunt force injuries in San Antonio.

Multiple witnesses, and eventually Thompson himself, said he snatched Pitts' purse at a convenience store and she ran after him, jumping on his stolen pickup in an effort to get the purse back.

**Please see AIRMAN'S, page A-6**

## From horses to houses

### Stables face development

By Del Lessard  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

Niceville officials are studying a proposal to build homes on a tract that is now home to horses.

The Niceville Planning Commission received a proposal from Valparaiso Realty for preliminary approval for a 45-unit residential subdivision on

13.45 acres currently operated as Rocky Bayou Stables on Forest Road at Rocky Bayou Drive.

The only access to the subdivision would be on Forest, across from the Ruckel airstrip. The property is zoned PUD, or planned unit development.

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



These horses will have to find a new home if the city of Niceville approves subdivision-development plans for the 13 acres on which Rocky Bayou Stable currently operates.

Beacon photos by Mike Griffith



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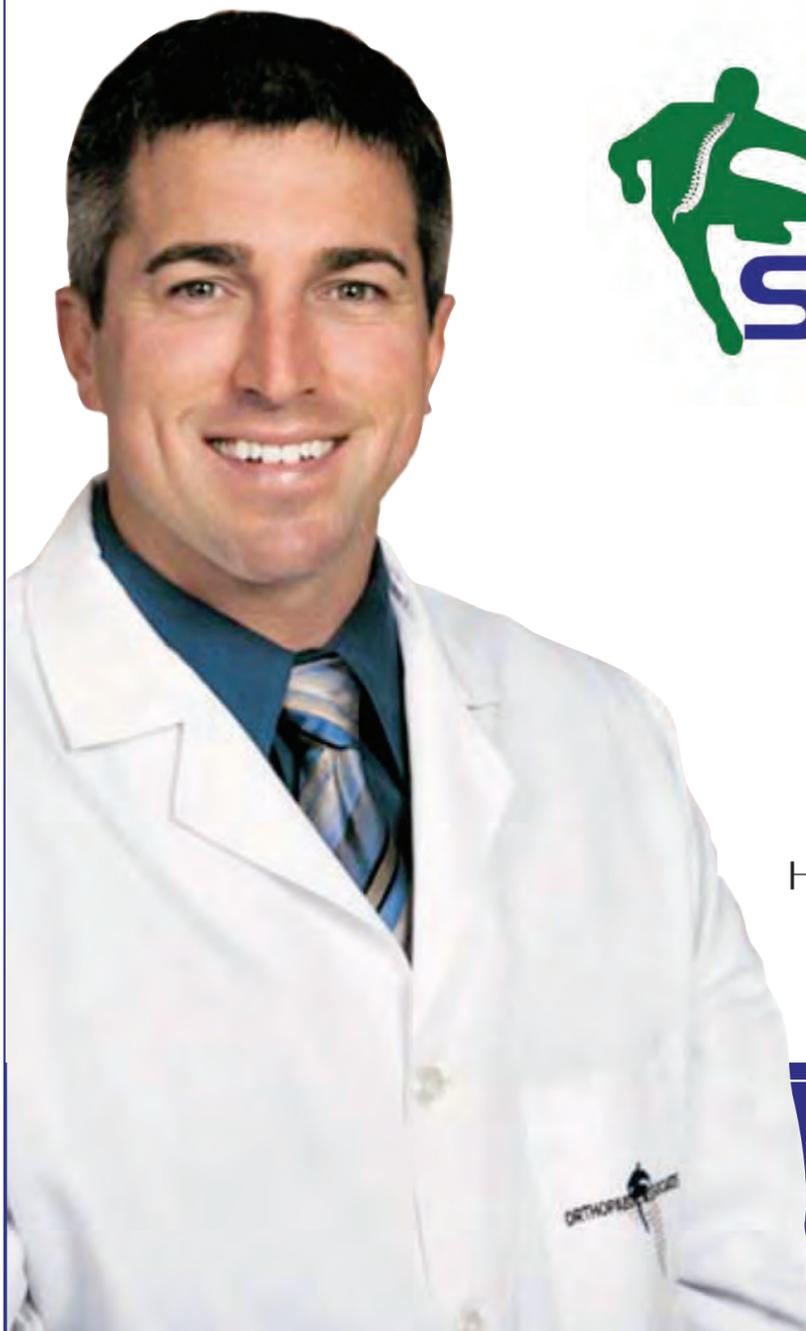
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## Where the money is

A crane belonging to Southern Structures Corporation was used Friday to install a bank vault at the new CCB Community Bank branch being built near John Sims Parkway in Niceville. According to SSC President Edwin Page, the vault will weigh 100,000 pounds, and is being built in blocks of steel-reinforced concrete, which are bolted and welded into position as they are placed one by one.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith



## DELEGATE

From page A-1

Obama's acceptance speech, scheduled for Thursday, the four-day gathering's final day, in a football stadium rather than in the convention hall, allowing for a larger crowd of about 73,000 supporters.

Asked what else viewers should expect to see during the Democratic gathering, Mallory said convention speakers "will give answers to the things said" by Republicans during their convention in Tampa last week, at which they nominated Mitt Romney, former Massachusetts governor, as the GOP presidential candidate.

For example, said Mallory, the Republicans last week "played on unfulfilled promises" by President Obama, but said, "The Republicans are naïve" if they expected all of the promises made



Courtesy photo  
**Jerry Mallory, Bluewater Bay, a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, with Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, party chair, in Charlotte, N.C., site of this week's convention.**

during the last election to be fulfilled by now. "Every candidate makes promises," Mallory said, "including some they cannot keep, and some they never intend to keep."

Democrats will also criticize Romney. Among those speaking at the convention, said Mallory, "There will be people from factories Bain closed," referring to Romney's past leadership of Bain Capital, a company Democrats have characterized as a group of corporate raiders who shut down factories and laid off workers.

Following the Democratic Convention, said Mallory, Northwest Florida Democrats plan to campaign hard in Okaloosa County and other nearby areas, despite knowing that the region is currently dominated by Republicans. If enough Democratic votes can be produced from Northwest Florida, he

said, "We can help put Florida over the top" for the Democrats, with the help of predominately Democratic districts in south Florida. He said he expects Florida's electoral votes will be crucial in this election, as they were in the elections of 2004 and 2000.

Mallory said Democrats plan to "camp out" in Northwest Florida, constantly campaigning and bringing "surrogates" such as retired US Army Gen. Wesley Clark to speak on the president's behalf. Mallory said he also hopes that Michelle Obama, the president's wife, will be able to visit. Mallory said that he is head of the local branch of "Organizing for America" a campaign organization that will "reach out to various community groups," such as pastors of churches likely to support Obama and other Democratic candidates.

## GROUPS

From page A-1

Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services: \$1,000  
Shelter House: \$1,000  
Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra: \$500  
Sharing and Caring: \$4,000  
Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start: \$3,000

In addition, the Senior Citizens Club of Valparaiso asked an unspecified amount of in-kind services. All of the organizations have requested and received varying amounts of help from the city in previous years, and all provide assorted social services to residents of Niceville, which might otherwise have to be provided by the city itself. Each of the organizations provided written requests describing how they would use the funding they sought, except the senior citizens club.

Three of the organizations sent representatives to address the council in person.

Duane Gallagher of the Chamber of Commerce said his group is partnering with other Northwest Florida Chambers in a "Six Pillars" program intended to "put Okaloosa County on the map as an organized entity open to expanding our business presence in the state."

A Bridgeway Center representative spoke about Bridgeway's crisis hotline and rape crisis center, which provides immediate intervention and help to victims.

Jeffrey Rink of the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, affiliated with Northwest Florida State College, told council members about the Symphony's free con-

certs for local elementary school children, many of whom, Rink said, might never hear live classical music except for the concerts provided by his orchestra.

City Clerk Dan Doucet said he had expected more organizational representatives to address the council meeting, but that some of them may have been deterred by bad weather, as the outer bands of Hurricane Isaac pelted Niceville with wind and rain throughout the afternoon and evening.

In other business, Doucet clarified some information presented at a previous budget workshop. He said a \$3.4 million state grant to Niceville discussed during the Aug. 16 budget workshop is a "Florida Forever" grant (not a redevelopment grant) intended to help preserve wild land in an undeveloped state. He said the grant for Niceville is intended to help purchase additional land along Turkey Creek.

City Manager Lannie Corbin said the grant will help Niceville extend the Turkey Creek boardwalk city park to the boundary of Eglin Air Force Base, and possibly add some recreation facilities such as an amphitheater to a section of the park at the former site of a Hardee's restaurant between the creek and John Sims Parkway.

Doucet also said the actual roll-back millage rate for the 2012-13 fiscal year, which will begin Oct. 1, will be 3.6278. At that rate, Doucet said, the city would receive the same property tax revenue as during FY 2011-12.

During the Aug. 16 workshop, Corbin and Doucet had

recommended a millage rate of 3.70 for FY 2012-13, to produce enough revenue to cover expected increases in city government expenses, including health insurance, workers compensation insurance, and state retirement funding for city employees.

At the recommended millage, Niceville property owners would pay \$3.70 in property tax for every \$1,000 of appraised, taxable value of their property after homestead exemptions and other discounts. For example, a Niceville homeowner whose home is appraised at \$200,000 would pay \$740 in property tax, as well as such other taxes as Okaloosa School District property tax.

During the Aug. 28 workshop, several commissioners expressed doubts about hiking the millage rate from its current level of 3.65, at which the above homeowner pays \$730.

"I know you are also asking for increases the city's water and sewer rates," said Councilman Dan Henkel, "but we have difficult and uncertain times ahead. If Eglin is affected by sequestration, we could

see a lot of people laid off. I don't think a tax increase is right at this time. We must live within our means, not on the backs of our citizens."

Corbin replied that despite the requested tax hike, Niceville will remain a leader among Florida cities for the amount of city services it provides at a tax rate below that of most other communities such as Crestview and Fort Walton Beach, and lower than in Valparaiso, "where they have a volunteer fire department and no recreation department."

Councilman Bill Schaetzle asked Corbin and his staff to provide more documentation of how the city is cutting costs. After some further discussion, the council asked Corbin and Doucet to present an alternative budget, showing what services the city could afford and what cutbacks would be required if the city property tax were set at the roll-back rate of 3.62.

Final budget hearings are scheduled for Sept. 4 and 13. The budget hearings are scheduled for 6 p.m. at Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive. For information, call 279-6436.

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# Niceville businessman dies in crash

By Mike Griffith

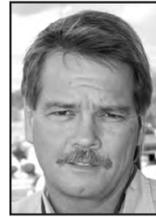
Beacon Correspondent

William Rock Wright, a local businessman, was killed last Wednesday afternoon in a head-on crash on Interstate 85 in Atlanta, according to reports. The crash also killed a man riding in the vehicle that collided with Wright's.

According to Heritage Gardens Funeral Home, Wright was 49.

The Georgia State Patrol declined to make a report of the crash immediately available.

News media reports



Rock Wright

from Atlanta stated that a pickup truck driven by Wright was traveling the wrong way on Interstate 85. A passenger in the other vehicle, identified as Christopher O'Day, 49, of Canastota, N.Y., was

also killed, and its driver was hospitalized.

Wright's funeral has been tentatively scheduled for 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 7, at Heritage Gardens, Niceville, with viewing from 1 to 2 p.m., according to Eric Uher, of the funeral home. Family members could not be reached for comment.

## THEFT

From page A-1

payments of \$750, beginning as soon as he is released from jail. At that rate it would take Banegas a bit more than nine years to make good the money.

Banegas' sentence of 11 months, 29 days in county jail was just shy of a term that would have required him to

serve it in a state prison. He also must serve 10 years' probation and write letters of apology to the fire district and to North Bay Fire Chief Joseph Miller, his former boss, whom he had repeatedly hoodwinked.

Banegas, of Niceville, must also perform 500 hours of community service with an organization other than the Boy Scouts of America, in which he

had been a leader before being arrested for the theft. He was also barred from fire district property.

Banegas spoke briefly before sentencing, expressing remorse and apologizing to his former co-workers at the North Bay Fire District and to his family.

"I sincerely apologize," he said. "I have brought shame to my family, and my actions were totally unacceptable." He also told the judge, "I am anxious to get back into the employment force, so I can do restitution."

During the sentencing hearing prosecutors recommended that Banegas be sentenced to three years in a state prison, saying that although he had no other criminal record and had expressed remorse for his crime, he had systematically betrayed his position of public trust for six years, stealing from the taxpayers of the fire district he served.

Banegas' attorney, however, asked the judge not to send him to jail at all. The lawyer said that except for his one crime, Banegas has always been a model citizen. He served in the Air Force as a senior master sergeant, has been married for over 30 years and raised a family, and was a Scout leader. The lawyer told the judge that Banegas regrets his crime, and is extremely unlikely to ever commit another. "You will

never see him in this court again," the lawyer told the judge.

Chief Miller testified on Banegas' behalf during the sentencing hearing. He said that he and other members of the North Bay Fire District were surprised and disappointed when they learned that a trusted co-worker had stolen from the fire district. "It pretty much devastated us," he said.

However, Miller also said that except for the theft, Banegas had always been an exemplary employee. "I have known and worked with him for 15 years," Miller said, "and he was always an upstanding citizen." Miller said he supported the defense recommendation that Banegas be sentenced to probation, restitution and community service but without any jail or prison time.

According to sheriff's reports, Banegas forged Miller's signature on payroll checks by taking his signature stamp from an unlocked drawer when the chief was out of the office, each time returning it undetected. The swindle was discovered in early January by the district's outside accountant. Banegas was fired Jan. 30 and arrested Feb. 28.

After hearing the statements and testimony and just before pronouncing sentence, Judge Brown spoke to Banegas, saying that in considering what sentence to give, "I have two things competing in my head." In Banegas' favor, he said, were his previous exemplary life and the fact that he had pleaded no contest and "acknowledged your guilt." The fact that Banegas had never been known to commit any other crime "gives me pause," he said.

However, the judge added, "You have acknowledged one wrong, but you actually committed a systematic series of thefts, over and over again, for a period of six years." Brown told Banegas that despite his remorseful words, those words were not matched by his actions. "Your actions were irresponsible and unacceptable," the judge said, "What you did was wrong."

Following the hearing, Chief Miller told the Beacon that Banegas' jail sentence "could have been worse. The state wanted three years."

Despite Banegas' crime, Miller said, he still considers him to be "a good guy, who led the youth of our community."

"He is a good person," Miller said, "who did a bad thing."

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## HORSES

From page A-1

A spokesman for Valparaiso Realty said that Huff Homes would build 45 single-family homes on the tract, if the plan wins the approval of city officials. He said the upscale development would be similar to The Preserve at Swift Creek, off Partin Drive.

Builder Chandler Huff said the single-family homes for the proposed subdivision would be in the 1,900- to 2,400-square-foot range and be priced from about \$325,000 to \$380,000. The development may also have a theme reminiscent of the stables, he said, for example in the fencing.

The operator of the stables could not be reached for comment.

# North Bay seeks steady millage rate

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

North Bay Fire Chief Joe Miller is scheduled to present a new budget in public hearings this month that would keep the district's property tax rate unchanged at 2.35 mills.

At a meeting Aug. 14, the North Bay Fire Commission received a proposed budget from Miller based on the tentative, not-to-exceed, property tax rate of 2.38 mills approved by commissioners last month. That would be an increase of .03 mills in the tax rate.

However, commissioners asked Miller to come back this month with a proposal that would result in no tax-rate increase.

Because the fire district had raised property tax rates the previous three years, commission Chairman Jim Miller asked the chief to present a budget at the first public hearing based on the current millage rate of 2.35 mills. That, the fire chief said, would cut the operation reserve to about \$23,000.

Even at an unchanged millage rate, the district's income would presumably rise because its tax base rose \$1.55 million this year, or about 0.18 percent.

Commissioners voted unanimously to propose a budget based on the existing millage rate of 2.35 mills at the first public hearing on the budget and millage rate set for Sept. 11, 7 p.m., at the fire station, 1024 White Point Road.

The budget and millage rate will get finalized at a second public hearing set for Sept. 19, 7 p.m., at the fire station.

With an assessed valuation of more than \$867 million in the fire district, a 2.38 mills rate would bring in a total of \$1,988,656 in property tax revenue, after accounting for discounts for early payment. Interest and miscellaneous revenue would bring total revenue to \$2,003,256, Miller said.

On the expense side, personnel costs are the district's biggest expense, totaling more than \$1,452,288 in the budget proposed last month.

Other categories of expense in the budget proposed last month include:

- \$116,423 for professional services, such as those of the county's tax collector, property appraiser and medical director, as well as accounting, legal, auditing services as well as professional affiliations.

- \$22,845 for utilities and communications.

- \$39,272 for various insurance expenses.

- \$91,568 for operations and maintenance.

- \$19,000 for training.

- \$36,842 for supplies, including \$16,000 for fuel.

- \$176,800 for operating equipment acquisitions. This included reserves of \$100,000 for future capital items such as a new fire truck and \$50,000 for a fire station building fund.

The fire district no longer carries any debt after making the last payment on its ladder truck earlier this year. The department hopes build the reserve so that it can pay cash for a new fire truck in 2016, avoiding borrowing costs.

The expenses total \$1,955,041, leaving the district

with an operational "reserve" of \$48,214 for unknown contingencies such as unexpected equipment breakdowns or overtime pay caused by serious natural disasters such as a hurricane.

In other business, commissioners approved raises totaling \$27,356 this year to three captains and four supervisors and administrators.

In May, after months of negotiations with the firefighters bargaining unit, fire commissioners gave raises totaling about \$23,813 to the nine firefighters, retroactive to Oct. 1. Over three years the firefighter pay hikes are expected to cost the district a little over \$101,000.

A decision on pay increases for the department's three captains was delayed until last month because the captains sought, and were granted permis-

sion, to form their own supervisory bargaining unit under the union local.

Chief Miller told commissioners that the proposed raises for the three captains mirrored the longevity pay hike given to firefighters, and would total \$10,153 this year, retroactive to Oct. 1. Commissioners approved the proposed hike which will cost the district a total of about \$39,450 over three years.

Captains in the department, with the new pay hike, now earn between \$52,578 and \$62,078, depending on the number of years in the department.

Chief Miller also proposed two options for pay raises for him and his staff—7 or 10 percent—adding that there was money in the budget for the raises. He said the proposed pay hikes for himself and his two other chief offi-

cers, would provide a differential between senior captains and the chief officers, and would be more in line with salaries paid to supervisory firefighters at similar fire departments in the area.

Commissioners elected to give the three chief officers, and the administrative assistant, the 7 percent pay hike, retroactive to Oct. 1, 2011, a total of \$17,202 the budget year now ending. With the new raise Chief Miller's salary jumps to \$85,218, up \$5,575. He has worked for the department nearly 23 years, more than seven as the fire chief.

Chairman Miller asked the fire chief to come back to the board at a later time with proposed pay ranges for all four supervisory and administrative personnel, based on experience and pay scales for similar positions in the community.



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AIRMAN'S

From page A-1

The defendant then sped away, swerving in an effort to throw her off, and when that didn't work, aimed his truck at another vehicle in an effort to "scrape" her off, prosecutors David Lunan and Tim Molina said during closing arguments.

"She wasn't going to be victimized. But he ... made her a victim anyway," Lunan told jurors.

Thompson showed a lack of intent that day by avoiding other cars before hitting the truck that resulted in Pitts flying off his vehicle, his attorney, Joseph Esparza, said.

Defense attorneys blamed the death on two things they said were out of their client's control—Pitts taking the initiative to jump on Thompson's truck and the motorist he hit stopping in the middle of the road.

"Nothing happens to hurt her in any way until (the other

motorist) stops her vehicle in the roadway completely," Esparza said. "You don't have the evidence that he wanted her to die."

But prosecutors pointed to witness testimony that no one was in Thompson's lane of traffic or the lane next to him. He seemed to swerve intentionally into the other vehicle, they contended.

"Actions speak louder than words. He's going back and forth, abrupt turns, and she's swinging off the side of this car," Lunan said.

Pitts' parents described the Niceville airman as a shy person who had recently come out of her shell after completing Air Force basic training. She had worked two jobs while attending college and was thinking about getting engaged, they said.

"Today is a most happy day for her because justice has been served," Maria Elys Pitts, her mother, testified as her voice quavered. "Thank you God and you (jurors)."

Reprinted by permission.



Lorenzo Leroy Thompson, killer of Vanessa Pitts, Niceville, being led away from a San Antonio, Texas, courtroom after hearing a life sentenced pronounced.

San Antonio Express-News

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Advertisement for Palm Eye Care, featuring eye exams, contact lenses, and medical services. Contact: 850-279-4361.

Advertisement for The Boat House Landing Restaurant, featuring waterfront dining, seafood, and pasta. Contact: 678-2805.

Advertisement for Niceville Hearing Center, featuring hearing aids and professional services. Contact: 850-678-3277.

Advertisement for Emerald Coast Family Medicine, featuring internal medicine, pediatrics, and preventive care. Contact: 729-3300.

Advertisement for The Beacon by mail, offering weekly mail delivery of local news. Includes subscription form.

One Hour Air Conditioning & Heating
Niceville: the best place to raise a family and grow a business

Advertising Feature
After serving as an active duty Air Force A/C Specialist, the owner of One Hour Air, Lenny Siers, transitioned from his military uniform to the professional white shirt/black pants uniform, each field team member proudly wears today.

When starting the company in 1995, Lenny chose Niceville as the place to call home, and base his then one-truck service company.

"Niceville should not only be recognized as one of the best places to raise a family and live," Siers said, "it should also be recognized as a very business-friendly, centrally located city, where I am proud to base our operation that services both Okaloosa and Walton counties."

One Hour Air provides the local area with prompt and professional air conditioning and heating repair service, along with preventive maintenances and tune-ups. Since its opening 1995, the company has grown into one of the area's largest providers of residential "on time" service.

This year, One Hour Air added two additional service vehicles to its fleet of 30 and hired eight new team members. "That's so we can



One Hour Air Conditioning will "always be on time, or you don't pay a dime."

keep up with the demand that our area requires as Okaloosa and Walton counties grow. We also relocated to a larger 13,000 square foot facility in 2011 that has the space to grow our opera-

Advertisement for One Hour Air Conditioning & Heating, featuring indoor air quality solutions, 24/7 service, and free estimates. Contact: 389-4611.

tion as our great community increases in population and homes," Siers noted.

One Hour Air offers products and services for homeowners' A/C and heating needs, as well as plumbing, attic ductwork, attic insulation products and services. Its Comfort Club Program

"Our goal is to be the most recognized and referred provider of professional, punctual service in Northwest Florida."

peace of mind for a minimal cost. Membership also has rewards like priority service and reduced repair rates.

One Hour recently added the Filter Club Program. This allows its technicians to help clients manage the difficult task of finding and receiving delivery of their home comfort systems' filtration needs.

Benjamin Franklin Plumbing provides a Ben Society Program, which is an annual inspection on clients' home plumbing systems. This helps prevent possible water quality problems along with potential breakdown and performance issues. As with the Comfort Club, Ben's Society members receive priority service and reduced repair rates.

"We want to become your service company, and to take care of your homes comfort system and plumbing needs. "Our goal is to be the most recognized and referred provider of professional, punctual service in Northwest Florida," Siers stated.

One Hour Air Conditioning and Heating and Ben Franklin Plumbing are located at 319 & 321 Hwy 85, Niceville. Call 389-4611 for your appointment today.

Advertisement for Kiwanis Club, featuring a flag-raising service for \$35 a year. Contact: 897-4396.

Advertisement for Bluewater Bay Dental, featuring family & cosmetic dentistry, accepting new patients. Contact: 897-4488.

Advertisement for Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair, featuring brake and water pump services. Contact: (850) 729-6629.

Advertisement for Walk to End Alzheimer's, featuring a fundraising event on October 6. Contact: 1.800.272.3900.

Advertisement for All Around the Town, featuring a promotional offer for military papers at half price. Contact: 678-1080.

Advertisement for Rhino Shield, featuring a 10% off coupon for Rhino Shield paint. Contact: (850) 424-6829.

## Niceville duo to compete for state title

### Winner of January pageant goes to nationals in Mobile

By Kenneth Books  
Beacon Staff Writer

Three young women from Niceville made quite an impression in the Okaloosa County Distinguished Young Women contest, held Aug. 11 at Niceville High School. So much so that two of them will go to the Florida state contest in January in Winter Garden. If one wins the state title, she will compete for national recognition next June in Mobile, Ala.

Arden Robertson, 16, is the Okaloosa County Distinguished Young Woman. Ronette Kortbein, 17, is the Distinguished Young Woman of the Emerald Coast.

While Madeline Kirkpatrick, 17, won't participate in the state contest, she finished as runner-up in the talent category, singing the Natalie Cole version of "Orange Colored Sky," and, more importantly, she and the other two girls became fast friends.

Arden is a senior at Collegiate High School, while Ronette and Madeline are seniors at Niceville High School.

For her win, Arden received \$4,100 in scholarship money, while Ronette got \$2,500. She also has a full ride to Troy University "if I decide to accept it." Madeline received \$1,000 for college.

Arden hopes to attend Florida

State University to study accounting, while both Madeline and Ronette are looking at Auburn, although Ronette may end up at Florida State "because they have a good match program and I want to be a teacher." Madeline hopes eventually to become a veterinarian.

Eleven girls competed in the contest, which evolved from the Junior Miss contest last held locally in 2004.

"They were all so well-rounded," Arden said. "I am so blessed and honored to receive the award. But it was such a close competition. All 11 girls, Miss Carole (Byrd, the Okaloosa County Coordinator) said were just a fraction apart. So we were all well-rounded girls."

The contest was scored on the basis of scholastics, 20 percent, interview, 25 percent, talent, 25 percent, self-expression, 15 percent, and fitness, 15 percent.

Before the overall county winner was announced, Ronette said, awards were presented in each category. Arden won the interview category and was first runner-up for fitness. She also won the "spirit award," which carried no weight in the scoring. Ronette won the talent portion, singing "Art is Calling For Me," from the opera "The Enchantress." Arden performed a contemporary dance to the Christian song, "The Voice of Truth."



Okaloosa County's Distinguished Young Women are, from left, Madeline Kirkpatrick, Arden Robertson and Ronette Kortbein. Robertson is a senior at Collegiate High School and Kirkpatrick and Kortbein are seniors at Niceville High School.

Although she didn't win a spot in the state competition, Madeline said she gained a great deal from participating.

"I'm really glad I decided to do it," she said. "I called up Miss Carole and she explained how fun it was. It was really fun—more fun than I thought it would be. I feel like it brings you a little

bit of recognition."

Arden agreed. "I would love to share that Distinguished Young Women has opened up so many doors for me," she said. "I really want to give so much credit to Miss Carole for bringing it back."

Ronette made it unanimous. "This program has been so wonderful for me personally," she said of the Distinguished Young Women pageant, "because it helped me develop leadership skills. I'm generally a pretty shy person, but it helped me to break out of my shell.

"I would love to encourage (other girls) not to be afraid to do something like this. I wasn't really sure about it when I thought of doing it, but I'd really like to encourage people to do it."

Madeline admitted that "at first glance, it may seem kind of daunting." But Arden pointed out a fringe benefit of participating.

"The first meeting we went to was in March," she said. "We put our names in a hat and were paired up with a girl to meet. The first girl I met was Madeline and now all three of us are best of friends."

### Who's News

**Robert Love** of Niceville recently graduated with a master of arts in teaching degree from Southern Arkansas University. Love was among 87 undergraduate and graduate students receiving degrees during commencement exercises Friday, Aug. 3.

\*\*\*

Rocky Bayou Christian Academy Class of 2012 graduates

**William Hudson and Joshua Turner**

have earned the designation of AP Scholar with Distinction by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program Exams. To be qualified for this award, students must receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and



William Hudson



Joshua Turner



Josiah Balthazar

Please see WHO'S, page B-2

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Flu season is approaching rapidly. You better be prepared! Join us to learn tips and tactics for a flu-free season when Wendy Borcyk, RN, BSN, MPH, discusses the flu vaccination and tips for a quick recovery.

**Don't Skip A Beat**  
Friday, September 14, 11:30 am-1:00 pm  
Twin Cities Hospital Wellness Center

What is a heart attack? Join us to learn about early detection, prevention and warning signs of a heart attack.

**Seniors vs. Crime**  
Wednesday, October 10, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Twin Cities Hospital Wellness Center

JB Whitten from the Okaloosa County Seniors vs. Crime office will discuss tips and tactics to teach Seniors how to avoid becoming the victims of theft and fraud.

**Put Your Best Foot Forward**  
Friday, October 26, 11:30 am—1:00 pm  
Twin Cities Hospital Wellness Center

Meet Dr. Thomas Fusco and explore treatment and surgery options for your aching feet.

**Reservations required, call 850.729.9463**  
Complimentary lunch provided.





**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 [jnjkam@gmail.com](mailto:jnjkam@gmail.com) for registration forms, or pick one up at the Valparaiso Community Library. No experience necessary. Info: [marieharrison@valp.net](mailto:marieharrison@valp.net).



**Arts and crafts show**

The fourth annual Fall Flair Arts & Crafts Show, sponsored by the Destin United Methodist Women, will take place Friday, Sept. 7, 9 a.m.-5:00 p.m., and Saturday, Sept. 8, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Destin Life Center, 200 Beach Drive, Destin. Vendors will display and sell their works. A bake sale will offer a variety of homemade goodies for purchase. Enjoy lunch at the Soul Cafe. All proceeds benefit Church missions. Info: [fallflair2012@aol.com](mailto:fallflair2012@aol.com)

**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.html](http://nicevilleumc.org/women/bazaar.html) 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](mailto:jimgirl@cox.net), or [nicevalrotary@yahoo.com](mailto:nicevalrotary@yahoo.com). Safe boating class

**Audubon beekeeping meeting**

The next meeting of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society will be held Thursday, Sept. 6, and will feature a presentation on the

basics of beekeeping by Niceville native Jeff Dietrich. Jeff is in the fifth year of a master's in beekeeping certification through the University of West Florida. His bees produce honey from a variety of local wildflowers, and samples will be available.

This meeting will be held in Room 132 of the Student Services Center (SSC 132) on the Niceville Campus of Northwest Florida State College at 6:30 p.m., for socializing and refreshments, and the program at 7 p.m. The meeting is free and open to all who have an interest in birds and nature. For more information, please call Walt Spence at 582-7064.

**Library movie day**

The Valparaiso Community Library plans its first Early Release Movie Day of the fall. "The Pirates: Band of Misfits," Sept. 6, 1:30 p.m. Snacks and drinks will be provided.

**Schoolhouse marks 100th**

Camp Walton Schoolhouse aficionados will celebrate the building's 100 years on Saturday, Sept. 8, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Everyone is invited for an old-fashioned party with decorations, cake and ice cream. The theme of the day is the time period the schoolhouse functioned as a school: 1912-1936. Meet Fort Walton Beach's founding families whose ancestors attended the school and learn about the past. Enjoy these activities and displays throughout the day:

- Live music and games such as 3-legged races;
- Educational exhibits on inventions, toys, and newspaper headlines from 1912-1936;
- Antique cars on Heritage Park grounds;
- Old-fashioned photo opportunities;
- Shopping for schoolhouse related items, including a new Christmas ornament.

Admission to all museums at



**Child care expert to speak**

John Rosemond, syndicated columnist and author of more than 14 best selling parenting books, including his most recent, "Parenting By The Book," is coming back to Niceville after 10 years Sunday, Sept. 9, 6:30 p.m., at the Mattie Kelly Art Center. Tickets are \$25 for general admission or \$45 for VIP seats and reception. Also, a silent auction will be available. To for tickets, call 729-6000 or visit [mattiekellyartscenter.org/index.cfm](http://mattiekellyartscenter.org/index.cfm).

Heritage Park and Cultural Center will be free that day.

**3rd annual "Holly" day 5K run**

The third annual "Holly" day 5K fun run is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 8, starting at the east pavilion at James Lee Park by the Crab Trap Restaurant, in Destin. Early registration is available for \$25 at [active.com](http://active.com). Registration will also be available the day of the race for \$30. Call Maria at 225-1648 or Cathy at 582-0806 for more info. Proceeds will benefit Shred Out Cancer, a nonprofit organization in memory of local teen, Holly Burke. Runners will receive a T-shirt and goodie bag.

Trophies will be awarded, and a YOLO board and other prizes will be raffled.

**JobsPlus seminar**

The Fort Walton Beach Public Library will host Larry Tipton from JobsPlus Saturday, Sept. 8, 1 p.m., for a job resource and resume writing seminar. This is a free seminar and no sign up is required. Info: 833-9590 or [fwb.org/library](http://fwb.org/library).

The Fort Walton Beach Library is located at 185 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach. Parking is located on First Street SE to the North and Ferry Road SE to the East.

**"Obamacare" briefing**

The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County has announced a special informational briefing on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 8, 4-5:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Emerald Coast, 1295 N. Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso.

The meeting is free and open to the public, and will provide a great opportunity for citizens to get answers to their questions about how "Obamacare" will affect them. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, visit [lwvokaloosa.org](http://lwvokaloosa.org).

**'Kids' Voice of Alzheimer's'**

Sterling House Bluewater Bay and Maryann Makekay with Hope Matters will join forces Sept. 9, 12:30-5:30 p.m., for the inaugural "Kids' Voice of Alzheimer's" event, which will focus on helping children who have loved ones affected by dementia or Alzheimer's disease, cope and understand memory loss in developmentally appropriate terms. Admission is free. Info or to RSVP: Tami Miles, 729-3323.

**Blood drive for 1st responders**

Northwest Florida Blood Services will be at Sterling House, Bluewater Bay, Sept. 10, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., for a 9/11 commemorative blood drive in honor of first responders for Patriots Day. Wear red white and blue and stay for refreshments.

**DAR to meet in FWB**

Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will meet at

the First Presbyterian Church, 134 Beal Parkway SW, Fort Walton Beach, at 10 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 13. Paul Lux, Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections, will speak on voting and the Constitution. DAR is open to all women who are lineally descended from a Revolutionary War patriot. Following the meeting a genealogy lecture will be given by Richard Ferman at 1 p.m. and is open to the public. Info: 496-7056

**Fisher House golf tourney**  
The annual Fairways for the Fisher House Golf Tournament will be Sept. 13, at 1:30 p.m., with a shotgun start at Kelly Plantation. The gala event will take place Sept. 14, from 6-9 p.m. at Eglin Air Force Base Bay View Club with dinner, entertainment and a silent auction. Gala tickets may be purchased in advance for \$50. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast. Info: [fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org](http://fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org), or 259-4956. Several sponsorship levels are available.

**Friends set book sale**

The Friends of the Niceville Library annual book sale will take place at Niceville Community Center, adjacent to the library, Sept. 14, 4-6 p.m., for Friends only, and 15, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., for the general public. Saturday's event will include a bake sale. Info: 729-4090.

**Vocalist auditions**

The Northwest Florida State College Schola Cantorum (School of Singing) will hold vocalist auditions Monday, Sept. 10 and 17 in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center on the Niceville campus. Experienced singers and good readers of music are encouraged to audition. The Schola Cantorum performs three to five concerts each semester in local venues. The group does music from all periods of composition from early to modern. This semester, the group will prepare a concert of Christmas music for December concerts. Much of the music is performed a capella. Schola Cantorum is directed by Music Faculty and Symphony Conductor Emeritus, John Leatherwood. He may be contacted at 830-2062 for additional information.

**Braille training**

No experience with braille or the blind is necessary. Some computer skills and access to your own home computer are necessary to participate.

**Braille training**

The Northwest Florida Visionnaires, Inc. will present a free Library of Congress Braille Transcription Certification Class to teach the skills to transcribe textbooks for the blind children of Florida Sept. 17 through April, Mondays 10 a.m.-noon (except holidays), Room 912, First United Methodist Church Community Life Center, Niceville.

No experience with braille or the blind is necessary. Some computer skills and access to your own home computer are necessary to participate.

**WHO'S**

From page B-1 scores of 3 or higher on 5 or more exams.

Class of 2012 graduates  
**Josiah Balthazar, Neely**



Neely Fawaz

Fawaz, and Wendy Kent have earned the designation of AP Scholar. To be qualified for this award, a student must receive grades of 3 or higher on 3 or more AP Exams.



Wendy Kent

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### Girl Scouts hold sock hop for charity

The Twin Cities Girl Scouts Service Unit held a sock hop for all Girl Scouts, kindergarten through 12th grade, in Niceville and Valparaiso Saturday, Aug. 25 at First United Methodist Church. They learned the stroll and the hand jive, hula hooped and did the limbo and had fun dancing in their socks. Coke and root beer floats were served to help the girls cool off the '50s way. The Scouts also collected 153 pair of socks for Children in Crisis.



### Boy Scouts earn 72 merit badges

Troop 52 of Valparaiso recently held a Court of Honor to recognize its Scouts' achievements. Scouts earned 17 ranks, 72 merit badges and 31 special awards through summer camp and troop events. They've had fun zip lining, kayaking, canoeing, climbing, blacksmithing and more. The troop meets most Mondays at New Hope Church in Valparaiso. Call 678-8014 for information or to arrange a visit.



### 96 years and counting

Marlin Griffin celebrates his 96th birthday with Ray Ditrro at Sandy & Ray Realty LLC, Bluewater Bay. Marlin displayed an array of his illustrations and artwork at the Friday, Aug. 17, party. More than 100 friends attended to wish him a happy birthday.



### Bass gives to Scouts

Gary Feduccia, promotions department at Destin Bass Pro shops, presents a check for \$812 to Billy Egan, district field director for the Boy Scouts of America, Gulf Coast Council. The check represented 50 percent of total donations taken by Bass Pro Shops during the Boy Scout month of June. The other 50 percent went to the national BSA headquarters.

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# Eagles top East Gadsden in grid opener, 51-17



Beacon photos by Sarah Clouston

Niceville High School's Dylan Estep evades East Gadsden defenders Friday during the Eagles' 51-17 victory at home.

By Sarah Clouston  
*Beacon Correspondent*

The Niceville Eagles followed up their high-scoring win in the Kick Off Classic with a 51-17 victory over East Gadsden Friday night. The season opener previewed a well-prepared, strong and cohesive team that looks to yet again be a fierce competitor in the District 2-6A lineup, and possibly beyond.

The Jaguars took an early but short-lived lead with a field goal in the first quarter, but the Eagles took possession and running back Shi Kim Coward quickly set the tone with strong runs and a touchdown to take the lead, which they never surrendered.

The offense, led by senior quarterback Andrew Mitchell, continued to move with speed and deliberation, making it easy to forget that this was just the Eagles' season opener. The defense also applied steady pressure, and took advantage of its competitor's missteps with

Please see EAGLES, page B-5



Senior Denzel Applewhite throws an East Gadsden running back for a loss Friday.

## Spearfishing tourney set

The second annual Gulf Coast Reef Hunter Spearfishing Tournament, sponsored by Discovery Dive World, is scheduled for Sept. 22 at the North Light Marina dock. A mandatory captains' meeting is planned for Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. at Discovery Dive World, 92 S. John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso.

Participants can start shooting upon sufficient light. Weigh-ins will be allowed from noon until 4 p.m. Awards and trophy presentations will be conducted after 5 p.m. at the North Light Marina Dockside Cafe.

Team competition registration is \$90 per team; registration within two days of the tournament is \$100. Team members can compete in the individual competition as well for an additional \$45 per person.

Individual competition registration is \$45; junior individual competition registration is \$40. Registration within two days of the tournament is \$45.

Registration forms and release and waiver forms are available online at [discoverydiveworld.com](http://discoverydiveworld.com) or at Discovery Dive World.



## Rocky falls in opener to Jay, 67-21

Rocky Bayou Christian School wide receiver Josh Preston uses his height advantage and great hands to pull down a pass for a first down Friday in a home game against John Jay High School. The Knights fell, 67-21, in the game.

Beacon photo by Norman Wolf

## Golf tourney set for two charities

The Emerald Coast Association of Realtors plans the first Toys for Tots golf outing and Homes for Our Troops silent auction, saluting Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. John Hayes. The tournament and auction will be held at the Eglin Air Force Base golf course Monday, Oct. 1.

The goal is to raise funds and collect toys for the Emerald Coast Toys for Tots, which supports more than 35 Okaloosa and Walton County charities with children ranging in age from 0 to 16 and to raise funds for the Homes for Our Troops project which is currently raising money to build a home for Hayes.

In 2010, Hayes was on his

fourth deployment when he lost both of his legs and suffered life-threatening injuries after stepping on an IED in Sangin, Afghanistan.

The tournament shotgun tee-off/scramble time is noon and play will be limited to the first 120 players (30 teams). Lunch is planned for 11:30 a.m., as well as refreshments, carts, goodie bags, door prizes, awards, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. The cost is \$75 per player with all proceeds going to both charities.

For more information on golf sponsorship or to contribute prizes or other donations, contact Susan Rood at 855-7411 or [emeraldcoasttoysfortots@gmail.com](mailto:emeraldcoasttoysfortots@gmail.com).



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**EAGLES**

From page B-4

An interception by senior defensive back Demetrius Davis and a couple of fumble recoveries.

The Eagles' special teams also impressed. After a Niceville punt and a blunder

by the East Gadsden receiver, sophomore Drew Frederic got his hands on the ball and gave possession back to the Eagles. The special teams started the second half with an onside kick that proved successful and gave the Eagles the ball on the 34-yard line.

During halftime, Taylor Haugen, who lost his life four years ago after an injury on the football field, was respectfully remembered and honored by the retiring of his jersey number. Number 80 will forever represent him, and the incredible impact he had on the

school and the community. The dedication paid tribute to Haugen and emphasized his commitment to faith, Family, friends and Niceville High School. The special ceremony concluded with Haugen's motto, "Don't quit, never give up," which the Eagle football

team has embraced wholeheartedly.

After the evening's exciting victory, head coach John Hicks spoke highly of both teams.

"I thought they were a pretty good team and we handled them pretty good, so I'm encouraged by that," said

Hicks. "I thought we played well overall—certainly something to build on." The victory, which marked Hicks' 100th win, began the Eagles' defense of their district title. This Friday they face off against Pace High School at 7 at the Eagle Stadium.

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**In the Service**

Cadet Sarah Rosa Gold, daughter of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Allan Gold of Niceville, completed Cadet Basic Training at the U.S. Military Academy.

Gold entered West Point July 2 and has successfully completed six weeks of CBT. CBT is one of the most challenging events a cadet will encounter over the

course of their four years at the academy.

The initial military training program provides cadets with basic skills to instill discipline, pride, cohesion, confidence and a high sense of duty to prepare them for entry into the Corps of Cadets. Areas of summer instruction



Cadet Sarah Rosa Gold

included first aid, mountaineering, hand grenades, rifle marksmanship and nuclear, biological, and chemical training.

Gold began classes Aug. 20. The West Point curriculum offers 37 majors balancing physical sciences and engineering with humanities and social sciences leading to a Bachelor of Science degree.

Gold graduated from Niceville High School. She plans to graduate from West Point in 2016 and be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

**Engagement**

Mark and Martha Woolsey announce the engagement of their son, McClain Woolsey, to Jenni Watkins.

McClain is a 2000 graduate of Niceville High School and a 2006 graduate of the University of Central Florida. He earned his doctorate in dental surgery from the University of

Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry in May 2012. In July 2012, McClain began a Periodontics residency in Kansas City.

Jenni is a 2003 graduate of Princeton High School in Princeton, Mo., and a 2007 graduate of the University of Central Missouri with a degree in marketing. She is currently living in Kansas City, Mo., and working as a sales representative for AMC Theaters.

The wedding will be held at the Sunset Beach Clubhouse in Niceville Oct. 20, 2012.



Jenni Watkins and McClain Woolsey.



**Destin UMC helps Children in Crisis**

The Destin United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School recently presented Children in Crisis a check for \$480 to help provide a home and care to the abused, neglected and abandoned children of our community. The donation was a gift from the children's classes to make a difference in the lives of children in need. From left: Ken Hair, CIC President CEO; and Destin United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School teachers Judy Wiseman, Kim Hellen and Dana Chandle.



**Top shot**

Bonnie Hutton of Niceville resident won first place in the Nature/Landscape Division of the Arts and Design Society's 13th annual Photography and Digital Arts Exhibition. Her winning entry, "Fleeing the Unknown," was taken when she was on photo safari in Tanzania.

**NHS class of '82 donates to fund**

The Taylor Haugen Foundation (THF) received a \$1,680 check from the Niceville High School Class of 1982, Alumni & Friends, on Aug. 23. Taylor Haugen, 15, died in pursuit of his passion for football.

The THF provides scholarships, grants and awards the Taylor Haugen Trophy to students who emulate Taylor's devotion to faith, family, friends, academics, sports and, most importantly, his mantra of "Don't Quit—Never Give Up."

The Foundation also provides funding to athletic teams, schools and districts through its YESS (Youth Equipment for Sports Safety) and evoSheild rib-shirts.

To learn more about Taylor and to donate, go to taylorhaugen.org.



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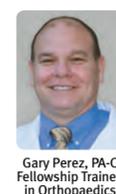
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