

The Bay Beacon

Police Blotter, page A-4

10 Pages, 2 Sections, 2 Inserts

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

50¢

**UP
COMING**

Fri., 7 p.m.



The All County Bands, musicians from various local high school and middle school bands, will perform in a free concert at the Mainstage Theater, **Mattie Kelly Arts Center**, Niceville.

Sat., 7:30 a.m.



There will be a **bird walk** at the Okaloosa County Landfill and Fort Walton spray fields. Meet at **Coach and Four Restaurant**, 1313 Lewis Turner Blvd., Fort Walton Beach. 305-359-5334.

Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.



An "Archeology for Kids" event will be at the **Biophilia Center**, Freeport. 835-1824.

Tues., 7-9 p.m.



David Ott, internationally recognized composer and conductor, will present his program, "Mostly Mozart" as part of the free "Better Listening" series held at the **Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall**, 1295 Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso.

Calendar, B-3

After 33 years, a supermarket closes



Beacon photos by Angela Yuriko Smith
Many hugs were handed out along with receipts over the weekend as customers and employees of the Food Depot, Niceville, came to grips with the sudden news that the supermarket was going out of business. Above, cashier Brittany Henry, right, says good-bye to a teary customer. Meantime, merchandise was readied for transfer to other stores.



Food Depot, once Kelley's, shuts due to 'a business decision'

By Angela Yuriko Smith
Beacon Staff Writer

The usually satisfied customers were not happy Friday night in the Food Depot supermarket, at John Sims Parkway and Palm Boulevard, Niceville, when they learned that the store would close its doors for the last time on Sunday, Jan. 26.

It was the second supermarket to be shuttered in Niceville in six months.

The news came as a shock to the 25 employees of the store as well. The merchandise at market in Palm Plaza is being divided among other stores owned by the parent company, Barnes Supermarkets, Pensacola, one of which is situated in Freeport.

"I'm so upset," said Sabrina Booker, a regular customer. "I live right across the street and come here all the time. I'm more worried about them," she said, referring to the employees.

Please see CLOSURES, page A-3

Valp. gives final OK for Tom Thumb expansion

By Mike Griffith
Beacon Correspondent

In a meeting held Jan. 22, the Valparaiso City Commission approved a land use and zoning change from residential to commercial for a lot on Okaloosa Avenue.

The commission also gave final approval to a new date for the city's postponed municipal election, and approved a plan to commit \$125,000 to improvements in the city's sewer system, in hopes of obtaining a state grant of \$700,000 to help

fund the improvements.

The zoning and land-use change approved changes the zoning at 306 Okaloosa Ave. from R1A (residential) to C1 (commercial). The change was requested by the Tom Thumb store located along John Sims Parkway near Okaloosa Avenue. The store owner plans to add a deli to the current gas station and convenience store, and to build an expanded parking lot on the adjacent property at 306 Okaloosa Ave., which it

Please see EXPANSION, page A-5



Beacon photo

The Tom Thumb store in Valparaiso was given permission to add parking on an adjacent residential lot, allowing an expansion of the business.



Snow days

A winter storm warning caused schools to close for a rare set of snow days Tuesday and Wednesday, but not everyone got an unexpected holiday. School resource officers like Deputy Sheriff Clara Thomas, pictured Monday at Plew Elementary School, Niceville, will take to the roadways to help with traffic during the severe weather. Okaloosa and Walton county schools and Rocky Bayou Christian School were closed Tuesday and were scheduled to be closed Wednesday. Northwest Florida State College was closed Tuesday, with a decision about Wednesday yet to be made at press time.

Beacon photo by Angela Yuriko Smith



Maggie Bowers on her quarter horse Elvis early this month. The animal was among nine horses which died in a barn fire in Holt Jan. 19.

Courtesy photo

Mourning a friend's loss Niceville girl's horse dies in barn fire

By Angela Yuriko Smith
Beacon Staff Writer

Lightning struck a barn in Holt early Jan. 19, causing a smoldering fire that suffocated nine horses before destroying the structure, according to Cynthia Bowers, whose daughter Maggie, 13, lost her horse in the fire.

"It was pretty devastating," said Cynthia Bowers, of Bluewater Bay. "All the horses [in the barn] were killed. The youngest was about 3 days old."

Maggie has been competing in equestrian events for five years and is the youngest competitor at Reichert Performance Horses, the stable that boarded the competition horses. Maggie had received the horse, Elvis, a quarter horse, in November.

"I started riding because a couple of my friends were," said Maggie. "My first horse was named Sox."

The stable is owned by Angie Reichert, who trains horses and riders for competition.

"We had a horrible tragedy," stated Reichert. "A thunderstorm hit, and my show barn took a lightning strike (at) the middle top rafter and the barn burned to the ground."

Maggie herself is learning to

cope with her loss. A funeral for her horse was held Saturday. At that time, neither she nor any of the other horse owners had ridden since the tragedy. On Sunday, when she did get back on a horse, it was an emotional event.

"She rode for 10 to 15 minutes, and she cried," said Maggie's mother. "It was a therapy ride. It was the first ride for anyone in the barn."

While the death of her horse has distressed Maggie, it hasn't upset her plans to continue competing. An eighth grader at Ruckel Middle School, she intends to attend Georgia State University on an equestrian scholarship.

"I still love horses," said Maggie.



Maggie Bowers

THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER —by Mike Griffith

Will you root for the Denver Broncos or Seattle Seahawks in this year's Super Bowl?

Location: Café Liquid



"Broncos. I'm from Denver."

Candice Bellino, 29, Eglin Air Force Base, Café Liquid owner



"The Seattle Seahawks, but I'm not really that interested in football, so I flipped a coin."

Jeremy Palmitier, 32, St. Helena, California, flight medic



"Seahawks, because I'm from Seattle."

Annalyse Hambleton, 17, Crestview, Niceville High School student



"Broncos, because Peyton Manning is one of the best quarterbacks to ever play the game."

Kevin Hopkins, 40, Freeport, software engineer



"Denver. They have all kinds of snow out there, and they'll be playing in snow."

Sharon Harris, 67, Choctaw Beach, caregiver



"Whoever wins. I'm not a big fan of football."

Mike Hudson, 36, Niceville, business owner

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

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Fire call punctuates meeting

North Bay commission of issues in session

By Dani Tavano
Beacon Correspondent

The North Bay Fire Commission has expanded its mutual aid agreement.

In a meeting Jan. 14, the commission also discussed changes to district policies and reviewed the fire chief's annual report.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Boswell at 7 p.m. in the firehouse on White Point Road, just as the station received a mutual aid dispatch regarding a fire in Destin. A loud buzzer sounded, and the firemen who were sitting in on the meeting rushed to suit up as the dispatch was read. Within two minutes, they had left the station, sirens blaring and lights flashing.

The board checked the Statement of Assets, Liability, and Capital, as well as the Statement of Revenue and Operating Expenses for December 2013.

The Check Detail was briefly discussed for clarification, as Treasurer David Scholl had a question regarding a payment that was made to Verizon Wireless. Fire Chief Joe Miller explained that the payment was for computer tablets that the district had recently purchased from the cellular carrier.

The tablets help the department monitor which engines from which fire districts are going where, in real time, through GPS tracking. They also facilitate faster and more accurate communication between the different fire districts in the region, thus allowing for swift and coordinated response to mutual aid calls.

The Deposit Detail and Reconciliation Summary were then reviewed, after which Boswell motioned to approve the Financial Report for December. Lee Wetzel seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Miller then read his Fire Chief's Annual Report, reviewing the details of activities for 2013.

There were no fire-related deaths in the district in the year, and North Bay will again file for the "Operation Life Safety Award," which it has received from 2000-12 for having no fire-related deaths in these years.

Miller also reported that several personnel are working towards college degrees and job-related certification courses. "With seven paramedics covering the three shifts, the Advanced Life Support program for the North Bay Fire Control District continues to excel, providing advanced medical care to the citizens and visitors of our area," Miller said.

Moving on to new business, Miller suggested changes to the financial statement as it is usually presented to the board. He voiced his opinion that it is a waste of paper to make so many copies of the full financial report, when it could just as easily be emailed to the commissioners, and a specific page printed for consideration should any of them find fault with it.

Miller said that the most important part is the check record, and they could print just that part to save paper. He noted that the district's financial report is public record, and if a member of the public inquires about it, a copy can be printed.

The board of commissioners agreed, and Boswell stated that a formal motion need not be made, and that they would present the report in a condensed form from now on at the board's monthly meetings.

Next, North Bay Fire Control District Resolution 91-3 was reviewed, a document which outlines penalties and protocol for multiple false alarms at a residence that result in wasting of the



Beacon photo by Dani Tavano

The North Bay Fire Commission discusses changes to the mutual aid agreement, which now encompasses all fire departments in Okaloosa and Walton counties, as well as the Holley Navarre Fire Control District.

fire district's precious time, manpower, and resources.

Basically, if a property owner is negligent regarding the maintenance or proper use of fire alarms on their premises, and the station receives multiple false alarms within a specific time frame, that property owner is subject to a fine or time in jail, or deactivation of said alarm.

The penalty is more severe if it is evident that the property owner has taken no action to resolve the issue, whether it be a mechanical malfunction with the device, children of tenants who pull the alarm as a prank, etc. The burden of proof then lies on the property owner to show that they have taken measures to prevent the false alarms. Boswell made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded, and approved by the board.

The revised Agreement for Automatic Mutual Aid Between Area Fire Departments and Department of Public Safety was then reviewed. The new agreement now includes all the fire districts in Okaloosa County to be joined together in mutual aid, plus South Walton, Holley-Navarre, and Walton County Fire Control Districts. Treasurer Steven Strait made a motion to accept the document as presented, which was

seconded by Chairman Boswell, and approved.

The Interlocal Agreement of the Advanced Life Support Fire Engine Partnership Program was then reviewed, discussing procedures for emergency medical transport agreed upon between the Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners and the North Bay Fire Control District. Jim Boswell motioned to approve the document, which was seconded and carried.

Construction projects underway were then reviewed by the Fire Marshall, Lloyd Losinger, whose responsibility it is to monitor these projects for their adherence to statutes and protocols regarding fire safety.

Boswell and Miller then discussed plans to enlist mutual aid from Walton County and East Niceville Fire Control Districts in the event of any accidents caused by the new Mid-Bay connector. They cited that the shift from four lanes to two lanes and back again would very probably confuse motorists, especially those from out of town, and those not paying attention to the road signs. They noted that there are no lights and no fire hydrants on the connector, and that the North Bay District would be at the ready in case any incidents arise in that area.

CLOSES

From page A-1

"It was just a business decision," said Barnes executive Rob Lewis on Monday. "Ever since we've been in Niceville it's only been big enough for three grocery stores. We're the low man on the totem pole. We outlasted Food World, but with Publix going in, we just couldn't hang on."

The other area stores are: Winn-Dixie, which has operated for 21 years in Bluewater Bay; Walmart, which opened three years ago in Niceville; and Publix, which is nearing completion of a store in Niceville that city officials have said will open in February. Another market, Food World, in Oak Creek Plaza, Niceville, closed in 2013 after its parent company filed for protection from creditors under U.S. bankruptcy law.

Lewis said Barnes is keep-

ing as many employees as possible, with "five to six going to Freeport and a couple going over to the Pensacola store."

A grocery store had operated at the Food Depot location in Palm Plaza for over three decades, opening in 1980 as Kelley's IGA, named after the Kelley family of Fort Walton Beach, which owned and operated the business.

The store changed its name to Kelley's SuperValu in 1994. The Niceville store became the flagship of the Kelley operations until it was sold to Barnes in 2008. Many Niceville residents continued to refer to the store as "Kelley's."

As far as what will be going into the vacated space, plans are uncertain. While the merchandise was being sent to the other Barnes stores, the fixtures will remain at the Niceville location, according to Lewis, until a buyer can be found for them.

The owner of Palm Plaza, Ruckel Properties Inc., issued the following statement Monday through its rental manager, Dora Cawood: "The difficult economic times of the recent past hurt many businesses in our area, and some were unable to weather those tough times. However, recent closures

enable Ruckel Properties to continue to revitalize Palm Plaza by upgrading and renovating spaces to accommodate

new tenants. We feel sure that these improvements will enhance the Palm Plaza family of businesses."



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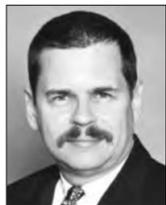
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Police Blotter

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

On Jan. 15, Niceville police arrested Tiffany Kaye Simmons, 31, unemployed, of 400 Kazmira Court, Niceville, for one count of retail theft, on a warrant stemming from an incident on Nov. 5, 2013. Simmons had entered Laura's Pet and Horse Supply in Niceville and removed a bottle of hamster vitamins, valued at \$5.99, which she concealed in her skirt and left the store with no attempt to pay for the merchandise. Police obtained a sworn affidavit of complaint from the store manager, and also obtained a written letter of apology and a written Police Department statement from the defendant, stating she removed the merchandise from the store, and that her reason for doing so was to medicate her family's new pet

hamster, but she did not have the money to purchase the vitamins.

On Jan. 16 an Okaloosa County deputy sheriff arrested Kurt Wade Barrentine, 26, unemployed, of 1723 18th St., Niceville, for larceny. Deputies had received a report from a Niceville resident that Barrentine was staying at her residence, and that she noticed that Barrentine had been going out late at night and returning in the morning hours with suspicious items and hiding them. These items included an outboard motor, welding equipment, and kayaks.

On Jan. 16, a deputy met with Barrentine outside the residence, where Barrentine declined the deputy's request to go inside the residence. Barrentine stated that there were no stolen items inside,

but admitted that there was "drug."

He was then detained, and requested to go inside the residence to retrieve his shoes. Deputies escorted him inside, and as a routine officer safety measure, conducted a protective sweep for persons inside the house. At that time, a deputy noticed a 15 hp outboard engine in the bathroom. Barrentine admitted to stealing the motor. Upon further investigation, he admitted to stealing welding equipment from a nearby residence and hiding the equipment under the decking on the side of the house. The owner said the welding equipment was valued at approximately \$400.

Bear sighting

On Jan. 15, Niceville police received a report that someone had seen a black bear near an address on Crystal Lake Lane. The report was passed on to the Valparaiso Police Department due to the incident being in that city.

Other reports

On Jan. 7, Okaloosa deputies responded to a report of a vehicle theft that had occurred at an address on Napa Way in Niceville.

The stolen vehicle was later recovered in a wooded area in Walton County.

On Jan. 10, Okaloosa deputies responded to a report of burglary and grand theft at an address on Oak Shores Drive, Niceville.

On Jan. 14, Okaloosa deputies responded to an address in Niceville in reference to a theft that had already occurred.

On Jan. 14, Okaloosa deputies responded to a report of grand theft at an address on Putter Drive in Bluewater Bay. A resident there reported his golf clubs and other golf equipment had been taken from his garage. The victim said his garage was closed all during the previous night and was closed most of the morning on Jan. 14. He estimated the total value of the missing equipment at \$3,195.

On Jan. 14, a Bluewater Bay resident entered the sheriff's substation in Bluewater Bay to report that his golf clubs had been stolen from his carport.

On Jan. 14 Niceville police responded to an address on the Echo Creek Cove, where the complainant advised she had just gotten home from work and found her back French doors broken. Further investigation indicated that someone had thrown an anvil at the glass door, breaking it, but not creating enough of an opening to enter or reach through. Nothing was taken from the home.

On Jan. 15, Niceville police responded to a report that two vehicles had sped into the parking lot of the Waffle House on John Sims Parkway, where a couple jumped out and had a screaming match while running down a nearby alley. Police separated the couple and determined that the altercation had been verbal rather than physical.

Fire Department Reports

Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from Jan. 17, 2014 through Jan. 26, 2014.



| STREET | SITUATION | DATE | TIME |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------|-------|
| E. John Sims Pkwy..... | Medical | 1/17/14 | 13:55 |
| Government Ave..... | Smoke scare | 1/17/14 | 15:44 |
| Bayshore Dr./Fink Rd..... | Cancelled | 1/18/14 | 01:24 |
| Allen St..... | Vehicle crash | 1/18/14 | 01:31 |
| Campbell Dr..... | Cancelled | 1/18/14 | 18:13 |
| Fin Oak Cir..... | Cancelled | 1/18/14 | 21:24 |
| Bayshore Dr..... | Medical | 1/18/14 | 22:18 |
| Als Dr..... | Medical | 1/19/14 | 08:08 |
| Deer St..... | Cancelled | 1/19/14 | 18:39 |
| Roberts St..... | Cancelled | 1/19/14 | 19:37 |
| W. John Sims Pkwy..... | Service call | 1/20/14 | 06:13 |
| Cadillac Ave..... | Medical | 01/20/14 | 12:26 |
| S.R. 85 N..... | Good intent | 1/20/14 | 17:50 |
| Bally Way..... | Medical | 1/20/14 | 20:33 |
| W. John Sims Pkwy..... | Cancelled | 1/20/14 | 23:01 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/21/14 | 01:01 |
| S.R. 85 N..... | Vehicle crash | 1/21/14 | 14:08 |
| Nathay Ave..... | Cancelled | 1/21/14 | 18:15 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Cancelled | 1/22/14 | 00:26 |
| Bayshore Dr..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 09:28 |
| Mulry Dr..... | Alarm activation | 1/22/14 | 10:05 |
| Maple Ave..... | Cancelled | 1/23/14 | 04:55 |
| Cherrywood Ct..... | Medical | 1/23/14 | 16:29 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Kitchen fire | 1/23/14 | 19:26 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/23/14 | 20:42 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/24/14 | 06:42 |
| E. John Sims Pkwy..... | Medical | 1/24/14 | 10:54 |
| Bayshore Dr..... | Service call | 1/24/14 | 13:53 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/24/14 | 16:24 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/24/14 | 17:26 |
| 23rd St..... | Medical | 1/24/14 | 19:20 |
| Chimney Rock..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 07:42 |
| Everglade..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 09:09 |
| E. John Sims Pkwy..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 09:32 |
| 29th St..... | Service call | 1/25/14 | 19:50 |
| Redman Ct..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 23:26 |
| 29th St..... | Medical | 1/26/14 | 08:22 |
| E. John Sims Pkwy..... | Medical | 1/26/14 | 16:31 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Medical | 1/26/14 | 19:19 |

Weekly Safety Tip: Install smoke detectors on every level of the home in rooms, stairs, landings and passageways. Test smoke detectors at least once a month and change batteries twice a year. Like the Niceville Fire Department on Facebook

North Bay



The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from Jan. 17, 2014 through January 26, 2014.

| STREET | SITUATION | DATE | TIME |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|-------|
| E. Hwy 20..... | False alarm | 1/17/14 | 06:42 |
| Pine St..... | Medical | 1/17/14 | 07:34 |
| Government Ave..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/17/14 | 15:45 |
| Woodlands/Southwind..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/18/14 | 00:25 |
| Calinda Ln..... | Grass fire | 1/19/14 | 18:58 |
| Merchants Way..... | Medical | 1/19/14 | 20:38 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/19/14 | 21:57 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | Medical | 1/20/14 | 08:07 |
| Jamaica Way..... | Public assist | 1/20/14 | 19:21 |
| Whitewood Way..... | Medical | 1/21/14 | 08:51 |
| Merchants Way..... | Medical | 1/21/14 | 11:37 |
| Hwy. 20 East..... | Medical | 1/21/14 | 15:37 |
| Bay Dr..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 02:57 |
| Oaklake Ln..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 05:04 |
| Hwy. 20..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 09:22 |
| White Point Rd..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 11:08 |
| Old Post Rd..... | Medical | 1/22/14 | 13:48 |
| Windward Cir..... | Medical | 1/23/14 | 08:07 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | Medical assist | 1/23/14 | 08:35 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | Medical | 1/23/14 | 10:46 |
| Old Post Rd..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/23/14 | 15:56 |
| N. Partin Dr..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/13/14 | 19:30 |
| Oakmont Pl..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 02:57 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | Medical | 1/25/14 | 03:40 |
| The Crossings..... | Electrical wiring | 1/25/14 | 18:10 |
| Range/Bluewater..... | Dispatched & cancelled | 1/26/14 | 20:20 |
| N. White Point Rd..... | EMS rescue | 1/26/14 | 21:04 |

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EXPANSION

From page A-1

is acquiring from Ruckel Properties.

During discussion of the proposed zoning and land-use change, City Commissioner Joe Morgan initially expressed concern that once the property is rezoned, it might not always be used as a parking lot, but might, in the future, be used for some other commercial purpose which could be less compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood. He asked whether Tom Thumb would be willing to agree to a restriction on its future use of the property.

Attorney Jeff McInnis, representing Tom Thumb, said that his client "is not prepared to waive any rights in the future," but does not currently anticipate using the property for anything other than a parking lot.

Mayor Bruce Arnold said that he did not think the city should "hold Tom Thumb hostage" to hypothetical future changes in land use.

After some further discussion, the commission voted 3-1 in favor of the change to the land use and zoning, Morgan dissenting. Commissioner Diane Kelley was absent.

In other business, commissioners unanimously approved the second and final reading of an ordinance changing the date of this year's municipal election from March 11 to Aug. 26. In that election, city voters will vote for or against a proposed amended city charter.

The new date will allow the city election to be held in conjunction with a countywide primary election also scheduled for Aug. 26. It will also allow the city to reduce the cost of holding the election from \$4,500-\$1,000, according to the ordinance.

City officials decided to postpone the election, normally held every year in March, after the three elective seats at stake

this year (two four-year commission terms and the mayoralty) drew only one candidate each. With no contest for those positions, the charter referendum could be postponed five months, officials decided.

Commissioners also approved a resolution in which the City of Valparaiso commits \$125,000 to the fiscal year 2013 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project, contingent upon receiving a CDBG grant of \$700,000 from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), which awards such block grants.

The decision follows up on previous action taken during the city commission's Jan. 13 meeting, during which the commission held its second public hearing regarding its application for the CDBG grant of \$700,000 in the DEO's Small City Community Development Block Grant program.

To obtain such a grant, at least 51 percent of the funds obtained must benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The grant would include \$56,000 for administration, \$43,600 for engineering, and \$600,400 for rehabilitation of city sewer lines and components.

According to documents presented during the Jan. 13 commission meeting:

"The city of Valparaiso's application will request funding to provide rehabilitation to the city's sewer collection system and the city's sewer lift stations. Potential upgrades to the existing sewer collection system may include: the complete renovation and replacement of several lift stations throughout the system to address aging and deteriorating wet wells, conversion from a dry pit configuration to submersible and replacement of energy inefficient pumps; and localized gravity sewer and force main replacement to accommodate the associated lift

Please see OK, page A-6



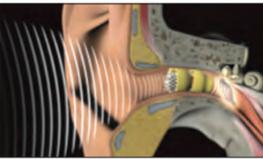
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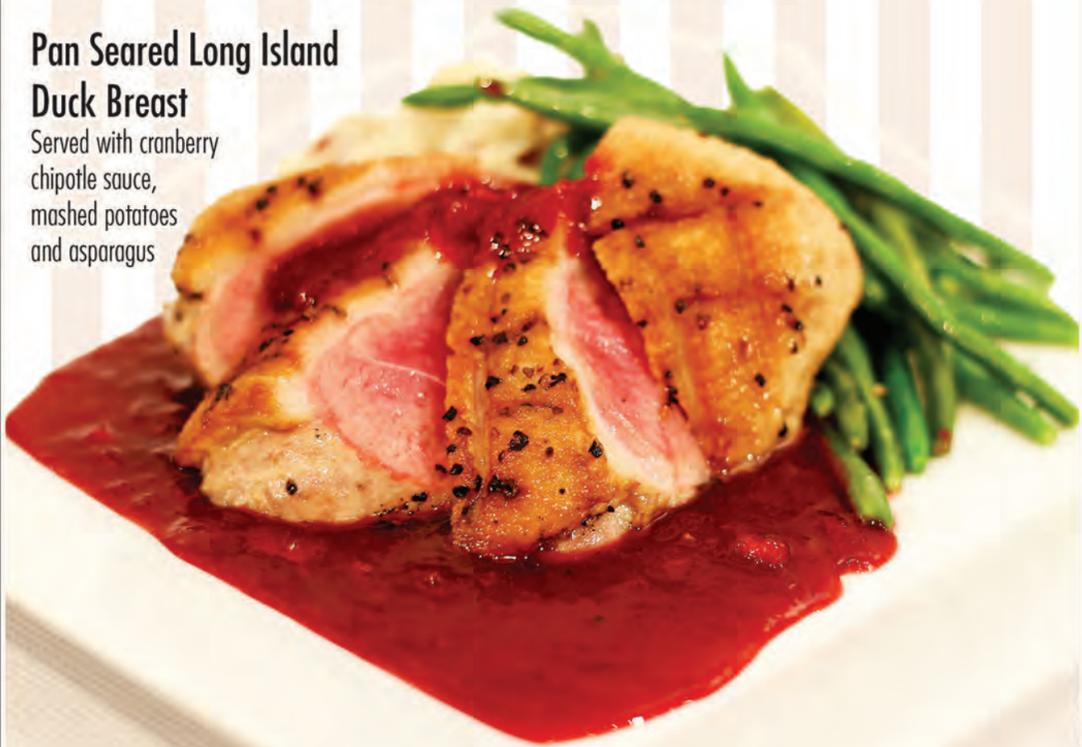
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Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

Eaglettes honored

The Okaloosa County School Board honored the Niceville High School Eaglettes Dance team Monday. The team won the 2014 Universal Dance Association's Alabama State Champions in the Out of State Varsity Hip Hop Division. The Eaglettes also won second place in the jazz division and received the varsity sportsmanship award. The students honored Monday were: Taylor Anderson, Alexa Verzyvvel, Jessie Saris, Ally Greer, Allison Schwartz, Laurel Browning, Grace Barton, Lexi Grandgenett, Johannah Wolfe, Desiree Manard, Jessi Miceli, Katie Armstrong, Skylar Barrett. Coaches are Brooke James and Jill Kerschitz. Choreographers are Denise Dicharry Galjour and Jill Kerschitz.

OK

From page A-5

station rehabilitation, as necessary."

"Additionally, upgrades at the lift stations may include the installation of a standby generator and electrical and control system upgrades."

Joseph A. Mittauer, President of Mittauer & Associates, a consulting and engineering firm working with the city to design the sewer system improvements, addressed the city commission's Jan. 13 meeting, saying that it would be possible to improve the city's competitive position for obtaining the CDBG grant by pledging more of the city's own money than the \$25,000 the city initially pledged, up to a maximum of \$125,000.

City Commissioner Heyward Strong, who oversees the city's public works program, told fellow commissioners Jan. 13 that

he would look into the city's finances, and report back to the city commission during its Jan. 22 meeting about how much the city can actually afford to pledge.

On Jan. 22, Strong made his report, recommending that the city go ahead and pledge the maximum \$125,000 amount. If the CDBG grant is then obtained, the \$700,000 of the grant would then be combined with the city's \$125,000 to fund the improvements to the city sewer system. Strong suggested that the \$125,000 could be borrowed from the city's general fund, and could be paid back with a monthly rate hike of \$2.12 per household applied over three years. He said that even with such a rate hike, Valparaiso's sewer rates would still compare favorably with those of nearby sewer districts such as Niceville and Okaloosa County. Given the fact that the city's aging sewer system is

much in need of improvement, said Strong, the benefit of raising the extra money in hopes of obtaining the CDBG grant outweighs the cost.

Commissioner Kay Hamilton, however, said that she would like to obtain more information about the chance of obtaining a CDBG grant next year versus this year, since there have been some unconfirmed reports that the DEO's rules may change next year, eliminating the requirement for the city to pledge so much of its own money in order to be competitive for obtaining such a grant. If the rules actually change, she said, the city might obtain such a grant next year without having to pledge so much of its own money or raise rates on its residents.

After some further discussion, the commissioners voted 3-1 in favor of pledging the \$125,000 in hopes of obtaining the grant, Hamilton dissenting.



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Dotson Gwinn proudly shows off his Rhino Shielded home.

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"While Super Shield is cheaper than re-roofing," said Redmond, "this product also has a 10-year non-prorated transferable warranty and can be tinted to any color."

Dotson Gwinn, who lives in nearby Miramar Beach, recently had his home renovated, to include Rhino Shield protection for both his roof and exterior walls. "My original roof was a

mint-green color that couldn't be matched with new roof tiles," Gwinn said, "but with Rhino Shield, we were able to use different color roof tiles, then coat them with Rhino Shield to color the roof a shade of brown that perfectly coordinates with the Rhino Shield coating applied to the walls of the house."

The new exterior of his home, Gwinn said, "cleans extremely well," and provides excellent protection from the elements.

Gwinn was also pleased by the workmanship and professionalism of the Rhino Shield installation crew. "They did an exceptionally good job, on a timely basis, and left no mess. Later, they came back to touch up wherever I asked them to. They were extremely polite, and did an efficient, high quality job. I am completely satisfied."

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More than books await at the Niceville Library

Library houses kittens in courtyard

By Angela Yuriko Smith
Beacon Staff Writer

Patrons of the Niceville Public Library may have noticed some new activity out in the library's gated courtyard. Two feral kittens have made the area their home and been adopted by the staff.

"The patrons are getting used to seeing them out there," said Libby Gibbs. "They'll come up to the glass to play." Gibbs is the woman who is largely responsible for the kittens adoption by the library.

The kittens have been named Edgar Allen Poe and Dorian Grey, after the literary icons of the same name, and they have a shelter to help them survive in the recent cold snaps and are fed and watered daily.

Feline Friends of Destin

worked with the library staff to capture the kittens and give them medical evaluations and shots.

Both kittens are male and have also been neutered. Once they were vetted, the two felines were released back into the area they were found in as part of Feline Friends' "Trap, Neuter and Return," a program that "is the smartest and most humane way to deal with existing outdoor cat populations," according to the



Dorian Grey

FFoD website.

The program involves trapping feral cats, providing them with medical care, shots and spaying or neutering before being releasing the animals back into their area.

Volunteers humanely trap dozens of cats a month and make sure that feeding stations are established and supervised afterwards.

"The library employees have been taking care of their food," said Gibbs. "Feline Friends is responsible for them if anything happens major." The idea behind



Edgar Allen Poe

this is to save cats that are considered unadoptable, said Gibbs, and would be euthanized immediately.

"These little guys are completely feral," said Gibbs "Which is different from 'stray' as in they haven't had any contact with humans, other than when they were fixed."

While Poe and Doe, as they are called now, may be adoptable some day, at the moment all parties involved seem content to let things go ahead as they are.

"We're all getting attached to them," said Gibbs.

Libby Gibbs, a Niceville Library employee, has championed the cause to care for the two feral cats that live in the enclosed library courtyard. Patrons can come see the kittens play through the windows.



Ruckel beats Bruner Thursday

Ruckel Middle School Rams won Thursday night's soccer game against Bruner Middle School with a score of 3-2. Pictured, Mattheau Martin leaps over Bruner's goalie to charge the goal. Ruckel will be playing Lewis School Jan. 30. at the Twin Oaks Sports Complex, Niceville.

Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson

Who's News

Elizabeth Gadzinski has been named to the Dean's List for the 2013 fall semester at Northwest Florida State College.

Gadzinski is a 2013 graduate of Rocky Bayou Christian School having earned an honors diploma.

Upon obtaining her associate's degree she plans to transfer to the University of Central Florida in the fall of 2015 to major in Events Management.



Elizabeth Gadzinski



Beacon photo by Angela Yuriko Smith

Book release fete

Terri Fedonczak, left, was at One 20A Modern Bistro, Niceville, Monday, Jan. 20 to sign copies of her new book, "Field Guide to Plugged-in Parenting: Even if You Were Raised by Wolves" at a book release party. Pictured, she signs a copy for Nancy Fox of Bluewater Bay.



Robotics champs at STEMM Center

The robotics competition team for The Doolittle Institute at the Okaloosa County STEMM Center, Valparaiso, won first place, and the Champion's Trophy, in a robotics tournament at Northwest Florida State College Jan. 18 as part of the "2013 Nature's Fury Challenge." This is the first time NWFSO hosted the event. Pictured from left, Robin Wynn, Indira Mishra, Natalie Cross, Livia Hughes, Ben Baltz, Chris Loffler, Mary Mason White and Jasmine Mishra.

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Lady Eagles lose to South Walton

Niceville High School Lady Eagles lost their last varsity basketball game to South Walton High School, Santa Rosa Beach Friday with a score of 47-36. Their next game will be in Fort Walton Beach Jan. 30 for a district game against Crestview High School. Pictured, Elise Stuart takes control of the ball.

Beacon photo by Sarah Clauson



Twins at Lewis rank first in All-State

Andrew and Tacy Colón, 8th grade twins at Lewis School, were recently each ranked number one in the state of Florida on their respective instruments at the Florida Music Educators Association convention Jan. 11 in Tampa. Pictured, Andrew and Tacy, just after their performance as principal players in the All-State Band.



Okaloosa Volunteer of the Year

Mary Norton, right, better known as "Granny" to hundreds of Bluewater Elementary students, was recently named as the recipient of the Okaloosa School District's "Outstanding School Volunteer of the Year" award, senior category. She has volunteered for the past 10 years. Pictured with Amy Klugh, Bluewater assistant principal, who is giving her an official name badge that says "Granny."



Mayor and wife give new stove to children's center

Mayor Wise and his wife Helen donated a new stove to the Children's Advocacy Center. After 13 years of baking more than 100,000 plus cookies, the oven door on the old stove fell off making it necessary to be replaced. Pictured from left, Vida Brinson, Debbie Hollis, Mayor Randall Wise and Julie Hurst.

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Edge lauds staff of the year

Angelle Rosenbleeth, left, has been selected as Edge Elementary's Teacher of the Year and Cindy Dooley has been selected as Edge's Educational Support Person of the Year.



Beacon photo by Angela Yuriko Smith

Museum class learns to weave rushes

Interested students gathered despite the chilly night Jan. 21 to learn to make woven rush seats at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Valparaiso. Each student made the seat for a stool as their project. Pictured from left, Susan Adamov, Christine Reiner, instructor Phil Richter, Elaine Lightfoot and Marsha Cox. For information on future classes call 678-2615.



Eaglettes shine at dance championship

The Niceville High School Eaglette Dance team traveled to Birmingham on Saturday, Jan. 11, to compete at the UDA Alabama State Championship. In the out-of-state division, they placed first in Varsity Hip Hop and second in Varsity Jazz. The team was also awarded the "Sportsmanship Award" for all varsity teams. Pictured top row from left, Laurel Browning, Jessi Miceli, Lexi Grandgenett, Katie Armstrong, Jessie Saris, Grace Barton, Skylar Barrett and Allison Schwartz. Bottom row from left, Johannah Wolfe, Desiree Manard, Taylor Anderson, Alexa Verzwylvelt and Ally Greer.



Teacher, staff of the year for Plew

Sonja Leighton, left, has been selected as Plew Elementary's Teacher of the Year and Lynne Roll has been selected as Plew's Educational Support Person of the Year.



2014

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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

CALENDAR

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com

Movie event
The Valparaiso Community Library invites teens to a special showing of "The Lone Ranger," rated PG-13, on Jan. 29 at 3 p.m.

Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult. For questions, call 729-5406.

Alzheimer's support group
A support group for those affected by Alzheimer's will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 29 at the Niceville United Methodist Church, Chandler Center, 214 S. Partin Drive. The support group is free and limited respite care is available, reserve in advance by calling 866-478-7790.

All County performance
The All County Bands, musicians from various local High School bands, perform in an All County Band concert Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. Event is free at the Mainstage Theater, Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville.

Republican Women meet
The Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated will meet on Feb. 5 at the Wyndham Garden Hotel on Okaloosa Island. Socializing will begin at 11:30 a.m., with lunch at noon. There will be a "Dine and Dash" table, which will accommodate those who can only stay for a limited time. "The Media in Politics" will be presented by Michael Griffith, a reporter and photographer for The Bay Beacon.

To make a reservation, contact Donna Pattison at 651-5416 or donna.pattison@cox.net by noon on Jan. 31. Cost of the lunch is \$16 for members and \$18 for guests. For more information about RWOFF, visit rwoff.org.

Worship and Word
Pastors Walter and Barbara Williams, along with the members of All God's Children and The Living Word Worship Center, 40 S. John Sims Parkway, Valparaiso, welcomes special guest Joni Ames for their Friday Night Live Service on January 31 at 7 p.m. All are invited. For more information call 678-7632.

Bird walk
Master birder, Bruce Purdy, will lead a bird walk to the Okaloosa County Landfill and Ft. Walton spray fields on Feb. 1. This location consistently produces the highest species counts in our area with wintering shorebirds, raptors, ducks, songbirds and more. Wear good shoes, bring water and insect repellent. Meet at Coach

and 4 Restaurant at 1313 Lewis Turner Blvd., Fort Walton Beach at 7:30 a.m. Call Bruce at 305-359-5334 for more info.

Income tax help
Volunteers from AARP will provide free individual federal tax assistance on an appointment only basis at the Niceville Library beginning Feb. 1-April 12. Days and times available are Saturdays 9-1, Wednesdays 9-1 and Fridays 9-4.

Individuals seeking 2013 federal tax preparation help can sign up at the Reference Desk or call the library at 729-4090 or 279-4863 x1507 to make an appointment. According to AARP officials, individual income tax preparation assistance is limited to 2013 federal income taxes only.

IRS tax forms are available in the library lobby. Many major forms and instruction booklets may not be available till late February according to a recent IRS notification.

Biophilia event
There will be an "Archeology for Kids" event at the Biophilia Center, Freeport, on Saturday, Feb. 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with special programs at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. For more info, call 835-1824 or visit eowilsoncenter.org.

Black History dinner
The Okaloosa County Chapter of the Democratic Black Caucus of Florida will be having a Okaloosa County Black Caucus' Black History Fundraising Dinner on Feb. 1 at 6 p.m. at the Ramada Inn on Okaloosa Island.

The event's theme, "Teamwork makes the Dream Work," will be highlighted by keynote speaker Dr. Melvin T. Stith, Dean Emeritus at the Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University.

Tickets for this event are \$50 per person with proceeds benefitting the Okaloosa Black Caucus' annual "get out the vote" campaign.

To purchase, contact Jerome Lewis 376-3142, Naomi Hardison 499-0204, Diane Dillard 226-1346 or the Okaloosa County Democratic Party at 609-3367.

Watercolor workshop
Don Andrews, nationally known watercolor artist, will present a "Beginning Landscape" class at the Arts and Design Society's (ADSOS) Art Center Studio, 17 First Street, SE, Fort Walton Beach on Feb. 1 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. This class is for beginning through advanced watercolor students. Cost is \$120 for ADSO members, \$130 for non-members. Students provide their own materials.

To sign up for this workshop visit the ADSO website at artsdesignsociety.org or call 244-1271 Tuesday through Friday, 1-4 p.m.

History weekend
Make history part of your future with "Home School Fridays" and "Hands-On History Saturdays," a monthly program based on the Florida core standards for education for children ages 5-12 at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Valparaiso. Each month, from now until June a different pro-

gram will be presented related to Northwest Florida history for children and families.

February's program will be "Bayou Living" on Feb. 1 and 7 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

\$7 per child or \$5 for museum family members. Special deal for new family members. Groups welcome, space is limited so please pre-register at 678-2615.

Mac users
The February meeting of the Mac Users Group will be held on Monday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Northwest Florida State College Student Services Building, room 132.

Anne Hornstein will be presenting a program entitled "Short cuts, Secrets and Simple Hints." This will be a hands-on, interactive workshop for using your Macintosh computer and iPad. Some of the applications to be covered will be eMail, Contacts, Pages, iPhoto, Calendar, Reminders and Notes.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their Mac devices and will be given an opportunity to share information and ask questions.

For more information, visit FWBMug.com or contact Jean Dutton at 862-3327 or jeandutton@mac.com.

Classical commentary
The "Better Listening" series combines commentaries on classic music and related CD selections each Tuesday evening from Feb. 4 through March 25 from 7-9 p.m. at the Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall, 1295 Bayshore Drive, Valparaiso. All sessions are free and open to the public. No reservations required.

Feb. 4 will be Dr. David Ott, internationally recognized composer and conductor, will open the Unitarian Church sponsored community classical music study series with his program, "Mostly Mozart." For more info, contact Lou Johnson at musicstudy@uufec.com.

Open mic poetry night
Join fellow poets Feb. 5 for "Say the Word," an open mic poetry reading at the French Quarter Bar & Grill, 714 Howell Rd., Niceville, at 7 p.m.

The event is free of charge and all are welcome to take the mic. Each performer should plan to share about 2-3 poems, either their own or by another author.

Read to Baci
Baci, a Bichon Frise therapy dog, loves a good book. If you are age five or older and would like to read a story to Baci, join him in the Youth Services program room Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 3:30 p.m. This is a first come, first served program. You may bring a book or choose from the library collection.

Daughters of colonists
Euclidean Chapter, Daughters of the American Colonists will have its next meeting on Feb. 5 in Niceville. Women over the age of 18 are welcome to join. Membership in the NSDAC is a unique opportunity to honor one's lineage and heritage as a descendant

Please see CALENDAR, page B-4



Prepare for tax time

Volunteers from AARP will provide free individual federal tax assistance on an appointment only basis at the Niceville Library beginning Feb. 1-April 12. Days and times available are Saturdays 9-1, Wednesdays 9-1 and Fridays 9-4. Individuals seeking 2013 federal tax preparation help can sign up at the Reference Desk or call the library at 729-4090 or 279-4863 x1507 to make an appointment.

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Does This Look Funny to You? A Lesson on Skin Health

Wednesday, February 5th | 11:30 am
Twin Cities Hospital Wellness Center

Join us as George vonHilsheimer, MD, a Board Certified Dermatologist, discusses a variety of common skin problems and how you can prevent, recognize, and treat these skin disorders in the most innovative ways.

Preventing a Broken Heart
Friday, February 21st | 11:30 am
Twin Cities Hospital Wellness Center

Cardiovascular Disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but the majority of heart attacks and strokes are preventable. Twin Cities Hospital H2U Director, Kelly Light, RN, BSN, will share information about who is at risk and what you can do to help prevent this debilitating and fatal disease.

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'Saturday in the Park' seeks vendors

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida in Valparaiso is seeking craft and food vendors, re-enactors and traditional craft demonstrators for their 38th annual "Saturday in the Park Heritage Festival" to be held on April 26 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.



This family friendly event has long supported the museum's efforts to promote the rich history of Northwest Florida.

The festival begins at 8 a.m. with the Heritage 5K Run/Walk and the Kids Fun Run and is followed by a day of historic celebration with re-enactments, craft demonstrations, live entertainment, a Kid Zone with bounce house, children's crafts and much more.

Vendor space is limited. Registration forms are available at the museum or can be requested by emailing info@heritage-museum.org.

Individuals interested in signing up for the event are urged to carefully review the rules section of the application. Contact the museum at 678-2615 for more information.

WHO'S

From page B-1

Contest. The prize is a \$5,000 grant contribution to a Florida 529 College Savings Plan.



Eve Glenn

CALENDAR

From page B-3

of the American Colonials. For information contact Margaret Nichols at 897-1278.

Early release movie

The Valparaiso Community Library invites children and families to the next Early Release Movie Day on Feb. 6 at 1:30 p.m. The movie will be "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2," rated PG. Popcorn will be served, seating is limited. 729-5406.

Audubon meets

The Audubon monthly meeting will be Feb. 6 with the program "Alabama and Florida Hummingbirds, a Lot More Than You Think" by Fred Bassett, certified master bird bander. The program will discuss Ruby Throated Hummingbirds in detail and introduce several western humming bird species that winter in the Southeast that have been banded and sighted often.

The meeting will be held in Room 130 on the ground floor of the Student Services Center at the Niceville campus of Northwest Florida State College, and will begin at 6:30 p.m. with socializing and light refreshments. The meeting is free and open to the interested public. For more information, call Walt Spence at 582-7064.

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vs
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Wednesday, February 19, 2014

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- Tour Entire Campus:
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Costa Leadership Institute
Community Meeting & Conference Facilities
Doolittle Raiders History Exhibit
- Tour Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center
- Door Prizes! Win a Nook HD+!
- First 200 Patrons Receive Free Admission to NWFSC vs. Gulf Coast Basketball Games.

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