

# The Bay Beacon

Police Blotter, page A-4

10 Pages, 2 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

50¢

**UP COMING**

**Thurs., noon**



The **Twin Cities Ministerial Association** will host the local observance of the annual **National Day of Prayer** on the front steps of Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive, Niceville. Public welcome. 678-1611.

**Fri.-Sat., 6:30 p.m.**



**Rocky Bayou Christian School** will present the musical play **"The Secret Garden Spring Version"** at the Fort Walton Beach Municipal Auditorium. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and may be reserved or purchased at the door. 279-4112.

**Sat., 9 a.m.**



The annual **EOD Memorial ceremony** will be held at the Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Range Road, Niceville. Free and open to the public.

**Mon., 5:30 p.m.**

Republican candidates for **Okaloosa County Commissioner**, District 4, will participate in a public forum at **Bluewater Bay's Clubhouse, Niceville**, which includes dinner for \$15. Incumbent Don Amunds and challengers Trey Goodwin and Henry Kelley will speak and answer questions. Open to the public. 678-2182.

Calendar, B-3

## Niceville awards \$5.5 million debt deal

By **Marcia Anne Sanders**  
*Beacon Correspondent*

The Niceville City Council met April 22 in a special meeting to choose the lender to refinance a series of 2005 bonds for water and sewer projects. All council members were present except Judy Boudreaux.

The resolution passed unanimously to accept the proposal for \$5.5 million in loans from Trustmark Bank, of Jackson, Miss. The amount increased

from a planned \$5.1 million so the city could take advantage of lower interest rates while retaining the same terms and debt service on the loans, which will end in 2024 and 2030.

Bill Fray of Fray Municipal Securities, finance adviser to the city, told the council that the low bidder FNBT.com Bank "refused to follow up on their commitment in their RFP response."

The city gave FNBT.com

Bank, Fort Walton Beach, until noon on the day of the meeting to honor its original low bid with a true interest cost of 1.95 percent or negotiate another rate, but there was no response, according to city officials.

The second place bidder was Trustmark National Bank, which offered a true interest cost of 2.58 percent on the \$5.5 million loan.

The original loan rates, which the new loans will

replace, ranged from 3.5 to 4.3 percent. The city will generate \$631,158 of savings which includes all related costs of the financing. An additional \$271,642 will be deposited to the construction fund at closing from the water and sewer sinking fund.

The \$271,642 had been set aside to pay off the bond that comes due in June 2014, but it will be paid with the new loan funds.

City Manager Lannie Corbin said he had no particular projects in mind for the money yet. "We start our budget process for next fiscal year in June and we'll be coming up on all kinds of projects at that time," Corbin said.

Councilman Bill Schaeztle said, "I think it's the right thing to do. It saved the city about \$600,000 by refinancing and the savings can be applied to

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

## Tasty tourney



A watermelon eating contest was a favorite contest for children at the Saturday in the Park event at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida and Perrine Park. Pictured, kids had to eat the watermelon to the white rind to win. The winner won a watermelon among other prizes. Saturday in the Park is one of the annual events that the museum depends on for funding, according to Steve Czonstka, a museum trustee, along with memberships and other fund raising events, and he said he was pleased with the turn out. "This is the best one we've ever had," said Czonstka. "The bake sale was sold out. We had a lot of people come through the museum and sign up for memberships."

Beacon photo by Angela Yuriko Smith

## House robber gets 15 years

Circuit Judge John T. Brown has sentenced Corey Landon McComas to 15.1 years in state prison, with 15 years to be served as a minimum mandatory sentence following his plea of no contest to a charge of robbing a Niceville home, according to William Eddins, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit.

McComas will serve 15 years without "gain time" because of his status as a prison releasee reoffender, according to Eddins. McComas was also sentenced as a habitual felony offender. He was on probation at the time he committed the robbery.



**Corey Landon McComas**

On July 12, 2013, McComas entered a home in Niceville to visit an acquaintance, who was one of the residents, according to the state attorney.

While inside the residence, McComas took a small safe that contained the victim's medications. When the victim saw he was taking it, McComas pulled a

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

## Takeover of Eglin gas network advances

The way has been cleared for Okaloosa Gas District to take over and operate the part of the natural-gas distribution system on Eglin Air Force Base that it doesn't already own.

An agreement between the Valparaiso-based utility and the Air Force has been signed by both parties, the district's board of

directors were told during a meeting last week.

Execution of the agreement set in motion steps for Okaloosa Gas to assume ownership of the natural gas system located on the Eglin main base and the Eglin reservation.

Gas district and federal representatives met to define the steps

to finalize the final utility bill of sale, in which no money will change hands. At that point, Okaloosa Gas will assume responsibility of the complete natural gas distribution system within Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, Duke Field, and the 7th Special Forces as part of an Air Force-wide utility privatization initiative.

Separately, Corvias Military Living, a private contractor that will build and operate military housing on Eglin and Hurlburt, has received a signed copy of an agreement under which Corvias will finalize provisions for Okaloosa Gas to provide natural gas service to the new homes that will be located on the military

bases.

In other business, the Okaloosa Gas board was told that the utility is turning its compressed natural gas marketing efforts towards small-fleet conversions. The district will develop a new CNG rate to lure small fleets of motor vehicles to convert to natural gas to save on fuel costs.

## Highway option is handed off to bridge panel

By **Mike Griffith**  
*Beacon Correspondent*

Members of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority (NWFTCA) Thursday voted unanimously to leave a possible extension of the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector road by about 4.3 miles, from State Road 85 north of Niceville to a point near the Northwest Florida Regional Airport, for the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority (MBBA) to build if it chooses.

Earlier this month the bridge authority voted to pursue such a project.

The NWFTCA, which last year ranked such an airport connector as its top priority

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



## Baseball Eagles set for regionals

Niceville High School won its first baseball district title since 2009 Thursday when it beat Crestview for the 1-7A district title, 3-0. The Eagles will face Lincoln High School in the regional quarterfinal tonight at 7 p.m. at home. Will West, pictured below, shared credit with Drew Dungan for the shutout that brought down the Bulldogs. Left, dirt flew at the plate in the fourth inning as Andrew Engle slid to score after Cody Moore hit a double that also brought teammate Drew Frederic home. Separately, Rocky Bayou Christian School won the District 1 Class 3A championship the same day, page B-4.



Beacon photos by Sarah Clauson



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**Sen. Gaetz portrait unveiled in Tallahassee**

A portrait of Florida Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, was unveiled Monday in a ceremony at the state Capitol, Tallahassee. By tradition, after each Senate President's term, a portrait is hung in the Senate Chamber. Each time a portrait is added, another is moved to the Historic Capitol, keeping 100 years of past senate presidents on display in the present chamber. Gaetz's two-year term as senate president will close later this year. The Florida Legislature is scheduled to adjourn its annual 60-day regular session Friday.

**OPTION**

From page A-1

among 36 highway projects in its master plan, recently dropped the project from the plan.

The project proposal was raised again during Thursday's meeting in Destin as a request from Eglin Air Force Base to revise the 2013 adopted master plan, according to the NWFCA meeting agenda.

A brief discussion of the Eglin request led to a motion by NWFCA member Gordon Sprague to go forward with the existing master plan, which does not include the airport extension. Sprague added, however, that the board remains free to "recognize that changes can be made at any time."

NWFCA chairman Robert Montgomery said that the NWFCA will "continue discussions with Eglin," but did not indicate any likelihood that the NWFCA will revive its own involvement in the project.

No representatives of the Air Force appeared at Thursday's meeting or addressed the NWFCA.

Following last week's meeting, Montgomery spoke with the Beacon, saying that the bridge connector extension project will probably be turned over to the MBBA. He said the exact point at which such a road might connect



The Mid-Bay Bridge Authority has assumed responsibility for exploring whether to build a highway linking the Northwest Florida Regional Airport with the MBBA's recently completed expressway, which terminates at Highway 85 just north of Niceville. Pictured, an aerial photo presented to the bridge authority's governing board earlier this month showing the Eglin Air Force Base land through which such a highway, if built, would go.

to a highway serving the airport would have to be worked out between the MBBA and the Air Force.

Montgomery told the Beacon, "It is my understanding that the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority has enough money to fund such a project without making it a toll road." The NWFCA had previously estimated the cost of such a project at about \$50 million. The

bridge authority earlier this month estimated the cost at \$40 million.

Montgomery said that to the best of his knowledge, the MBBA receives enough toll revenue from the existing Mid-Bay Bridge and its connector route around the north of Niceville to fund such a project, especially if additional traffic between the Northwest Florida Regional Airport and beachfront resort communities such as Destin, Sandestin, and Okaloosa Island produce additional toll revenue along the connector and over the bridge.

In other business during Thursday's meeting, Mary Beth Washnock, a senior planner with the West Florida Regional Planning Council, invited NWFCA members to attend the second annual Emerald Coast Transportation Symposium, scheduled to be held May 29 and 30 in Pensacola. She said the

event will feature industry panel experts and keynote speakers, including Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Ananth Prasad, Gil Penalosa, Executive Director of "8-80 Cities," and Tim Chapin of the Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

Topics to be discussed during the symposium will include a "Florida state legislators update," "Florida's wicked planning problems," "Bringing industry to our region," "Aviation and port planning," "The future of transit in Florida," "Complete streets," "Transportation - planning to reality," "Building lean & green," "Alternative energy," and "Health and the built environment."

NWFCA General Counsel Nick Beninate told the NWFCA members that it is permissible under the Florida sunshine law for more than one member to attend the transportation symposium, as long as they do not discuss NWFCA business among themselves while there.

Meetings of the NWFCA are held quarterly, and rotate among various locations within Northwest Florida. The next NWFCA meeting is scheduled for July 24, in Port Saint Joe.

**ROBBER**

From page A-1

handgun from his pocket, pointed it at the victim and said, "This is happening." The weapon was later determined to be a BB gun.

McComas fled down the street and got into a taxi, which was quickly tracked down by Niceville police officers. By that time, however, McComas had fled the cab.

Both the cab driver, who was not a taxi employee, and a passenger denied any knowledge of what McComas had intended to do. McComas reportedly had only told them

he was going to get some money that was owed to him, according to Eddins.

The passenger said that while McComas was in the cab, he opened the safe and pills went flying everywhere.

Law enforcement found the safe, two empty pill bottles, and some loose pills in the cab. They also recovered an air pistol.

The investigation which led to McComas, who was arrested July 21, was conducted by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and the Niceville Police Department. Assistant State Attorney Clifton Drake prosecuted the case.



Gordon Sprague



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**DEBT**

From page A-1

other areas within the city. By doing that, that helps keep taxes down."

At a meeting April 15, officials had expressed unhappiness upon being told that FNBT.com Bank had withdrawn its low bid, which would have saved the city even more money in the refinancing.

City Attorney Dixie Dan Powell said April 22, "We

hoped to be able to continue our relationship with FNBT, but we're pleased to foster a banking relationship with Trustmark."

Councilman Sal Nodjomian said, "The savings that'll result from the refinance will afford us an opportunity to make other investments in the city." He added, "This council is very interested in fiscal responsibility for the city."

The closing for the new loans was set for April 29.



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### Newest North Bay fire truck enters service

North Bay Fire District division chief Butch Parker showed off North Bay's newest fire truck Friday as he prepared for its "push-in ceremony" on Tuesday, April 29, in which the truck would be ceremoniously inducted into the district's inventory, although the new truck actually arrived at the station last month. Parker said the new, \$525,000 pumper and rescue truck replaces an older, less modern vehicle that was sold. It can deliver 1,500 gallons of water or foam per minute onto a fire. It also comes equipped with newer, more modern types of rescue and extraction equipment for rescuing people from damaged vehicles and other dangerous situations, right. The North Bay Fire District serves Bluewater Bay, Seminole, and nearby communities.

Beacon photo by Mike Griffith



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Last day to register: Session 1 - June 11, 2014    Session 2 - July 9, 2014

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Morning Session:	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	\$120.00
Lunch:	12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	\$45.00
Afternoon Session:	12:30 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.	\$120.00
Extended Care PM:	3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	\$35.00

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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 April 19, Valparaiso police arrested Benjamin Edward Keicher, 24, a construction worker, 954 Rue de Palms, Niceville, for 11 counts of possession of controlled substance. While investigating another crime, police encountered Keicher inside of a home belonging to another person. Police discovered a variety of drugs in the home, which Keicher said did not belong to him. A search of Keicher's person, however, revealed 11 Suboxone sublingual films, for which Keicher admitted having no prescription, and he admitted that he had obtained them from the street a few days earlier.

On April 21, Niceville police arrested Stefan Jade Shauf, 23, 1618, Date Palm Dr., Niceville, for one count of possession of controlled substance (0.3 grams of heroin), and one count of possession of narcotic paraphernalia (syringe and burned spoon).

Police visited Shauf's address in response to an anonymous tip, and asked if there were any illegal narcotics in the house. Shauf replied "No sir." Police then asked for consent to search his bedroom and he consented. He led officers into his master bathroom and opened the top left drawer of the bathroom counter, exposing one used syringe, one burned spoon, seven empty small ziplock bags and one that contained approximately 0.3 grams of suspected heroin that later field tested positive for the presence of heroin.

On April 21, Niceville police arrested Blaine Alexander Thomas, 28, unemployed, of 1609 Date Palm Dr., Niceville, for one count of dealing in stolen property and one count of grand theft. The arrest was made on a warrant stemming from an incident on Dec. 5 in which Thomas rented a demolition hammer from a rental store in Niceville, then pawned it in Fort Walton Beach for \$300.

On April 22, Niceville police arrested Stephan Jacob Mesiner, 25, unemployed, 403 Evans Rd., Niceville, for one count of knowingly driving with a license suspended or revoked, habitual offender.

## Summonses served

On April 21, Niceville police cited Zoe Demetra Bitzes, 21, of 4466 Kingslynn Rd., Niceville, for one count of drug equipment possession, and cited Ronald Steven Beckwith, 27, of 1027 Alderwood Way, Niceville, for one count of marijuana possession, not more than 20 grams.

A police officer observed Bitzes and Beckwith sitting in a vehicle on Alderwood Way with the vehicle lights turned off. The vehicle was partially parked on the city right-of-way and partially on the roadway, with the vehicle pointed toward oncoming traffic. There had previously been complaints called into the police department in reference to people sitting in the same spot smoking marijuana.

The officer first observed the occupants as the officer drove past the vehicle heading in the opposite direction. The officer turned around and pulled up behind the vehicle, exited the marked patrol car, and approached the passenger side of the vehicle. The passenger, Beckwith, exited and began to walk away from the police officer after the officer began speaking with him.

Bitzes also exited the vehicle at that time. The officer smelled the odor of marijuana when Beckwith opened the door. The officer asked Beckwith if he had any identification on him and what they were doing. Beckwith said, "I live here." Beckwith did not say what address he lived at or point to a specific residence.

The officer asked Beckwith to turn around to be patted down for weapons. As Beckwith began to turn back toward the officer, the officer saw what appeared to be a glass pipe inside Beckwith's front left jean pocket. Beckwith turned around and said, "I do not consent to this search." The officer explained he was not searching him. Beckwith attempted to put his left hand inside his front left jean jacket. The officer grabbed Beckwith's hand and told him not

# Okaloosa seeks fugitives

This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.



**Wanted As Of: 04/04/2013**  
**Unemployment Compensation Fraud**  
**Name: Johnny Dwayne Sparks, Sr.**  
**Sex: Male Race: Caucasian**  
**Age: 50 DOB: 06/04/1963**  
**Height: 5ft 7in Weight: 160 lbs**  
**Hair: Brown Eyes: Green**



**Wanted As Of: 04/22/2013**  
**VOP-Grand Theft Auto**  
**Name: Nathaniel Bryan Morris**  
**Sex: Male Race: Caucasian**  
**Age: 34 DOB: 10/13/1979**  
**Height: 5ft 7in Weight: 135 lbs**  
**Hair: Brown Eyes: Hazel**

This information is from reports by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. A reward is offered by Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers, 863-8477, or 1-888-654-8477. Information can also be provided anonymously by texting "TIP214 plus the message" to CRIMES (274637)

to reach in his pockets again.

The officer patted down the same pocket and felt what appeared to be a large pipe. The officer asked Beckwith what was in the pocket. Beckwith said it was a pipe. The officer removed the pipe, which contained a burned substance, along with a smaller glass pipe. The officer located a small clear plastic baggie in Beckwith's front right jean pocket containing a green leafy substance which later tested positive for the presence of THC.

The officer conducted a search of the vehicle based on the odor of marijuana and located a "one hitter," which was made to look like a cigarette. The officer asked Bitzes what she used the hitter for and she said to smoke marijuana.

On April 22, Niceville police cited Kristie Marie Berhow, 34, of 1727 Union Ave., Niceville, for one count of drug equipment possession. Berhow was the front seat passenger in a vehicle stopped by police for white light emitting from a taillight. An officer approached the vehicle on the driver side, and asked the driver to roll down the left rear window for safety purposes.

The driver complied, and the officer smelled marijuana coming from inside the vehicle. Upon searching the vehicle based on the odor, the officer located a glass pipe in a pack of rolling papers inside Berhow's purse. The pipe smelled of marijuana. The officer asked Berhow about the pipe, and she said she uses it

to smoke marijuana. Also located in the vehicle was approximately 4.5 grams of marijuana underneath a baby seat.

Also cited was Richard Grey Brennan, 30, of 650 Country Club Ave., Fort Walton Beach, for possession of marijuana, not more than 20 grams. Brennan was the left rear passenger of the vehicle, and when questioned, he said that it was his marijuana that was located under the baby seat, where he said he had put it when the police officer pulled over the vehicle.

Brennan also said that a pack of rolling papers on the floorboard near where he was sitting were probably his, too. The suspected marijuana tested positive for the presence of THC, and weighed in at approximately 4.5 grams.

## Other incidents

On April 11, an Okaloosa deputy responded to an address on Baywood Drive in Niceville regarding grand theft of a motor vehicle.

On April 14, Niceville police responded to an address on Hart Street, regarding criminal mischief. The complainant stated that someone had set fire to some of his landscaping straw, and that he believed it was done by some kids.

On April 15 someone reported to Niceville police that his trailer tag had been stolen.

On April 16, Niceville police responded to an address on Crestview Avenue regarding criminal mischief.

On April 15, Niceville police responded to an address on Derby Downs, regarding a grand theft. A complainant told police that unknown persons had pried the lock off a construction trailer and removed a paint sprayer valued at

# Fire Department Reports

## Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from Apr. 21, 2014 through Apr. 27, 2014.

0 Structure Fire	20	Emergency Medical Calls
0 Vehicle Fire	1	Vehicle Crash
0 Other Fire	0	Vehicle Crash with Extrication
0 Illegal Burn	5	Other Emergency Calls
0 False Alarms	2	Hazardous Conditions



STREET	SITUATION	DATE	TIME
S. Cedar Ave.	Medical	4/21/14	01:05
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	4/21/14	10:03
S.R. 123	Cancelled	4/21/14	20:39
S. Partin Dr.	Medical	4/22/14	10:02
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	4/22/14	12:09
Edge Ave.	Medical	4/22/14	20:01
Nathey Ave.	Medical	4/23/14	10:15
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	4/23/14	11:31
Redwood Ave.	Medical	4/23/14	14:37
Drew Ct.	Medical	4/23/14	17:48
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	4/23/14	21:27
McEwen Dr.	Medical	4/23/14	23:58
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	4/24/14	07:33
Davis Dr.	Medical	4/24/14	09:00
S.R. 285	Medical	4/24/14	14:59
Edge Ave.	Life flight	4/24/14	18:26
Regatta Dr.	Medical	4/25/14	00:37
26th Street	Medical	4/25/14	03:25
N. Partin Dr.	Medical	4/25/14	07:41
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Power line down	4/25/14	19:34
Lake Ct.	Service call	4/25/14	21:30
Hart Street	Alarm activation	4/25/14	22:38
Hart Street	Alarm activation	4/25/14	23:51
S. Palm Blvd.	Medical	4/26/14	10:16
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle crash	4/26/14	17:13
Camellia Pl.	Medical	4/27/14	09:10
Yacht Club Dr.	Service call	4/27/14	13:07
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	4/27/14	14:49

Weekly Safety Tip: If an electrical appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it immediately and have it serviced before using it again. Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed. Like the Niceville Fire Department on Facebook

## North Bay



The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from Apr. 21, 2014 through Apr. 27, 2014.

STREET	SITUATION	DATE	TIME
Prestwick Dr.	Public assist	4/21/14	00:44
Merchants Way	Medical	4/21/14	03:01
Merchants Way	Medical assist	4/21/14	10:20
Merchants Way	Medical	4/21/14	10:49
Range Rd.	Explosive/bomb removal	4/21/14	11:11
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	4/22/14	05:22
Bermuda Way	Animal problem	4/22/14	13:54
Prestwick Dr.	Medical	4/22/14	19:03
Wright Cir.	Medical	4/23/14	00:17
Dominica Cir.	Medical	4/23/14	16:39
Nelson Point Rd.	Medical	4/24/14	08:17
Parkwood Cir.	Medical	4/24/14	09:04
White Point Rd.	Medical	4/24/14	10:00
Rosewood Way	Public assist	4/24/14	11:39
Canterbury Cir.	Medical	4/24/14	14:47
Rosewood Way	Assist invalid	4/24/14	16:53
Cat Mar Rd.	Medical	4/24/14	20:28
Westlake Ct.	Dispatched & cancelled	4/25/14	01:10
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	4/25/14	16:16
N. White Point Rd.	Medical	4/25/14	20:53
Windlake Dr.	Public assist	4/26/14	00:07
N. White Point Rd.	Medical assist	4/26/14	16:26
E. Rosewood Way	Public assist	4/26/14	21:10
Curacao Cove	Medical assist	4/26/14	22:21
N. White Point Rd.	Medical assist	4/27/14	06:24
Windrush Dr.	Medical	4/27/14	13:46

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

\$2,800, another paint sprayer valued at \$3,500, and six 5-gallon buckets of new paint, valued at \$720.

On April 15, Niceville police responded to an address on Rhonda Drive regarding a report of fraud/identity theft. The complainant reported that he had received a notice of debt collection for an ambulance ride supposedly taken while he resided in New Mexico. The complainant said that he had never taken an ambulance ride while in New Mexico and someone must have used his personal information.

On April 21, a couple entered the Niceville police station to report a possible identity theft. They said that they had been notified by email that their credit card had been reported stolen. They contacted their credit card company and learned that no such report

had been made. On April 22, Niceville police responded to an address on Bullock Boulevard in reference to a stolen vehicle. The complainant reported that her vehicle had been taken from in front of her residence, and that she believed she had left the keys in the vehicle and the vehicle unlocked.

On April 22, Niceville police responded to the Eglin golf course regarding a report of criminal mischief. A course maintenance official reported that he had discovered two broken windows on a restroom building at the 14th hole of the Eagle golf course. In addition, a \$600 water cooler had been knocked over, damaging its spout, a light fixture had been broken, and three tee markers were missing from the 14th hole. Someone had also defecated on the floor of the restroom.

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**THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER** —by Mike Griffith

What do you think about paying college scholarship athletes as “employees” of the colleges they play for?

Location: Winn Dixie shopping center



“When they’re in bowl games and the colleges get a lot of money, I think the players should be compensated, but in the regular season, they should be regular student athletes. However, all players should be paid an equal amount.”

Ken Krause, 52, Niceville, contractor



“I really don’t know. I don’t follow college football that much.”

Randy Bonds, 60, Tampa, business owner



“If they receive a scholarship, they shouldn’t get a salary on top of that.”

Robira Everett, 28, Niceville, homemaker



“I think it’s a good idea. They should compensate the kids. The schools are making a ton of money off them.”

Stephen Siefke, 61, Dayton, Ohio, program manager



“It’s a bad idea. Sports are a part of the athletes’ college education. If they want to make money at it, they can do that as professionals after they graduate.”

Devon Hunt, 46, Valparaiso, boat captain



“The money earned from college sports should benefit all the students at the college, not just the student athletes.”

Cecilia Wallace, 50, Bluewater Bay, sales manager

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

# Flutter by the Panhandle Butterfly House

With spring in full bloom on the Gulf Coast, the Panhandle Butterfly House, Navarre, opens its doors for a 17th season on Saturday, May 3 at 10 a.m. to showcase a worldwide collection of butterflies and vast array of plant life.

the vivarium, as it is kept quite warm.

The butterflies prefer to have a temperature of around 80 degrees. Since they are cold-blooded animals, they use the environmental heat to get their wings moving.

## DAY TRIPPER

Just inside the door, a worldwide collection of butterflies,

Those that don’t require so much heat to get moving will appreciate one

donated by Dr. Tom Grow of Gulf Breeze, is on display. He donated the collection in 1999 and all the butterflies in the collection have been numbered and identified since then.

of the newest improvements to the vivarium; a fan and mist system to cool things off for visitors.

After enjoying the collection, you can see the real thing as you enter the vivarium where hundreds of local butterflies are fluttering around, enjoying their natural habitat. A large collection of natural plants and flowers can also be observed.

“We’ve had a lot of mention in the past about the heat,” said Mary Derrick, the Panhandle Butterfly House Extension Coordinator. “The new misting and fan system is very high quality to keep visitors cooler during the hot months.”

No one should need a coat in

Also inside the vivarium you will find displays of caterpillars and various other insects as well



Young and old alike thrill to have the opportunity to interact with butterflies so closely.

## Trip Tips

*Panhandle Butterfly House, Navarre*

**Getting there:** The Butterfly House is located at Navarre Park on Hwy. 98 at the foot of the Navarre Bridge.

**Price:** Admission is free but donations are appreciated. The Butterfly House runs solely on donations.

**Hours of operation:** The Butterfly House is open Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Scheduled tours can be booked online for Monday through Wednesday.

**Points of contact:** Visit the website at panhandlebutterflyhouse.org or call 623-3868. The mailing address is P.O. Box 5208, Navarre, FL 32566.

**Accessibility:** The Butterfly House is wheelchair accessible. The walkways are all paved and there are no stairs. Parking is directly in front of the building.

**Other activities:** Be sure to bring your sunscreen and bathing suit, as Navarre Park is not only home to the Butterfly House but also a children’s water park, playground and beach.

as an exhibit on the life cycle of the butterfly.

Native habitats for butterflies are slowly disappearing and the Panhandle Butterfly House is designed to educate the public on habitat conservation and ecosystem management.

The Butterfly House encourages people to consider planting a butterfly garden that receives plenty of sunlight with “butterfly-friendly” plants, such as milkweed, parsley, fennel, dill, wild petunias, wormwood and Queen Anne’s lace, among others. Butterflies will lay their eggs only on certain plants.

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on the milkweed plant, so if you want to see lots of beautiful monarchs in your yard, plant some milkweed. The Butterfly House even offers milkweed seeds for sale in their shop. Proceeds from the sales go help support the butterflies.

Thousands of visitors toured the house last year, many of them kids that went through the Kidderpillar school tours. The Kidderpillar school tours teach children to understand the insect’s role in the environment. The school tour won the Florida Master Gardener 4-H award for 2008.

The Butterfly House depends

on volunteer docents to help with things such as monitoring the facility, greeting the public and answering questions. A training course is available for prospective docents. It also needs garden volunteers in the early spring to get the inside and outside gardens in shape for the new season.

Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. The house is run completely on donations.

To help defray some of the costs associated with the butterflies visitors are welcome to make tax deductible contributions either at the Butterfly House or online.

Donors can also purchase special bricks that are placed in the walkways of the Butterfly House or purchase gift items in the Monarch Market.

The role of the Butterfly House is strictly educational. Their goal is to have folks leave with an appreciation for insects and their role in the environment and to understand they are very important to food production and to the whole ecosystem.

Worldwide, the butterfly population is decreasing due to the loss of habitat. The Panhandle Butterfly House wants kids who have visited to go home and plant a butterfly plant to support butterflies.



One of the thousands of butterflies at the Panhandle Butterfly House relaxes on a leaf in the arboretum.

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That's right—their expertise goes beyond transmission work. You can count on Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair to keep your car or truck running in perfect order. Prevention isn't reserved for personal health. It's critical in the health of your vehicle as well. Extend the life of your family vehicle with timely tune-ups and inspections of critical automotive systems. We now offer Amsoil oil changes which is a synthetic oil that can get you up to 25,000 miles until the next oil change. Don't allow those little problems to turn into costly ones. Maintenance neglect can cause major inconveniences to your

life, and your pocketbook. Let Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair take care of your vehicle and you.

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Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair at 610 Elm St. in Niceville, with newly renovated front office, customer lounge and general repair extension.



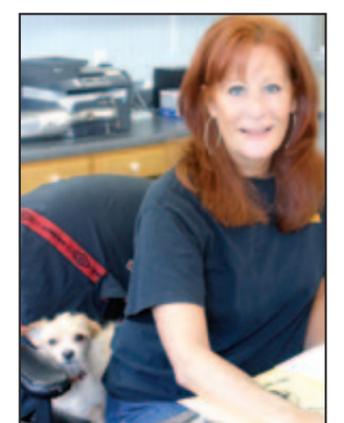
business, including an expansion to its building. The new "General Repair" side has three lifts dedicated to general repairs. And, we now have General Motors Factory Scan Tool for Dealer Level Diagnostic and Reprogramming Capabilities. All makes and models, both foreign and domestic, are welcome. Even diesel engines can find all their solutions at Twin Cities Transmission. This expansion supplements the four lifts dedicated to transmission work.

Twin Cities Transmission is independently and locally owned by Adam Marthis. Along with manager and fiancée Brandy Pirc, he prides himself on being a family-owned, hometown operation that has gladly served the Twin Cities area since 2000.

Located at 610 Elm St. in Niceville, just north of John Sims Parkway and west of Partin Drive. Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair is eager to make your acquaintance. Call 729-6629, fax 729-1529 or e-mail Brandy@tct.gccoxmail.com.

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## Ruckel wins robotics tourney, STEMM in third place

Eight schools from Okaloosa County participated in the Okaloosa Robotic Invitational Tournament April 12. The Doolittle Institute, Niceville High School and the Okaloosa STEMM Center hosted the event where students from 4th to 8th grade programmed Lego Mindstorms robots to autonomously accomplish five different missions to include Drag Race, Ball Pickup, Ball shoot, Maze and Wind Sprints. These robots are designed to use color, light, touch, gyro and ultrasonic sensors to navi-



gate in the events. Niceville High School's Radioactive Robots team prepared the course for the past two months and participated in judging, along with volunteers from Eglin Air Force Base and University of West Florida. The Choice Institute acquired a grant from AT&T to provide prizes. Teams competing were Baker Middle School, Bob Sikes Elementary, Bruner Middle School, Davidson Middle School, Okaloosa STEMM Academy, Pryor Middle School, Shoal River Middle School and Ruckel Middle School. NHS students

were there as volunteers and awarded their Radioactive Roaches trophy to the Okaloosa STEMM Academy students who presented the most sophisticated code. The overall winners of the competition was Ruckel Middle School with Bob Sykes Elementary in second place and the Okaloosa STEMM Academy placing third. Additionally, the Judges presented the Judges Choice medal to the Okaloosa STEMM Academy for best exemplifying the core values of the ORBIT competition.



The overall winners of the Okaloosa Robotic Invitational Tournament April 12 was Ruckel Middle School, pictured, with the Okaloosa STEMM Academy placing third. Additionally, the judges presented the Judges Choice medal to the Okaloosa STEMM Academy for best exemplifying the core values of the ORBIT competition.



## Bluewater students get house call

Second grade students at Bluewater Elementary recently finished a study on the human body. Dr. Steve Enguidanos of the Spine Institute visited the classes with an informal presentation where he provided all 37 students with proper "scrub wear," gloves, hats and booties. He also showed the classes X-rays, models of bones and hardware used to repair broken bones. Pictured, Dr. Enguidanos puts a cast on his daughter Marisol so the students could watch the procedure.

## Boys save for charity while mom deploys

Robert, right, and Michael Fogle found a way to count the days while they waiting for their mom to return from serving overseas duty in Afghanistan. Each day she was away, they put a quarter away in a special red, white and blue bank. When she returned, they donated the money to Sharing and Caring to help others.



## Area chefs help military families

On Thursday, May 1, Pioneer Technologies Corporation in partnership with the Air Commando Association and Fisher House of the Emerald Coast will host the 3rd

annual Taste of North Bay tapas and wine pairing at North Light Yacht Club in Niceville.

Guests will enjoy exquisite culinary offerings - paired with vintage wines - created by talented area chefs who, in the special VIP area, will reveal their secrets with live cooking demonstrations throughout the evening. Music, fabulous raffle items and a silent auction will round out this popular event.

General admission tickets are \$50 now and \$75 the final week leading up to the event. VIP tickets, which include access to the special chef cooking demonstrations and unlimited wine tastings, are \$75 and

\$100 the final week leading up to the event.

Proceeds benefit the Air Commando Association Endowment Foundation and Fisher House of the Emerald Coast.

The Air Commando Association was founded in 1969 by Brigadier General Robert Cardenas and then Colonel Harry Aderholt as an organization for retired and active duty Special Operations Forces personnel.

The purpose is manifold: bringing together airmen of all ranks to preserve memories and history, providing support to

**Please see CHEFS, page B-2**

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### Parish gives to food bank

Easter baskets for area children were donated to Sharing & Caring by the parish of Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church. Volunteers who assembled the baskets included Tom Okuly, Rhonda Wercinski, Tricia Zermeno, Tina-Marie Zermeno, Sean Dooley, Andrew Dooley and Paul Dooley; other volunteers included Ruthie Reynoso and Maria Lewis of Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church and Lisa Gamon of Niceville United Methodist Church. Pictured, Claire Jones, a food bank volunteer, accepts the baskets.

### Team Jen raises money to fight MS

Members of Team Jen, a group of friends, family and coworkers of Jennifer Hendrix, a 2002 graduate of Niceville High School who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2011, gathered Saturday, April 12 for the annual Walk MS 5k in Fort Walton Beach. The team, pictured from left, Autumn Allen, Jan Tardif, Patti Checkler, Robert Simmons, Joe Checkler, Jennifer Hendrix, Jason Hendrix, Debbie Simmons, Alexandria Allen, Rebekah Miller and Ashley Kohl. They have raised over \$1,000 in 2014.



### RBCS wins engineering tourney

Rocky Bayou Christian School recently won 1st place in the IDEAS 2014 engineering competition held at Calvary Christian School, Fort Walton Beach. Pictured from left, Keilani Colon-Bruno won second place in the airplane competition, Stephen Lowmiller took 1st place in the bridge competition, Seth Kerstein won 2nd place in the mousetrap car contest and Noah Kerstein won 3rd place in the mousetrap car contest.



### CHEFS

From page B-1

service members and their families and raising awareness and needed funds for their numerous outreach endeavors via their foundation.

The Fisher House of the Emerald Coast provides a home for military families when a family member is undergoing medical treatment at any local medical facility.

There is never a fee to stay at the Fisher House nor is it funded by the government, so community donations are vital to providing all the necessary comforts of home to these families that are often separated.

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downsized or eliminated, supporting our services members and their families becomes more critical than ever. Enjoying an evening of delicious food and festive fun is a perfect way to do this.

Taste of North Bay Thursday, May 1 at North Light Yacht Club, 113 John Sims Parkway W., Niceville.

Event opens at 6 p.m. Tastings begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for this event. For more information on how to become a sponsor, contact Kim Henderson at 259-4956. Donations to support the team can be made at AirCommando.org or FisherHouseEmeraldCoast.org.

Learn more about the event at TasteofNorthBay.org.



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## All-County Bands to perform Friday in Niceville

Forty-eight students from Ruckel Middle School were selected for the Okaloosa All-County Honor Band which will perform a free concert open to the public at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center on May 2 at 7 p.m. All-County high school and middle school bands will perform. Pictured, from left bottom row, Ryan Murphey, Alex Shields, Hannah Sjoström, Claire Yandel, Ashleigh Wallace, Madelyn Huston, Camille Miles, Hannah Stevenson, Katrin Woods and Jade Ward. Second row, Daniel Bobbitt, Julia Freeman, SarahBeth Bilton, Morgan Bailey, Adam Mistretta, Taylor Strickler, Mandy Martin, Meredith Freeman, Kaden Russell, Vanessa Barrett and Mark Herring. Third row, Triston Holloway, Emily Paulson, Cameron Vallin, David Cathey, Marcus Larson, Daisy Riley, Hannah Reid, Rene Johnson, Brian Son and Colton Williams. Fourth row, Steven Shipman, Jesse Johnson, Matthew DeYong, Kate Duricy, Jazzlyn Timper, Joshua Mills, Austin Jacobs, Trey Buck, Ryan Erickson, Zachary Verzyvvel and Nathaniel Preston. Not pictured, Jorah Barefield, John Hencinski, Ryan Matthewson, Ellie San Clemente, Lauren Smith and Joe Walker.

**2014**  
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E-mail items to  
info@baybeacon.com  
before 5 p.m. Wednesday.

### Student art show

The Okaloosa County School District and the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation will present the free 2014 Okaloosa County K-12 Student Art Show April 30 and May 1 from 9 a.m.-7:00 p.m. at the C.H. "Bull" Rigdon Fairgrounds/Northwest Florida Fairgrounds in Fort Walton Beach. This annual event exhibits over 2,500 pieces of student artwork from over 20 elementary and 17 middle and high schools. A reception will be held on May 1 from 6-7 p.m. Best of Show awards will be presented to middle school and high schools artists for 2-D and 3-D works.

For more information, please contact the Okaloosa County School District at 833-3100 or the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation at 650-2226.

### Alzheimer's support group

A support group for those affected by Alzheimer's will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 30 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.

### National Day of Prayer

The Twin Cities Ministerial Association will host this year's annual National Day of Prayer event on the front steps of Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive, Niceville, on Thursday, May 1 at noon. For more information call 678-1611 or visit the National day of Prayer website at nationaldayofprayer.org/events/.

### Audubon meets

The Choctawhatchee Audubon Society will have their monthly meeting and program: "Caught on Camera: Butterflies and Moths," presented by MaryAnn Friedman, 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.

### Free concert

The popular Christian musical group, The CenturyMen, will perform a free concert in the mainstage theater of the Mattie Kelly Arts Center on Thursday, May 1 at 7

p.m. as part of their nationwide tour. The event is sponsored by Shalimar United Methodist Church. Love offering will be taken.

For information contact Shalimar United Methodist Church at 651-0721 or the Mattie Kelly Arts Center Box Office at 729-6000.

### Taste of North Bay

Taste of North Bay will be Thursday, May 1 at North Light Yacht Club, 113 John Sims Parkway W., Niceville.

Event opens at 6 p.m. Tastings begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for this event. For more information on how to become a sponsor, contact Kim Henderson at 259-4956. Donations to support the team can be made at AirCommando.org and FisherHouseEmeraldCoast.org.

Learn more about the event at TasteofNorthBay.org.

### Musical show

Rocky Bayou Christian School proudly presents the musical "The Secret Garden Spring Version" on Friday and Saturday, May 2-3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Fort Walton Beach Municipal Auditorium. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and may be reserved or purchased at the door. For tickets and information, contact Jana Obrigewitch at 279-4112 or obrigewitchj@rbcs.org.

### History weekend

Make history part of your future with "Home School Fridays" and "Hands-On History Saturdays," a monthly program for children ages 5-12 at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, Valparaiso. Each month, from now until June a different program will be presented related to Northwest Florida history for children and families.

May's program will be "Mothers of the Past" on May 2 and 3 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.

### EOD memorial

The EOD Memorial at the EOD Memorial Wall Range Road, Niceville, will begin at 9 a.m. May 3. There will be a Crawfish Boil at Helen Back Again, 1128 John Sims Pkwy. Niceville, immediately following the Memorial.

### Retreat

Holy Name of Jesus in Niceville will be having their second annual Women's Retreat Saturday, May 3 in the Parish Life Center from 12:30-8:30 p.m. for "Sisters of Christ" with Sarah Hart. Early Registration is \$35 and is available online: holynamechurch.org/sistersofchrist. Women 18 years and older are welcome to attend this inspiring and uplifting day.

### State of the County

The 15th annual State of the County Report, which will be from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 3



Beacon photo by Angela Yuriko Smith

## Last early release movie of the year

The last Early Release Movie of the school year at Valparaiso Community Library will be May 1 at 1:30 p.m. for a showing of "The Nut Job," rated PG. Popcorn will be served. 729-5406.

in the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce conference room at 34 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, next door to Staff's Restaurant, Fort Walton Beach. Free and open to the public.

### Fundraiser

There will be a mystery dinner theater fundraiser to benefit Relay for Life May 3 at Dockside Cafe & Oyster Bar, Niceville, presented by Team Century 21, Wilson Minger Agency beginning at 6 p.m. with a cash bar and silent auction and dinner and a show at 7 p.m. Tickets

cost \$50. To reserve, call Cindy at 974-2951.

### Linux group meets

The "Northwest Linux User Group" will meet May 5 from 5-7 p.m. in Room 400 of the Niceville United Methodist Church, 214 Partin Drive South.

Those planning to attend should email Tom at tom.browder@gmail.com. Visit at nwflug.org for more information.

### Mac users meet

The May meeting of the Mac

Users Group will be held on Monday, May 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the NWF State College Student Services Building, Room 132.

"The iPad — How to Use, Tricks and Tips" will be presented by Denny and Karen Lauer. They will cover how to navigate, use some of the handy Apps.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their iPads and will be given an opportunity to share information and/or ask questions.

For more information, visit FWBMug.com or contact Jean

Dutton at 862-3327 or jeandutton@mac.com

### Public forum

The Republican candidates for Okaloosa County Commissioner, District 4, will participate in a public forum hosted by Silver Sands Republican Women Monday, May 5, at 5:30 p.m. at Bluewater Bay's Clubhouse in Niceville and includes dinner at 6 p.m. for \$15.

Commissioner Don Amunds and challengers Trey Goodwin and Henry Kelley will speak and then answer questions. Guests are welcome. For dinner reservations or further information please call Libby Hill, 678-2182.

### Read to Baci

Baci, a Bichon Frise therapy dog, loves to hear a good book. Children age seven or older are invited to read a story to Baci in the Youth Services program room Wednesday, May 7, at 3:30 p.m. This is a first come, first served program.

### Open mic poetry night

"Say the Word," an open mic poetry reading at the French Quarter Bar & Grill, 714 Howell Rd., Niceville, will be May 7 at 7 p.m.

The event is free and all are welcome to take the mic. Each performer should plan to share about 2-3 pieces.

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Two new titles from Walton County author John Danilow available now at Bayou Books, Niceville.

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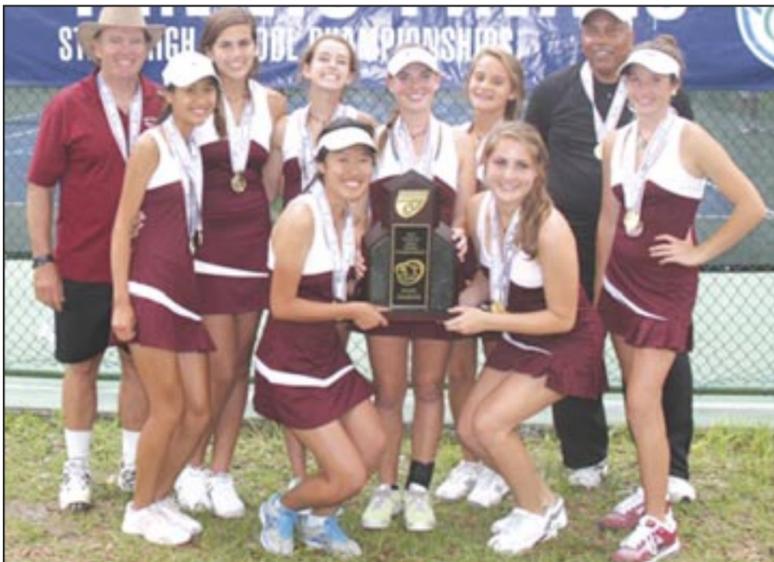
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**Niceville's Newspaper**



### NHS tennis girls win state champs

Niceville High School Girls Tennis team won the program's first State Championship title at Sanlando Park in Altamonte Springs April 15-18. The girls had a perfect opening day, winning both singles matches and both doubles matches for a total of 12 points. Pictured, Coach Chris Poate, Andi VonHilsheimer, Antonia Poate, Monica Hsiang, Alexis Hruby, Sam Sepe, Maddie Hsiang and Coach Brian Braziel. "This was just a culmination of some hard work," said Coach Chris Poate.

Photo courtesy of Kimberly Sepe



### Traveling volleyball team wins division championship

The Niceville Volleyball Club's U13 team won the division championship at the 9th Annual American Riviera Classic in Foley, Ala. on March 29. Pictured front row from left, Sarah Markwardt, Lauren Frederic, Mia Hague, Hannah Sjostrom, Courtney Faulkner, and Stefanie Markwardt. In the back row are coaches Tom Markwardt and Andy Faulkner.

### Rocky wins district championship

Rocky Bayou Christian School baseball beat Pensacola Christian Academy in a home game 6-3 and won the District 1 Class 3A Championship Thursday. Pictured, the 2014 varsity boys baseball team.



### NHS flag football team ends perfect season

Niceville High School girls flag football team ended a perfect 6-0 season against Fort Walton Beach High School with a game score of 27-7.

"I could not be more proud of the girls I had this year," said Coach Adron Robinson. "They literally put their heart and soul - blood, sweat and tears into the program. From day one, they wanted to be undefeated, they talked about it every day. And if you talk the talk, you have to walk the walk. And they did that."

### Eagles send six runners to state

The Niceville High School Eagles track and field competed in the Regional Meet in Tallahassee on April 24 against 31 other schools. The girls placed 7th overall while the boys placed 6th. The following six athletes will continue onto the State Meet in Jacksonville May 2-3: Nick Morken, Thomas Howell, Sophia Bergmann, Aubrey West, Jack Massey and Caden Ewing.

Aubrey West won 8th place in the 100m dash, 2nd place in the long jump (13.08, 17-08.75); Claire Crist won 7th place in the 3200m (11:56.26); girls 4x400m relay team Cenedy Crum, Jaylah Lawson, Drew Haggerman, Nickie Anderson won 9th place (4:08.21); girls 4x800 relay team Mackenzie Shinnick, Claire Crist, Drew Haggerman, Nicole Escoffier won 8th place (10:11.69);

Hannah Schroeder won 6th place in the triple jump (33-06.00); Sophia Bergmann won 3rd place in the shot put, 1st place discus (36-05.50, 122-07); Skyler Joneson won 5th place in discus (100-05); Tripp Davis won 5th place in the 800m (1:57.63); Jack Massey won 9th place in the 800m (1:59.92);

Nick Morken won 2nd place in the 1600m (4:07.12); Caden Ewing won 6th place in the 1600m (4:29.63); Thomas Howell won 2nd place in the 3200m (9:16.50); Kevin Cruz won 6th place in the 300m hurdles (40.92); boys 4x400m relay team Alex Boswell, Isaiah Denman, David Bobbitt, Josh Chord won 9th place (3:28.02); boys 4x800m relay team Nick Morken, Thomas Howell, Jack Massey, Caden Ewing won 1st place (7:52.82);

Aaron McDuffie won 13th place in the pole vault (9-06.00); Edward Shelikoff won 11th place in the discus (127-07); Garrett Olds won 12th place in the discus

(127-00). The following athletes achieved personal records at this week's meet: A. West, K. Cruz, N. Morken, T. Davis, J. Massey, S. Bergmann, H. Schroeder.

Niceville High School boys finished 6th and girls finished 7th out of 32 schools in 3A Region 1. Six runners qualified to move on to the state meet in Jacksonville May 2-3. Pictured, the Boys 4x800 consisting of Nick Morken, Caden Ewing, Thomas Howell and Jack Massey, won first place.

Beacon photo by Dave Shelikoff




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