

The Bay Beacon

Police Blotter
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12 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

50¢

**UP
COMING**

Wednesday, 3-4 p.m.



Learn how to check out eBooks and audio books with your Nook in a free **Nook workshop** at the **Niceville Public Library**.

Thursday, 1:30 p.m.



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Friday, 6-8 p.m.

Enjoy food from local restaurants at the **Child Care Services** annual "Taste of the Bayou" and charity auction fundraiser at St. Mary Church, Fort Walton Beach.

Saturday, 6-9 p.m.



Support the **Rocky Bayou Christian School** at its Burgers and Bids **silent auction** to benefit its scholarship and financial aid programs at the Destin United Methodist Church.

Monday, 6:30 p.m.



Hear the **Liberty University Wind Ensemble** in its spring tour **free concert** at the First Baptist Church of Niceville.

See Calendar, B-2.

Plan to build on part of golf course eyed

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

The Okaloosa County Commission will hear a request at its April 16 meeting for a notice of proposed change to the Bluewater development of regional impact (DRI) by the Bluewater Resort to change four of the resort's golf holes to land for residential development.

According to Terry Jernigan, Okaloosa County planning manager, the commission will decide whether the proposed change constitutes a substantial deviation from the original development plan, and then decide whether to approve it.

Jernigan said a decision that the change does not constitute a substantial deviation does not

necessarily mean an approval of the plan.

"They could decide it's not a substantial deviation and still give it the thumbs down," Jernigan said.

Jernigan said the West Florida Regional Planning Council and the state's Department of Economic Opportunity (formerly the Department of Community

Affairs) have also received submissions from the resort and will also decide whether the proposed change is a substantial deviation.

If the county determines the change does not constitute a substantial deviation and the Department of Economic Opportunity does, the issue would be sent for review to the state's Land and Water

Adjudicatory Committee, consisting of Gov. Rick Scott and his cabinet.

Jernigan said DRIs are governed by a different statute than normal zoning changes, and thus the change will not go before the Okaloosa County Planning Commission.

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

Play ball!



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Saturday was opening day for 120 players of the Valparaiso-Niceville Girls Softball Association. Ten teams, divided into four leagues covering ages 5 to 18, faced off at the Niceville softball complex for their first games of the 42nd season, which ends May 18. Coaches helped girls in the dugout get ready to take the field while parents and family members cheered from the stands.

Nurse charged with stealing patients' pills

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

A nurse at a Bluewater Bay nursing and rehabilitation facility was arrested after she was caught with over 100 pills intended for residents of the facility, according to Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office reports.

Renee Lorraine Stern, 32, of 229 Limestone Circle, Crestview, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 24 on charges of petit theft, two counts of possession of a prescription drug without a prescription and two counts of trafficking opium or a derivative, according to the sheriff's reports, which gave the following account:

Duane Gallagher, administrator of the Manor at

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



Renee L. Stern

Officials deny blame in TDC scandal

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

A parade of Okaloosa County officials and contractors testified Monday before the Florida Legislature's Joint Legislative Auditing Committee (JLAC) in Tallahassee during the panel's second hearing regarding the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council scandal of 2012.

Each witness explained his role in relation to the TDC and said that he was not responsible for any misconduct connected with deceased TDC director Mark Bellinger's theft of county funds. It was the third time in recent weeks that the JLAC has summoned Okaloosa County officials to testify on events surrounding the looting of hundreds of thousands of dollars from county coffers.

One of the first witnesses was Warren Gourley, a member of the TDC's governing board. He said that TDC board members were volunteers who served merely in an advisory role, and that votes taken during their

2 accused in case, A-3.

Please see **SCANDAL**, page A-5

Landscapers offer ideas to spruce up BWB

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Landscaping companies made suggestions to improve the look of Bluewater Bay during a recent public forum.

The Bluewater Bay Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU), a taxing district that maintains the appearance of common areas of Bluewater Bay, hosted a landscaping workshop Feb. 22.

The workshop meeting was scheduled by the MSBU to gather

information and ideas about how to improve the overall appearance of the Bluewater Bay community. No decisions were made, but ideas advanced at the workshop are expected to be discussed at future MSBU meetings, such as the one scheduled for March 12.

The workshop began with a slide presentation from Jason Connor, a representative of the ValleyCrest Landscape Companies.

Connor showed slides of work

his firm, a national company which is based in California and has an office in Santa Rosa Beach, has done at other planned communities similar to Bluewater Bay. ValleyCrest was an unsuccessful bidder for the MSBU's current landscape-maintenance contract.

Connor said that while he did not wish to throw stones at the hard work done by other landscaping companies in Bluewater Bay, his company could offer

ideas that would enhance the "curb appeal" of Bluewater Bay, and help local residents "to be happy where you live."

Connor said some of the landscaping designs and street signs in the Bluewater Bay area are aging and that their deteriorating appearance could reduce local home values. He suggested that current wooden street signs could be replaced by more durable signs such as concrete or brick monuments or by making use of

landscaping features to elevate or protect signs against damage from lawn mowing equipment and other sources.

Connor also said that local turf could be helped to grow and maintain its appearance through better use of water and fertilizers, which could be planned by his company. He also recommended that steps be taken to remove such eyesores as ant mounds, deadwood, and other debris from landscape areas. Connor also sug-

gested adding what he called a "third rotation" of seasonal color to Bluewater Bay through the planting of colorful flowers and shrubs in local flower beds.

Connor's slide show was the only formal presentation from any landscaper or company at the workshop. However, some other landscapers did speak up with ideas of their own. Hank Bruns, for example, mentioned that he

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

Newest fire engine floats

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

Firefighters will be able to respond better to waterfront fires and other emergencies on area waterways, thanks to a new fireboat operated by Niceville Fire Department Feb. 27.

Niceville Fire Chief Tommy Mayville said the boat, a 27-foot Brunswick Boston Whaler, can fight blazes by pulling up to structures or vessels from the water side.

Mayville said the boat has an intake pump that can shoot water from the bay through hoses at 1,200 gallons per minute, nearly the rate of a fire engine.

According to Mayville, the boat would also respond to air crashes in the bay.

Before Feb. 27, the only fire agency near Choctawhatchee Bay to have a proper fireboat was the Destin Fire Control District,

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



Niceville firefighters test the pump and spout on a new fire boat in Boggy Bayou off Lions Park, Niceville, Friday. The 27-foot Boston Whaler, which will be used to fight fires around Choctawhatchee Bay, can pump water in a 200-foot stream at 1,200 gallons a minute.

Beacon photo by Daniel Elsesser

PLAN

From page A-1

Jernigan said if this change to the DRI is approved April 16, the resort will be able to sell the development rights for the land. Any future developer will then have to draft more specific building plans, which will then have to be reviewed only by the county for permitting.

The resort is trying to sell parts of its Magnolia golf course in order to save the course as a whole, according to Bluewater Resort General Manager Tom Hanks. The proposal would shorten, but not eliminate, the

nine-hole course. The resorts three other nine-hole courses would be untouched.

Hanks said the number of rounds played at the course has dwindled in recent years due largely to poor economy. Hanks said selling part of the land for residential development is the best way to cover the course's general upkeep costs.

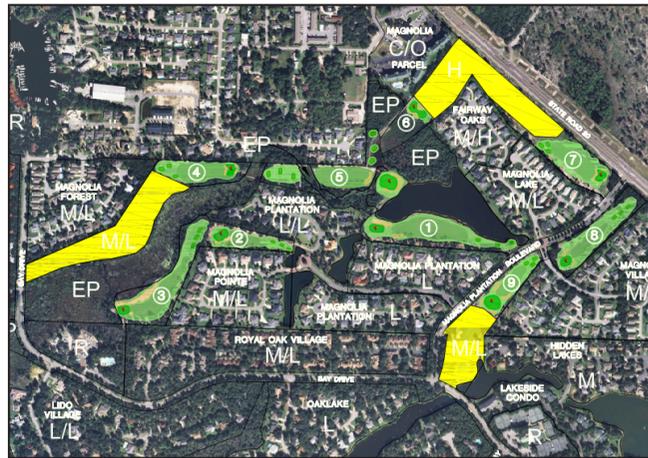
Steve Hall, a Destin attorney representing the resort, said multiple-family housing will likely be developed on the land currently occupied by holes 6 and 7 of the Magnolia course. The submitted request, if approved, would allow for this construction and construction of single-family

homes on land currently occupied by holes 4 and 9.

Several Bluewater homeowners have expressed opposition to the proposed change, saying a shortening of the golf course will decrease property values of houses that will no longer adjoin the course.

Raimund Herden, a land developer who was instrumental in the creation of Bluewater Bay, said even if the change to the DRI is approved, the project will be difficult to permit and thus unattractive to potential developers.

"This project is a stillborn child," Herden said. "It's dead before its even started."



Holes 4, 6, 7 and 9 of the Magnolia golf course at the Bluewater Bay Resort would be shortened to create room for the development of houses and apartments, according to a resort proposal submitted for government approval. The proposed residential areas are marked in yellow.

Bluewater Resort

BWB

From page A-1

had helped work on the Highway 20 median in Bluewater Bay as well as the Gleneagles II community within Bluewater.

A representative of Emerald Coast Nursery, Niceville, said that Bluewater Bay is a beautiful community but that it needs a master plan and goals, especially for such things as street lighting and signage. She said

Bluewater Bay needs a consistent concept in order to present the best possible appearance.

A representative of Bayou Lawn Services, Valparaiso, Bluewater Bay's current landscaping contractor, was present

at the meeting but did not give a presentation.

Bayou Lawn's taxpayer-funded contract to care for the landscape of common areas of Bluewater Bay was renewed for 12 months in November by the

MSBU. Unit costs in bids submitted by companies seeking the annual contract remain secret at the MSBU's behest, despite requests that they be recognized as public documents. Other parts of the bids were disclosed Feb. 12, five months after the first of several requests by the Beacon.

The newly disclosed documents show the following bottom-line bids, including options, to perform landscape maintenance at public expense in Bluewater Bay for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1:

—Dogwood Services Inc., Niceville: \$189,667.

—Bayou Lawn Services, Valparaiso: \$176,106.

—ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance Inc., Santa Rosa Beach: \$271,845.

A number of Bluewater Bay residents attended the Feb. 22 meeting. They asked questions and offered suggestions of their own. One resident said that while Connor's presentation was impressive, she preferred to maintain the many trees and shaded areas that have become characteristic of Bluewater Bay.

She also suggested more use of native plants rather than annual flowers in local flower beds.

Another resident said that he prefers that Bluewater Bay present a more wild or wilderness appearance, rather than the manicured appearance found in such places as Sandestin.

Yet another resident, however, said that while some areas in Bluewater Bay should remain wild, other specific areas need good grooming to present a good first impression to newcomers and visitors.

Bluewater Bay resident and professional golfer Rob Strano said, "As a former tour pro, I have seen the high and low end of golf communities throughout America." Strano said the Bluewater Bay should keep up with the times and "Be an 'A' community versus a C-minus community," which he said Bluewater Bay is now, in terms of appearance. Strano said that Bluewater Bay needs a plan in order to "keep up with the Joneses."

No votes were taken or decisions reached during the workshop. As the forum concluded, some residents offered other comments, such as one who commended the MSBU board of directors for the time and effort they volunteer in helping to maintain the community.

Another resident asked the MSBU board how much money is actually spent each year on landscaping in Bluewater Bay. The board members replied that this year's landscaping budget is about \$285,000.

Another resident suggested that Bluewater Bay's appearance can be improved through better enforcement of community covenants such as those that forbid the parking of boats in driveways or the presence of cars under repair in people's front yards. Board members replied that covenant enforcement is not part of the MSBU's legal charter, and that people with complaints about covenant enforcement should contact local lawyer Jerry Zivan, who handles such matters within Bluewater Bay.

MSBU board member Dale Blanchard said that not all parts of Bluewater Bay are under the jurisdiction of the MSBU, and that therefore, such areas cannot be improved through its actions, but must be maintained by their private owners or homeowners associations. He told the Beacon that an aging sign on Bay Drive just east of Bluewater Boulevard, pictured in the Feb. 20 issue of the newspaper, for example, was not under the MSBU's control.

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Two accused in TDC case

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

A Destin man was charged with grand theft in connection with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office's investigation of the misuse of Tourist Development Council (TDC) funds by former TDC Director Mark Bellinger. The sheriff's office has issued a second grand theft warrant for a Pennsylvania resident.

Nathan Bert Gerald Wilson, 39, of 4201 Two Trees Road

Apt. 1617, Destin, was arrested by sheriff's deputies March 4 on a charge of grand theft, according to a sheriff's report, which gave the following account:

Between Jan. 1 to March 1, 2012, Wilson's ex-wife applied for \$47,450 in TDC funds to finance marketing and permitting for Destin relay race which was to be held Nov. 8 to Nov. 11, 2012. According to the sheriff's office, the race never occurred.

The event received \$12,000 in funding, \$7,000 of which was paid to Wilson and his ex-wife in June 2012. The \$7,000 has not been remitted to the county.

A warrant for grand theft

was also issued for Robert Boudreau, 84, of 550 Plains Church Road, Penn., according to a sheriff's report.

Boudreau, the music director for the American Wind Symphony Orchestra, allegedly received \$25,000 for a concert or concerts to be held in Okaloosa County June 2012, according to the report. According to the sheriff's office, no concerts took place, and the money has not been remitted to the county.



Nathan B. G. Wilson

Fire chief concerned on taxes

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

The North Bay Fire Commission on March 12 is expected to hear more about a draft "Master Plan Update" submitted by Fire Chief Joseph Miller.

The master plan, said Miller during a briefing to the elected fire commissioners last month, is a tool for drafting each year's annual budget, and is also a planning guide for long-range improvements to the North Bay Fire District, such as planning for purchasing and financing new fire trucks, improvements and major repairs to the fire station, obtaining new equipment, implementing new training and personnel policies, and other long-range planning.

In a briefing to the commission Feb. 12, Chief Miller emphasized that the current plan is only a draft. Miller asked commissioners to review the document prior to the March 12 commission meeting, and to

bring their own recommendations for changes and improvements of the plan to that meeting.

In his draft plan, Miller stated that the fire district has reduced its property tax collections for the past several years, pacing a decline in local property values. He implied that if the current decline in property value continues, it may soon be necessary to either raise tax rates or cut back on plans for future improvements or services provided by the fire district.

"Since FY 2007/08 when the property values were \$1,092,932,446; property values have dropped \$225,708,995," Miller stated. "At a 2.0 mil rate, that equates to \$415,418 in revenue lost for the district. If this trend continues, adjustments may need to be made to the budget and planned upgrades to the fire station."

North Bay's current millage rate is 2.35. Its tax rolls rose less than 0.2 percent last year,

one of only two taxing jurisdictions in Okaloosa County to post an increase.

Miller also wrote that activity at the Navy-operated joint-service Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, located adjacent to the North Bay Fire District, has steadily increased, and that other local military units such as the 33rd Fighter Wing have seen an increase in personnel and activity on Eglin Air Force Base training and bombing ranges.

He said that North Bay has been exploring the possibility of obtaining the use of some Eglin property as the location of a new North Bay fire station, "but due to the economic downturn, a new station may not be feasible at this time."

Miller also wrote that increased traffic to and from the Mid-Bay Bridge has added to the number of vehicle accidents the fire district responds to, and that although new business development within North Bay

adds to the amount of property tax revenue available, it also adds to the probability of fires or other emergency calls as more people come and go from the new businesses.

Miller also recommended that the fire district add another inspector to its staff, to help keep up with the increased need for fire inspections as new businesses are added to the community.

Regarding other future plans, Miller told commissioners that there may be an opportunity to purchase a new rescue and pumper truck for North Bay at a reduced price. The Jacksonville Fire Department is purchasing 58 such trucks, so North Bay may be able to "piggyback" on Jacksonville's large order, thus sharing in the volume discount offered to Jacksonville by the truck manufacturer. He said he will gather more information and report back to the fire commission at a future meeting.

NEWEST

From page A-1
Mayville said.

"They were taking on the brunt of fire near the water," Mayville said. "Now we'll be able to take on some of that workload."

Mayville said that previously Niceville used a small boat not built for the purpose to fight blazes near the water. That boat used a portable Honda pump that could pull water from the bay at about 300 gallons a minute, one-quarter the rate of the new boat.

The new boat, powered by two Mercury 250-horsepower outboard motors, cost \$231,000. It was obtained through a port security grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, according to Mayville. He said the potential risk of the Citgo fuel depot on Boggy Bayou near Lions Park and the possibility of airplane crashes from Eglin Air Force Base qualified the department to receive the grant.

Mayville said the boat will be kept on a trailer at the firehouse on North Partin Drive until the department reaches an agreement



with Northern Light Marina for storage. He said the boat would then be kept at the marina on a lift, ready for quick deployment.

Mayville said the self-bailing boat came with some advanced features, including a side dive hatch, radar and a depthfinder.

The boat will also carry emergency-medical equipment, Mayville said. He said this would help the department respond to water-sports injuries

in a more timely and safe manner. Mayville hopes Niceville residents will go to the fire station to look at the department's newest piece of equipment.

"I encourage the general public to come by and look at it," Mayville said. "It's their boat."

Niceville firefighters took out the boat on a training run in Boggy Bayou Friday, spouting water perhaps 200 feet into the air.

A makeshift rescue boat, left, equipped with a portable pump has been supplanted by a \$231,000, 27-foot fireboat, background, at the Niceville Fire Department.

Beacon photo by Daniel Elsesser

Mayville named several fires that could have been handled better had the new boat been on hand, including an April 2012 sailboat fire at the dock of Giuseppe's Wharf. Niceville firefighters were hindered in responding to that blaze because of a broken hydrant. A fire hose brought to bear by a crewmen on a tugboat that happened to be nearby was credited with saving other vessels from the flames.

NURSE

From page A-1

Bluwater Bay, 1500 White Point Road, reported he had reason to believe Stern, a registered nurse employed by the Manor, had been stealing prescription medication intended for patients.

According to the sheriff's report, Gallagher called police after he watched surveillance

footage. Gallagher confronted Stern, and she confessed, according to the report.

Stern allegedly provided a deputy a sworn statement admitting to the offense.

According to the deputy's report, Stern said she took the pills because of pain she had from surgery.

A deputy found Stern was in possession of 126 pills intended

for various patients at the Manor. The pills were three pills later identified as Lorazepam, 74 pills later identified as acetaminophen and hydrocodone bitartrate, 46 pills later identified as oxycodone hydrochloride, and three pills later identified as Alprazolam. The drugs were worth an estimated \$82.

Stern's required court appearance is scheduled April 9. She

was booked Feb. 24 at the Okaloosa County jail on a \$53,500 bond for the stated charges, and was released Feb. 25.

Gallagher told the Beacon that all patients eventually received the intended medication.

Gallagher said he called the sheriff's office after he noticed medication missing.

Gallagher said Stern is no longer employed at the Manor.

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Police Blotter

The following accounts of the activities of police are according to records of the Niceville and Valparaiso police departments, the Okaloosa County and Walton County sheriff's offices, other law-enforcement agencies, and the Okaloosa County and Walton County jails.

Arrests

Miranda Lee Murphy, unemployed, 30, of 626 W. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police on a charge of battery for an incident which allegedly occurred Jan. 28.

An officer responded to the Subway restaurant at 900 S. Palm Blvd., Niceville, in reference to an assault report. A man reported that a woman later identified as Murphy punched him three times in the face inside the restaurant.

Murphy allegedly admitted to hitting the man, filling out a voluntary statement to that effect.

Bradley Neil Beck, 30, at large, was arrested by Niceville police Feb. 26 on a charge of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, possession of marijuana less than 20 grams and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Two officers found Beck in a bedroom in a residence on the 500 block of 27th Street, Niceville, while conducting an investigation with a representative of the Florida Department of Children and Family Services.

The owner of the residence said she did not know Beck was there. An officer searched Beck and found a tube in his front pocket. The tube contained a blue pill which poison control later confirmed was 10 mg hydrocodone and 650 mg acetaminophen, and one white pill which poison control later confirmed as 2 mg clonazepam.

Officers also found a cigarette pack containing what a field test confirmed was marijuana, and a pipe. On Beck's person, officers also found a clear plastic tube with two coffee filters packed into it.

Beck's required court appearance is scheduled April 9.

A 17-year-old Niceville girl was arrested by Niceville police Feb. 22 on a charge of simple battery domestic violence.

The girl's required court appearance is scheduled March 27.

Jason Michael Willman, a building maintenance worker, 23, of 168 Live Oak St., Niceville, was arrested by Valparaiso police Feb. 26 on a charge of battery.

Willman allegedly struck someone on the side of the face with a closed fist.

Willman's required court appearance is scheduled March 19.

Margaret Elizabeth Thornton, 43, of 393 Lincoln Ave., Valparaiso, was arrested by Valparaiso police Feb. 24 on a charge of battery domestic violence.

Thornton allegedly struck someone in the face, breaking their glasses and causing lacerations. She also allegedly slapped a separate person.

Thornton's required court appearance is scheduled March 19.

Alexander Peter Laurent, a construction company owner, 38, of 1651 18th St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 26 on a charge of battery domestic violence.

Laurent allegedly grabbed someone by the shoulders and pushed her into a chair, and when another person attempted to intervene, Laurent pushed that person over a chair, knocking over a table.

Laurent's required court appearance is scheduled March 19.

Tonya Marie Pratt, a nursing assistant, 42, of 915 Linden Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 24 on a charge of battery domestic vio-

lence.

Someone reported Pratt struck him twice in the face with what he believed to be her keys.

Pratt's required court appearance is scheduled March 19.

Miles Orrin Van Eaton, a convenience store employee, 26, of 114 Oak Shores Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 22 on a charge of driving while license suspended third or subsequent offense.

Van Eaton's required court appearance is scheduled March 26.

DUI arrests

Brian A. Showalter, 52, of 1638 Stevens Ave., Louisville, Ky., was arrested by Valparaiso police for DUI at S.R. 397 at Old Highway 10, Valparaiso, Feb. 23 at 8:05 p.m.

Showalter was also cited for unlawful speed and driving with an open container of an alcoholic beverage.

Showalter's required court appearance is scheduled March 12.

Cherie Marie Watson, 37, of 5254 Kimp Road, Crestview, was arrested by Niceville police for DUI at S.R. 20 at Bayshore Drive, Niceville, Feb. 24 at 12:35 a.m.

Watson was also cited for unlawful speed.

Watson's required court appearance is scheduled March 19.

Mary Darlene Nieves, 50, of 327 Evergreen Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies for DUI at

Traffic crash sends six to hospitals

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

A 16-year-old Niceville boy was cited for causing a two-vehicle collision in Bluewater Bay Friday that sent six passengers to hospitals with minor to serious injuries, according to a Florida Highway Patrol report, which gave the following account:

The youth was driving a 1999 Ford Explorer westbound in the left-turn lane of S.R. 20 at 6:30 p.m. and attempted to turn left onto White Point Road, according to the FHP report.

He drove the car into the intersection in the path of a 2009 Chevrolet Traverse that was eastbound on S.R. 20. The front of the vehicle driven by the 16-year-old collided with the front of the Traverse, driven by Richard Hoover, 51, of Springfield, Mo.

The collision caused \$15,000 in damages to the Traverse and \$6,000 in damages to the Explorer.

509 Harbor Blvd., Destin, Feb. 20 at 12:04 a.m.

Nieves' required court appearance is scheduled March 12.

Thefts

Niceville police received a call Feb. 22 reporting an unknown person stole an unspecified amount of money from the Coke machine at Building C of Northwest Florida State College at 100 E. College Blvd.

The owner of the business at 96 John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso, reported Feb. 18 an unknown person stole approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 of coins from his store.

The complainant reported the

door to his business had been opened by what appeared to be a pry bar.

A Valparaiso resident of the 200 block of Chicago Avenue reported Feb. 21 an unknown person had used her credit card from Nov. 8 to Feb. 4 to make several fraudulent charges and cash withdrawals totaling \$8,135.01.

The purchases included a \$268.65 purchase at Publix in Fort Walton Beach Jan. 30 and a \$401.68 purchase at Walmart in Fort Walton Beach Feb. 2.

The complainant said she did not realize she hadn't been receiving credit card statements from the credit card company because she had been recovering from illness.

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Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 25, 2013 through March 03, 2013.

0 Structure Fire
0 Vehicle Fire
1 Other Fire
0 Illegal Burn
0 False Alarms

20 Emergency Medical Calls
1 Vehicle Crash
0 Vehicle Crash with Extraction
2 Other Emergency Calls
0 Hazardous Conditions

STREET	SITUATION	DATE	TIME
S. Palm Blvd.	Medical	2/26/13	08:51
Nalney Ave.	Medical	2/26/13	08:58
Redwood Ave.	Medical	2/27/13	07:31
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	2/27/13	07:43
Cape Lane	Medical	2/28/13	17:12
Camellia Place	Cancelled	2/28/13	18:23
Coral Drive	Medical	2/28/13	23:34
29th Street	Medical	3/1/13	00:21
Perdido Circle	Vehicle fire	3/1/13	07:23
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	3/1/13	08:05
Linden Ave.	Medical	3/1/13	12:30
Juniper Ave.	Medical	3/1/13	13:02
Juniper Ave.	Service call	3/1/13	17:24
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	3/2/13	02:50
Bahia Vista Dr.	Medical	3/2/13	04:38
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	3/2/13	05:34
21st Street	Medical	3/2/13	13:24
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	3/2/13	20:56
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	3/3/13	01:13
Evans Street	Medical	3/3/13	04:18
Camilla Place	Medical	3/3/13	05:14
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	3/3/13	05:37
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	3/3/13	07:37
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	3/3/13	14:51

Weekly Safety Tip: Check lamps and ceiling fixtures to make sure wiring is intact. If an appliance smokes or smells, turn it off immediately. Examine electrical cords before use and replace any that are frayed or cracked. Don't overload electrical outlets. Like the Niceville Fire Department on Facebook

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 25, 2013 through March 03, 2013.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Hickory St.	Public assist	2/25/13	01:31
N. White Point Rd.	EMS call	2/25/13	08:01
Cedar St.	Assist invalid	2/25/13	08:38
St. Josephs Cove	No incident found	2/25/13	09:12
S. Tumberry Cove	EMS call	02/25/13	10:16
Cedar St.	Assist invalid	02/25/13	11:06
E. Hwy. 20	EMS call	2/25/13	12:54
Range Rd.	EMS call	2/25/13	13:04
N. White Point Rd.	EMS call	2/25/13	13:58
N. White Point Rd.	EMS call	2/25/13	18:18
Blue Pine Ln.	EMS call	2/25/13	19:14
Hwy. 20/Klaus Conrad Dr.	Medical	2/25/13	20:10
N. White Point Rd.	EMS call	2/26/13	01:02
Highway 20	Medical	2/26/13	09:37
BW Blvd/Hwy. 20	Vehicle accident	2/26/13	16:56
John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	2/27/13	07:49
Ida Coon Cir	Medical assist	2/27/13	20:07
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	2/28/13	01:30
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	2/28/13	22:50
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	2/28/13	22:33
Perdido Circle	Fire in motor home	3/1/13	07:29
Partin Dr.	Dispatched & cancelled	3/1/13	08:06
White Point Rd.	Medical	3/1/13	13:47
Mainsal Dr.	Dispatched & cancelled	3/1/13	15:02
Calinda Lane	Dispatched & cancelled	3/1/13	15:24
SR 293	Vehicle accident	3/1/13	18:41
Parkside Cir.	Public assist	3/2/13	01:04
Fairway Lakes Dr.	Medical	3/3/13	05:49
Bay Drive	Dispatched & cancelled	3/3/13	11:57
Cat Mar Rd.	Medical	3/3/13	12:43
Shadow Ln.	Medical assist	3/3/13	22:29

East Niceville

The East Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls during the month of February, 2013.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
18th Street	Vehicle accident	2/1/13	01:05 PM
Patti Cove	EMS call	2/4/13	03:00 AM
Partin Drive	Aircraft standby	2/4/13	08:31 AM
Highway 20 E.	Unintentional transmission	2/4/13	09:36 AM
48th Street	EMS call	2/6/13	05:04 AM
48th Street	Good intent call	2/6/13	05:46 PM
17th Tee Cove	EMS call	2/7/13	04:24 PM
48th Street	EMS call	2/7/13	05:49 PM
48th Street	Medical assist	2/7/13	09:41 AM
Edgewater Dr.	EMS call	2/10/13	12:17 AM
Valparaiso Blvd.	Public service assist	2/10/13	06:59 AM
N. Partin Dr.	Heat from short circuit	2/10/13	10:16 AM
Sycamore Ave.	EMS call	2/10/13	08:50 PM
Bay Drive	Dispatched & cancelled	2/11/13	06:18 AM
White Point Rd.	Dispatched & cancelled	2/11/13	06:22 AM
Redwood Ave.	EMS call	2/12/13	06:20 AM
Bayshore Dr.	EMS call	2/17/13	03:23 PM
Martinique Cove	Smoke detector activation	2/18/13	10:28 AM
Redwood Ave.	EMS call	2/21/13	12:15 PM
45th Street	EMS call	2/21/13	12:29 PM
Sycamore Ave.	EMS call	2/22/13	07:26 AM
E. Dominica Cir.	EMS call	2/23/13	12:49 AM
SR 85 N.	Building fire	2/24/13	11:26 AM
Kathleen Ct.	Lightning strike	2/24/13	09:55 PM
Wren Way	Lightning strike	2/24/13	11:19 PM
E. John Sims Pkwy.	EMS call	2/27/13	07:44 AM
23rd Street	EMS call	2/28/13	09:36 AM
Golf Course Dr.	Detector activation	2/28/13	11:01 AM

Visit our website at www.enfd.net.

Valparaiso Volunteer

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

Location	Situation	Date	Time
Judith Dr.	Fall	2/2/13	14:53
Andrews Dr.	Back pain	2/2/13	19:06
Glendale Ave.	Sick call	2/3/13	10:39
Trevor Dr.	Sick call	2/4/13	11:25
Government Ave.	Unconscious	2/5/13	21:16
Adams Ave.	Traumatic injury	2/6/13	12:30
S. Bayshore Dr.	Unconscious	2/9/13	08:17
James Ave.	Breathing problem	2/14/13	01:12
Chicago Ave.	Fire service call	2/14/13	15:13
Jasmine Ave.	Fall	2/15/13	11:02
Carie Way	Unconscious	2/17/13	04:47
Edge Ave.	Headache	2/18/13	22:43
N. John Sims Pkwy.	Motor vehicle accident	2/19/13	16:38
Jackson Cir.	Structure fire	2/20/13	15:30
Grandview Ave.	Chest pain	2/22/13	22:25
S. Bayshore Dr.	Oven fire	2/23/13	12:18
Market Ave.	Fire alarm	2/27/13	05:53

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The Swim and Hard Court Tennis Memberships are not exclusive to Bluewater Bay Residents. **EVERYONE** is welcome to join!

SCANDAL

From page A-1

meetings served only to provide advice and suggestions to the county commission, which had the authority to make actual decisions.

Gourley told the JLAC that TDC members did not deal directly with such things as invoices or checks issued on behalf of the county or the TDC.

Gourley said that after a recent legislative delegation meeting held in Niceville, that the county commission asked TDC members for their resignations. Gourley told the committee that County Commissioner Don Amunds had told him that resigning from the TDC might help to protect TDC committee members from being "drug through the mud in Tallahassee," an apparent reference to earlier JLAC hearings at which some county officials were lambasted by state lawmakers for an alleged failure to detect and stop the plunder of public funds.

Gourley said that despite the request from the county commission and Amunds recommendation, that he had not resigned from the TDC. Gourley said that neither he nor the other TDC members had done anything wrong. "We were all representatives of the tourist industry," he told the committee, with no authority to approve checks or invoices. The problems that led to the TDC scandal, Gourley said, "are in the process itself."

Gourley said that former TDC director Bellinger was "very outgoing" and "able to fool us, but I don't think he had any accomplices." Gourley emphasized that the county commission, not the TDC, had to approve all TDC spending. The county commission chairman was responsible for approving all TDC payments.

Some JLAC members expressed skepticism about Gourley's testimony. Sen. Rob Bradley, a Gainesville Republican, asked, "Did you have no idea what you were approving, even though you were voting to approve it? How did you not know about the gross abuses?"

Gourley again said that the TDC was merely an advisory body and had no approval authority over checks or invoices. Gourley said that he had never heard about Bellinger's purchases of a motor yacht, a house, or a Porsche sports car until the boat purchase was revealed in May 2012, shortly before Bellinger's suicide.

JLAC members also questioned Gourley about the county commission's request that TDC members resign. Sen. Alan Hays, a Lake County Republican, asked whether Gourley thought that the requests for resignations were merely intended to allow the county commission to present the Legislature with "heads on a platter."

"That's my opinion," Gourley replied.

Gourley also told the committee that some people in Okaloosa County think that the JLAC hearings are "all political," and that the state wants to take control of Restore Act oil-spill mitigation funds from BP, using recent scandals in Okaloosa County as a pretext for doing so.

JLAC members vigorously denied that allegation. "Okaloosa County made themselves look bad," said Sen. Hayes. "This is about extremely bad public policy."

Nevertheless, said Hayes, "If we have to send the Attorney General to throw everyone out of office in Okaloosa County and hold new elections, so be it."

Other present and former TDC members gave testimony similar to Gourley's. Patricia Hardiman told the JLAC that she joined the TDC on May 7, 2012, shortly before the scandal broke, but was nevertheless asked to resign last month. During her service with the TDC, she said, she sometimes felt like it was a superfluous body—"not window dressing, but not really necessary."

She said that as a TDC member she saw overall county budgets, but few specific figures regarding TDC spending. "I should've pushed harder," for information, she said. After being asked to resign, said Hardiman, she did so with a strongly worded letter.

Bobby Nabors, a TDC member from Fort Walton Beach, said the TDC members were given general budgets, but no line items for spe-

cific expenditures, such as the Destin house or the Porsche or the yacht purchased by Bellinger.

Nabors said that the management of the TDC was "a system set up to fail." Although the county commission had a representative on the TDC, he said, that representative did not talk to other county commissioners outside of county commission meetings because to do so would have broken Florida's Sunshine Law. Bellinger supposedly answered directly to the county commission chairman, who did not attend TDC meetings.

Despite the mismanagement of the TDC, said Nabors, he still thinks that his job there is an important one. Tourism accounts for about 40 percent of all the jobs in Okaloosa County, he said, adding that he is proud to be an industry representative to the TDC.

Kathy Houchins told the JLAC that she has been TDC chairwoman for the last two years. During her service, she said, she thought that everything approved by the TDC was going straight to the county commission for final approval. She said she never saw requests from Bellinger to purchase such things as a house or yacht. Bellinger, she said, was "a big-ticket guy" and that the Zimmerman and Lewis ad and marketing agencies "were paid big chunks of money in advance."

After hearing from TDC members the JLAC members questioned former TDC legal counsel Steve Hall, who said that he resigned from his position with the TDC at the county commission's request in February.

Hall said that he began as TDC counsel in 1994 or 95. Hall said that before Bellinger became director of the TDC, Bellinger's predecessor was Darryl Jones. Jones, said Hall, regarded the county commission as a deadly enemy, and saw himself as the protector of the Tourist Development Council, with the job of protecting its funds from being taken by the county commission for non-tourism related projects throughout the county. For years, said Hall, Jones "built his system around himself as a single individual."

In 2005, Hall said, the TDC director was placed directly under the supervision of the county commission chairman, rather than the county administrator. Hall said that Jones became "the keeper of budget information," and that TDC members were informed only of "big picture allocations" of funding, such as special events following the BP oil spill in 2010. Hall said the entire county government went into a "panic mode" after the oil spill, in its attempts to revive tourism, which suffered markedly due to bad publicity about the spill, although little oil ever touched Okaloosa's shores.

When asked by Sen. Hayes, "How did you not know about the gross abuses of TDC funds?" Hall replied that soon after Bellinger succeeded Jones as director of the TDC, Bellinger "stopped talking to me. I thought he didn't like me and was planning to get rid of me."

Hall said he was not consulted about Bellinger's large purchases or about the contracts with the Zimmerman or Lewis agencies. Those, he said, were handled directly by the county attorney and county purchasing department.

Ellen Wingard, a representative of Lewis Communications, an Alabama ad agency that worked for the county, was also questioned by the committee. She said that Bellinger had sent her agency \$747,000, supposedly to fund a "Boast the Coast" publicity campaign for the county. Then, she said, Bellinger asked the Lewis agency to return those funds, claiming that the project had been canceled. The money eventually was used to buy Bellinger a house in Destin, according to law enforcement authorities.

Bellinger, Wingard said, asked that the funds be returned to a special escrow account at Regions Bank. She said no one at Lewis thought to verify the ownership of that escrow account, simply assuming that the account belonged to the county. She said that she and Lewis president Larry Norris authorized the wire transfer to the Regions account.

Wingard said that neither she nor Norris profited from their dealings with Bellinger. In fact, she said, "We were never paid for 40 to 60 days of work." The county recently ended its relationship with the agency.



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Okaloosa County commissioners Dave Parisot, left, Don Amunds, second from left, and Wayne Harris, seated at right, were among those addressing a state legislative panel Monday investigating the county Tourist Development Council scandal.

Asked why the Lewis agency did nothing to verify or enforce checks and balances on their financial dealings with Bellinger, Wingard replied that Bellinger, as the official representative of Okaloosa County to the agency, "was the client," and that from their agency's point of view, "this was his money."

Curt Zimmerman and Richard Long of the Zimmerman ad agency, a Tallahassee agency hired by the TDC, told a similar story. "During our first 19 years working with the TDC," said Zimmerman, "there was considerable oversight of expenditures." That changed with Mark Bellinger, he said. "Bellinger did not desire our help in managing his budget."

Zimmerman, whose agency the county also has since dispensed with, said that Bellinger told him not to send representatives to any more TDC meetings. "Bellinger," said Zimmerman, "was strong-willed and wanted things his way," often behaving like a "steamroller."

When asked about the Zimmerman agency's involvement in Bellinger's \$48,000 expenditure for a Porsche, Long said that Bellinger had contacted the Zimmerman agency, saying he had a great idea for a viral marketing campaign revolving around a give-away of a Porsche. Bellinger, he said, instructed the Zimmerman agency to purchase a Porsche from a dealer in Massachusetts designated by Bellinger, with the agency's own money, and to then invoice Okaloosa County for the same amount, listing it as a bill for the marketing campaign, but without mentioning the purchase of the car.

Committee members asked Zimmerman and Long whether their suspicions were ever aroused by such vague wording on invoices, and whether they thought it was reasonable to use public money to buy a Porsche.

Zimmerman replied that Bellinger had already made the deal, and that although the Zimmerman agency advised Bellinger that it was a bad idea, that they nevertheless followed Bellinger's instructions. Zimmerman said that his agency had "no direct relation with the county commission—none."

State Rep. Matt Gaetz, Fort Walton Beach, asked Zimmerman if such business dealings were customary. Zimmerman replied, "Sometimes." Zimmerman said invoices from his agency to the county usually referenced overall ad or marketing projects, not specific items to be purchased. Zimmerman said that Bellinger had assured him that the county commission would approve such invoices.

When asked by Gaetz whether he thought such dealings were strange, Zimmerman replied "Yes," but added that he was simply working with his client as he thought he should.

Okaloosa County Clerk of Court Don Howard also testified briefly, confirming that the county's TDC governing ordinance was changed in 2005 to allow the TDC director to report directly to the county commission chairman, rather than to the county administrator. At that time, said Howard, there was nothing to indicate gross abuses within the TDC. Howard is responsible for auditing county books, but apparently did not detect widespread instances of TDC spending which the state

auditor general has said were unlawful.

County commissioners Don Amunds, Dave Parisot and Wayne Harris also spoke briefly, and attempted to show a PowerPoint presentation to the committee detailing how some funds for the TDC were used and how some of the debit cards issued by the TDC following the BP oil spill were put to use. However, time was running out, and the PowerPoint was not shown in full.

Commissioner Harris assured the committee that he took his job as county commission chairman seriously. He said there were three oaths that he has taken most seriously in his life - his oath of office as an Air Force officer, his marriage vows to his wife, and his oath of office as a member of the Okaloosa County Commission. He asked the JLAC to order a complete operational audit of "every entity of Okaloosa County government, including all constitutional officers." This, he said, would "help to heal the county."

James Campbell and Bill Roberts, two former chairmen of the county commission who were

commission members during Bellinger's tenure, but did not run for re-election last year, did not appear at the JLAC hearing. It could not be immediately learned whether they had been asked to testify.

Okaloosa County Attorney John Dowd testified briefly. He said he did not agree with some recent state Auditor General findings that contracts between Okaloosa County and some of the TDC's contractors "subjected the County to unlimited liability."

"Mistakes were made," said Dowd. "A man stole from us."

What the county must do now, Dowd said, is "to correct those mistakes."

Before adjourning the committee meeting, JLAC Chairman Sen. Joseph Abruzzo, a Palm Beach County Democrat, said that the state is not seeking control of any BP or Restore Act money earmarked for Okaloosa County. He said the auditor general's report was "as bad as any ever seen." He said the TDC scandal has stained the image of government officials in Okaloosa County and throughout Florida.

Abruzzo admonished Okaloosa County officials that, "You must be accountable for all the dollars spent." He said that the auditor general will issue another report in 18 months. "I hope all other counties pay close attention to that report," Abruzzo said, because the control issues with the Okaloosa County TDC could happen in other counties.

Following the JLAC's meeting, Rep. Gaetz told the Beacon that the next step in the process will be to await the auditor general's final report in 18 months. Gaetz said that Okaloosa County's response to the TDC scandal thus far has been disappointing.

"The county has been totally deaf to the people's requests to change personnel," he said.

"A whole lot of people need to get fired," said Gaetz. Among these, he said, are County Attorney John Dowd and County Administrator James Curry, as well as anyone within the county purchasing department who should have overseen the funding for the TDC and failed to do so. "These are not bad people," Gaetz said, "but they didn't do their jobs."

On Tuesday, in response to an inquiry from the Beacon about what kind of report, legislation, or other action by the Florida Legislature may result from the auditing committee's hearings on the TDC, JLAC coordinator Kathy DuBose replied on behalf of Sen. Abruzzo, the JLAC chairman.

"To my knowledge," said DuBose, "no report will be issued. Committee staff will, however, continue to monitor activities in Okaloosa County related to the audit and the hearings, such as the results of the law enforcement investigations as they are made public and the County's effort to take corrective action related to the audit findings."

"Although individual members of the committee (or other members of the Legislature) may decide to propose legislation (or amendments related to the issues raised during the hearings, the committee is not authorized to propose or consider legislation," DuBose added.

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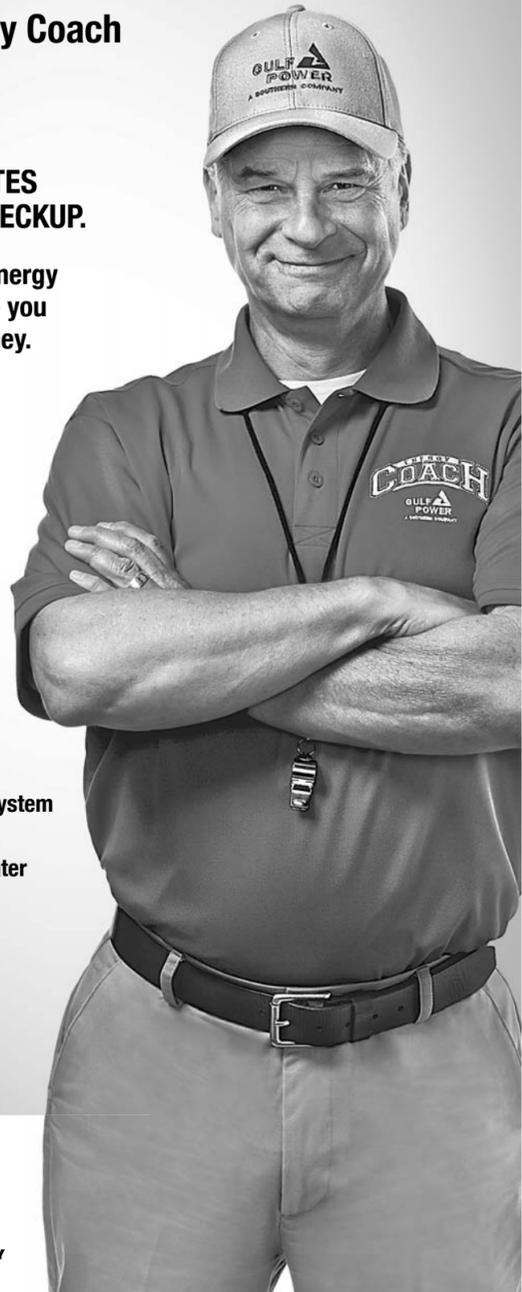
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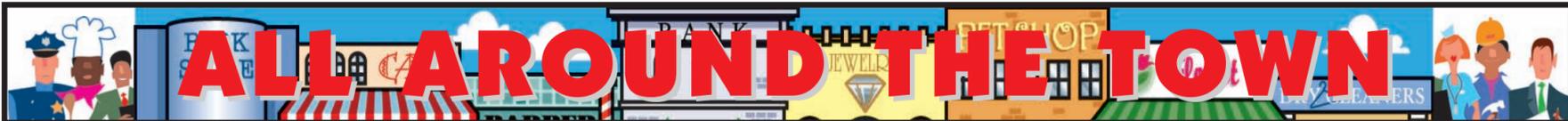
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Spa La La

Celebrating its one year anniversary of serving Niceville

Advertising Feature

The only thing more fun than saying the name is experiencing it for yourself! Local salon Spa La La will be celebrating its one year anniversary with its patrons on Friday, March 15th.

All day, the salon will host an open house with hors d'oeuvres, lots of wine uncorking and a stellar deal of 10% off all retail: a recipe for celebration and relaxation.

Why name a full service luxury salon Spa La La? "It's just fun to say!" comments owner Renee Hill. Walk into the salon and you get that healthy, glowing feeling. As you enter, you're bound to have someone asking you if you'd prefer water or wine. Its effortlessly glamorous décor, siding on having the charm of a classy boutique, makes most guests feel as if they've checked into a resort rather than gone to the neighborhood salon.

It's Niceville's own, like stylist Kathleen Schabla who has lived in town for 19 years, that make up the soul of Spa La La's talented team. She, along with stylist Kristin Cash, believe that their job is to make people feel better about themselves and bring out their inner beauty.



Bobby Watson is one such happy customer. "As a treat for her daughter-in-law, my mother will give my wife a haircut from Spa La La," Watson shares.

Owner Hill still remembers the surprised and endearing look on

Bobby's face when his beloved emerged from her stylists' care with a deep mahogany color and wonderfully detailed cut. "When she came out she was absolutely gorgeous. I told her she looked like a movie star," remarks Watson.

It's like having the best back-scratch of your life." Starting with a body exfoliation and ending in a milk massage, this treatment is guaranteed to have you tingle all day.

But what is truly remarkable about Spa La La is its triumphant story of local business success. After raising her children, Hill decided to pursue her passion in cosmetology. "After all," she says, "if you're not doing what you love at 45 then you need to change that!"

It is easy to equate their one year achievement with their client focus. Their customer service is a direct reflection of the community; they even offer the "Military Mender" package for our service men and women returning from deployment. Whether you're a loyal customer or interested newcomer, come celebrate Spa La La on March 15th. We dare you not to feel instantly relaxed!

Spa La La is open Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. You may call 850-279-4620 for an appointment or visit 306 Government Avenue, Niceville, Florida. Their email address is Spalaladayspa@gmail.com.

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Niceville soldier embarks on first deployment

Second Lieutenant Shawn O'Brien of Niceville had been a newly trained signal officer for all of four months before he embarked on his first deployment to Kuwait, Iraq, Jan. 2.

Shawn, who previously worked as a contractor for Jacobs Engineering on Eglin Air Force Base, first heard rumors of his deployment while attending the Signal Basic Officer Leader Course (SBOLC).

"I graduated from Auburn University in May 2012 and two weeks later, I was at SBOLC," Shawn said.

Shawn trained for his job at SBLOC over the summer and quickly began work with his unit, the 67th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 35th Signal Brigade, XVIII Airborne Corps, within a couple days of graduating SBLOC in September at Fort Gordon, Ga.

"I immediately started working with the people in the 3 shop (operations) and got a better handle on how things worked," Shawn said. "One day, I saw my name on the deployable roster,



2nd Lt. Shawn O'Brien of Niceville said goodbye to his family Jan. 2 at Fort Gordon, Ga., before leaving for his first deployment to Iraq. From left: parents, retired Air Force Col. Michael O'Brien and Mary-Allison, Shawn, and sister Aubrey-Joy O'Brien.

and that's when I knew I was going."

Deployment was always part of his plan, Shawn said. When his unit asked him if he wanted to deploy, he easily answered "yes."

Shawn's father, retired Air Force Col. Michael O'Brien of Niceville, was excited and nerv-

ous for Shawn when his son told him the news.

"On the military side you're excited he could do work in an operational environment after graduating," Michael said. "But of course it comes with the danger."

Please see SOLDIER, page B-4

Ballet still a dream job for young dancers

By Anna Kavanaugh
Beacon Staff Writer

Ballet isn't just a hobby or after school activity to 11-year-old Savannah Crabtree of Bluewater Bay, a firefly in the upcoming Northwest Florida Ballet's performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" March 9 and 10 at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center.

"When I first started to dance, I fell in love with it," Savannah said. "I saw performances and thought, I can do that someday."

Savannah has been dancing since she was three years old, her mother, Lisa Crabtree, said. Lisa knew Savannah was destined to be a dancer since she was a toddler.

"She started walking on her tippy toes when she was one years old, so I thought, she should be a ballerina," Lisa said. "So I signed her up for ballet lessons."

Since then, Savannah's life has revolved around dancing. She is a student at the Northwest Florida Ballet Académie, a public academic and dance education school,



Savannah Crabtree of Bluewater Bay is thrilled to wear her firefly costume for the Northwest Florida Ballet's performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" March 9, 7:30 p.m., and March 10, 2:30 p.m., at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center.

and dances at least four hours every day, she said.

Elle Danjean, daughter of Niceville's Dockside Café owners Ernie and Dawn Danjean and student at the Académie, will also play a firefly.

Elle has been dancing since she was four years old and

plans to pursue a career in it.

"One day I want to go to Julliard or Geoffrey and be a professional ballet dancer," Elle said.

Elle spends her days at school from 7 a.m.-3 p.m., then attends dance classes after

Please see BALLETS, page B-4

Engagements

E-mail items to:
info@baybeacon.com



Katrina Fantaski and Adam White.

Fantaski-White

Mike and Cheryl Fantaski of Niceville are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Katrina Fantaski, to Adam White, son of Ron and Clarissa White of Rolla, Mo.

Katrina is a 2003 Niceville High School graduate and a 2010 graduate from the University of Florida, College of Pharmacy. She completed her residency at the Joint Ambulatory Care Center in 2011 and now practices as a VA clinical pharmacist.

Adam is a 2007 University of Missouri graduate and 2010 Summa Cum Laude graduate of Florida Coastal School of Law.

Adam works at Wade, Palmer and Shoemaker P.A. in Pensacola.

The couple resides in Pensacola and the wedding is planned for May 11, 2013, at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Pensacola.

Students win essay contests

The Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, announced the winners of its 2012-2013 American History Essay Contest, Good Citizens Essay Contest and the Christopher Columbus Essay Contest.

The American History winners are: Alicyn Grete, Rocky Bayou Christian School sixth grader, Zoraida Isabel DeJesus-Mendoza, seventh grade homeschooler, and Cole Crews, Meigs Middle School eighth grader.

The state winner will be announced at the Florida State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Spring

Conference March 14-17, Orlando.

Niceville High School senior Victoria Marks was named the Christopher Columbus Essay Contest winner. She is the two-time contest state winner.

The Good Citizens Essay Contest was restricted to high school seniors in public, private and homeschooled programs. Collegiate High School student Alexander Wagner and Victoria Marks were recognized for their winning entries on the subject "Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It: Describe the Freedoms and Responsibilities of a Good Citizen."



Alexander Wagner

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NWFSC fall graduates

Northwest Florida State College announced the 2012 fall term graduates.

Adrian Richard Banegas of Niceville graduated with an associate in art degree, summa cum laude with a grade point average of 4.0.

Graduates earning magna cum laude, with a GPA of 3.8-3.99, **Freeport:** Timothy S. Carty with a bachelor of science and Joseph Harrison Settle with an associate in science.

Graduates earning cum laude, with a GPA of 3.5-3.79, **Niceville:** Rachel A Miller with a bachelor of applied science, Melissa June Lambert and Frans Georg Wollnik with associates in applied science, Travis James Ford, Natasha A. Jackson, Rebecca A. Johns, Evan Knorr, Amethyst Rivet, Zach Leon Rodgers with associates in arts degree, Michelle Debolt with an associate in science, **Valparaiso:** Joseph Jacobs and Bryan T. Sylvester with associates in arts degree, and Michelle K. Sinicrope with a bachelor of science.

Graduates earning highest honors with a GPA of 4.0, **Niceville:** Stacy L. Wheelwright with an applied technology diploma, Rebecca Sue Birge, Christopher Steven Force, Travis Ryan Topolski with certificates, **Valparaiso:** Ryan David Frandi with an applied technology diploma, **Freeport:** William Hallman with a certificate.

Graduates earning high honors, with a GPA of 3.8-3.99, **Eglin AFB:** Thomas Paolo P. Espino with a certificate. **Niceville:** Aaron Clay Chapman, Mark Anthony Cordeiro, Alicia Marie King, Isabel Rosado Pogozelski with certificates.

Graduates earning honors with a GPA of 3.5-3.79, **Niceville:** Erin Elizabeth Eichler with an applied technology diploma, James Andrew Corkum, Daniel Gurley, Brooke A. Hansen and Tyler Shiltz with certi-

ates, **Freeport:** Michael Patrick Eggie with a certificate, **Valparaiso:** Ryan David Frandi with a certificate.

Students who successfully completed the requirements for a degree or certificate include: bachelor of applied science, **Niceville:** Grace G. R. Baker, Tyketon Paul Barger, Lori Michelle Burgess, Nicholas W. Johnson, Shawaun T. Moore, **Freeport:** Matthew Donald Phaneuf; bachelor of science, **Niceville:** Richard A. Jackson, Joseph M. Sparks, Lindsey N. Stuteville; associate in applied science, **Freeport:** Mark Alan Johnson, **Niceville:** Natasha Nicole Collins, Shawaun T. Moore, Michael Patrick Moriarty, Horace Randall Paine Jr., and Jason P. Remar; associate in arts degree, **Eglin AFB:** Holly Asher

Scanlon, **Freeport:** Ashley Venus Atkins Mann, Joshua Lee Ealum, Rose R. Martin, Tammy Kay Raymond, **Niceville:** Timothy J. Berger, Ashley Allene Brown, Lori Michelle Burgess, Haley E. Byrd, William Andrew Cunningham, Tessa L. Darling, Ryan L. Dybal, Melissa Lee Dye, Debra T. Elliott, Erin Rose Foss, Jon Nicholas Freshour, Gabrielle S. Guilles, Dylan Charles Hoover, Shelby Marie Johnson, Heather Nicole Kelso, Asia Michelle Lara-Navarro, Matthew Ray Luecht, Jessie M. Maraman, Kayla Morrison, Rochelle Neau, Jared U Nieves, Daisha M. Oliver, Brandon Parrish, Samuel Schweitzer, Hannah Paige Simerly, Michael Jay Stiles, Sandra Leticia Tierney, Allison J. Van De Voorde, and Kendall Elena Walton; associate in science, **Freeport:** Samantha Beville, **Niceville:** Toni V. Altieri, Toni Marie Becker, Matthew Ryan Halladay and Misty Parsons; certificate, **Freeport:** William Henry Lockemy, Amber N. Riley, **Niceville:** Michael J. Esneul, Mark Henry, Antoinette Danielle Larence, Joseph B. McCormick and Angela M. Olberding.



NHS 1973 reunion

The Niceville High Class of 1973 40th Reunion will be held Oct. 11-13. Contact Pam Smith for tickets and details at 678-5484 or pamsmith1955@yahoo.com.

Senior program

The Walton Okaloosa County Council on Aging offers a weekly senior program for people 60 and older two locations. The Seminole Community Center offers Bingo Thursdays, 10 a.m., and Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., at the center. The young women of First Baptist Church of Niceville host a monthly birthday party on Wednesdays at the Valparaiso Community Center. There is also Wii bowling on Thursdays, 9:30 a.m., Bingo, Fridays and Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., and Mondays, Dominoes and socializing, 9:30 a.m., at the center. Contact 833-9291 for weekly menus and events.

Vendors needed

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida needs vendors for its 37th Saturday in the Park Festival April 20, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The festival features the Heritage 5K Run/Walk, People's Choice Car Show, heritage craft demonstrations, re-enactments, live entertainment, craft and food vendors, old-fashioned games and contests, a kid zone with petting zoo, bounce house and children's crafts. Vendor space is limited. The fee for one booth is \$55 or \$60 with electricity. Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. To apply contact the museum at 678-2615 or www.heritage-museum.org.

Road notifications

Beginning March 5 the City of Niceville will remove and replace 600 feet of the concrete pathway along Bayshore Drive, between Dana Pointe and Lanman Road. The work is expected to take 10 days. Pedestrians are asked to exercise cautions while traveling along this segment of the roadway. Wise Avenue, Niceville, will be closed March 11, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., for installation of a new storm drain, weather permitting. Contact the Public Works office at 729-4064.

Nook workshop

The Niceville Public Library will host a free, public Nook workshop March 6, 3-4 p.m., at the library. Marysia Mann, digital sales lead with Barnes & Noble, will teach participants how to check out eBooks and audio books from the library's new Overdrive database. Registration isn't required.

Early release movie day

The Valparaiso Community Library will host an early release movie day featuring "Wreck it Ralph" March 7, 1:30 p.m. at the library. Popcorn will be served.

Audubon Society meeting

The Choctawhatchee Audubon Society will present a free, public program, "Monitoring the Success of Oyster Reef Restoration in Choctawhatchee Bay," March 7, 7 p.m., Room 132 Student Service Building, Northwest State Florida College, Niceville. Alison McDowell will talk about improving the productivity of Choctawhatchee Bay, and how to get involved. Refreshments and socializing will begin at 6:30 p.m. Contact Walt Spence at 582-7064.

Donate blood

Northwest Florida Blood Services will host blood drives March 8, 8 a.m.-noon, at General Dynamics, 115 Hart Street, Niceville, March 9, 1-6 p.m., at the Niceville Walmart, March 17, 8 a.m.- 1 p.m., Christ Our Redeemer



Liberty University concert

Hear the sounds of Liberty University Wind Ensemble as they perform a free concert March 11, 6:30 p.m., at the First Baptist Church of Niceville.

Church, 1028 White Point Road, and March 27, 3-8:30 p.m., Niceville United Methodist Church, 214 S. Partin Drive. Snacks and drinks will be provided to donors as well as a free t-shirt. Contact Lynda Krupka with questions, 862-4216 or Lynda.Krupka@oneblood.org.

'Taste of the Bayou'

The Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services will host its 17th Annual Fare For Child Care, "Taste of the Bayou" and Charity Auction, March 8, 6-8 p.m., at St. Mary Church, Fort Walton Beach. The event will feature food from local restaurants and advance tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. Purchase tickets at Child Care Services' offices in Fort Walton Beach and DeFuniak Springs, Uptown Station, and Valparaiso Realty Company. Contact Amber Spurgeon at 833-9330 ext: 202. All proceeds will benefit Child Care Services.

'Geocaching' lecture

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida will host its free lunchtime lecture, "Mosquitoes, Muggles, and Museums: Exploring Florida's Archaeology with Geocaching" March 8, noon, at the museum. Historian Mike Thomlin will explain how "geocaching," a worldwide scavenger hunt game, works and what you need to play. Reserve a seat at 678-2615.

Chili cook off fundraiser

The Emerald Coast Parrothead Club will host a chili cook off March 9, 3 p.m., at Harborwalk Village, Destin. Sauce Boss will perform and there will be a silent auction as well. The contest entry fee is \$25 and tasting armbands are \$10. The proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society Relay For Life.

Genealogical Society meeting

The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County will hold its' monthly meeting March 9, 10 a.m., at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Ave., Valparaiso. Dale Cox, writer and historian, will speak on "Seminole Wars in this Area". All visitors are welcome and a Dutch treat lunch will follow at a nearby restaurant. Contact 678-2023.

Northwest Florida Ballet

The Northwest Florida Ballet will present "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and the neo classical ballet "Afterglow" March 9, 7:30 p.m., and March 10, 2:30 p.m., at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Northwest Florida State College, Niceville. More than 58 dancers will perform. Tickets are \$28 for adults and \$14 for children 12 and under and available at www.nfballet.org or 664-7787.

YMCA yard sale

The Niceville YMCA will host a yard sale March 9, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Palm Plaza, Highway 20, Niceville. The proceeds will benefit the Niceville YMCA.

Burgers and Bids fundraiser

The Rocky Bayou Christian School will host its Burgers and Bids 40th Anniversary and Silent Auction March 9, 6-9 p.m., at the Destin United Methodist Church, 200 Beach

Drive. All members of the RBCS community are invited to attend, as well as the broader community. All proceeds generated through the auction, sponsorships and ticket sales will benefit the scholarship and financial aid program at the school. Contact 678-5878 to purchase tickets for \$40 per person.

'Les Misérables' child audition

Northwest Florida State College will hold an audition for its summer musical, "Les Misérables," children's roles, including young Cosette, young Eponine and Gavroche March 9, 9:30 a.m., in the Tyler Recital Hall, Northwest Florida State College, Niceville. Contact the Fine and Performing Arts Division office at 729-5382.

Liberty University concert

Liberty University Wind Ensemble Spring Tour will perform a free concert March 11, 6:30 p.m., at the First Baptist Church of Niceville. The ensemble, under the leadership of Dr. Stephen Kerr, consists of college students studying a variety of majors at Liberty University, Va.

Better Listening music study

The Unitarian Church Fellowship presents a free, public music study, "The Symphonic Poem," as part of its Better Listening series March 12, 7-9 p.m., at the Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall, 1295 Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso. Lars Runar will speak. The programs are held each Tuesday until March 26. Contact Lou Johnson at musicstudy@uufec.com.

Twin Cities Seniors meeting

The Twin Cities Seniors, 50-plus, will meet March 13, 1 p.m., at 268 Glenview Ave., Valparaiso. There will be Bingo and an entrée provided. Bring a covered dish to share. Contact 543-0869.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

The Northwest Florida State College presents the theatrical version of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" March 13-16, 7:30 p.m., in the Sprint Theater, at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, NWFSC, Niceville. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for youth ages 18 and younger. To purchase tickets contact the box office at 729-6000 or visit www.mattiekellyarts-center.org.

DAR meeting

The Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will meet March 14, 10 a.m., at the First Presbyterian Church, 134 Beal Parkway SW, Fort Walton Beach. Randy Bergeron, retired USAF and civil service, will speak on military archives. The DAR is open to all women who are lineally descended from a Revolutionary War Patriot.

Ruckel chorus concert

The Ruckel Middle School Chorus will perform a concert, "Sweet Sounds," directed by Megan James March 14, 6:30 p.m., at the school gymnasium, Niceville. Admission is \$5 and dessert and coffee will be served. Elementary students and younger are free. The proceeds will benefit the Ruckel chorus program.

In Service

Air Force Airman 1st Class **Gannon Q. Patton** graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Gannon Patton is the son of Stacy Reynolds of Niceville.

Army 1st Lt. **Joshua S. Aspinwall** has returned to the U.S. after being deployed overseas at a forward operating base to serve in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Aspinwall is a platoon leader assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. He has served in the military for two years.

He is a 2004 Collegiate High School graduate and the son of Cynthia Snowden of Fort Walton Beach, and Jack Aspinwall of Crestview. He is a 2008 Northwest Florida State College graduate, Niceville.

Marine Corps Pvt. **Marquis J. Jeffers** earned the title of U.S. Marine after graduating from recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C. One week prior to graduation, Jeffers endured the Crucible, a 54-hour final test of recruits' minds and bodies. He is a 2008 Niceville High School graduate.

Air Force Airman **Corey T. Kennedy** graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Corey Kennedy is the son of Denise and Kevin Kennedy of Niceville and a 2010 Niceville High School graduate.

Navy Seaman **Richard A. Phillips** completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.

Phillips is a 2002 Niceville High School graduate and the son of Pamela J. Phillips of Cantonment, and Anthony R. Phillips of Niceville.

Air National Guard Airman 1st Class **Brittany A. Foxhall** graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.



Brittany Foxhall is a 2009 Niceville High School graduate and the daughter of Nanette Trigg of Clovis, N.M., and granddaughter of Denver, Colo.

Navy Seaman Apprentice **Christopher C. Beebe** completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.

Beebe is the son of Matthew J. Beebe of Niceville and a 2011 graduate of O'Fallon Township High School, Ill.

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Niceville's Newspaper

Cub Scouts visit Bay Beacon

Tiger Cub Scout Den 4, Pack 553, members Bryce Linton, Ayaan Haris and Max Brough toured the Bay Beacon office Feb. 15 and learned how the weekly newspaper operates.

Beacon photo by Daniel Eisesser

Rocky Bayou places in tournament

Rocky Bayou Christian School Junior Classical League members competed in the Junior Classical League Regional Forum Feb. 9 at Gulf Breeze High School.

Individual winners for the academic testing were: seniors Savannah West, third advanced Greek derivatives, Casey Young, third advanced Latin derivatives and fifth advanced Latin vocabulary; juniors MacKenzie Davis, second Latin derivatives II and fourth Greek derivatives II, Izabella Foreman, fifth history of the republic II, Connor Lynch, fifth Latin grammar level II,



Rocky Bayou Christian School students competed in the Junior Classical League Regional Forum Feb. 9 at Gulf Breeze High School. From left: Connor Lynch, Tim Sung, MacKenzie Davis, Shiloh Johns, Michelle Earls, Clayton Jago, Casey Young, Matt Pippins, Izabella Foreman, Ivan Linn, Will Makarov, Andrew Earls.

Matthew Pippins, second heptathlon II; sophomores Clayton Jago, fourth pentathlon.

Creative Contest winners: senior Shiloh Johns, second declamation; junior Kayla Thompson, first illustrated booklet, and Izabella Foreman, fifth modern myth.

Olympics individual winners:

100 meter race, first MacKenzie Davis and fourth Connor Lynch; 400 meter mixed relay, second MacKenzie Davis, Casey Young, Matt Pippins, and Will Makarov; Atlanta's race, fifth Casey Young and Clayton Jago; Friscus throw, fifth Kayla Thompson and fifth Tim Sung; human chariot race,

first Michelle Earls, Will Makarov, Trever Knie, and Andrew Earls; standing broad jump, first MacKenzie Davis, fifth Matt Pippins, and tug of war, second MacKenzie Davis, Izabella Foreman, Ivan Linn, Matt Pippins, Will Makarov and Casey Young.

Ruckel and Lewis bands receive superior medals

The Lewis School and Ruckel Middle School band students participated at the Florida Bandmasters Association Solo and Ensemble Festival Feb. 16 at Gulf Breeze High School. Lewis earned 36 superior medals and Ruckel earned 79.

Lewis superior solos are: Hannah Roos, clarinet, Tacy Colón, clarinet, Matthew Smith, euphonium, Andrew Colón, tuba, Jeffrey Rhodes, trombone, McKenzie Bentley, clarinet, Faith Fry, flute, Isabelle Devoid, trumpet, Justin Haymond, tuba, Matthew Bentley, trombone, Jasmine Richardson, clarinet, Jady Richardson, flute, Mindi Dennis, flute, CW Williams, trumpet, Garrett Oden, snare drum, Haley Pratt, bass clarinet, Noah Shaw, clarinet, Grayson Kramer, clarinet, and Peregrine Baarsch-Conroy, trumpet.

Superior ensembles are: Saria Hoskinson and Ayla TudTud, clarinet duet; Amy Lee and Danielle Davis, clarinet duet; Andrew Colón, Matthew Smith, Xavier Adams-Stewart, Zachary Krouse and Isabelle Devoid, brass quintet; Alexis Mooneyham, Jady Richardson, and Faith Fry, flute trio; Tacy Colón, Noah Shaw, Jasmine Richardson, Hannah Roos and Grayson Kramer, clarinet quintet.

Ruckel participants are: Alex Tolbert, Olivia Glaze, Anna Freeman, Madelyn Huston, Camille Miles, Brynn Burdge, Karlee Prevatt, Ashleigh Wallace, Claire Yandel, Taylor Strickler, Jayden Reece, Hannah Ross, Hannah Sjostrom, Katrin Woods, Gwyneth Clark, Lauren Murray, Ryan Murphey, Perrin Davis, Lauren Cole, Katarina Marshall, Samantha Hanson, Evan Huntley, Noemi Ruiz, Jade Ward, Makayla Denney, Claire Crist, Jazzlyn Timper, Jacqueline Hruby, Austin Jacobs, Meredith Freeman, Zachary Verzwylt, Mandy Martin, Mikayla Barfield, Colton Williams, Austin Pettibone, Michael Letsinger, Jordyn Riley, Carter Bair, Emily Paulson, Jesse Johnson, Erin Fisher, Trent Walker, Gina LoCastro, Julia Freeman, Daniel Abel, Lauren Smith, Alissa Parr, Sarabeth Bilton, John Hencinski, Grace Smales, Matthew DeYong, Marcus Larson, Jacob Vernon, Michael Ross, Mason Ramby, Jorah Barefield, Ryan Erickson, James Underwood, Chloe Kokenes, Nathaniel Preston, Nathan Anthony, Trey Buck, Samuel Underwood, Hunter Brake, Dillon Buckley, Sydney Prevatte, Jane Parke, Matthew Parnell, Devin Drake, Daniel Bobbitt and Kasen Stephensen.



Ruckel Jazz Band gets high scores

The Ruckel Middle School Jazz Band received superior ratings at the Florida Bandmasters Association District One Jazz Music Performance Assessment Feb. 22 at Fort Walton Beach High School. From left: front row, Colton Williams, Michael Ross, Mandy Martin, Julia Freeman, Daniel Abel, Marcus Larson, back row, Zachary Verzwylt, Carter Bair, Meredith Freeman, Matthew DeYong, Grace Smales, Jacqueline Hruby, Jordyn Riley, Joseph Walker, John Hencinski, Jacob Vernon, Hunter Brake, Dillon Buckley, and Jacob Wargo. Not pictured, Perrin Davis.



First in essay contest

Okaloosa Stemm Academy student Aliviah Buzan took first place in Division 1 of the Florida State Elks Americanism Essay Contest. Her essay will compete against 13 Florida Elk Districts first place essays for best in state.

Cox tourney results

The Cox Communications-Okaloosa School District Academic Tournament held its fourth round of matches Feb. 12 and 19 in the media center at Choctawhatchee High School.

In match nine Collegiate High School beat Niceville High School 250 to 145.

De Cook coached the Collegiate team: captain Matthew Crabtree, Alex Russ, Danielle Trotman, Braden Corkum and John Chapman.

Justin Reichard and Amanda Brady coached the Niceville team: captain Sabrina Valenti, Alex Fager, Ciara Ordner and Georgia Pearce.

In match 10 Choctawhatchee High School beat Rocky Bayou Christian School 210-165.

Mike Mosley and Julie Mosley coached the RBCS team: captain Audrey Stevens, Noah Kerstein, Priscilla Baum, James Sung and Ian Kampert.



Boy Scouts zip line

Niceville Troop 157 Boy Scouts were fitted in harnesses to zip line across nine courses during a camping trip Feb. 16-18 at the Canyons Zip Line in Ocala.

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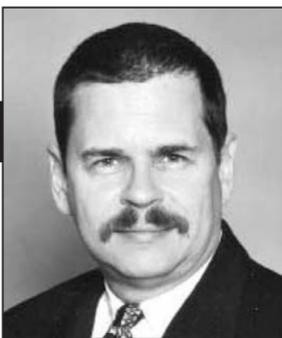
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Who's News

E-mail items to: info@baybeacon.com

Liza Jackson Preparatory School held its "Kick for a Cause" middle school soccer tournament Feb. 9 and raised \$1,000 for the Northwest Florida Chapter Big Brothers Big Sisters and \$100 for New Generation Animal Sanctuary, Niceville, in honor of its late Principal Phyllis Green.

The funds were collected from the tournament's attendees and middle school soccer teams, to include Lewis School, Rocky Bayou Christian Middle School and Ruckel Middle School.

Victoria Marks was honored with the Niceville Exchange Club's Youth of the Month award Feb. 12 at the club's monthly meeting. The Niceville High School senior is the daughter of Tim and Stacey Marks of Valparaiso.



Victoria Marks

Stacey E Rocque of Niceville earned dean's list honors at Saint Joseph's University for the fall 2012 semester. Students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or above, a B or greater in all their classes, and complete at least 15 credits to qualify.

BALLET

From page B-1

school and sometimes doesn't get home until 8 p.m., she said.

She doesn't mind spending her weekends practicing, but said it can be tough balancing work and play.

"My best friend Lilly always asks if I can come over, but I have rehearsal at four on Saturdays," Elle said.

Dancing doesn't stop for these young ballerinas after high school. In fact, it's just the beginning of their dancing careers and they are prepared to do whatever it takes to make it.

Niceville couple Sarah and David Goud had to have that same passion when they were younger and still have it today.

The couple has been dancing

professionally since they were teenagers. Sarah has been a NFB principal dancer and ballet teacher for two years and David has been a principal guest artist and dance teacher with the company for 15 years.

"Dancing is what we were born to do," Sarah said.

Sarah, who will play the lead role of Titania, the fairy queen, began dancing full-time professionally with the Louisville Ballet Company at 18 years old, where she met her husband, who will play Demetrius, one of the comedic lovers. David also began his career with the Louisville company at 19 years old.

Most of the couple's life was spent on the road dancing for different companies before they settled in Niceville. Luckily, they have found a semi-permanent home at the NFB.

Sarah spends her week teaching three ballet classes at the Académie, attended company ballet classes and then rehearses for upcoming performances.

"These are easily 10-hour days, so I like coffee and to eat and sleep well," Sarah said. "Saturdays, we dance and rehearse and Sundays are usually Danny's Fried Chicken and Redbox movies."

There is no rest for these ballerinas as they dedicate their entire lives to their love of ballet.

"It is the best life ever, especially when shared with someone you love," Sarah said. "The downs are injuries and that sometimes people don't understand how much blood, sweat and tears go on behind the scenes to make it look so easy, but we love it."

The ballet will feature the story surrounding the marriage of the Duke of Athens, Theseus, and the



Elle Danjean hits an arabesque as she prepares for her upcoming firefly role in the Northwest Florida Ballet's performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta. It follows the adventures of four young Athenian lovers and a group of amateur actors, who are manipulated by fairies.

Katia Garza, a NFB principal guest artist, choreographed the NFB's version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"I have to say that I have choreographed before, but Midsummer is the one I enjoy the

most," Garza said. "Midsummer is such a fun ballet to choreograph because it's always different and gives the dancers the freedom to interpret the roles in such a different way, so for me it's always like a new ballet."

More than 58 dancers from the NFB Company and international guest artists will perform. The Orlando Ballet will provide the scenery and costumes for the performance.



2nd Lt. O'Brien's job while deployed consists of planning future operational events that would involve moving communication dishes, above, to various parts of Southwest Asia.

SOLDIER

From page B-7

Shawn said his father was happy knowing he was going to be able to do what he wanted to

do. His girlfriend, Elisabeth Owen, was more apprehensive about the deployment.

"She was nervous at first, but then, she really dug in and started doing research about military life and couples affected by deployment," Shawn said. "It made me feel good to know that she was emphatically supportive of my goals."

Shawn's parents also supported him a 100 percent, he said. Shawn's father, mother, Mary-Allison O'Brien, sister, Aubrey-Joy O'Brien, and Elisabeth were able to spend New Year's Day together before Shawn deployed.

"Originally, the unit's deployment timeline wouldn't have allowed me to spend that time with them, but it was nice that it worked out so I could spend the holiday with my loved ones," Shawn said.

Shawn said goodbye to his family at the ceremony and then flew to Kuwait. Although he was excited, he didn't know what to expect.

"I didn't know what specific roles I'd be filling," Shawn said. "This being my first deployment, there were a lot of unknowns. Two weeks later, I now feel like I know what's going on, and I fit in."

Shawn is thankful to have the opportunity to communicate back home via Skype. Faith is important to him and he is looking forward to spending more time praying and reading the Bible, he said.

"I feel fortunate because a lot of my buddies in my Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps Class are still waiting to go to their respective BOLC courses, and I'm already deployed," Shawn said. "If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't do anything differently."



Lady Rams win Lions Cup

The Ruckel Middle School girls soccer team won the Big Brothers Big Sisters Northwest Florida fourth annual Lions Cup soccer tournament Feb. 9 at Fred Hedrick soccer field, Fort Walton Beach. More than 1,000 people came to watch 15 middle school soccer teams compete.



Runner places in top five

The Rocky Bayou Christian School track and field team competed at Baker High School Feb. 28. Junior Levi Derry, left, placed in the top five runners in the 100 meter race.

Photo by CeCe McArdle

Eagles tennis team beats Crestview

The Niceville High School Eagles Tennis team defeated Crestview High School at the Bluewater Bay Tennis Center Feb. 26. The girls beat Crestview 5-2 and the boys finished 7-0.

The team competed in five single matches and two double team matches. The NHS girls tennis competitors are: Timea Kovacs, Alexis Hruby, McKenna Mills, Monica Hsiang, Antonia Poate, Kendall Junker, and Jessica Markowski. The NHS Boys tennis competitors are: Alex Von Hilsheimer, Behrens Watkins, PJ Shaw, Max Van Belkum, Luke Chaney and Grant Beattie.



Photo by Cathy Catanese

Niceville High School tennis player Alex Von Hilsheimer defeated Crestview High School student Andrew Piagot 6-0, 6-0, for an overall win for the Niceville High School Eagles Tennis team Feb. 27.

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Ruckel dance team first

The Ruckel Middle School Dance Team, pictured with Coach Kendal Brown, took first place in the junior jazz division at the 2013 National Cheer and Dance competition Feb. 15 in Atlanta.

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