

The Bay Beacon

Police Blotter
Page A-4

10 Pages, 2 Sections, 5 Inserts

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

50¢

UP
COMING

Sat., 7:30 a.m.



2013 **Emerald Coast Mud Run** will be taking place at **Northwest Florida State College**. Around 4,000 runners will be battling the elements to raise money for orphans. Call 714-3757 or visit emerald-coastmudrun.com for details, Niceville.

Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.



OAA presents the sixth annual **Family Fun Arts Fest** at **Harborwalk Village in Destin**. There will be artisan vendors, live music and food in a festival atmosphere. Call 499-8335 for details.

Tues., 5:30 p.m.



Friends of Niceville Public Library present a **Maritime History Lecture** with speaker Della Scott-Ireton who will be sharing information about Florida's earliest shipwreck site at the **Niceville Community Center**, 204 N. Partin Dr., Niceville. Call 279-4863 ext.1504 to reserve a spot.

Calendar, B-2

Niceville seeks to promote its seniority

Officials eye addition of date to city seal

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

Niceville city officials are considering a change to the city seal to convey a deeper sense of community history.

City Manager Lannie Corbin has proposed that the city council decide whether to add a banner reading "Est. 1868" to the city's

seal, which currently bears no date.

The city was incorporated in 1938, but a local-history buff has been pushing city officials to emphasize that the community's roots go back more than six decades before that.

Corbin brought up the request at the suggestion of Elisa

Mitchiner, a self-described "freelance historian" who has spent years chronicling the history of the area, to which the first settlers of European descent arrived in the 1840s.

Mitchiner arrived at the 1868 established date because that was the year mail service in the area began, when the community was

named Boggy. According to the city of Niceville's website, "the Boggy Post Office was located about 100 feet from a wharf close to where Mill Creek flows into Boggy Bayou." Mill Creek drains Trout Lake, which is north of John Sims

Parkway on the Eglin golf course.

That development occurred 60 years before 333 of about 1,500 area residents voted, 329-4, to incorporate as a city. The decision, made in July 1938, was followed by the naming of J.M.



Please see SEAL, page A-3

Out of this world



Over 500 fourth- and fifth-grade students from area schools pretended to colonize another planet during the annual Marsville event at Eglin Air Force Base May 9. Pictured, students from Lewis School celebrate completion of their 'biodome' as a classmate looks on. More on B-1.

Tax auction is underway

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

The right to collect delinquent property taxes in Okaloosa County is up for bid.

Okaloosa County Tax Collector Ben Anderson opened an online auction May 11, in which buyers can bid on the rights to collect interest on unpaid Okaloosa real estate taxes. The auction will close May 31. A workshop for prospective bidders will be held in Niceville Monday.

Okaloosa real estate taxes levied in 2012 were due March 31, 2013. After that, unpaid taxes are delinquent and eligible for auction, according to tax administrator Justin Gordon.

Auction participants bid with the interest rates they are willing to accept, with the lowest bid winning the certificate. The winner then pays the county the face value of the certificate—that is, the amount the property owes in taxes.

Bids for the interest rate start at 18 percent and are submitted in increments of 0.25 percent. The lowest possible interest bid is 0.25 percent.

Please see TAX, page A-3



Ben Anderson

Matt Gaetz seeks Senate seat now held by his father

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

The race for Don Gaetz's District 1 Senate seat is already heating up, as Matt Gaetz, his son, became the second person to file candidacy for the race, which is scheduled to be decided in 2016.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, filed Monday



Matt Gaetz

Please see GAETZ, page A-2

Eglin disbands jet-noise committee

F-35 environmental report expected later this month

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

Eglin Air Force Base is disbanding a committee designed to work with local communities on the issue of jet noise, according to Valparaiso's representative to the

panel. During a Valparaiso City Commission meeting Monday, Bob Webb, the city's representative to the Eglin Air Force Base Noise Committee, told the commission that during the latest

meeting of the noise committee, held May 9, he was informed by base officials that it was the final meeting of the panel as presently constituted.

Webb said he hopes to propose that the noise committee be

succeeded by a smaller committee made up mostly of Valparaiso and Eglin representatives, as the other cities previously represented on the noise committee are less affected by aircraft noise from the base and are therefore

less interested in the noise issue.

Webb suggested to the commission that the city's future strategy in dealing with aircraft noise should focus on engaging directly with the 33rd Fighter Wing commander, as well as with Pentagon-level Air Force environmental officials, and should focus on what Webb called "positive action" to

address noise issues affecting Valparaiso.

Webb also said that the delayed final version of the Air Force's environmental impact statement regarding Eglin F-35 operations, including jet-noise impacts on Valparaiso and other communities, is expected to be released later this month.

Please see EGLIN, page A-2

New 'Niceville' sign in works

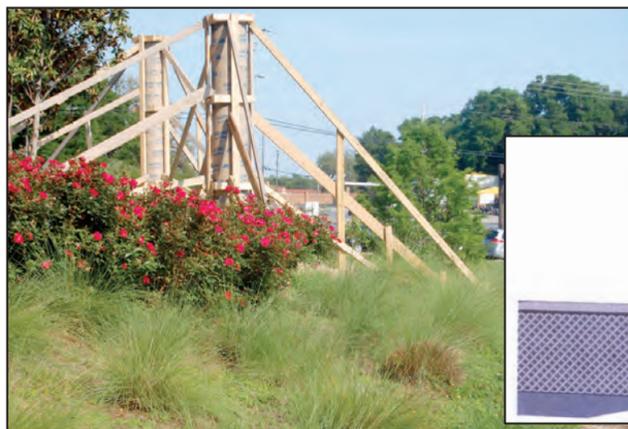
By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

Work is in progress to construct a new "City of Niceville" sign at the "triangle" intersection of John Sims Parkway and Highway 85 North.

City Manager Lannie Corbin said the work is being done entirely by the Niceville Public Works Department.

He expects work on the project to be completed in about a month.

The old "City of Niceville" sign, basically a series of large flowerbeds on a hillside, was torn up when John Sims Parkway on either side of the intersection was expanded to six lanes, a project that began in 2003.



Work has begun on a new sign (left) at Highway 85 North and John Sims Parkway, which will read "Enjoy Niceville," according to a city rendering, below. Beacon photo by Daniel Elsesser



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1187 East John Sims Parkway, Niceville (Across from Po Folks)

Fire sinks 31-foot boat in bayou



Photo by Leah Gagnon
An inboard powerboat was destroyed by fire around 3 p.m. May 12 in Rocky Bayou near Bluewater Bay Marina. The two persons aboard escaped without injury.

By Daniel Elsesser
Beacon Staff Writer

No one was hurt during a fire that destroyed a 31-foot boat in Rocky Bayou near the Bluewater Bay Marina just after 3 p.m. Sunday. Firefighters and private citizens rescued the two people aboard.

Ernesto Torres, of Niceville, the owner of the powerboat, said he is "99 percent certain the cause of the fire was electrical."

"I started to smell that typical smell of a burning wire," Torres said. "When I looked back a few minutes later, there was smoke everywhere."

Torres' wife, Tasha, and their dog, Borscha, jumped from the boat when it began smoking as it was underway. Tasha Torres said she and the dog were rescued by another boater, Leah Gagnon.

Ernesto Torres went to grab his wallet and jumped after his wife and dog. He was helped to safety by a paddle boarder.

"I wish we had gotten his name so we could somehow thank him,"

Tasha Torres said.

The Coast Guard, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Niceville Fire Department responded to calls made at about 3:05 p.m., according to Coast Guard Petty Officer Hunter Watkins.

Niceville Fire Chief Tommy Mayville said city firefighters raced to the scene with the agency's recently acquired fireboat. Mayville said the stern eventually burned away, allowing water to flow in until the hull sank.

Brett Hinely, owner of the Bluewater Bay Marina, said a marina-owned vessel dragged the burning boat away from the pier, avoiding additional damages.

Hinely said the marina used its own hoses to attempt to douse the flames. He said after the boat had been ablaze for a few minutes, there were nearly a dozen boats whose crews were attempting to help.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is currently investigating the cause of the fire. A spokesman estimated the investigation would take two weeks.

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EGLIN

From page A-1

Webb said that Eglin currently hosts 23 F-35 fighter planes, with the total perhaps rising to 41 by year's end. At least 55 of America's newest warplane are expected eventually to be based at Eglin, he said.

Valparaiso officials have long expressed concerns about noise and safety issues arising from the basing of an F-35 training wing at Eglin. At one point the city sued the Air Force over the issue. The suit was settled and the Air Force promised to do more work on the environmental-impact statement which Webb said is now expected later this month.

GAETZ

From page A-1

for the seat currently occupied by his father, a Niceville Republican who cannot run again for the post due to term limits. The younger Gaetz joins Rep. Jimmy Patronis, R-Panama City, who filed to run for the seat Dec. 3.

"I love serving the people of Northwest Florida," Matt Gaetz said. "I hope to be effective in the future in getting conservative reforms passed."

Patronis previously said he filed early in case Don Gaetz, the current Senate president, decided not to complete the last two years of his four-year term once his tenure as president ends in 2014. However, Patronis said he was still eager to run for the job if it starts in 2016.

Rep. Gaetz said Patronis' decision to file early prompted him to do the same.

"When I found out that someone who is a good friend and great guy, but not as strong a conservative as me, had filed, I saw that I needed to start campaigning as well," Gaetz said.

Patronis will be term-limited out of the House in 2014, when he will have served four consecutive two-year terms.

Matt Gaetz has also filed to run for re-election for his current House seat in 2014. This will require him to run two campaigns simultaneously.

Patronis questioned Rep. Gaetz's decision to run for both offices. "I don't know how you can run two campaigns without

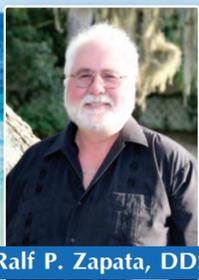
Please see GAETZ, page A-6



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CONVENIENT SCHEDULING

Monday - Thursday 7:30am-5:30pm
Friday: Closed



SEAL

From page A-1

Reynolds as mayor, and the creation of a city council that included Claude Meigs and Wallace Spence.

Mitchiner said she wants to add the "established" date to the city seal partially to emphasize that the community of Niceville, though not incorporated earlier, has been around longer than Valparaiso. Mitchiner, a resident of Greenville, N.C., who visits Niceville every year, said she is a descendant of the Nathey and Wise families.

Valparaiso was incorporated 17 years before Niceville. Valparaiso's city seal, which

depicts the "Vale of Paradise" with a boat approaching land, is surrounded by a gold ring upon which the words "Valparaiso, Florida" and "Incorporated 1921" are emblazoned.



"If you look at the two city seals together, you might think Valparaiso has been established longer," Mitchiner told the Niceville City Council meeting in March. "We should add the established date to show that Niceville has been around a long time."

Niceville's seal depicts a shoreline scene similar to Valparaiso's, with untamed vege-

tation stretching toward a placid bay. However, instead of a ship headed toward land (Valparaiso), Niceville's seal shows a deer wading just offshore. The image drawn in the seal is based on a photo by Corbin's father taken in 1970.

"I always thought it was a great scene," Corbin said of the photo and seal. "I think it really symbolizes what our area is like."

Corbin presented Mitchiner's idea to the city council in March, saying that the company that created the city seal would add the "established" banner for free. He agreed with Mitchiner's assertion that 1868 is the community's true establishment date, and said he would look into drafting a rendering of the seal that the council could vote on.

The council will have such a rendering no earlier than June, he said.

Four of the city council members said in March that they supported the idea for a change to the seal, with only Heath Rominger voicing objection.

"I like the seal the way it is," Rominger said. "It's nice and simple, and I don't think we need to clutter it up."

According to records compiled on Mitchiner's website, the city took on the name Niceville in 1910 or 1911. The earliest mention of a name change was in the DeFuniak Springs Breeze. On Feb. 2, 1911, the newspaper stated: "B. P. Edge received his commission Friday as Postmaster at Niceville, in the place of Boggy. We are glad the name has been changed."

TAX

From page A-1

Winners are guaranteed a 5 percent interest rate, even if the winning bid is below 5 percent.

If two or more bidders submit the same amount as the lowest bid, Gordon said the winner will be selected at random.

Gordon said the average winning bid was for 8.47 percent interest in last year's auction.

Gordon will host a workshop at Niceville City Hall May 20 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. to help interested parties get a better understanding of the auction process.

Anderson said the program allows the county, its cities, the school district, and other jurisdictions for which the county tax collector receives tax revenue, to immediately get nearly all of the money they are owed.

"In last year's collection, we got all but \$75,000 out of \$198 million in collectible tax," Anderson said.

Gordon said delinquent property taxes can still be paid before the auction closes May 31. After April 1, a 3 percent delinquent interest charge is added, and on May 1, a \$28 fee is added to cover the cost of advertising the tax sale. Gordon said someone with delinquent taxes can pay them with the additional charges by 5 p.m. May 31, and escape the tax auction.

Gordon said owners owing delinquent taxes receive a reminder notice April 30, informing them their unpaid taxes will be eligible for auction.

Gordon said the auction applies to real estate taxes only, not taxes on business personal property such as equipment and fixtures.

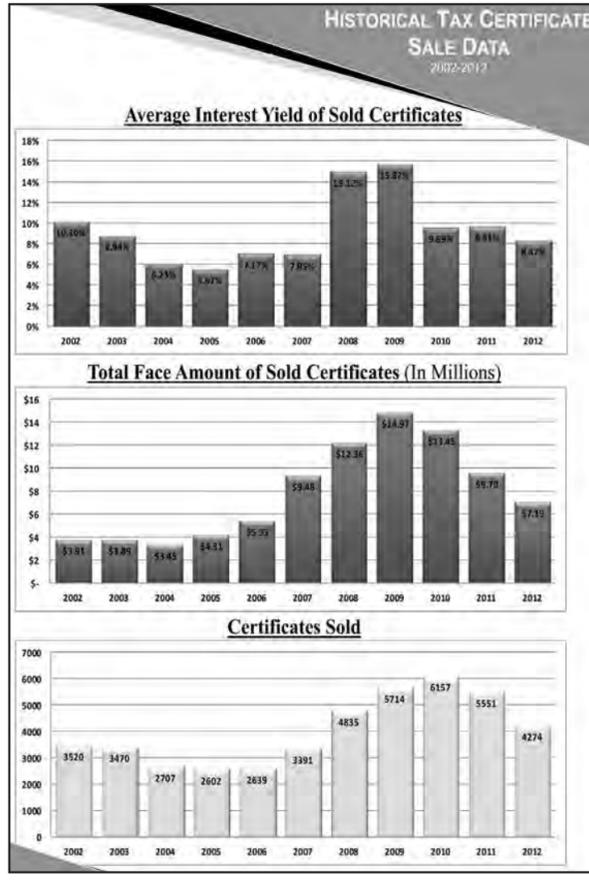
Certificates will be awarded June 1, with bidders' payment due June 4. The taxes, plus interest, are then due to the holder of the certificate within two years of the delinquency. If the taxes are not paid by then, the Okaloosa County Clerk of Court may auction off the property itself. Proceeds will pay the certificate holder and fees, with any funds left over going to the property owner. A total of 24 properties were sold last year for taxes.

Bidders must electronically submit W-9 forms and fund deposits. Bidders are allowed to purchase no more than 10 times the value of their submitted deposit.

Gordon said it is rare that a delinquent tax rate will earn 18 percent interest. That usually happens when there is only one bidder on a particular tax certificate. Gordon said certificates not sold at auction are "struck" to the county at an 18 percent interest rate, leaving the county to collect at that rate.

The ongoing bidding is conducted online at bidokaloosa.com. The auctions are blind, in which bidders cannot see the amounts offered by other bidders.

The amounts of tax certificates sold, face value of certificates and average interest yield of sold certificates increased sharply after 2006-07, when the U.S. real estate "bubble" burst. The numbers for interest yield



Okaloosa County Tax Collector

and face value sold peaked in 2009, when the county auctioned \$14.97 million in tax certificates with an average interest yield of 15.87 percent. The number of certificates sold peaked at 6,157 in 2010.

Those numbers have since

declined, a fact that Gordon takes as an indication of a stronger economy.

"As the economy is getting stronger, we have less people behind on their property taxes, and less certificates to sell," Gordon said.

Clarification

Cory Scott holds a doctorate in physical therapy. A photo caption published on Page 1 in the May 8 issue did not describe his profession.

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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

Jason Christopher Coulthart, unemployed, 30, of 500 Kelly Mill Road Apt. 114, Valparaiso, was arrested by Niceville police May 4 on a charge of contempt of court injunction violation.

Coulthart was allegedly observed in the drive-through lane of Danny's Fried Chicken at 408 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, March 30. Per a Jan. 29, 2009, injunction, Coulthart is not allowed within 500 feet of the place of employment of the person who has the injunction against him.

Coulthart's required court appearance is May 21.

Raul Falcon Silvas, 34, of 929 Vita St., Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Niceville police May 4 on charges of possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Police responded to a fire alarm call at the Quality Inn at 101 N. Highway 85, Niceville, from a room occupied by Silvas. Police ran his name through a database and found an active Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office warrant against him.

Police took Silvas into custody and searched his person and property, finding a vial of testosterone enanthate and four syringes. The testosterone enanthate was confirmed by poison control to be a

controlled substance.

Silvas' required court appearance is June 11.

Falicia Marie Bender, a cook, 23, of 507 Lot B 23rd St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police May 4 on a charge of retail theft.

An employee of the Walmart at 1300 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, allegedly observed Bender conceal \$92.19 worth of merchandise in her purse and attempt to leave the Walmart without paying.

Bender's required court appearance is May 21.

Adam Scott Elking, a construction worker, 24, of 326 Sanders Lane, Panama City, was arrested by Niceville police May 4 on a charge of uttering a false bill.

Elking allegedly attempted to purchase a prepaid debit card from the Walmart at 1300 E. John Sims

Parkway, Niceville, with two \$100 bills that showed discoloration not consistent with normal \$100 bills. The front side of one pill had an odd watermark not consistent with a normal \$100 bill, and both bills had the same serial number.

Elking allegedly said he had gotten the bills from the money center at a Walmart in Panama City. The Niceville Walmart Manager called the Panama City Walmart, and an employee there said no transaction was made with the card Elking said he used.

Elking's required court appearance is June 11.

Paul Edward Hartzog, 45, of 221 Mooney Road, Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Niceville police May 6 on a charge of violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence.

Hartzog was allegedly observed by a Niceville officer working an off-duty detail at the

Niceville First United Methodist Church. The officer observed someone telling Hartzog to walk away. Hartzog yelled profanities at the person and did not walk away, despite requests from intervening officers to do so.

Later, the person Hartzog was yelling at provided police with documentation of an injunction that forbids Hartzog from being within 500 feet of her.

Leah Marie Vanderpool, a nursing assistant, 25, of 520 Maple Ave., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police May 5 on a charge of domestic violence battery and criminal mischief \$1,000 or more.

Vanderpool allegedly struck someone, bruising the victim's left hand, and caused an estimated \$3,800 in damages to another person's truck by scratching profanities into the paint.

Vanderpool's required court appearance is June 11.

Rebecca Lynn Taylor, 22, of 8100 Escola St., Navarre, was arrested by Valparaiso police May 7 on a charge of unlawful possession of prescription drugs.

An officer responded to a suspicious person call at 425 Government Ave., Valparaiso, where he contacted Taylor.

The officer asked Taylor for identification, and when she reached into her purse to retrieve it, the officer noticed two prescription pill bottles in the purse. After the officer asked what kind of pills she had, Taylor handed over one of the bottles, which was prescribed to her. When the officer asked about the other bottle, Taylor handed him a prescription bottle with part of the label torn off. Taylor said she didn't know to whom the prescription belonged. The bottle contained one pill later

confirmed to be Tramadol.

Reginald Cunanan Adams, unemployed, 34, of 34 Harbeson Ave. N.E. Apt. B, Fort Walton Beach, was arrested by Valparaiso police April 30 on charges of possession of methamphetamine, possession of listed chemicals, tampering with evidence and possession of paraphernalia.

An officer responded to Glen Argyle Park, Valparaiso, in reference to a possible homeless person loitering. The officer contacted Adams and asked if he had any weapons or narcotics.

Adams began emptying his pockets, and the officer asked to see the contents of the front pocket of Adams' travel suitcase. Adams showed the officer the plastic bottles that were in the pocket. When the officer asked to see the bottles, Adams handed him a purple bottle but attempted to conceal another filled with liquid and white residue.

When the officer began to open the bottle Adams had handed him, Adams threw the bottle with white residue into a trash can. When asked, Adams told the officer that the purple bottle contained a pipe used to smoke methamphetamine.

Adams then tried to run away, but after a brief foot chase he gave up.

After searching Adams' travel case, the officer found a glass pipe with a burnt end with white residue, a straw with white residue, which Adams allegedly admitted to have used the night before to smoke methamphetamine, a sealed bottle of drain cleaner, a coffee filter and a clear soda bottle that tested positive for the presence of methamphetamine oil.

Seldonia Renea Allen, 28, of

Please see BLOTTER, page A-5

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Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from May 6, 2013 through May 12, 2013.

0 Structure Fire	10 Emergency Medical Calls
0 Vehicle Fire	4 Vehicle Crash
1 Other Fire	0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication
0 Illegal Burn	5 Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms	0 Hazardous Conditions

Street	Situation	Date	Time
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	5/6/13	17:52
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	5/7/13	04:57
N. Partin Dr.	Alarm activation	5/7/13	09:04
Dolphin Point Rd.	Service call	5/7/13	18:01
SR 85	Medical	5/8/13	02:16
26th Street	Medical	5/8/13	10:11
Fairway Dr.	Vehicle crash	5/8/13	13:41
Azalea Dr.	Medical	5/9/13	04:30
Government Ave.	Vehicle crash	5/9/13	08:57
Reeves St.	Cancelled	5/9/13	16:32
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	5/9/13	20:30
Royal Palm Dr.	Medical	5/10/13	09:07
SR 85 N.	Vehicle crash	5/10/13	11:05
Dolphin Point Rd.	False call	5/11/13	02:33
Rocky Bayou	Water rescue	5/11/13	13:35
Ivy Ave.	Medical	5/11/13	15:03
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	5/11/13	18:41
Nathay Ave.	Medical	5/12/13	01:20
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	5/12/13	14:04
Nelson Point Rd.	Boat fire	5/12/13	15:03

Weekly Safety Tip: The best way to survive a fire inside a building is to get out fast. Plan two escape routes from each room in your home and practice the routes with your family members at least twice a year. Pick a meeting place where everyone can gather outside and never go back in...stay out!

Like the Niceville Fire Department on Facebook

North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from May 6, 2013 through May 12, 2013.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
Hickory St.	Public assist	5/6/13	02:22
Range Rd.	Brush fire	5/6/13	12:05
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	5/6/13	20:07
Hampton Cir.	Dispatched & cancelled	5/6/13	22:03
Cedar St.	Medical	5/7/13	02:41
E. Hwy. 20	Dispatched & cancelled	5/7/13	06:22
Sailboat Dr.	Alarm activation	5/7/13	10:11
N. White Point Rd.	Medical assist	5/9/13	05:18
Range Rd/Hwy. 20	Vehicle accident	5/9/13	16:22
Merchants Way	Medical	5/10/13	07:10
White Point Rd/Hwy.20	Medical	5/10/13	14:19
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	5/10/13	15:49
Troon Dr. W.	Medical	5/11/13	11:18
Ida Coon Cir.	Public service	5/11/13	11:41
Rocky Bayou	Medical	5/11/13	13:33
Nelson Point Rd.	Water vehicle fire	5/12/13	15:05
150 yds west of Midbay Bridge	Vehicle accident	5/12/13	16:22
Troon Drive W	Public assist	5/12/13	17:24
Lake Drive	Medical	5/12/13	22:03

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THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith

What do you think about Okaloosa County raising local gas taxes by up to five cents per gallon, to meet rising county expenses?

Location: Niceville Children's Park and Turkey Creek Walk



"Florida gas prices are already higher than in surrounding states. I wonder how our state and local taxes compare with neighboring jurisdictions?"

Steve Renna, 36, Choctaw Beach, contractor



"It's a sign of the times. I'm getting used to hearing that prices are higher."

Keisha Edwards, 34, Niceville, banker



"I think it's crazy,"

Charles Chaloupka, 55, Niceville, plumber



"I disagree with it. Taxes are high enough, especially with the economy the way it is."

Shauna LaPan, 35, Niceville, disabled



"If I was sure the money would be used for road maintenance and storm water control, I'd be for it."

Annette Tope, 45, Valparaiso, substitute teacher



"Taxes are high enough already. Governments always look for ways to come up with money for their projects."

Melvin Place, 71, Fort Walton Beach, property maintenance

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

BLOTTER

From page A-4

28 Garden Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 5 as a fugitive from justice on a New Hampshire warrant on original charges of disobeying a police officer and operating a motor vehicle as a habitual offender.

Phyllis Janis Mitchell, a restaurant server, 28, of 800 Bay Drive Apt. 19, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 5 on a charge of driving while license suspended first offense.

Mitchell's required court appearance is May 21.

Tristian Matthew Wittwer, 29, of 1050 N. Partin Drive Lot 9, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 4 on a charge of preventing or obstructing extinguishment of fire.

A corrections officer at the Okaloosa County Jail reported Wittwer used his portable bunk to damage the facility's fire suppression equipment. He allegedly pushed the bunk into the sprinkler head on the ceiling, activating the sprinkler.

Wittwer denied breaking anything. His required court appearance is June 11.

Danielle Patricia Cronin, a retail manager, 37, of 1807 Valparaiso Blvd., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 3 on a charge of battery on an officer or firefighter.

Cronin was sitting with a friend in the driveway of the business at 240 Harbor Blvd., Destin. Cronin's friend was intoxicated, and they were waiting for emergency services to arrive.

An emergency services paramedic arrived and asked Cronin to release her friend so the paramedic could evaluate him. Cronin then allegedly struck the paramedic in the left arm and upper jaw.

Cronin's required court appearance is June 11.

Justin Tomas Underwood, a cook, 20, of 306 South Lake Court, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 3 on a Manatee County warrant for violation of probation.

Allen Wayne Watts, retired, 66, of 1737 Thomas St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 3 on a charge of two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill.

Watts allegedly drove his truck onto the property at 1733 Pine Ave., Niceville, and drove directly toward a van occupied by two people, one a tenant of Watts'. Watts allegedly slammed on the brakes and stopping just before hitting the van. He denied threatening the two people.

Watts' required court appearance is June 11.

Tanner Pierce Viola, a doorman, 19, of 4621 Paradise Isle, Destin, was arrested by sheriff's deputies May 1 on charges of possession of marijuana less than 20 grams and drug equipment possession and/or use.

A deputy stopped a vehicle driven by Viola and smelled an odor of marijuana coming from the car and Viola's person.

The deputy saw a digital scale, which was later found to have marijuana residue on it, in plain view on the right rear floorboard of Viola's vehicle. The deputy searched the vehicle and found a pill bottle containing 2.5 grams of a green substance that later tested

positive for the presence of THC. Viola admitted ownership of the marijuana but denied ownership of the scale. His required court appearance is May 21.

Thefts

An employee of the Walmart at 1300 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, reported May 3 someone stole a USB charger and a pack of razor blades, worth a total of \$11.24, from the store. The employee showed police a surveillance video of the suspect leaving the store.

An employee of the Walmart at 1300 E. Johns Sims Parkway, Niceville, reported May 3 someone in a red truck stole six cases of beer from the store.

A Niceville resident of the 500 block of Hill Lane reported May 1 someone stole all of her clothes out of her car while she was moving into her apartment.

A Niceville resident of the 700 block of Bayshore Drive reported April 30 she had been defrauded of \$5,000.

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GAETZ

From page A-2

having a mixed agenda," Patronis said. "But that's his problem, not mine."
Patronis, while noting that he himself has served more years in the House than Rep. Gaetz, who was first elected in 2010, nevertheless praised him as a good legislator and attorney with

strong family values.
Don Gaetz, who was first elected to the Senate in 2006, said his son has proved himself in the House, and, if elected, would continue



Don Gaetz

to prove himself in the Senate.
"Matt just completed a very effective legislative session in the House," Don Gaetz said. "He will continue to be a strong conservative voice for Northwest Florida."
Don Gaetz said that one of the most important tasks for Matt, if elected to the Senate, would be to continue to keep the interests of Northwest Florida alive.

"For a number of years, Northwest Florida was forgotten," Don Gaetz said.
"Recently, Northwest Florida has gained a stronger voice, and Matt will



Jimmy Patronis

have to continue to work to keep transportation, military development and education strong."
Don Gaetz said his son informed him beforehand that he intended to run for the Senate seat.
"We are not just father-son, we are also close colleagues in the legislature," the elder Gaetz said.
Don Gaetz said his son's roots will contribute to his success.

"Matt is a Niceville boy," he said. "He's a very hard worker, and that's why I think he's going to win."
Matt Gaetz said he has mixed feelings about attempting to follow in his father's footsteps.
"I am very proud of my dad," Matt Gaetz said. "But we don't have identical voting records. I hope to work so that the people of Northwest Florida better know my principles."



Boathouse Landing

Where the locals go for good water side dining

Advertising Feature

It is well before noon and a stream of locals, business and military personnel make their way into Boathouse Landing, drawn by the water and hooked by the food. While enticed with big bowls of hot gumbo and homemade hushpuppies with strawberry butter, each newcomer is greeted by restaurant co-owner Lisa Sarra, as if they were family and friends coming over for lunch.

"We are a local and family based restaurant," exclaims Sarra. "My husband Nick and I have lived here seventeen years now and have been running the restaurant for twelve years. We've made a name for ourselves because we like to be in tune to the town and what customers think. We take customer service and food quality very serious."

Although you can always count on a welcoming staff and a charming atmosphere, complete with fisherman decor, Boathouse Landing is different things at different times to different people. Now that it is lunch time, diners can choose between the coconut chicken salad, drizzled with orange vinaigrette dressing and the famous grouper sandwich. Meanwhile, they contentedly chat



Inside and outside dining available, both sharing a spectacular view of Boggy Bayou.

without worry as to whether or not they'll get back to work on time. One of the day's military patrons has brought his friend for his first Boathouse Landing experience, while on temporary duty from California.

"I grew up here, so I know all about it," the airman shares. "We had our high school reunion right downstairs and my brother had his wedding reception here. We are here all the time... it's just locally known."

Later, when dinnertime rolls around and the lights dim, the staff will invite its guests to uncork a bottle of wine and take their time with the coursing, featuring fare from



the farm and the sea. Some dine early to take advantage of the early bird specials between 4:30 and 6:00. Many come to indulge just before a show at the Northwest Florida State College: the perfect date night.

For the party-goers, Boathouse Landing's personality also continues down to a separate, lower level, where there is a year-round heated patio, full bar and live entertainment on Friday nights, Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. This allows vacationers and natives to enjoy the view of the bayou and a few drinks, without being exposed to the elements.

In reference to the downstairs bar, one frequent customer exclaims, "They have their time and we have ours." She also takes a moment to note, "The freshness of the food and the quality keeps us coming back. Even if you're not out on the deck it's nice just having the view and being close to the water. We live in Crestview and it's a close little get away. You can always count on good food, catered to the local tastes, and a good time."

This diner has brought two guests with her, one who is a family member that has come all the way from Philadelphia and who always makes a point to make Boathouse Landing her first and last stop.

A refreshing change from the chain restaurants, Boathouse Landing is the ideal escape for cold, winter nights and warm, summer adventures. Just a fifteen minute drive from parts of Fort Walton, Niceville and Eglin, all you have to do is look for the big sign on John Sims Parkway and follow it to the water. In most cases, you won't even have to cross the bridge again! Boathouse Landing is now taking reservations for Valentine's Day. When it comes to local fare with a personal touch, don't let this be the big one that got away.

For more information and reservations, call the Boathouse Landing at + 1 850 678-2805 or stop by their location at 124 John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso, FL. You can also find them online at www.theboathouselanding.com or on Facebook.

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Edge students help the environment and themselves

By Angela Yuriko Smith
Beacon Staff Writer

As another school year ends, fifth grade students at Edge Elementary are wrapping up a year-long environmental restoration project called the Grasses in Classes Program.

Sponsored by the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance of Northwest Florida State College, around 1,300 fourth and fifth grade students throughout Okaloosa County participated in the program.

The Grasses in Classes program allows students to take ownership in their local environment by learning they can have a direct and positive impact on it.

"I like it because it gives the students a chance to see that what we are learning in school does translate into real life," said Mary Brown,

one of the teachers at Edge Elementary.

Students at Edge have been tending nurseries of smooth cord grass, a native plant that is invaluable on our beaches to help slow shoreline erosion, according to CBA's website.

The students have had monthly classes all year learning about the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed and its importance to the bay area. The lessons came full circle with a field trip to the Choctawhatchee Bay to bring the year long project to a close.

"My favorite part of the trip was the 'exploration table,'" said Marissa Rung, a fifth grader at Edge. "I loved learning about how these animals live in their environment which we are helping to improve!"

Edge students were divided into focus groups that included sampling

water quality. Students used actual scientific equipment to examine the depth, salinity level and temperature of Choctawhatchee Bay and a local creek.

Another focus during the field trip was learning about the importance of oysters in Choctawhatchee Bay and students were able to explore the bay's shoreline using dip nets, seine nets and sediment sampling poles.

"My favorite part was when we got to get in the water knee high and use different tools to look in the sand for crabs, insects, oysters, oyster shells, etc..." said Josh Oliver, a student in Ms. Brown's class.

The highlight of the day for most students, however, was planting the cord grass they had raised in their classrooms. The grasses they raised were planted behind an oyster reef

at a restoration site located at Cedar Beach Cove in Freeport.

"The field trips provide a perfect opportunity for students to connect their science education to their local environment," comments Brittany Tate, Education Coordinator for CBA, "The experience students' gain encourages them to become an active part of the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed."

How the students take what they learned in the Grasses in Classes program into their future will be up to them. Some, like Jenna Elmer, says she's always known nature needed extra help "because of what we humans do to it."

For others, like Reed Ferrell, the hands on lessons were an eye opening experience. "I think we should take care of bays and oceans now," said Reed.



Photo courtesy Mary Brown

Students at Edge Elementary plant cord grass they raised in their classrooms for a program called Grasses in Classes at Cedar Beach Cove, Freeport. The cord grass helps slow down erosion and provide critical habitat.



Lewis students experience life on Marsville

With the help of volunteer John Mahood, Lewis students rush to finish their 'biodome' as part of the annual Marsville event sponsored by Eglin. Fourth and fifth grade classes from the surrounding area were invited to 'survive on Mars', an activity designed to foster science, technology, engineering, and math skills in a fun learning environment.

Beacon photo by
Angela Yuriko Smith



Photo courtesy of Steven Howell

Morken and Howell win gold at state

NHS students Nick Morken, 1600 meter run, and Thomas Howell, 3200 meter run, both won first place at the state meet in Jacksonville May 3. Afterwards they celebrated with the women who made it all possible for them, their mothers. From left, Nick Morken, Mary Morken, Thomas Howell and Candice Howell. The Eagles took seventh place overall at the meet. See related story on B-4.

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Rocky math teams add up wins

The Rocky Bayou calculus and algebra I teams won fifth place trophies in their category at the March 2 Regional Mu Alpha Theta held at Rutherford High in Panama City. Pictured left are Charis Allen, Lexi Kirkpatrick, Rachel Ahn, and Jin Kim. Pictured right are Timothy Sung, Dave Tan, Shiloh Johns and Savannah West.



Hugh Harris Scholarship Award recipients

The National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), Gulf Coast Chapter, in conjunction with NDIA's Targets, Ranges, and UAVs Division is pleased to announce this year's winners of the annual Hubert D. (Hugh) Harris Scholarship Award.

Each recipient will receive a \$1000.00 award which will be sent to the respective colleges' financial aid office for use by the students. The recipients from Niceville and Valparaiso are:

Josue I. DeJusis, home-schooled and dual enrolled at

Northwest Florida State College where he maintained a 4.0 GPA. He made the College President's List and has been a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society during his entire period of study at NWFS.

Josue will attend University of West Florida and major in Electrical Engineering.

Adam T. Nodjomian, Niceville High School, has accumulated a 3.95 GPA while being a member of the student-run

Natural Geography in Shore

Areas project where he has conducted graduate level research in collecting and identifying macro fauna and meiofauna specimens.

Adam intends to pursue his engineering degree at University of Florida in order to become an Imagineer with Walt Disney.

Courtney D. Testa, Niceville High School, has been actively involved in her school's activities while maintaining a 3.78 GPA.

Courtney intends to pursue and engineering degree at

University of Florida in order to become an Imagineer with Walt Disney.

Addie M. Voigt, Niceville High School, is the Valedictorian of her class of 425 students. She has been a four-year recipient of the Ann T. Mitchell Award, Magna Cum Laude Award for the National Latin Exam and a member of the National Honor Society.

Addie intends to pursue both a Biomedical Engineering and Computer Science degree at the University of Florida while pursuing a medical degree.



Ruckel wins Tech Bowl

Ruckel Middle School students Rachel Cathey, Alex Tolbert, and Camille Miles bested ten other teams to win this year's Tech Bowl May 4 at the Niceville Community Center. It was the first time a Middle School has won the competition two years in a row.



Head Start kids get bicycle helmets from Kiwanis

Steve Baldock, Kiwanis Club of Niceville-Valparaiso, presented a check for \$400 to Cristina Shaw and Pete Saal of Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start Child Development, Inc. to purchase bicycle helmets for children at the Head Start Center in Niceville.

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Area music students hone skills

Students from Niceville, Bluewater Bay and surrounding areas recently participated in the Okaloosa County Music Teachers' Association Student Day held at Niceville United Methodist Church. About 20 students performed for judges to sharpen their musical skills. They were rated on performance, tested on written theory and listening. Students that received honors may choose compete at the state level.

2013 CALENDAR

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com

Blood drives in May
Friday 17 at L-3 Stratis, 1501 Merchants Way, Niceville - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Sunday 26 at Christ Our Redeemer Church, 1028 White Point Rd - 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Monday 27 - Walmart, Niceville 2 p.m.-6 p.m. - all donors free Walmart gift card
Wednesday 29 at Niceville United Methodist Church, 214 South Partin Drive - 3-8:30 p.m.

Scramble golf tournament
Join the Niceville Eagles and Ruckel Rams for a scramble Golf tournament on Wednesday, May 15 at the Rocky Bayou Country Club. Shotgun start at 2 p.m. features a closest to the pin contest, silent auction and a kitchen makeover by Marquis as the hole-in-one prize. Proceeds benefit the construction of The Eagle-Ram Tennis Center. Call 585-8980 that's 585-8980 to register or go to eagler-amtennis.com

Snapper seminar
There will be a free seminar on snapper Wednesday, May 15 at 7 p.m. at the North Light Marina, 113 E John Sims Pkwy, Niceville. Open to the public, no R.S.V.P. needed, free raffles. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. Visit saltwater-events.com or call 516-0709 for more info.

Adventure club ride
Join the Adventure Club for a group bike ride, Thursday 16 May, at 4 p.m. Meet at the Winn Dixie on Hwy. 20 across from the Bluewater Bay Resort/Subdivision. Supper after the ride at a nearby restaurant. Contact Bob and Audrey at 897-3624.

Trail day
Explore the Biophilia Center, Freeport, with guided hikes on Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Dress appropriately and bring insect repellent, sunscreen and water. Call 835-1824 for more info.

Adventure club ride
Join the Adventure Club for a group bike ride, Saturday 18 May, at 10 a.m. Meet at the strip mall at the intersection of John Sims Parkway and Hwy. 85. Lunch after the ride at a nearby restaurant. Contact Jim at 897-6756.

State of the County report
The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County and the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce are pleased to announce the 14th annual State of the County Report, which will be held from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. on Saturday, May 18.

The Chamber will host the event in their conference room at 34 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, next door to Staff's Restaurant in Fort Walton Beach.

Memorial poker run
Blue Knights Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club Florida Chapter XXV are proud to present a poker run to be held Saturday, May 18. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Cost is \$20 for a single rider and \$25 with a passenger and includes lunch and music after the ride. Ride pins for first 200 riders. Meet at Heritage Cycles Harley Davidson, 788 N. Beal Pkwy in Fort Walton Beach. Call Ken Christmas at 612-0261 for more information.

OAA arts fundraiser
The Okaloosa Arts Alliance presents its 6th Annual Family Fun Arts Fest May 18 and 19, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., at HarborWalk Village, Destin. The event will feature artisans, craft vendors, food, beverages, live music and art performances. There will be hands-on art projects, educational animal presentations and exhibits, face painting and street performances. A silent auction will raise funds for OAA and Okaloosa County School poster contest entries will be on display. Contact Amy at abaty@okaloosaarts.org.

Spring concert
Northwest Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra presents their Spring Concert Sunday, May 19 at 3 p.m. at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville. The concert is free and open to the public; however

donations to support the youth program are welcomed. For more information on the performance or the NFSYO contact the Fine Arts Office at 729-5382 or Liz Aylor at 651-4308

Tax certificate sale workshops
Reps from the Okaloosa Tax Collector's Office will be educating citizens on the annual Tax Certificate Sale. Workshops will be May 20 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Niceville City Hall, 208 Partin Dr. and on May 22 from 6-7:30 p.m. at OCTC FWB Office in Uptown Station, 73 Eglin Pkwy., Ste. 111.

Learn to crochet
Learn the useful art of crochet. Bring some yarn, size "I" needle, or needle size of your choice. Both right and left hander's are welcome. If you have a pattern you would like to try, bring it and get help starting it. Class limited to eight. This two hour class will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 6 p.m. at Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Ave., Valparaiso. Cost is \$20 or \$15 for Museum Members.

Maritime history lecture
The Friends of the Niceville Public Library are pleased to host a Maritime History Lecture with Della Scott-Ireton, Associate Director of Florida Public Archaeology Network. This free program will take place in the Niceville Community Center on Tuesday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m. Please call 279-4863 ext. 1504 for more information or to reserve a spot.

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Niceville's Newspaper



Local students win at county art show

Two students from the area placed in the 2013 Okaloosa County K-12 Student Art Show on May 1-2, at the C.H. "Bull" Rigdon Fairgrounds in Fort Walton Beach. Tim Tuper, pictured with his art teacher Carmen Patterson, from Ruckel won 2D Best of Show while Kelsey Joyner, pictured with her art teacher Kim Nihill-Taylor, from Niceville High School was the 2D Superlative winner. The awards were presented at a reception on Thursday evening, May 2.



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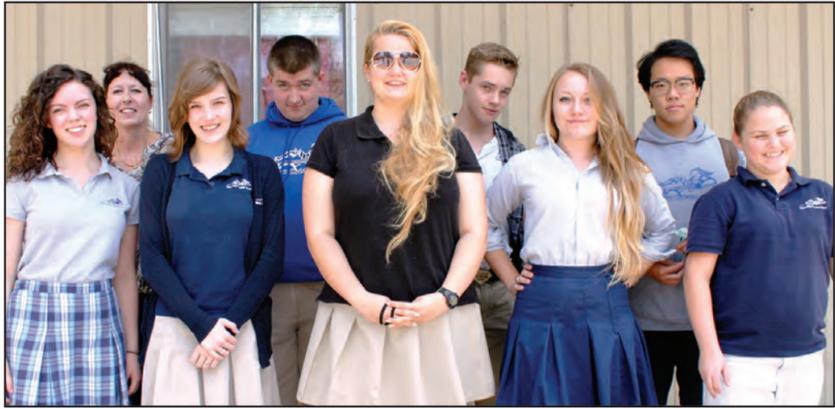
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Rocky Bayou Christian School won 14 places and one honorable mention at the Okaloosa County Arts Show held in Fort Walton Beach on May 2. Pictured, Ms. Dawn Boon, James Johnson, Douglas Black and Wan-Shik Kim. Front row, Mandy Hart, Audrey Stevens, Jessica Sandlin, Kelly Hanning and Savanna Fort.

Rocky Bayou puts on a good show for county arts

Students at RBCS held their own at the Okaloosa County Arts Show May 2. They won 14 places and an honorable mention. The winning students are:

High School

Wan-Shik Kim, third place in color photography.
Christa Daughtry, honorable mention in pencil.
Kelly Hanning, second in pencil.
Christa Daughtry, third in colored pencil.
Wan-Shik Kim, first in digital media.
Mandy Hart, first in charcoal.
Audrey Stevens, third in black and white photography.
Jessica Sandlin, first and second in textiles.
Jessica Sandlin, first and second in woodwork.

Junior High

James Johnson, first in sculpture.
James Johnson, second in weaving.
Doug Black, second in pencil.
Elizabeth Mackey, first in pencil.
Elizabeth Mackey, first in acrylic.
Savanna Fort, third in marker.

Eagles end winning season

NHS track and field finished the season strong with a seventh place finish overall for the boys at the state meet with two first place wins in individual events.

There were 64 schools competing at the FHSAA Finals in Jacksonville on May 3. The girls 4x800 meter relay team of Nicki Anderson, Marsel Mosley, Drew Haggerman and Annie Serpa took ninth place with a time of 10:01.52.



The boys 4x800 meter relay team of Nick Morken, Jack Massey, Tripp Davis and Thomas Howell took fifth place with a time of 8:08.29.

Individual event winners consisted of Thomas Howell, first place in the 3200 meter run with a time of 9:34.67 and Nick Morken with first place in the 1600 meter run with a time of 4:23.79 and 15th place in the 800 meter run with a time of 2:05.65. Aubrey West took ninth place in the long jump with a distance of 17-0.75.

Congratulations Eagles for a fantastic season!



Silver award for Girl Scout

Katrin Woods, a member of Girl Scout Troop 2111, receives the Silver Award from Tami Valdez, Membership & Community Development Manager for the Girl Scout Florida Panhandle Council. To earn it, Katrin worked with her adviser, Ms. Erica Laine, a Biologist at Jackson Guard, to identify a need for owl nesting boxes on the Eglin Reservation and built six nesting boxes for Barn Owls, Barred Owls and Screech Owls. Katrin will assist in monitoring the boxes for owl activity.

May yard of the month

Niceville Garden Club chose Tom and Josephine Latenser's yard at 800 Linden Ave, as Yard of the Month for May. The Niceville Garden Club meets at 6 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month at the Niceville Public Library, 206 Partin Dr.



Who's News

E-mail items to: info@baybeacon.com

Marine Corps Pfc. **Damien A. Ford-Hardy**, son of Karyn S. Ford of Valparaiso, Fla. and David W. Hardy, of Las Vegas, Nev., earned the title of United States Marine after graduating from recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S. C.

One week prior to graduation, Ford-Hardy endured The Crucible, a 54-hour final test of recruits' minds and bodies. Upon completion, recruits are presented the Marine Corps emblem and called Marines for the first time.

Ford-Hardy is a 2009 graduate of Niceville High School of Niceville, Fla.

Lynn Oelke recently received a doctoral degree in clinical neuropsychology from the University of South Florida, Tampa. Dr. Oelke interned at the University of Arizona Medical Center and now resides in Tucson, Arizona, where she is employed by the American Parkinson's Disease Association. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Florida and is a graduate of Niceville High School. Lynn is the daughter of Roger and Marion Oelke of Bluewater Bay.

Two seventh grade Rocky Bayou Christian School students, **Elisha Daughtry** and **Gavin Morrison**, participated in the Duke University Talent Identification Program by taking the ACT and qualified for the State recognition ceremony held in May. They did so by earning at least a 20 on the English or Math sections or at least a 21 on the Reading or Science sections. Elisha qualified in English, and Gavin qualified in all four sections.



Girl Scout gets gold award

Katherine Sturim, a junior at Niceville High School, was awarded the Girl Scout Gold Award for an extensive service project which involved repainting the Technology Lab at Bluewater Elementary School. She also spent over 100 hours working with numerous fifth grade students to write, film, edit and broadcast a morning show for the entire school that will continue.

May is National Skin Cancer Awareness Month

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