

The Bay Beacon

12 Pages, 2 Sections, 7 Inserts

Wednesday, September 19, 2012

50¢

Commissioner charged with lying about income Campbell arrested, stripped of office

By Kenneth Books
Beacon Staff Writer

Okaloosa County Commissioner James Campbell was suspended from office by Gov. Rick Scott hours after Campbell was arrested Monday

on charges of official misconduct and perjury.

The arrest resulted from an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement into Campbell's alleged failure to report \$12,750 in finder's fees he had received for securing spon-

sors for the Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival, which is held every October in Niceville.

Campbell, 64, of Niceville was booked into Okaloosa County Jail. He posted \$24,000 bond and was released at 7 p.m. the day of his arrest.

If convicted on all counts, according to State Attorney Bill Eddins, who will prosecute the case, Campbell faces as



James Campbell

Officials react, A-4.

much as five years' imprisonment and a \$2,500 fine on each of four felony counts of misconduct in office and one year and a \$1,000 fine on each of four misdemeanor charges of perjury. Conviction for official misconduct can also

result in forfeiture of a state pension.

Campbell declined to comment Tuesday. "They won't let me," he said. "They've already done the investigation and we'll go from there."

According to an FDLE arrest affidavit, in 2005, Campbell received two undisclosed

Please see CAMPBELL, page A-4

UP COMING

Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.

The **Genealogy History Class** at the **Valparaiso Community Library** will have a special program to explore the basics of genetic inheritance. Free.

Info: 729-5406.

Wed.-Fri., 7 p.m.

The **Living Word Worship Center**, 40 S. John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso, invites the community to its annual Revival services. The guest speaker will be Pastor Alvin Smith of **Sonlight Covenant Ministries** and a native of Crestview.



Info: 678-7632 or

Friday, 11 a.m.

Science Friday seminar series hosted by the Sciences Division at Northwest Florida State College will continue its series on "Infectious Diseases" in the Robert E. Greene, Jr. Science building on the Niceville campus,

in the main lecture hall, room S-110. Featured will be Kathryn Doornbos, who will discuss "The Secret Life of Ticks: Blood, Bacteria and Beyond."

Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon

The **League of Women Voters** of Okaloosa County will sponsor a panel discussion on campaign financing in the **Niceville City Council** chambers, 208 N. Partin Drive, Niceville.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

Calendar, B-3

New pastures eyed for horses



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Sharon Burke, owner of Rocky Bayou Stables, with horses Lennox, left, and Jellybean Joe. The stables' animals will have to move from the site at Forest Road and Rocky Bayou Drive, Niceville, when a proposed housing development comes to fruition.

Subdivision plans would close Niceville stable

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Despite plans to build a housing development in Niceville at the current site of Rocky Bayou Stables near Forest Road and Rocky Bayou Boulevard, just west of Ruckel Airport, the horses, donkeys, goats, and other animals at the stables will not become homeless, according to stables operator Sharon Burke.

Although Niceville city officials are considering a proposal from Valparaiso

Realty to convert the present riding school and boarding stables to a 35-unit residential subdivision, stable operator Sharon Burke said she is not worried about the possibility of having to move her business and her horses.

First of all, said Burke, she has not yet received any notification to vacate the property from her landlord, Valparaiso Realty, and does not expect such in the near future.

She told the Beacon that it takes time to plan, finance, and prepare for a

big housing development, and that actual construction or clearing of the land is unlikely to begin any time soon. Meanwhile, she said, Valparaiso Realty, which submitted the housing-development plans last month, has helped make repairs and improvements to the stables, indicating that they expect things to remain as they are for the present. "They have been really easy to work with," said Burke.

Whenever it does become necessary

Please see STABLES, page A-4

MSBU panel asserts secrecy in disputed contract bids

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Elected members of the Bluewater Bay Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU) postponed a decision on selecting a landscape contractor for the coming fiscal year, after one of the bidders for the contract objected to the selection process.

MSBU board members turned down a request from the Bay Beacon for a copy of a report from a two-member study committee that met privately concerning the selection of a landscape contractor.

The board also discussed sidewalk construc-

Please see MSBU, page A-3

Niceville sees years of hikes in rates for water, sewer

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Over objections by some residents, the Niceville City Council Thursday gave final approval to rate hikes for water, sewer, and trash pickups. The council also gave tentative approval to a millage increase from 3.65 to 3.70, and to the city's proposed general fund budget of \$13,737,670, and a water and sewer budget of \$13,564,090 for fiscal year 2012-13.

Please see HIKES, page A-5

Valp. boosts taxes, pay for employees

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

The Valparaiso City Commission is scheduled to give final approval Monday to the city's budget and millage rate for Fiscal Year 2012-13, including a property tax increase from the current millage rate of 4.0644 to 4.524.

City workers would get a 2-percent pay raise under the spending plan.

The budget, which was tentatively approved at a meeting Sept. 4, would be \$6,862,613, of which \$795,228 will come from ad valorem property taxes, with the rest

Please see VALP., page A-3

North Bay panel aims to hold line on millage

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Tonight will be the last chance for residents of the North Bay Fire District to ask questions or offer comments before the fire district's budget and property tax rate are given final approval. The North Bay Fire district provides primary fire protection, emergency medical and accident responses to Bluewater Bay and other communities west of Rocky Bayou and east of the Walton County line.

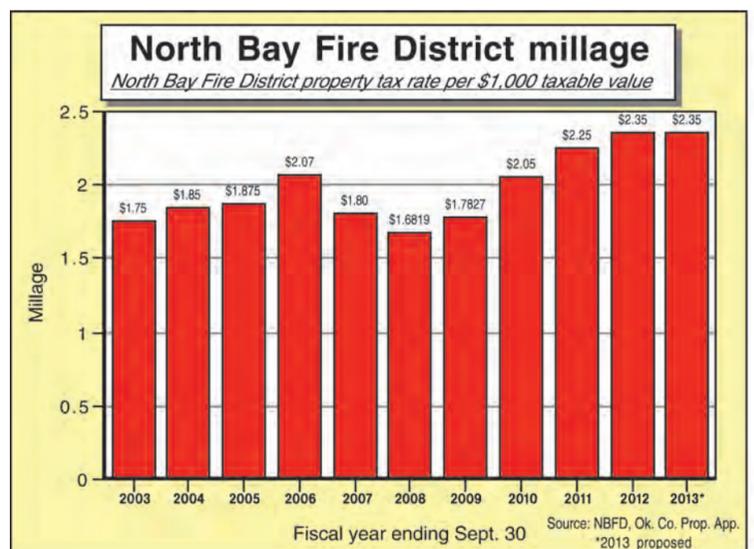
During their public budget and tax hearing, held Sept. 11, North Bay fire commissioners tentatively approved a budget of \$1,954,520 for Fiscal Year 2012-13, which begins Oct. 1. The proposed budget is \$9,211.95, slightly lower than that of the current year.

The fire commission also tentatively approved a property tax millage rate of 2.35, the same as for the current fiscal year, and slightly below the "rollback" millage rate of 2.3585, the rate at which the

same amount of property tax revenue would be produced as during the current year.

At a millage rate of 2.35, property owners in the North Bay Fire District pay \$2.35 in property tax for every \$1,000 of appraised taxable value of their property, after homestead exemptions and other discounts. For example, the owner of a house appraised at \$200,000 would pay \$470 in property tax to the North Bay Fire District, in addition to

Please see NORTH BAY, page A-6



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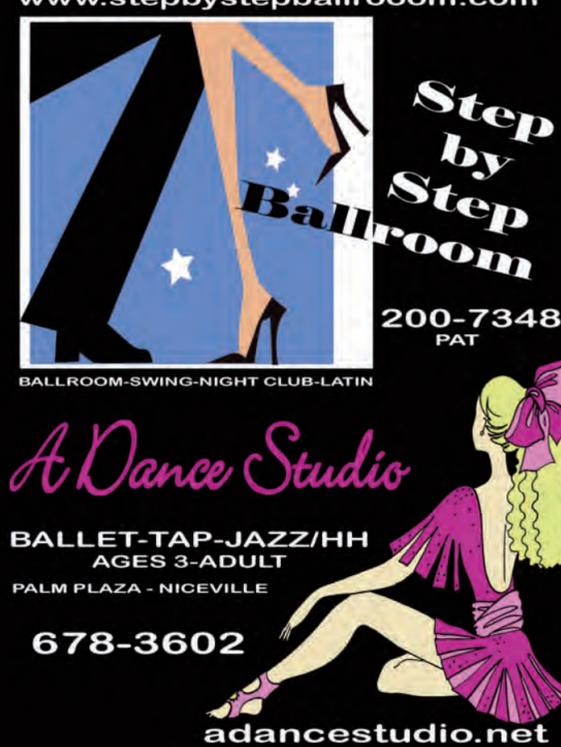
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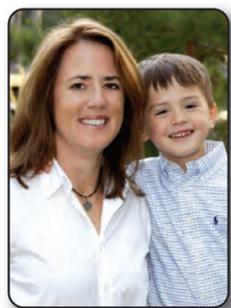
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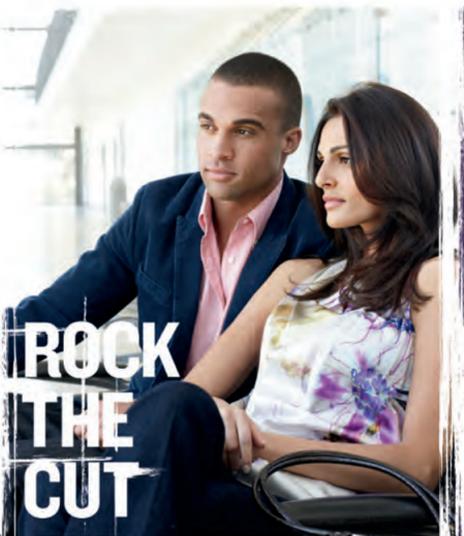
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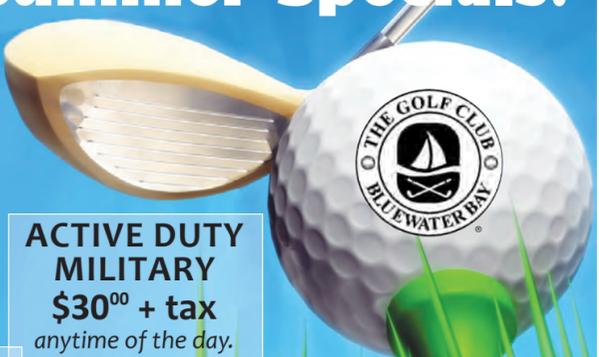
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MSBU

From page A-1

tion and some other ongoing projects, and the upcoming election of new board members.

The MSBU is a special unit of Okaloosa County government, in charge of landscaping, street lights and signs, and general maintenance of common areas throughout the unincorporated Bluewater Bay community. It is governed by a five-member board of elected directors.

The award of a landscape contract is typically the most costly decision the MSBU board makes each year. This year, landscaping accounts for about 45 percent of the panel's \$368,000 tax-funded budget.

During a meeting Sept. 11, the MSBU board discussed a report from board member Doug Burgess and MSBU management consultant Archie Jernigan, who had served as a study committee to review sealed proposals for the MSBU's landscaping contract for fiscal year 2012-13, which will begin Oct. 1. Neither Burgess nor Jernigan attended the Sept. 11 meeting.

The board members present discussed the written report from Burgess and Jernigan, which apparently consisted mainly of a comparison of prices bid by landscape companies interested in the contract. After a brief discussion, MSBU board member Dale Blanchard moved to award the contract to Bayou Lawn Services, the current contract holder and, officials said, apparent low bidder.

There was no second to Burgess' motion, however, and Jason Connor, business developer for ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance, a company from Santa Rosa Beach that is among the bidders, addressed the board, objecting to the selection process.

Connor said his company had been led to believe that the selection process would be based on a combination of price and the overall quality of service proposed by



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

A bidder for the annual landscaping contract under consideration by the Bluewater Bay Municipal Benefit Unit questioned procedures for awarding the job. The governing board of the MSBU, shown meeting Sept. 11, refused to allow the public to view documents concerning the proposed award.

competing companies, but that the selection process he saw underway at the Sept. 11 meeting appeared to be based on price alone. He requested that his company's proposal be more fully considered before a decision is made.

Officials said three companies submitted bids for the landscaping contract: Bayou Lawn, Dogwood Services, and ValleyCrest. MSBU chairman Dave Strunk, however, said he would not disclose the amounts of the bids while the selection process is underway.

A Bay Beacon reporter at the meeting asked for a copy of the written report from Burgess and Jernigan. Blanchard, apparently speaking on behalf of the MSBU board, refused to provide a copy of the report or allow the reporter to examine it, saying that the document was part of a work in progress rather than a final decision by the board, and therefore not open to public examination. Blanchard said public disclosure of the report would reveal confidential information about the contractor proposals under consideration.

The reporter contended that under Florida's Government in the Sunshine and public records laws, documents being used as reference material to influence decisions being made by bodies of elected officials, such as draft leg-

islation, proposed budgets, or study reports on pending contractor selections, are public records and should be made available while the public still has opportunity to question or comment on the pending decisions, and to clearly see the process by which such decisions are being made. Blanchard, however, repeated his refusal to provide the report.

After Burgess' motion failed for lack of a second, the board then tabled the contractor selection until the next meeting of the MSBU board on Oct. 9, and to extend the current contract with Bayou Lawn Services for 30 days, pending a final decision at a board meeting scheduled for Oct. 9, when Burgess and Jernigan are expected to be present.

In seeking bids for the contract last month, the MSBU directed bidders to mark their proposals "trade secret." The district also stated at that time that the bids would not be opened in public.

In other business at the meeting Sept. 11, Blanchard said he had met with Okaloosa County public works officials on September 4, and was told that county workers expect to begin clearing the right of way for a new sidewalk near the northwest end of Bay Drive within the next few weeks. He said he does not know how long it will take to actually build the new side-

walk, as the county is doing the work on a time-available basis, whenever county workers are not occupied by higher-priority projects.

MSBU communications chair Joan McCarthy said she has added biographies, resumes, and contact information to the "Out and About" section of the MSBU web site at bluewaterbay.org, so Bluewater Bay voters can learn more about candidates for the MSBU board who will be running in this year's general election in November.

Current candidates include: Group 1; 4-year term: New candidate Judy Griffin is unopposed. Incumbent Dave Strunk is not seeking reelection.

Group 2; 2-year term: Incumbent Joan McCarthy is unopposed for reelection.

Group 3; 4-year term: Incumbent Doug Burgess is challenged by Joseph Bowers.

Group 4; 2-year term: Incumbent Robert Jellison is challenged by Debbie Stretch.

Group 5; 4-year term: Incumbent Dale Blanchard is challenged by Stanley Richard Martin.

The next meeting of the MSBU governing board is scheduled for 10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9, at the Bluewater Bay golf clubhouse at 1950 Bluewater Boulevard.

VALP.

From page A-1

of the city budget funded by such other sources as intergovernmental transfers, franchise fees, and utility service taxes.

At the current millage rate of 4.0644, Valparaiso property owners pay just over \$4.06 in property tax for every \$1,000 of appraised, taxable value of their property, after homestead exemptions and other discounts. The owner of a home appraised at \$200,000, for example, pays \$812.88 in annual city property tax, in addition to other taxes such as the Okaloosa School District property tax. At the proposed new millage rate of 4.524 the same homeowner would pay \$904.80.

The proposed new budget and property tax rate must be approved again at the city's final public budget hearing, scheduled for 6 p.m. Sept. 24, to be held at Valparaiso City Hall, 465 Valparaiso Parkway.

The proposed millage given initial approval Sept. 4 is less than that discussed at a previous budget workshop held July 30. At that time, the proposed millage was 4.8823, which would have meant an annual property tax of \$976.46 for the homeowner mentioned above.

At the July 30 meeting, howev-



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

A budget hearing Sept. 4 by the Valparaiso City Commission, although open to the public, was attended only by city officials. A second hearing is set for Monday.

er, the city commission asked city department heads to find additional cuts to allow a lower tax rate, which were incorporated in the final budget proposal presented at the Sept. 4 budget hearing by City Clerk Tammy Johnson. The proposed budget was also cut, from \$6,931,743 discussed July 30 to the current proposal of \$6,862,613.

The budget tentatively approved also includes a 2 percent cost of living raise for city employees.

City Commissioner Kay Hamilton suggested that city workers might receive a larger raise if city departments heads, whom she said "are paid very

well," would be willing to forego a raise this year in order to allow larger raises for rank and file employees.

"People working for nine dollars an hour really need an increase," Hamilton said, adding that in the current economy, department heads would have a hard time finding better paying management-level jobs than what they already have.

"I don't really concur," replied Mayor Bruce Arnold. "Department heads are the ones responsible," he said, and deserve higher pay for that reason.

Commissioner H.H. Strong agreed with the mayor. "Our department heads don't just sit

behind their desks," he said. "They are out there working. They are not over-paid for what they do."

Commissioner Joe Morgan agreed with Hamilton, saying that civilian managers at Eglin Air Force Base, such as his wife, have had their pay frozen for the last several years, and that many Valparaiso taxpayers have gone without pay raises during the current recession. Morgan said he thought city department heads would be willing to agree to a pay freeze for themselves in order to help their employees.

Despite Hamilton's suggestion, no action was taking about whether to change the city pay structure.

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CAMPBELL

From page A-1

payments totaling \$2,000 from the Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival for recruiting Cellular South, which donated \$6,666 as a festival sponsor.

In 2006, the affidavit states, Campbell received an undisclosed payment of \$1,750 from the Mullet Festival for the sponsorship by Hammock Bay Real Estate, which donated \$2,500.

In 2010, according to the affidavit, Campbell received an undisclosed payment of \$2,500 from the Mullet Festival for obtaining a \$2,500 sponsorship from Crystal Beach Development, and for a sponsorship by Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council (TDC), which donated \$10,000 through its advertising firm, The Zimmerman Agency.

In 2011, the affidavit states, Campbell received undisclosed payments totaling \$4,500 from the Mullet Festival for arranging sponsorships of \$1,250 by Crystal Beach Development, \$1,250 by Nufletch LLC, \$10,000 by the TDC through an ad agency, and \$10,000 by the Northwest Florida Regional Airport through an ad agency.

"Some of the money he was paid was paid indirectly from county agencies," Eddins said, referring to the TDC and the airport. "He indirectly received county money."

The airport and the TDC are county agencies overseen by the county commission. Campbell was commission chairman in 2011, and signed off on TDC pay-

ments, including a controversial one that resulted in the secret purchase of a yacht by the TDC. When the yacht news broke earlier this year after the suicide of fugitive TDC Director Mark Bellinger, Campbell said he hadn't known what he was signing.

Elected officials are required to publicly disclose all amounts and sources of income larger than \$1,000. Campbell, the affidavit charges, submitted the proper forms, notarized and signed under oath, but did not disclose the income of finder's fees for the festival.

After learning that he may be a target of criminal investigation, Campbell filed an amended income statement on July 5, 2012, listing the \$4,500 paid to him in 2011 by the festival committee, the affidavit stated.

The affidavit states that Campbell was interviewed by law enforcement officials on July 31 and again on Sept. 12 of this year. In the initial interview, the affidavit states, Campbell said his wife completed the necessary income statement and he signed them. He said he had not told his wife about the finder's fees because he wanted to use that money for personal hunting expenses.

In addition to his service as an Okaloosa County commissioner, Campbell is employed by the city of Niceville as recreation director. City Manager Lannie Corbin said as of press time he hadn't decided what action, if any, to take in light of the charges against Campbell.

Corbin, who himself plays a major role in the Mullet Festival, said he asked Campbell to obtain sponsors for the annual three-day Niceville festival of music and

"We looked at it as a way to make money for the Mullet Festival."

Corbin said the festival did not issue Campbell an IRS

arrested.

"James is a good person," Corbin said. "I'm sure if he thought about this and thought there was any legal ramification, he wouldn't have done it."

plete Campbell's term. Campbell did not run for reelection and Kelly Windes of Destin won election to succeed him.

"Typically, he would take applications, select somebody and appoint him to fill out the term, but since there's only weeks remaining until the new term, it's conceivable the governor may go ahead and put Kelly Windes in," Curry said, "but that's strictly the governor's decision."

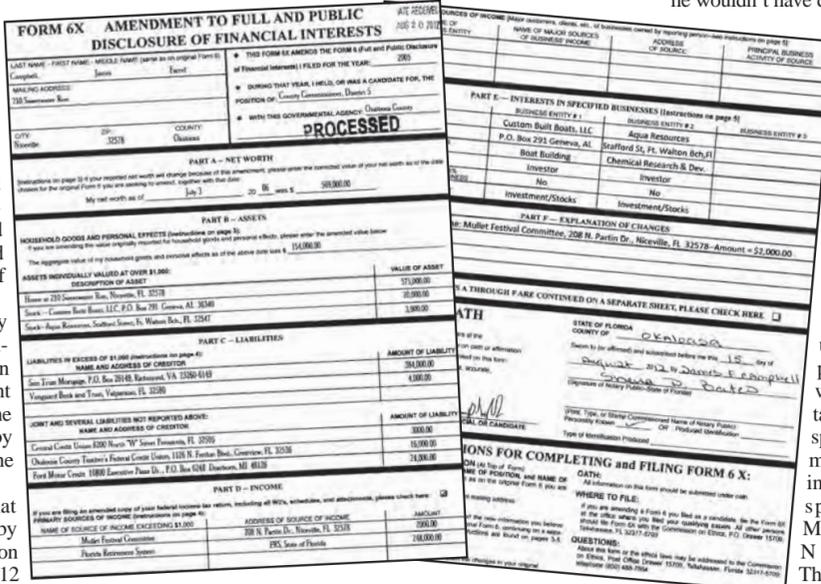
Curry said Campbell's arrest won't affect county operations.

"We will continue to do the business as hand," he said. "It certainly won't impact our operation of the county government."

Eddins said the matter is unlikely to be settled quickly. He anticipates a trial, rather than an out-of-court settlement, but, he said, "in matters of this nature, it always takes several months to go to trial" because of the requirement to disclose all evidence and witnesses to the defense, which can then scrutinize the documents and take depositions from witnesses.

"It's important for the general public to understand that this is part of the investigation into the TDC and it's ongoing and expected to last several months," Eddins said. The state auditor general is in the process of reviewing all the financial aspects. When that is complete, it will be determined if additional matters need to be investigated.

Eddins said as of now, it appears the trial will be held in Okaloosa County, since that is where the charges were filed, unless the defense requests a change of venue.



Florida Commission on Ethics

An amended financial disclosure form for 2005 filed in August 2012 by James Campbell after he learned he was the target of a criminal investigation corrected an earlier filing and disclosed for the first time that he had received payments from the Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival Committee.

food, but it was not a direction as an employee, but a request.

"Years ago, we had trouble getting sponsors, so we made the motion to pay someone to bring in sponsors," Corbin said. "This is for the last 12 or 13 years. We've always brought in sponsors and paid (Campbell) with a check and it's all part of our records.

Form 1099 reporting his income as an independent contractor for the finder's fees he was paid.

"We did not, but we should have," Corbin said. "We are making sure that will never happen in the future."

Corbin said he was advised Monday morning by the FDLE that Campbell was about to be

\$710,000 yacht and Bellinger's Destin house, according to authorities.

Campbell's involvement in obtaining festival sponsorships for money came to light as deputies probed Bellinger's expenditures, Nicholson said.

Bellinger took his own life through a drug overdose on May 4, after an arrest warrant was issued charging him with theft of county funds.

County Administrator James Curry said he did not know who the governor had in mind to com-

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Reaction to Campbell arrest

By Mike Griffith

Beacon Correspondent

Okaloosa County officials shared reactions with the Beacon Monday, following the arrest of Okaloosa County Commissioner James Campbell, of Niceville, by agents of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement on charges of official misconduct and perjury.

According to an FDLE arrest affidavit, Campbell is alleged to have failed to disclose income in excess of \$1,000 received for soliciting sponsors for the annual Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival, as required by state statutes and the Florida Constitution. Annual financial disclosures are required of elected officials.

County Administrator Jim Curry said he first heard of the case when he was informed Monday morning that Campbell had been booked into the county jail following his arrest. "I was very saddened by it," said Curry. "The process will have to go forward, and the truth will come out." Meanwhile, Curry said, "The business of Okaloosa County will go forward without any interruption."

Curry said that to the best of his knowledge, Florida Gov. Rick Scott, who suspended Campbell from all official duties and authority following the arrest, has two options for filling Campbell's vacant seat on the county commission. The first option is to leave the seat vacant until newly-elected commissioner Kelley Windes officially takes office on the second Tuesday following the general elections in November, which would be Nov. 20. Windes was elected in August to the District 5 commission seat in a four-way race to succeed Campbell, who did not seek a third four-year term.

The other option, said Curry, would be to appoint someone, probably Windes, to fill the seat right away. Curry said he did not know which option the governor would choose.

Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux said the process of appointing a temporary office holder in such circumstances can sometimes be a

lengthy one, but that in this case, with Windes already having been elected to succeed Campbell, "my suspicion is that the governor will appoint Windes to take the seat."

County Commissioner Dave Parisot told the Beacon that he first heard of Campbell's arrest when he was notified Monday morning that Campbell had been booked. Parisot said he was "surprised by the news, and had not received any other information from investigators, other than what he read in the affidavit of arrest issued by FDLE Monday.

Parisot also said he was surprised to learn of allegations that Campbell had been receiving money from the Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival, in the form of percentages of money Campbell had solicited from Mullet Festival sponsors. Parisot said he had not known that any such arrangement had existed between Campbell and the Mullet Festival, a big, three-day music and food festival held every October in Niceville.

"Is it a common practice," Parisot asked, "for someone to get a percentage of the donations they solicit for the Mullet Festival? I thought the Mullet Festival was more like a charity."

Parisot said he is also curious about the financial and other relationship between Campbell, who is a Niceville city employee in addition to being a county commissioner, the Mullet Festival organizing committee, and Mark Bellinger, the deceased former executive director of the Okaloosa Tourist Development Council. Parisot is the county commission's representative on the TDC advisory board.

According to FDLE's arrest affidavit, "In 2010 Campbell received one payment of \$2,500 from the BMMF (Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival) for the sponsorship by the Crystal Beach development, which donated \$2,500, and the Okaloosa Tourist Development Council (TDC) which donated \$10,000 via its advertising firm, The Zimmerman Agency. County records reflect this payment was authorized by

then TDC Director Mark Bellinger and paid from BP grant funds awarded to Okaloosa County following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010.

Campbell solicited Mark Bellinger to sponsor the festival and later introduced Bellinger to BMMF committee chairman Lannie Corbin. Campbell did not disclose this income on his 2010 Form 6 financial disclosure and attached income tax filing."

Bellinger killed himself earlier this year after authorities sought to arrest him on charges of stealing TDC funds in another case.

The FDLE affidavit also states, "Campbell claimed that he first began soliciting sponsors for the BMMF when he was approached by Niceville City Manager Lannie Corbin. Corbin is also a BMMF committee member. Campbell, who in addition to being an Okaloosa County Commissioner is also employed by the city of Niceville as parks and recreation director, claimed that he believed that Corbin's request was made as a directive from his superior and that the recruiting of festival sponsors was part of his job at the City of Niceville. Corbin did not specifically tell Campbell that recruiting sponsors was part of his job, rather Campbell stated that he inferred it this way. In a subsequent interview with law enforcement, Lannie Corbin disputed this claim and reported that the BMMF is a private entity and is not affiliated with the Niceville city government and therefore Campbell's activity with the BMMF was in no way part of Campbell's duties as Recreation Director. Corbin stated that he gave no orders, explicit or implied, to Campbell to recruit sponsors for the BMMF."

County commissioners Wayne Harris and Bill Roberts declined to comment on the case. Commissioner Don Amunds could not be reached for comment. Campbell declined to comment.

Niceville Mayor Randall Wise gave a brief statement. "James Campbell is a friend of many people in Okaloosa County, and my

friend also," Wise said.

Niceville City Manager Lannie Corbin said news of Campbell's arrest was "a shock."

"James and I have worked together and been friends for a long time," Corbin said. "He's a good person. I hate to see this happen."

Asked about the FDLE statement that Campbell had claimed his Mullet Festival fundraising activities were done at Corbin's direction, Corbin replied, "That must be a misquote from James."

"We paid finder's fees for sponsorship long before James was a county commissioner," Corbin said of the festival committee.

Regarding Campbell's role in soliciting funds for the Mullet Festival, Corbin said, "He was always very good at that sort of thing," so Corbin approached Campbell on behalf of the festival committee. "The Mullet Festival committee asked him if he wanted a good price for this. He suggested 20 percent of everything he brought us, so we've been doing that ever since."

In return for donating money, said Corbin, Mullet Festival sponsors received publicity for themselves and their organizations. "We put their names and logos on tickets, flyers, and billboards, and put their DVDs on the big screen during the Mullet Festival." Financial sponsors of the festival, he said, "got a lot of exposure for doing this."

None of the officials contacted said they knew how FDLE may have become aware of Campbell's financial dealings with the Mullet Festival, although Okaloosa County public information officer Kathy Newby said she thought such information may have come to light during the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office's ongoing investigation of former TDC director Bellinger, who resigned and committed suicide earlier this year, after being accused of misusing large sums of TDC funds. An FDLE press release Monday announcing Campbell's arrest said the arrest followed "a four-month investigation.

STABLES

From page A-1

sary to move, said Burke, she already has about 65 acres of her own just north of State Road 20 near the Walton County community of Portland, between Bluewater Bay and Freeport. She said she has one parcel of 25 acres, and another adjacent parcel of 40 acres, which she plans to name "Big League Farms" if and when she has to move her business.

ROCKY BAYOU STABLES
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Currently, said Burke, she keeps about 28 horses in two big barns at her Rocky Bayou facility, including her own horses and those she boards for other owners, plus a pair of donkeys, some goats, and some other domestic animals including a group of at least 8 barn cats. In addition to boarding horses for some of her customers, Burke said she provides individual and group riding lessons for children and adults, with the help of three other riding instructors she employs.

"My typical student," she said, "is a young teenage girl," although her 40 current students include male and female riders, ranging from 3 to 60 years of age. "Some of my favorite students," she said, "are the youngest, in our 'Trot & Tot' program, which introduces young children to the fundamentals of riding, using small ponies." Lessons at Rocky Bayou, she said, cost from \$40 per hour for small groups of students to about \$50 per hour for private lessons.

HIKES

From page A-1

During Thursday's hearing, the sole dissenting vote against the rate and millage hikes was cast by Councilman Dan Henkel. Asked why he voted against the increases, Henkel told the Beacon, "We have to live within our means. There are uncertain times ahead."

At the recommended 3.7 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. At the current level of 3.65, the above homeowner pays \$730.

Water and sewer rate increases of between 2 and 4 percent are needed in each of the next five years to maintain the city's required ratio of revenue to debt, said city consultants Glenn Stephens and Bill Fray, who briefed the city council on the financial aspects of the rate hikes during the Sept. 13 public budget hearing.

Stephens told the council that the city must maintain a minimum ratio of 1.5 between revenue and debt payments, according to terms of the agreements by which the city has issued bonds to pay for improvements to the city's water and sewer system over the years.

City Manager Lannie Corbin said the city's bonds have been issued and refinanced at various times over the last 40 years, as needed to pay for various improvements to the systems.

According to figures presented by Fray, the city currently owes \$14,716,424 in water and sewer bonds and loans, as well as \$1,467,808 in Florida state revolving fund loans, for a total of \$16,184,232 in water and sewer related debt.

In addition, the city also owes \$3,528,850 in other debts not directly related to the water and sewer system, for a grand total of \$19,713,082.

According to Stephens' briefing, operating expenses for the next several years are expected to grow faster than revenues without annual rate hikes. As a result, the ratio of net revenue to annual debt service would drop below the required 1.5 ratio beginning in FY 2013, and grow worse in subsequent years. The proposed rate hikes for FY 2012-13 would average at about 2.4 percent for the city's water customers, and 4.5 percent for sewer customers, or about 3.7 percent overall.

In addition, Stephens recommended additional annual rate increases in future years, averaging at 4 percent in FY 2013-14, 4.2 percent for FY 2014-15, 2 percent in FY 2015-16, and 2.2 percent in FY 2016-17. Stephens said that with those annual rate hikes, the city will maintain a ratio of revenue to debt service greater than the required 1.5, at least through FY 2017.

In addition to the water and sewer rate increases, the city council also gave final approval to a 2 percent increase in trash disposal fees, which city manager Lannie Corbin said represents a tipping fee hike by Okaloosa



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

The Niceville City Council met Thursday to give final approval to rate increases for city utilities customers. Officials say the hikes are needed to repay debt. One citizen responded: "My water and sewer rates have gone up every one of the last 10 years."

County to the city, which is being passed on to city customers.

During Thursday's hearing, some Niceville citizens spoke in opposition to the proposed rate hikes.

Ronald Swafford told the city council, "I just turned 70 and live

on a fixed income. My water and sewer rates have gone up every one of the last 10 years."

"I'm retired military, with no raises in either my retired pay or Social Security, but all my rates are going up," he said. "I'm going down."

Stephens told Swafford that

the city provides a special "life-line rate" for senior citizens, in which the rate hike for FY 2012-13 would only be 20 cents for the base rate and 8 cents for customers who use only 2,000 gallons per month, typical of senior citizens without children in their households.



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Swafford, however, replied that he currently pays \$70 per month, plus another \$7 for the city's 10 percent tax on bills. "Water is my highest bill every month," he said.

Niceville resident Andy Cole said he currently pays about \$90 per month in fees to the city, and suggested that the city raise its sales tax rather than water and sewer rates.

Corbin replied that raising sales taxes would require a city-wide referendum. He also said that costs for such things as fuel and insurance have been growing for the city, requiring more revenue to maintain city services.

"Taxes' is not a bad word," Corbin said. "Niceville is a good city. We provide recreation services for the whole county, as well as library services for city and county residents." Corbin added that taxes are higher in Valparaiso, Crestview, and Fort Walton Beach, and that the North Bay Fire District charges 2.2 mills property tax just to provide fire protection, while Niceville provides fire and

police protection plus all other municipal services for a current millage rate of 3.65, or 3.70 for FY 2012-13.

"Police cars wear out," said council member Bill Schaeztle, "and city expenses are up."

City Clerk Dan Doucet said that Niceville senior citizens can apply for a special exemption of \$50,000 on the appraised values of their homes, in addition to the regular homestead exemption.

"You're tooting your horn to the wrong guy," replied Cole. "Everything is going up but my pay, which is going down." In the current economy, Cole said, "I want to live within my means," and he expects the city government to do the same.

Thursday's budget hearing marked the final approval of the coming fiscal year's water, sewer and trash rate increases, which require only a resolution and one public hearing for passage. The millage and budget, however, will be discussed and voted on again at the two remaining budget hearings scheduled for 6 p.m. Sept. 18 and 20 at Niceville city hall.

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NORTH BAY

From page A-1

other property taxes to such government entities as Okaloosa County and the Okaloosa School District.

During last week's hearing, North Bay Fire Chief Joseph Miller presented a PowerPoint slide briefing outlining the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. Highlights of the proposed budget include increases in professional and operating expenses and various types of insurance, and decreases in personnel costs and debt service.

Final approval or modification of the proposed budget and millage rate is scheduled for the final budget hearing to be held at 7 p.m. tonight at the North Bay fire station on White Point Road. The budget hearing is open to the public. For information, call 897-3689.

Budget Category Totals

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Personnel Costs | \$ 1,452,288.21 |
| Operating – Professional | \$ 115,902.97 |
| Operating – Utilities | \$ 22,845.51 |
| Operating – Insurances | \$ 39,272.90 |
| Operating – Maintenance | \$ 91,568.80 |
| Operating – Personnel Development | \$ 19,000.00 |
| Operating – Supplies | \$ 36,842.56 |
| Operating – Equipment Acquisition | \$ 176,800.00 |
| Debt Services-Tower 8 Payment | \$ 00.0000 |
| Total | \$1,954,520.95 |

Decrease of \$9,211.95 over 2011/2012

Budget Increases & Decreases

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Personnel (Decrease) | \$ 13,127.57 |
| Operating – Professional (Increase) | \$ 16,202.55 |
| Operating – Utilities (Even) | \$ 0.00 |
| Operating – Insurance (Increase) | \$ 1,393.95 |
| Operating – Maintenance (Increase) | \$ 2,546.81 |
| Personnel Development (Decrease) | \$ 500.00 |
| Operating – Supplies (Increase) | \$ 778.81 |
| Equipment Acquisition (Increase) | \$ 28,000.00 |
| Debt Services (Decrease) | \$ 44,506.50 |
| Total (Decreases) | \$ 9,211.95 |
| Reserves | \$ 23,668.07 |

North Bay Fire District

Briefing slides by the North Bay Fire District show how the district plans to apportion next year's spending (left) and how this would differ from this year's outlays (right). A final public hearing on the proposed \$1.95 million budget is scheduled for tonight.



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Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Phil Hooper blows out the candle on his cake, as YMCA branch director Sarah Traver and fellow Y member Bill Pezdirtz watch. "Our insurance company wouldn't let us put all 88 candles on the cake," said Pezdirtz.

YMCA celebrates volunteer's 88th

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Niceville YMCA members celebrated the 88th birthday of Phil Hooper Friday, with balloons, cake and a candle.

Hooper is a longtime member of the Y, where he works out and does frequent volunteer work, such as helping paint the walls of the

facility. He is also a former U.S. Army paratrooper, who landed on Utah Beach during the Normandy invasion. He was also in the battles of Bastogne and Arnhem, which inspired the movie "A Bridge Too Far."

As for his 88th birthday, Hooper told the Beacon, "I look forward to being here for my next one."

Annual Oktoberfest celebration approaches

Bratwurst and sauerkraut, dancers, polkas on tap



File photos

The High Steppers bring enthusiasm, spirit and fun to the annual Oktoberfest. Right, the Joe Occhipinti Band specializes in German-style polkas.

Staff Reports

The 18th annual Oktoberfest, sponsored by the Mid-Bay Rotary, is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 28 and Saturday, Sept. 29, in the market Place Shopping Plaza, in front of the Bluewater Bay Winn-Dixie supermarket. There is no admission charge.

The festivities will kick off Friday at 5 p.m. with live music under the beer tent and bratwurst on the grill, along with authentic German sauerkraut from an old Bavarian family recipe. Along with the German food will be grilled chicken quarters, hot dogs, funnel cakes, curly fries, hot boiled peanuts, snow cones, cotton candy and kettle corn.

The music will be provided by accordionist Walter

Kasprzyk, followed by the High Steppers and two hours of German polka music by the Joe Occhipinti band.

Volunteers from the Niceville High School's Rotary-sponsored Interact Service Club will help with concessions.

Booths will feature a selection of arts and crafts and children's activities, including giant slides, orbitron rides and mountain climbers, will be available. Friday's festivities will wind down about 10 p.m.

Saturday, Oktoberfest gets under way at 11 a.m.

From 2 to 4 p.m., musicians Tom Phillips and Gary Schmitz will entertain, followed by Kasprzyk from 4 to 5:30, the Joe Occhipinti Band from 5:30 to 7:15 and the High Steppers from 7:15 to 8. From 8 to 10,

the Occhipinti Band will return.

Last year, about 9,000 people attended Oktoberfest. Volunteers sold more than 2,000 bratwurst dinners, which included 150 gallons of sauerkraut.

All revenue will be used to support local charities, including the Children's Advocacy Center, the Emerald Coast Autism Center, Sharing and Caring, Take Stock in Children and many others.

Oktoberfest schedule

| Friday, Sept. 28 | Phillips and Gary Schmitz |
|--|---|
| 5-7:15 p.m.—Accordionist Walter Kasprzyk | 4-5:30 p.m.—Accordionist Walter Kasprzyk |
| 7:15-8 p.m.—High Steppers | 5:30-7:15 p.m.—Joe Occhipinti German band |
| 8-10 p.m.—Joe Occhipinti German band | 7:15-8 p.m.—High Steppers |
| Saturday, Sept. 29 | 8-10 p.m.—Joe Occhipinti German band |
| 2-4 p.m.—Musicians Tom Phillips and Gary Schmitz | (All shows on the stage) |

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THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith



How should America respond to the wave of attacks on our embassies that began on September 11?

Location: Niceville Public Library



"We should respond with force, to show them that it's wrong to do that."

Jack Jensen, 18, Niceville, food service



"We should pull our money out of those countries."

Alissa Clifton, 41, Niceville, homemaker



"We should be nice to them, and try to get along."

Sian Mignot, 9, Niceville, Edge Elementary School student



"Quit funding countries like Egypt."

Roy Harrill, 66, Niceville, retired engineer



"Quit having our military make enemies for us all around the world."

Bill Elliot, 62, Niceville, property management



"We should definitely get the military involved."

Marcella Ward, 48, Niceville, unemployed

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

Advertisement for SIMPLER CARPET & TILE, INC. featuring logos for Stainmaster, Tesoro, WundaWeave, American Olean, Mannington, and Shaw. Text includes: Browse our selection of Hardwood & Laminate, 209 Government Ave., Niceville • 678-7925, Sales & Installation, FREE Estimates, Mon.-Fri. 8am - 5pm, Sat. by Appointment, Serving Niceville-Valparaiso for 50 years.



Spouses help Children in Crisis kids

The Eglin Spouses Club helped the kids of Children in Crisis get ready for back to school again this year. All the kids at the Children's Neighborhood received new socks to take them through the new school year. From left: Carla Musgrove, CIC Development Director; Ken Hair, CIC President and CEO; Judy Wiseman, Eglin Spouses and a CIC board member; Natalie Rodriguez, CIC volunteer/events director; and Betty Hefner, CIC board member.

Advertisement for Law Office of SAMUEL M. PEEK. Includes logo for Samuel M. Peek, P.A. Attorney at Law, established 1981. Text includes: Estate Planning & Probate, Wills & Living Trusts, Powers of Attorney, Health Care Directives, Business Corporations & LLC, Samuel M. Peek, J.D., LL.M. Tax, 678-1178, 222 Government Avenue, Niceville, FL 32578. A small portrait of Samuel M. Peek is also included.

Advertisement for Polly's Concrete Products. Text includes: READY TO ENHANCE YOUR CURB APPEAL?, Upgrade your old existing driveway with Stylish Cobblestone Pavers or we can remove and repour your driveway. Two photos show a driveway 'Before' and 'After' with cobblestone pavers. Offers: \$100.00 OFF Cobblestone Paver Driveway, \$50.00 OFF Formed & Poured Driveway. Call today for a free estimate 897-3314. Polly's Concrete Products, www.pollysconcrete.com.

Advertisement for Club opens doors to new members. Text includes: Twin Cities Woman's Club is a group of women who have joined together for fellowship and who through constructive action help build and improve the community in which we live. The club was formed in the spring of 1983 and continues to serve our community today. Throughout the year, TCWC conducts fund raising projects which allow it to support the community through financial contributions to the following programs and organizations: In 1989, TCWC established a scholarship for displaced homemakers. These scholarships assist the recipients with tuition and books at NWFSC. As of 2012, the club has awarded over \$167,050 through this program. The Club Relay Team raised \$15,000 for the American Cancer Society's 2012 Relay event. During its 13-year participation in Relay for Life, the club has contributed \$323,955. Among the club's chosen charities are the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, Children in Crisis, Children's Advocacy Center, Covenant Hospice, Elder Services, Mental Health Association, Sharing and Caring, Shelter House, Take Stock in Children, Twin Cities Pavilion and the USO. Any woman who is interested in the club's activities and promoting a spirit of friendliness within the community is eligible for membership. It meets September through May. Luncheons are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Bluewater Bay Clubhouse. For information, call Roma Shipley, membership chairman, at 897-3172.

Advertisement for HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE. Text includes: Gone through the roof or non-renewed? Give us a call, we can help! 729-2131, www.nicevilleinsurance.com. Niceville INSURANCE AGENCY, Auto • Business • Home • Life • Flood.

Advertisement for 2012 Mullet Festival Kings & Queens Pageant. Text includes: Sponsored by the Crestview Elks Lodge #2624, September 29, at Niceville High School, Deadline for Entry is 9/22/12 at Noon. Applications are available online at www.md-events.com or for more info, please call 850-974-0220, 682-6129, or 682-2175. We still have plenty of openings for all age divisions.



Artwork displayed at library

Native Floridian and local artist Terry Johnston's artwork will be on display at the library during September. Her vibrant acrylic paintings evoke a smile and a sense of nostalgia. They are for sale at the library as well as various other facilities throughout the community.

In addition, local artist Art Bellen's whimsical woodwork is on exhibit in our tabletop display case. His wood veneer pieces are beautifully made and

Unique. He is also willing to custom make pieces

Refuge seeks volunteers

The Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge is seeking volunteers for its upcoming fundraiser "The Dark" haunted house. Volunteers can help build the maze, design and build props, act as monsters/villains, costume design, makeup, security, much more. All hours count towards community service hours. To volunteer or for further info, email Deb at mknbn4u@cox.net.

NHS band selling citrus

The Niceville High School Eagle Pride Band is again selling Fresh Indian River Citrus to be delivered the second Saturday in December. Navel oranges, grapefruit and tangelos may be ordered from any band member from Monday, Oct. 1, through Wednesday, Oct. 17. You can help support the band with this fundraiser while enjoying fresh delicious citrus during the holidays. Visit fruitor.com. To place an order with a credit card, use organization ID 787415, select a band student's name for credit or General Band Fund on the check-out page. Holiday citrus gifts may be ordered through this website and will be shipped fresh to your out of town friends and family directly from Florida Indian River Groves. For local orders please call (850) 496-1371, a band member will deliver the fruit to your door on Saturday, Dec. 8.

Tutoring available at library

Tutoring for high school students is available now at the Niceville Public Library. Tuesdays, 2:30-4 p.m. Appointment required. For info or to sign up, inquire at the Youth Services desk.

PTO coupon book sale

Through Sept. 25, Bluewater Elementary School will hold its annual PTO coupon book sale. You can enjoy many Emerald Coast restaurants and activities for a reduced price as you provide much needed funding for our classrooms. Pick up your coupon book at Bluewater Elementary School or from your neighborhood's Bluewater Elementary School student.

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.

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 or call 865-4769.

Genetic inheritance class

The Genealogy History Class at the Valparaiso Community Library will have a special program at 9:30 a.m. Sept. 19 to explore the basics of genetic inheritance. Charlene Grafton, a well-known local writer and geneticist, will present the program to discuss the 4-Gs (genealogy, genes, genomics and gender) that will help genealogists understand their family health heritage. This will be Charlene's final presentation in her four-part series. Free. Info: 729-5406.

Rotary golf tourney

Reservations are being taken for the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club Golf Tournament Oct. 11, at 1



'Turtle Bob' to visit

The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, Freeport, will host Turtle Bob Saturday, Sept. 22, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Standard admission rates apply.

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. Safe boating class

Living Word plans revival

The Living Word Worship Center invites the community to its annual Revival services Sept. 19-21, at 7 p.m. nightly. The guest speaker will be Pastor Alvin Smith of Sonlight Covenant Ministries and a native of Crestview Florida. He truly is an anointed man of God. Our church is located at 40 S. John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso. Info: 678-7632 or allgodschil-drenministry@centurylink.net.

Blood, Bacteria and Beyond

Science Friday seminar series hosted by the Sciences Division at Northwest Florida State College will continue their series on "Infectious Diseases" on Friday, Sept. 21, 1100 in the Robert E. Greene, Jr. Science building on the Niceville campus, in the main lecture hall, room S-110. Featured will be Kathryn Doornbos, who will discuss "The Secret Life of Ticks: Blood, Bacteria and Beyond."

Campaign finance discussion

The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County is sponsoring a panel discussion on campaign finance financing on Saturday, Sept. 22, 10 a.m.-noon in the Niceville City Council chambers, 208 N. Partin Dr, Niceville.

The panel will feature Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux, local business owner and FWB Tea Party activist Henry Kelley, and League of Women Voters of Florida government consultant Ben Wilcox. All three panelists are intimately familiar with the recent changes in campaign finance requirements and what they mean for Florida's electorate.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

Barbershop concert

"Harvest of Harmony, with performances by five barbershop chapters and the 100-man Panhandle Chorus will be performed Saturday, Sept. 22, 7 p.m., in the Niceville High School auditorium. Tickets are \$10, available at Bayou Bookstore or at the door the night of the show. Info: 698-6215.

Women's Council of Realtors will hold its second annual Emerald Dash 5K Run/Walk Sept. 22 at the Clement Taylor Park in Destin. The race will start at 7:30 a.m. T-shirts are limited to the first 150. Contact race director Paige Floyd at 585.0490 or PFloyd@MasonTitle.com or sign-up at active.com under Emerald Dash.

Alabama birding trip

Choctawhatchee Audubon Society plans a birding trip to Baldwin County Sod Farms Sept. 22. Walt Spence will lead the trip to the wilds of south Alabama in search of fall migrants. Bring sunscreen, water, hat, insect repellent, and lunch money. Meet at Uptown Station at 7 a.m. or the Navarre Butterfly House at 7:30. Call Walt at 582-7064 for info.

"Biker's Blast for the Past"

Shine your ride, rev up your engine, and cruise on over to the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida to register for the "Biker's Blast for the Past" Motorcycle Mystery Poker Run, Saturday, Sept. 22. Register 9-11 a.m. Enjoy a free Museum tour and view "The Wall That Heals" exhibit, featuring memorabilia and slide show presentation of The Wall Escort and ceremonies from the Vietnam Veterans Traveling Memorial Wall visit of 2010. Final destination: The Edge, 113 Edge Ave., Niceville. Live entertainment, shrimp boil, 50/50 and raffles. Poker run grand prize: Deep sea fishing trip. \$10 Single Rider, \$15 Double Rider, Shrimp Boil plate \$10. Package deals available. Info: 678-2615.

Latino American Festival

The first-ever Latino American Festival will be Sept. 22, from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., at the Emerald Coast Convention Center, Okaloosa Island. The festival will provide an opportunity to reach thousands of Hispanics in the Emerald Coast area. Info: Paola Vargas, 698-9854, David Triana, 368-3505, or latinoamericanfest@gmail.com.

Poker run to preserve history

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida will present "Biker's Blast for the Past" motorcycle poker run Sept. 22. Registration will be from 9-11 a.m. at the museum. Cost: \$10 per bike, \$5 per rider. The museum will have a special exhibit, "The Wall That Heals" with photos of Wall Escort 2010 Vietnam Veterans Traveling Memorial.

Please see CALENDAR, page B-5

Free pirates lecture

Historian Mike Thomin from the Florida Public Archaeology Network will share information about pirates who terrorized ships along the Gulf Coast during the 1800s in a special presentation, "Pirates! The Last Scourge of the Gulf" at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Friday, Sept. 21, noon.

Bring a sandwich and take your lunch break at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida for History Sandwiched-In, an informal lunchtime education program. This lecture is free and open to the public. Space is limited. Call to reserve a seat: 678-2615

Community yard sale

Edge Elementary will hold a community yard sale and bazaar Saturday, Sept. 22, 8 a.m.-noon, on the front lawn of the school. Anyone is welcome to rent a table to sell their yard sale or bazaar items. Contact Edge PTO, Kellee Dali at 582-4533 or kelleedali@yahoo.com to reserve your spot. Yard Sale tables are \$20 and Bazaar item tables are \$30.

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Charles and Shirley Price of Niceville, recently hiked Diamond Head in Hawaii while celebrating their 41st wedding anniversary.



NWFSC releases scholars lists

Northwest Florida State College recognized the superior scholastic achievement of students completing the Summer 2012 term by naming them to the President's List and Dean's List. The President's List names those students with nine or more credits in the term who earned a grade point average of 3.8 to 4.0 during the semester. The Dean's List names students with nine or more credits in the term who earned a GPA of 3.5 to 3.79. Some 317 NWFSC students were named as honors students for the Summer Term, which ended in August.



Parker, Zachary Phillips, Tibor Pollak, Jessica Popwell, Rickey Quesberry, Brad Ringler, Arden Robertson, Melanie Schultz, Joseph Settle, Joshua Spradlin, John Steele, Linda Tierney, Travis Topolski, Jessica Tuznik, Rebecca Wheeler, Ronald Whitman
Valparaiso: Clark Browning, Stephanie Fitzgerald, Ryan Frandi, Monica Smith

Dean's List

Destin: Katherine Baker, Kaleigh Dunn, Katie Holbrook, Marissa McCoy, Christopher Meade, Ashley Mook, Adrian Muresan, Tatiana Volcov

Eglin AFB: Pamela Cruz

Freeport: Michael Eggie, Brenda Farris, Matthew Phaneuf, Caley Stewart, Joshua Whitaker

Hurlburt Field: Richard Strong

Niceville: Nicholas Corbin, James Corkum, Alex Dallman, Adam Guiles, Caleb Havens, Maranatha Horvath, Richard Jackson, Billie Kennedy, Anne Melia, Daisha Oliver, Victor Sallee, Casey See, Alisha Sepsey, Jason Smith, Melissa Tomlin, Kala Wade, Caitlyn Williams

Valparaiso: Ashley Blain

President's List

Eglin AFB: Vanessa Alfaro, Natasha Bateman, Carrie Johnson

Freeport: Jennifer Christensen, Michelle Hebert

Hurlburt Field: Kayla Deatherage

Niceville: Caleb Barte, Danielle Bartley, Kelsey Bartley, Alejandro Cano, Renish Contractor, Mark Cordeiro, Evelyn Douglas, Mary Eichler, Erin England, Jessica Erickson, Rachel Fuller, Allison Harris, Sawyer House, William McNair, Jared Nieves, Sarah

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Plew to celebrate Hispanic heritage

Plew Elementary School students will celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, which began Saturday, Sept. 15, and runs until Oct. 15. During the next four weeks, students will learn about the Hispanic culture. They will take Hispanic cooking classes, enjoy crafts, watch cultural videos, learn folk dances, study poems and research famous Hispanic people, under the

guidance of the school's Spanish teacher, Mildred Avellanet. A group of Hispanic parents will volunteer to share with the students about their countries of origin. The celebration will end with an after-school program Oct. 11, from 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. The public is welcome to join Plew's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.



'Singapore math' at Rocky

Rocky Bayou Christian School has implemented an innovative math technique called Singapore math, which focuses on using manipulatives to develop concrete mathematical thinking skills. The students are actually able to "see" and "feel" the mathematical processes by using tools such as unifix cubes and base-10 blocks. It also stresses the importance of using language and vocabulary-building techniques. The goal at RBCS is to develop in each student the ability to manipulate numbers easily both in the classroom setting and in real-life situations.

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CALENDAR

From page B-3

Pancakes for cheerleaders

Ed's Hometown Seafood and Steaks, Palm Plaza, Niceville, will host two pancake breakfasts to benefit Beach Elite All Star Cheer on Sept. 22 and Oct. 27. Tickets are \$6 each and local athletes will serve breakfast from 8-10 a.m.

Breakfast includes pancakes, juice, coffee and bacon or sausage. All except the meat are unlimited.

Embroiderers season to open

The Sand Dunes Chapter of

Embroiderers' Guild of America celebrates various forms of hand embroidery. Its fall program begins with its meeting Monday, Sept. 24, 9:30 a.m.-noon. The night group meets Thursday, Sept. 27, 6-8:30 p.m., room 400, First United Methodist Church of Niceville. Visitors are welcome.

Niceville garden club convenes

This month's guest speaker at the Niceville Garden Club, 6 p.m., Sept. 25, in the City of Niceville library, will be Marge Hiller, who will give a presentation on Serendipity and Fun Gardens.

The club meets at 6 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month.

Alzheimer's support group

Alzheimer's Family Services provides monthly support groups for family members or friends coping with a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. A support group will be held at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the First United Methodist Church, Chandler Center, 214 S. Partin Drive. The support group is free and respite care is available.

Info: 478-7790 or visit AlzFamServ.org.

Twin Cities Woman's Club

Twin Cities Woman's Club will hold its first luncheon/meeting of the 2012-13 Club year Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Bluewater Bay Clubhouse, Bluewater Bay Boulevard. The social hour begins at 11 a.m., followed by lunch and a business meeting. While guests are always welcome, luncheon reservations must be made in advance by calling Vicki Rudolph at 678-5501.

Family movie planned

The Valparaiso Community Library invites families and friends to its next Early Release Movie Day

on Oct. 4, 2 p.m., for "The Avengers." Drinks and snacks will be served. The film is rated PG-13.

Emerald Coast Duck Regatta

Adopt a rubber duck for a \$10 or higher donation and join in a day of family fun at the second annual Emerald Coast Duck Regatta, hosted by the Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast Guild, Saturday, Oct. 6. About 2,500 ducks will begin their race across the Lagoon at the Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. Prizes will be awarded to the owners of the first ducks to cross the finish line. The event will have fun activities for the whole family, including Abtrakadoodle face painters, crafts, scavenger hunts and a chance to win the \$50,000 Golden Duck Prize. Admission is free. Festivities will begin at 11 a.m. and the Duck Regatta begins at 1 p.m.

Ducks are available for adoption at the Sacred Heart Gift Shop in Miramar Beach or online. Prizes will be awarded to the owners of the first ducks to cross the finish line.

Info or to adopt a duck: emerald-coastduckregatta.com.

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Beacon CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted

Rocky Bayou Christian School has an immediate opening for an Art teacher. Desired start date is October 1, 2012. Art classes include: Beginning Art, AP Art, 2D Art, 3D Art, and Clay works. Job requirements include a Bachelor's degree in Art with teaching experience preferred. Salary is based on degree/s and experience. This is a salary position and comes with health benefits. Interested applicants must submit their application via email to Ms. Jayne Warner at warnerj@rbcs.org no later than Friday, Sep 21, 2012. Applications are available on-line at www.rbcs.org > About Us > Employment. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Warner at 279-3761.

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Dr. David Creamer will be leaving his practice of Pain Management effective October 31, 2012. Your medical records will remain at White Wilson and be available for other White Wilson physicians or you may request copies of your records for physicians outside of White Wilson. Requests for copies should be made to the Medical Records Department at White Wilson.

Dr. Maily Creamer will be leaving her practice of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics effective October 31, 2012. Your medical records will remain at White Wilson and be available for other White Wilson physicians or you may request copies of your records for physicians outside of White Wilson. Requests for copies should be made to the Medical Records Department at White Wilson.

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BEACONSPORTS



Eagle field goal tops Pine Forest at the buzzer

Injured Mitchell leaves bench to win game

By Sarah Clauson
Beacon Correspondent

In a hard-fought, nail-biting battle, the Eagles brought home a 17-14 victory over Pine Forest Friday night. The win came off the heels of a rare early-season loss against Pace and was the perfect boost to get the Eagles back on track.

The well-matched teams fought the entire first half without putting any points on the board. The Eagle offense had a couple of early turnovers that slowed their momentum. Starting quarterback Andrew Mitchell came out of the game due to injury in the first quarter, which did not help matters.

They kept at it and midway through the third quarter scored the first touchdown of the game

after a successful drive with Ashton Hooker at quarterback, a couple of strong runs by Tyler Head and handoff to Shi Kim Coward for the score.

Pine Forest quickly answered and tied the game. The battle continued into the fourth quarter, when Niceville edged ahead with another touchdown by Coward with less than four minutes remaining. The score fueled Pine Forest's fire and after an impressive drive it once again tied the game 14-14 with only 47 seconds left in the game.

Niceville proved to work well under pressure and moved the ball to the Pine Forest 33-yard line. With just six seconds on the clock, an injured Mitchell re-entered the game to kick an impressive field goal for the

win. Head Coach John Hicks expressed pride in the entire team, and the winning kick.

"He's about as good as they get," he said of Mitchell. "He was really hurting bad, and he came out and nailed that kick under pressure."

How did they bounce back after last week's loss?

"Our pride," said Hicks. "We aren't used to losing and we expect to win. I thought we prepared better this week, and I feel like we'll continue to get better."

The win was critical to the team's pride, especially as it heads into its first district game against Navarre when, as Hicks put it, "We gotta take it to another level."



Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

Niceville High School's Andrew Mitchell gives a little body English as he watches his field goal attempt reach the goal posts. The kick, made with just six seconds remaining in the game, was good, handing the Eagles a 17-14 victory.

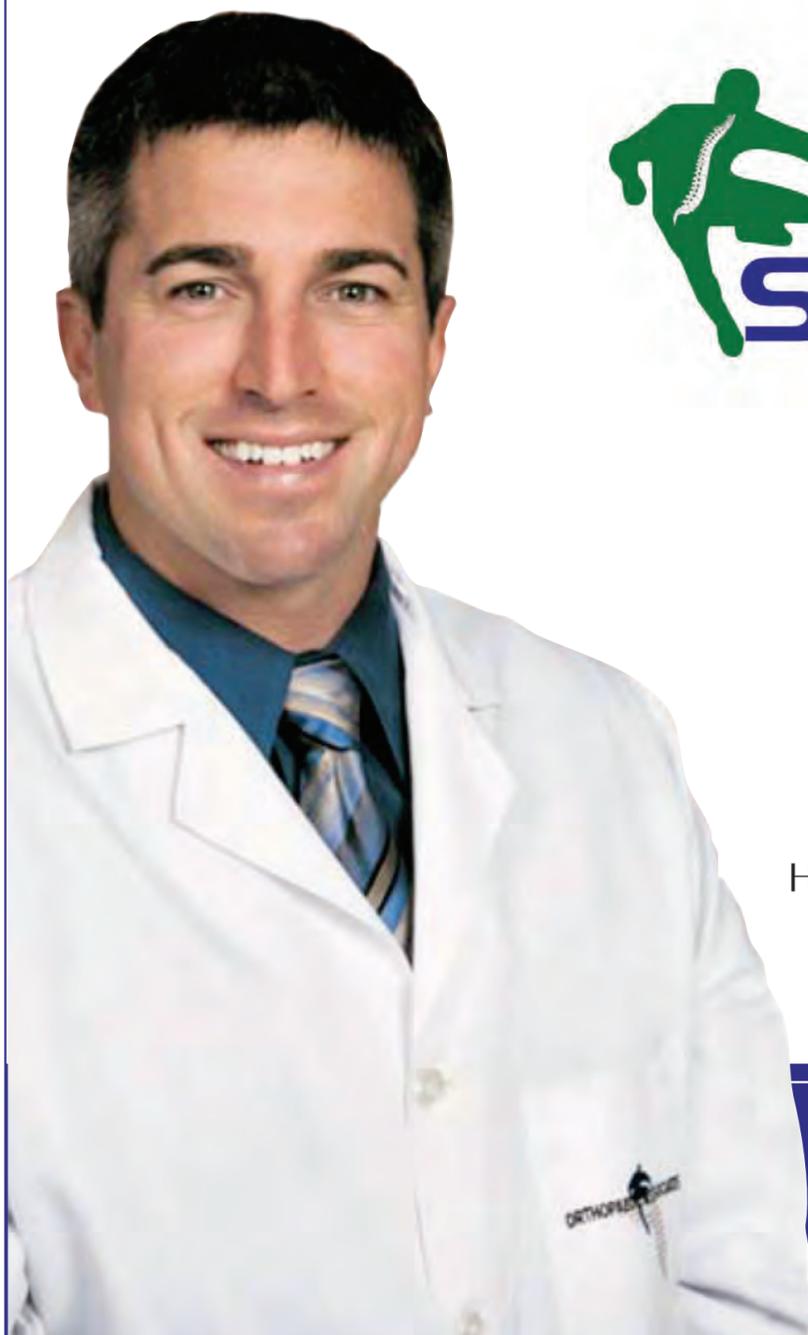
Ruckel runners take first

The sound of pounding feet signaled the start of middle school cross country season as the Ruckel Rams ran to victory in the first meet Sept. 12 at Shoal River. From left: coach Dale Eiriksson, Dillon Buckley, Hunter Brake, James Underwood and coach Zac Keeler. The boys were among the top four finishers for Ruckel. Not pictured is Calvin Blackford, who placed first.



Cardboard sailors vie in regatta

A pair of youthful buccaneers steer their craft toward the finish line in the Youth Division of Sunday's Bluewater Bay Sailing Club Cardboard Regatta. The regatta, which took place in Choctawhatchee Bay off the Bluewater Marina, drew sailors of all ages and skills. The pirates shown here, Heath Hinely and Ethan Hunt, won the Children's Division in their craft, the Nye Unstoppable.



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