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The Air Force will be well-represented within NASCAR as Reed Sorenson drives No. 43. See page 2.

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### Stout-hearted

He was determined to join the Air Force, so he dropped his weight from 351 to 190. See story on page 2.



### Culture club

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### What's up?

Check out the Patriot calendar for places to go and things to do on the Gulf Coast. See page 6.

## AF works hard to reduce bird strikes

### Dogs, birds and helicopters used to scare off unwanted wildlife

By Donna Miles  
*American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As an ongoing investigation continues on a bird strike that caused a passenger jet's engines to fail after takeoff from New York's LaGuardia Airport, Air Force safety officials said they're well-versed on the dangers of bird strikes and aggressively are working to prevent them.

National Transportation Safety Board officials confirmed initial indications that U.S. Airways flight 1549 struck a flock of birds, which were sucked into the engines and caused them to fail. The pilot, former Air Force pilot Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger III, successfully landed the plane in New York's Hudson River and is credited with saving all 155

people on board.

The incident brought public focus to a problem the Air Force, along with the airline industry, has long struggled to overcome.

Last year alone, the Air Force experienced more than 4,000 bird strikes, Eugene LeBoeuf, chief of the Air Force's Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard, or BASH, program at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., told American Forces Press Service.

Fortunately, none of those bird strikes was classified as a "Class A" accident, one that results in a death or more than \$1 million in damages, LeBoeuf said. But collectively, they cost taxpayers an estimated \$35 million.

Bird strikes are on the rise, he said, and present a serious safety

**Please see BIRD, page 3**



Air Force photo

Keith Mutton, who helps to run the U.S. Air Force's Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard program at the Royal Air Force base in Mildenhall, England, rewards Goldie, a 9-year-old Moroccan lanner hawk, for helping to rid the base of birds. Goldie can launch from Mutton's arm at up to 40 mph to chase away and ward off unwanted birds that are safety threats.

## Details emerge on post-9/11 GI Bill steps

By Rick Maze  
*Air Force Times*

A simple, Internet-based enrollment system is planned for the post-9/11 GI Bill to take care of everything from initial qualification to transferring benefits to family members, for those who want that option.

"We want it to be pain-free, we want it to be simple and fast," said a senior defense official who asked not to be identified because many details remain undecided.

Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs officials are preparing to implement Aug. 1 the biggest increase in veterans education benefits since World War II. The program promises to cover full tuition, with additional stipends for books and living expenses, for full-time students attending the public college or university of their choice.

On average, the combination of payments adds up to more than \$85,000 in college benefits over four years, and it is pos-

**Please see BILL, page 7**



Air Force photo by Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

### Talon tricks

Staff Sgt. Corey Fisher, 15th Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief, monitors the lifting of an MC-130H Talon II from the 15th Special Operations Squadron using four jacks, Jan. 7. Sgt. Fisher receives feedback from all four personnel manning the jacks to ensure the aircraft is lifted evenly. The jacks are pumped with hydraulic fluid forcing the jacks to extend, in turn lifting the aircraft to the desired height.



Patti Adams, cancer conqueror, sits in her Hawthorn House apartment at the Air Force Enlisted Village holding an oil painting of herself, painted in Hollywood, Calif., when she was 13. "I either take a great photo or I look like the Tasmanian Devil!" she said, laughing.

## Cancer survivor vows not to miss any of life

(With the Shalimar Relay for Life 2009 taking a new residence at the Air Force Enlisted Village, the residents of the Village who are cancer survivors have a story to tell to everyone whose life has been touched by this dreaded disease. This is the first in the series.)

By Paula Kelley  
*Air Force Enlisted Village*

Patti Adams is as full of life as her home state of Texas is big. The 76-year-old firecracker twists a strand of gold beads around her painted red manicured nails in her Hawthorn House apartment at the Air Force Enlisted Village and

begins her story.

"I have had, and I'm still having a ball in life," Adams said. "I became an R.N. in my 20s and worked in every possible healthcare area—the last few years of my career I worked in a private hospital in their psychiatric unit and detox unit—I'd see someone on the street and have to think twice if I knew them from church, from my social life or as one of my

patients." She tilted her blonde head back and laughed loudly.

Adams, a two-time Air Force bride, always had several things going at one time. Aside from being a wife, a mother to four children, and a nurse; she also sold real estate, sold Mary Kay cosmetics, taught nursing and enjoyed being a Texan.

"Honey, I'm so Texan that I can get a minnow as big as my

*'Here I was a nurse and I knew all about what was going on with my body medically—but I tackled it mentally!'*

—Patti Adams

**Please see SURVIVOR page 3**



Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jon McCallum

## Family commitment

Second Lt. Grant Georgulis, an air battle manager from Tinker AFB, Okla., administers the Oath of Enlistment to his mother, Master Sgt. Jodi Georgulis, 919th Maintenance Operations Flight information management NCOIC, in the wing conference room. Sgt. Georgulis was joined by another son who is a reservist at Duke Field, Senior Airman Zachery Perritt, 919th Maintenance Squadron crew chief, and her husband, retired Master Sgt. Mark Georgulis.

# Future airman gains confidence, loses 160 pounds

## Now weighs 190, prepares for his enlistment

By TSgt. Jennifer Lindsey  
Air Force Recruiting Service

Leo Knight-Inglesby is more determined than ever, and for the past 15 months has pushed himself beyond the limits he, and his loved ones, ever thought possible.

The 22-year-old Silver Spring, Md., native is so set to "Do Something Amazing" in the Air Force that he shed more than 160 pounds to meet the physical standard of enlistment, amazing his recruiter, family and friends.

"No one believed I would do it 'til I showed them the (enlistment) papers," Knight-Inglesby said. "My life has completely changed. Not only am I stronger physically, I am mentally stronger and more confident."

Today, the former 351-pound college freshman continues nosh-

ing on only healthy food, limits his daily caloric intake and exercises at least five days a week. Although he maintains the same smile, he looks like a different person at approximately 190 pounds, said his recruiter, Staff Sgt. Ty Lopez.

"He's well on his way to making his goal of 185 pounds before heading to basic military training," Lopez said.

Knight-Inglesby is scheduled to attend BMT at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in March, but hopes to attend earlier if a spot becomes available.

The 317th Recruiting Squadron recruiter caught Knight-Inglesby's attention in the summer of 2007 while speaking about Air Force opportunities to a group of people near a local com-

munity college.

"I wasn't getting much interest out of anyone except an obviously overweight guy in the back of the group," Lopez recalled. "He asked me questions that I gladly answered in hopes that the other guys in the group would become interested. At the end of our conversation, Leo said he wanted to join."

The recruiter told the young man he looked heavier than the maximum allowable weight to enlist and that at his height he needed to weigh below 202 pounds to join. A week later, Knight-Inglesby visited Lopez, tipping the Rockville, Md., recruiting office scale at 347 pounds leading to a serious evaluation of his life.

"My uncle was overweight and had a massive heart attack, and I didn't want that to happen to me" he said. "I knew I had to get my life on track, and I wanted the benefits the Air Force offers."

The potential to travel overseas, especially to Germany, remains a powerful motivator, as does his father's encouragement to serve in the military. Both his grandfathers and father served in the Army and his brother continues to serve in the Navy.

The only issue that kept Knight-Inglesby from becoming an airman earlier was his girth. He isn't alone in his struggle though.

AFRS records show that during the past year, 611 of the

# AF partners with NASCAR

By Daniel Elkins  
Air Force Recruiting Service

Gillett Evernham Motorsports and Petty Holdings announced in January to form a new NASCAR Sprint Cup team that partners one of the most recognizable cars in racing with the Air Force.

Air Force officials will now be both the primary and associate sponsor for the No. 43 car driven by Reed Sorenson, a 22-year-old, three-time winner in the Nationwide Series.

As a primary sponsor, the car will feature the Air Force paint scheme in four of 38 NASCAR races this season.

Air Force officials announced in November 2008 the new NASCAR partnership with Gillett Evernham Motorsports and its No. 10 car driven by

Sorenson for the 2009 NASCAR Sprint Cup season. The agreement by Gillett Evernham Motorsports and Petty Holdings leads to a new team featuring the No. 43 car co-owned by Richard Petty of Petty Holdings and Gillett Evernham Motorsports.

Air Force Recruiting Service officials here said this new venture is an attractive venue for marketing the Air Force because the sport has a strong, patriotic fan base that really supports its teams and team sponsors. Additionally, they said the sport of racing aligns well with the fans' interests and the Air Force's brand of speed, teamwork and technology, inspiring young Americans to consider the Air Force as a great career choice.



Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ty Lopez

Leo Knight-Inglesby reviews his Air Force enlistment contract with his recruiter, Staff Sgt. Ty Lopez, in the Rockville, Md., recruiting office. About 15 months earlier, when the 22-year-old from Silver Spring, Md., decided that he wanted to join the Air Force, he weighed 351 pounds and didn't meet physical standards. Today, he is fit and 160 pounds lighter, and is preparing to attend basic military training in the spring.

23,435 applicants who processed were disqualified at the Military Entrance Processing Station for weight-related issues, said Maj. Jeffrey West, AFRS Physical Standards chief.

Strong personal determination made a difference in the lives of two other overweight, but otherwise qualified, young men who shared Knight-Inglesby's drive to join the Air Force. Twenty-year-old Matt Mobley of Charleston, S.C., shed 90 pounds, and Will Sims of Warner Robins, Ga., dropped 128 pounds, qualifying for service.

As a member of the Delayed Entry Program with less than 90 days until basic training, Knight-Inglesby and fellow future airmen encourage one another to realize

their dreams by maintaining clean records and healthy lifestyles.

Knight-Inglesby's weight loss has been a gain for Lopez in more ways than expected. The recruiter said he has gained positive insight about the power of personal determination. When Knight-Inglesby proved he was serious about making the standard, Lopez joined him at the gym and helped the future airman continue when he reached a plateau in his weight loss at 220 pounds.

"We worked hard and he would never give up," Lopez said. "No matter how hard I worked him or how tired he got, he would keep going and ask for more."

"As a recruiter, we get hung up on time management. I have 28 high schools and colleges to visit every month, in addition to scheduled appointments," he said. "Applicants 15-20 pounds overweight say they want to join and that they'll lose the weight, then I never hear from them again. But based on Leo's case, now I'll think twice about not taking them seriously."

Air Force enlistment and commissioning weight standards vary based on height. People interested in joining should visit their local Air Force recruiter. Recruiter contact information is available by clicking on the Recruiter Locator link at air-force.com or calling 1-800-423-USAF (8723).

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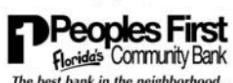
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## Roscoe

Hi, my name is Roscoe. I'm a 2-year-old collie/shepherd mix. I was kept mostly outside at my previous home. One day, I got out of the house and was hit by a car. I was hurt so badly that the doctor had to remove my eye to save my life. It doesn't slow me down, though. I get along with other dogs and do well around children. Please don't let my disability discourage you. Come see me at Eglin Pet Welfare and I'll show you what a good boy I am. Call 678-5066 for more information.

Photo by Eglin Pet Welfare



# New culture course now available online

By Carl Bergquist  
Air University Public Affairs

Through the efforts of the Air Force Culture and Language Center and Community College of the Air Force, enlisted members now have a distance learning course that will aid them in understanding world cultures.

Introduction to Culture, the first course of its kind in the military, is accepting enrollment. It will be delivered by the Web-based Air University Black Board system.

The course, which runs April 6 to July 20, is designed to be an overview of culture in general and is not specific to any particular country.

"We are trying to get airmen to know what culture is," said Robert Sands, AFCLC culture chair. "The course doesn't specifically talk about Iraq or Afghanistan or other countries to which airmen might be assigned, but (it) gives them a head start in completing their mission by understanding the effects of culture."

He said Department of Defense and service members are increasingly integrating into missions less traditional than before, and the course helps airmen understand what role culture plays in getting the job done.

"They are getting involved in tasks they have never before had to deal with, and Introduction to Culture provides general information about what they will encounter," Sands said. "The course defines what culture is and how it manifests in other

behaviors."

Katie Gunther, ITC senior instructor, said training in world culture is important because culture is the way people maintain the type of social order and lifestyle they want.

"Throughout the history of civilized societies, we have developed culture to get across beliefs and behaviors," she said. "An introduction to this level of thinking provides airmen with the general concepts of culture." will significantly increase for future



classes. The approximately three-month-long course is divided into three levels with 15 modules covering different aspects of the subject.

"One of the precepts of understanding others is to understand yourself," he said. "The first course module addresses that and introduces students to themselves. Later modules develop skills in such areas as cross-culture communications, culture conflicts and negotiations. Course information will also come from case studies of experiences airmen have in the theater."

Sands said the course modules are important because many times culture is attributed to "things," or what a person sees. He said ITC

helps change that perception by helping students base their assumptions on an understanding of culture and not just what they see.

Sands, an anthropologist from Southern California who came to the program in June 2008, said the course tries to go beyond "awareness" by helping airmen understand culture. He said an indication of the importance of that understanding came in 2006 when then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld decided the DoD would take a look at culture and language studies for the military. Air University first began Air Force efforts along those lines that same year, and the rest of the military followed in 2007.

"Based on feedback from airmen, we think the course will be very successful," Sands said. "We are getting very positive responses from people who really want to take the course."

Gunther said student feedback will be a significant factor in determining the success of ITC, and Air University is basing its quality enhancement plan "particularly from the course."

Sands said ITC, which fulfills a three-hour credit requirement for the CCAF associate degree, has a lot of support from Air University and CCAF.

Enrollment in Introduction to Culture continues through March 20. To enroll, contact the Air Force Culture and Language Center at af.clc@maxwell.af.mil, or Sands at Robert.Sands@maxwell.af.mil.

doctor and my nurse walked in and said, 'Patti we have some bad news for you. You have breast cancer,' and they were in tears and I said 'Oh good grief. I thought you had some really bad news—I can get through that.'"

She went through the mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiation. "Here I was a nurse and I knew all about what was going on with my body medically—but I tackled it mentally," she said.

"I got up every morning, put on makeup, dressed up, put on a new wig or a great scarf. I did something every day to make me get out and make me feel better and I looked great," she said. She attributes her remission and her current wellness to

"attitude, attitude, attitude."

"I'm going to make the best out of whatever life gives me, I'm going to drink a little Rock Star (an energy drink) and eat a little ice cream and not miss a thing in life—after all, if I miss anything it is because I have not known about it to try it," Patti said.

The Shalimar Relay for Life is scheduled for May 2 and 3 at the Air Force Enlisted Village main campus, 92 Sunset Lane. For more Relay for Life information, contact Mary Tinsley, American Cancer Society 244-3813, ext. 115, or Michelle Carmical, chairperson for the event, at 651-7368. For more information on the Air Force Enlisted Village, call 651-3766 or visit afenlistedwidows.org.

## BIRD

From page 1

issue. The crash of an E-3B Airborne Warning and Control System plane in 1995 after take-off from Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, painfully drove that point home. All 24 crewmembers died when the plane struck a flock of Canada geese just after takeoff.

"When you have a bird strike, it's like throwing a rock into the engine," said Staff Sgt. Paul White, airfield operations supervisor at Andrews AFB, Md. "It stops the turbine from spinning, and that can be catastrophic."

The BASH program works to avert accidents like the one at Elmendorf and last week's incident in New York. Based on a system of "integrated pest management," it aims to keep air bases, airfields and the air space and ground in and around them free of birds and wildlife that can hamper aircraft operations, LeBoeuf said.

That's a challenge, he said, with more Canada geese taking up permanent residence in the United States, a burgeoning snow goose population and a comeback for the pelican population after DDT and other insecticides were banned.

But birds aren't the only problem, LeBoeuf said. He's seen it all: deer, coyotes, wild pigs and even alligators finding their way onto Air Force flightlines. "They're mobile speed bumps, and aircraft don't take kindly to them," he said.

Step one in the BASH program is "habitat alteration," which LeBoeuf defined as making airfields as uninviting as possible. Anything that might serve as a perch is removed, denying birds an elevated place to roost. Potential perches that can't be removed get spikes driven into them.

Meanwhile, low spots in the land where birds can hide or seek

water that collects are filled in.

Dan Vredenburg, a contractor who oversees Andrews Air Force Base's BASH program, follows the Air Force protocol of ensuring grass around the airfield is maintained between 7 and 14 inches. That's too short for ground birds to nest in, but too long for them to feel safe feeding in, he said.

"These are the benign approaches, but if they don't work, we turn to more active techniques," LeBoeuf said. In a word, he defined that as "harassment."

Vredenburg, for example, has a whole list of tricks to make Andrews unwelcoming to seagulls, blackbirds, starlings, turkey vultures, crows, ducks and geese that frequent the region.

He fires off pyrotechnics and propane cannons as needed to

scare birds from the 4,320-acre base. One of his most effective tools is Bree, a two-tone border collie who chases away birds or other wildlife that might be tempted to take up residence.

Vredenburg and Bree patrol the base regularly, and he sets her loose when he discovers

birds roosting.

"When she takes off, they leave in a hurry," Vredenburg said. "After a couple of times, they probably won't come back."

Other bases use different techniques. The Royal Air Force base at Mildenhall in England, for example, relies on a Moroccan lanner hawk named Goldie to ward off unwanted birds. At Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan, a luger falcon named Mustang helps to keep unwanted birds at bay.

But no preventive measure will keep birds and other wildlife away indefinitely, LeBoeuf said. So as a last resort, BASH officials get the permits required to shoot, trap or otherwise remove them from the area.



## SURVIVOR

From page 1

pinky and tell you a tale that makes it a shark in three seconds and you will believe it," Patti said. "I am so Texan!"

Her "Survivor Story" fits her spunky life story. "Fifteen years ago," she begins. "I had a mammogram and I thought I was going to faint during all that squeezing, so I said never again, no thank you to mammograms. Then three years ago they found a spot on one of my lungs and my doctor insisted that I have another mammogram."

The diagnosis was full-blown breast cancer, with 12 out of 16 lymph nodes also testing positive for cancer. "My

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# Mardi Gras is a regional phenomenon

## Day Tripper

Dianne Bitzes



### From Mobile to Fort Walton Beach, it's party time through Fat Tuesday

Mardi Gras isn't just a New Orleans phenomenon. Parades, balls and events take place all over the Gulf Coast, including a celebration scheduled for the area Feb. 7.

"Oh my, I thought the Miss America pageant was the big event for dresses and tiaras," said April Davis, wife of deployed Special Operations Command JAG Capt. Aubrey Davis. A recent family outing to Mobile, Ala., was an eye-opener for the Montana native. "I thought Mardi Gras was one day only," she said. "I had no idea so much went into the event," she said.

The first Mardi Gras parade of the 2009 Mobile season kicked off at Dauphin Island with Krewe De La Dauphine on Saturday, Jan. 24.

The Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce sponsors Mardi Gras by the Sea Feb. 7, starting with a parade at 11 a.m. on Santa Rosa Boulevard, Okaloosa Island. Following a festival at the boardwalk, festivities come to a head at the Santa Rosa Mall, with live music played by "Miles from Coltrane" at a Mardi Gras ball.

Before you enjoy the local celebration, you can get a feel for Mardi Gras at the Mardi Gras museum in Mobile. Wilbur Pillman, the man responsible for 50 years of revelry as the court jester to Mobile royalty, guides the party through the Mobile Carnival Museum (MCM).

"The museum has only been open since 2005, but we are very pleased with what we have accomplished and the insight we provide the public about the celebration and pageantry that is Mardi Gras," said Pillman. The historic Bernstein-Bush house is home to the MCM. The building's detailed crown molding, authentic pine wood floors, and

unique chandeliers would alone be worth a tour when visiting Mobile. Yet the ornate gowns, trains, and costumes that fill the 14 rooms and line the hallways are truly the crown jewels of the structure. The gowns are worn during black tie balls by queens and their courts, sponsored by the various krewe (organizations that sponsor balls and celebrations for Mardi Gras.)

"Who pays for the gowns? One word: Daddy," said Pillman. The "daddy" of whom Pillman spoke was the father of the Mardi Gras reigning queen, chosen annually. Many queens come from successive generations of Mobile's finest families. This is southern tradition at its most fundamental nature.

"This crown was worn by three generations, starting in 1903 and was then worn in the years 1936, 1957, and 1959—all by family members," said Pillman. Anyone who appreciates the time involved in hand-work will want to spend a good bit of time at the museum.

"Gown selection starts almost immediately following the selection of the queen at the Thanksgiving Camellia Ball. The queen is chosen from distinguished Mobile debutantes," said Pillman.

Pointing to a rare purple gown, Pillman said, "This gown took the entire year from announcement to the day it was worn to be completed. The 80-pound train is outfitted with rollers for support. The collars are both elaborate and beautiful, but they are designed to be harnesses the lady wears to support gown trains."

Among the many costumes worn by Mardi Gras kings and queens, discreetly hidden in a second floor corner showcase is Pillman's own jester costume.



Photos by Dianne Bitzes

What would a Mardi Gras parade be without beads being tossed to the crowd? The beads were plentiful at the Dauphin Island parade last Saturday.

"I've been wearing that same costume for 50 years now—I was wearing it during the ball in which I met the love of my life, my wife," said Pillman.

Touring the MCM brings Mobile's history to life. Mardi Gras as celebrated in the United States originated in Mobile, Ala. in 1703.

"Most people think of New Orleans as the home of beads and moon pies, but it all started here in Mobile," said Pillman.

Celebrations continued annually until the Civil War. "Following the war, Joe Caine, a clerk for the city of Mobile, decided the time for mourning was over, dressed up in costume, and persuaded fellow Mobilians to join in the revelry," said Pillman.

In 1938, the Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association, Inc. (MAMGA), formally the Colored Carnival Association (CCA), was incorporated under the trusteeship of W. L. Russell, D.D.S., J.T. McKinnis, Sam Besteda, Jr., and Dr. J.A. Franklin. Russell, a respected dentist and civic leader, was president of the CCA and MAMGA for fifty years. Russell envisioned the carnival association as an outlet for the youth of the black community to display their tal-

Please see DAY TRIPPER, page 5



Parade viewers Zoe Bitzes, left, and April Davis enjoyed their first-ever Mardi Gras parade at Dauphin Island.

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Mardi Gras is a family affair. Entire clans dress to the nines to celebrate and party until the more solemn season of Lent, as shown by these costumes in the Mobile museum.



Even at smaller parades, excited onlookers come home with bags full of loot! Just try not to eat too many moon pies!

Wilbur Pillman, a 50-year Mardi Gras veteran and Mobile jester, shows off a coronation sword to a young museum guest.



## Trip Tips

*Mardi Gras, Mobile, Ala.*

### Mobile Carnival Museum

**Getting there:** Travel west along I-10 toward Mobile. Just prior to entering the city of Mobile, take exit 27. After exiting, continue straight through the stop light and through the Bankhead Tunnel. This is Government Street. The museum is down five blocks at the intersection of Claiborne Street and Government (on the southwest corner).

**Hours of operation:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Last tour begins at 3 p.m.) telephone: 251-432-3324

**Accessibility:** The museum is wheel chair accessible on 2 of the 3 levels via an elevator.

**Entrance fees:** Adults, \$5; Children 12 and under, \$2; Under age 3: No charge

**Other information:** Mobile has many Mardi Gras parades and events scheduled. For a full list, go to [mobilecarnivalmuseum.com](http://mobilecarnivalmuseum.com).

Locally, on Okaloosa Island, Mardi Gras on the Island, will take place Saturday, Feb. 7. The parade will begin at 11 a.m. on Santa Rosa Boulevard with more than 70 Mardi Gras theme floats. A festival will take place at The Boardwalk, noon-5 p.m., with music, food, costumes, children's activities. The celebration closes with the Mardi Gras by the Sea Ball at the Mall: Carnivale Atmosphere at Santa Rosa Mall, 8 p.m.-1 a.m., with live music by "Miles from Coltrane" Mardi Gras costumes or black tie; Local restaurants featuring "Taste of Mardi Gras." Tickets, \$35, now available at the Chamber office.

Pensacola's Mardi Gras parade is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 21, 2 p.m. [pensacolamardigras.com](http://pensacolamardigras.com)

Panama City's Mardi Gras celebration is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 6, through Saturday, Feb. 7, 3-5 p.m. [visitpanamacitybeach.com](http://visitpanamacitybeach.com).

## DAY TRIPPER

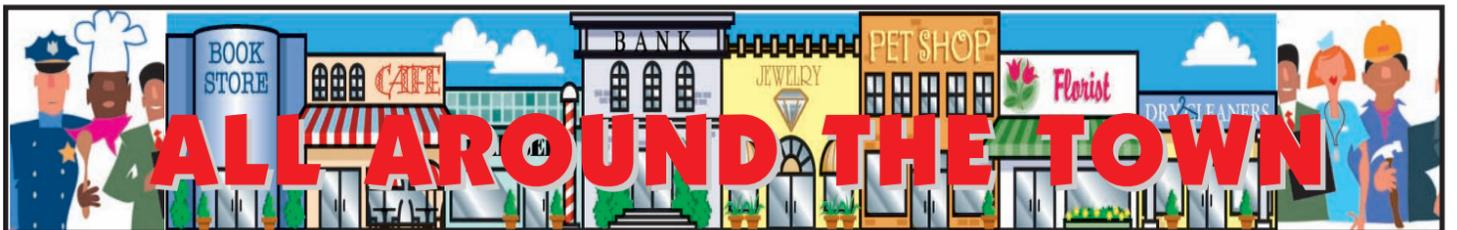
From page 4

ents.

"Sometime during the 80s, one of the main organizing bodies for carnival season, the Mobile Carnival Association, invited MAMGA to combine with them," said Pillman. "MAMGA declined the invitation and told MCA, you celebrate in your way, and we'll celebrate in ours."

Today the MCA and the MAMGA is about cultural diversity, not segregation. The carnival museum is proud to house history and costumes from most of Mobile's carnival krewe.

"From now until Fat Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday and the final day of Mardi Gras), there are parades all over the gulf region. The hardest part of Mardi Gras is deciding which parades to attend," said Davis. "I can't wait until the next time we go out and get more beads, moon pies, and all the other stuff they throw off the floats!"



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# 2009 CALENDAR

### Blood drives for January

Northwest Florida Blood Services Blood Mobile calendar  
 Jan. 31: Eglin BX, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Monday, Feb. 2: Town of Ponce De Leon, at the town hall, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 3: Fort Walton Medical Center, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Alys Beach, 30A, 1noon-5 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 4: Faith Assembly Church, Geronimo Street Destin, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 5: Baker High School, noon-7 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 8: First United Methodist Church, Crestview, 599 Eighth Ave., 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

### Denim and Diamonds set

The United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties' annual Dinner and Silent Auction is planned for Friday, Jan. 30, at the Palms of Destin resort. The theme is "Denim and Diamonds." Come dressed in your favorite denim and enjoy great food, casino games and a large array of auction items.  
 Call 243-0315.

### Black history liturgy set

The Catholic African-American Awareness Group of Okaloosa County invites the public to its Annual Liturgical Mass Commemorating Black History Month Sunday, Feb. 1, at Saint Mary Catholic Church, 110 St. Mary Ave., Fort Walton Beach. The mass will emphasize the rich heritage of African-American Culture in the Catholic Church.

The Eglin Brotherhood Choir will bring the celebration with a 30-minute concert, beginning at 2 pm. The mass will start at 2:30 pm. The combined choirs from St. Joseph and St. Anthony parish of Pensacola will provide music during the mass. A reception will follow at the conclusion of the mass.

The Rev. Shelton Joseph Fabre, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans, will be the homilist and the Rev. John H. Ricard, S.S.J., Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, will be the celebrant.

For more information, call Roland Simmons, president, 729-2573.

### Mixed media exhibit

"Proper Reason," a mixed media collection by nationally acclaimed artist Joe Hobbs, will be displayed at the Full Circle Gallery, 29B SE Eglin Parkway, Fort Walton Beach, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Call 218-5801.

### Baseball, softball signups

Youth baseball and girls softball registration runs Feb. 2-March 13, with the season tentatively scheduled to start in April. Coach pitch is for ages 5-6, machine pitch for ages 7-12 and softball for ages 10-14. Cost: \$45 per player. Coaches for all divisions are also being sought, with training scheduled for Feb. 26 and 26, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Call 884-6355.

### Middle East orientation

The USAF Special Operations School invites all special operations personnel to attend the Middle East Orientation Course (MEOC) Feb. 2-6. This course is designed for personnel preparing to deploy to the Middle East or who have a professional or analytical interest in the region. The course provides a broad, non-technical education on the cultural, historical, political, economic, social, religious and security dynamics of the region. Spouses are welcome to attend on a space-available basis.

For more information, call Capt. Neil Hicks at 884-7988 or visit <https://jsoupublic.socom.mil/usaf-sos/index.php>.

### Start Smart Baseball

Youth Center is taking signups for Start Smart Baseball, which teaches children aged 3-5 the basic motor skills to play organized baseball. Start Smart is a parent/child, one-on-one instruction program.

Registration runs Feb. 2-March 31. The program starts in April and will be held every Wednesday, 1:30-2:30 p.m., for six weeks. The cost is \$20 per parent/child team. Call 884-6355.

### CERT training scheduled

Okaloosa County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) will hold training sessions Tuesdays, 6-8:30 p.m., Feb. 3-March 31 at the Wright Fire Department (#2 Racetrack Road), Fort Walton Beach.

Sign up for the training online at [okaloosa-cert-team.org/Sign\\_Up.html](http://okaloosa-cert-team.org/Sign_Up.html) or, for more information, call Jennifer Tindall, 243-0315, or e-mail [CERT@united-way.org](mailto:CERT@united-way.org).

The CERT Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may affect their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. The CERT program is an official emergency preparedness pro-



Patriot photo

## Water media

The Niceville Public Library is featuring a water media exhibit by noted local artist Marla Armstrong through Feb. 27.

gram administered under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

### Health fair planned

In conjunction with Women's Health Month, the Republican Women of Okaloosa, Federated will host a Health Fair on Wednesday, Feb. 4, at the Holiday Inn SunSpree on Okaloosa Island, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

The program will be led by Micki Glenn, who specializes in women's health issues. She developed an interest in the subject early in her career as a mammographer. She later opened her own clinic where she performed bone density studies. Her profession in radiology created a special interest in bone densitometry, with a concentration on osteoporosis, and its effects on women's health.

To make a reservation, contact Bev McNally at 609-7989 or [mcnally2@cox.net](mailto:mcnally2@cox.net) by noon Friday, Jan. 30. Cost of the lunch is \$15 for members and \$18 for guests. For more information about RWOFF, visit <http://www.rwof.org>.

### Church sets craft show

The First Presbyterian Church of Fort Walton Beach, 134 Beal Ave., SW, will be the site of a SERRV Craft Market Feb. 8, 15, and 22, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 11, 14, 18 and 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The market is open to the public.

For more information, call 243-3732 or Carol Davis, 243-4777.

### 'Minnie Pearl' to appear

Destin Woman's Club presents Shirley Simpson on stage as 'Minnie Pearl' Saturday, Feb. 14, 2-4 p.m. \$25 per person (tickets non-refundable), PS Gifts, Fort Walton Beach, Bayou Books, Niceville,

Kitchenique, Sandestin. Cash or Check payable to Destin Woman's Club, [www.FisherHouseEmeraldCoast.org](http://www.FisherHouseEmeraldCoast.org). Reception immediately following the show to meet 'Minnie.' Grace Lutheran Church, 4325 W. Commons Drive, next to YMCA.

### Health training info

The Nursing and Allied Health programs at Northwest Florida State College will hold a Health Programs Information Fair on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5:30-8 p.m. at the Niceville Campus for those interested in learning more about admissions to NWF State College programs in dental assisting, paramedic, EMT, radiography and both the associate degree and bachelor's degree nursing programs.

There will be an overview at 5:30 p.m. on financial aid, academic advising and college support services. At 6 and 7 p.m., participants may attend in-depth information sessions on the programs of their choice for specific admissions information, tours and more. The event will be held in the College Mall, building K on the Niceville campus. For more information, contact the NWF State College Nursing office at 729-6400.

### Economy expo slated

In celebration of Okaloosa Saves Week, the University of Florida and Okaloosa County Extension Office plan an Economic Living Expo at the NWF State College campus Feb. 21, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. S

The Eco-Nomic Living Expo will present ideas on how to save money, conserve resources and build wealth, not debt, as part of Okaloosa Saves programs.

Deborah Owens, featuring her new book "Nickel and Dime Your Way to Wealth," will offer her "simple approach" to security and wealth. Owens is host of "Real Money," a finance talk show, is a sought-after author, and is passionate about helping people from all walks of life.

Check [okaloosaves.org](http://okaloosaves.org) for updated information.

### Happy Days here again

A Happy Days Musical Day trip to Jacksonville Feb. 28 will celebrate the 1950s with Richie Cunningham, Fonzie and the gang

as they try to save Arnold's from the wrecking ball. Round trip transportation, with a ticket to the musical, costs \$70 per person. Call 884-6795/5699.

### Travel Expo planned

The annual Hurlburt ITT Travel Expo is scheduled for March 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Soundside Club. Attendees will be able to buy vacation packages below market price and more than \$8,000 in door prizes are expected to be given away.

The Hurlburt squadron with the most attendees will win a "no-frills teal deal" from the Hurlburt Marina, including a day at the beach with canopy, grill, tables, chairs and free rentals of canoes and kayaks.

For info, call 884-6795.

### Cheer competition

The Sugar Sand Nationals Spirit Cheer cheering competition will take place Sunday, March 8, at the Okaloosa County Convention Center on Okaloosa Island. The event is open to the public. The time will be announced later.

### Arts and crafts show

The Northwest Florida Fairgrounds plans its first arts and crafts show and community day, Saturday, April 18. Gates are open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Activities include the High Steppers show dancers, gospel music by the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, the Fort Walton Beach YMCA, the Blood Mobile, the Okaloosa County Health Department and Sheriff's Office. PAWS will administer rabies shots and implant micro-chips to pets for a nominal fee, and will also have pets for adoption. The University of Florida Master Gardener annual plant sale will also be held during this event.

There is no admission charge; patrons are asked for a canned food donation for Sharing and Caring.

### Kayak lessons

Outdoor Recreation offers kayaking lessons every Wednesday, 3-4 p.m. The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, call 884-6939.

### CAA briefings

Briefings explaining the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts are held at the Hurlburt Field Education Services Center the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 9 a.m., and the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 2 p.m. For more information, visit [www.milspouse.org](http://www.milspouse.org) and [www.voled.doded.mil](http://www.voled.doded.mil) or call 884-5441.

### AWC and ACSC exams

Air War College and Air Command and Staff students must order their examinations online before scheduling a testing session with the education center. The exam must be ordered through the Air University Student Information System and posted into the Course Development and Student Administration/Registrar System before the test examiner can administer the test. There are no exceptions to this Air Force Institute for Advanced Distributed Learning directive.

For more information, call 884-6724 or refer to the student handbook.

### Carpooling opportunity

The West Florida Regional Planning Council's Ride On program offers an opportunity for drivers to share their commuting responsibilities to and from base with other drivers. Once drivers are signed up, the program will automatically match them with other drivers with similar schedules and routes. The program also offers a guaranteed ride home via taxi or shuttle in the case of an emergency. For more information, visit [www.wfrpc.org/rideon/index.htm](http://www.wfrpc.org/rideon/index.htm) or call 1-800-342-5557.

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**BILL**

**From page 1**  
sible that some people attending private schools could get far more under a program in which VA will pay more if expensive schools agree to discount tuition rates for people using the new GI Bill.

While some of the most crucial details—like exactly how much will be paid—have yet to be determined, defense and VA officials are working on rules to simplify the application process and make it easy for people to understand their benefits.

There are a few surprises in the VA proposal. For example, VA officials have determined that divorce will cut off a spouse's right to continue using transferred benefits, and children will lose their right to transferred benefits if they get married. The two restrictions stem from the definition of "family member" in VA law.

VA officials did have to fill in some holes in the law, such as what to do about benefits for people attending schools outside the U.S. In addition, special rules prevent benefits from being wasted in case military duties disrupt a student's education, or if other mitigating factors—such as a service-connected disability—force someone to withdraw from school.

Here are details of the plan.

**Tuition payments**

Basic benefits, paid directly to

a college or university, will cover full tuition plus fees up to a cap equal to the highest in-state tuition rate for a four-year public institution in the state where a person is attending school.

The average in-state tuition with fees for four-year schools is \$6,585 this year and is expected to increase about 6 percent for the 2009-10 academic year, according to the College Board.

Two important factors could reduce payments: the amount of active service a member has since Sept. 11, 2001, and the number of credits being taken. Anyone with fewer than three years of service or taking less than a full load of classes will get a percentage of full benefits.

**Private-school tuition**

A public-private matching fund program would increase benefits for students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill at private institutions where tuition and fees exceed the maximum benefit for each state based on public-school costs.

This "Yellow Ribbon" program requires VA to sign agreements with each participating school under which VA will pay \$1 more in tuition for each dollar that the school reduces its tuition costs for GI Bill users. This makes it possible for full tuition to be covered at private schools.

Schools can limit the number of people receiving reduced tuition under the program as long

as they make the reductions available on a first-come, first-served basis. This will prevent schools from discounting costs for full-time students only.

Schools also must promise that the reduced tuition rates would remain in effect for an entire academic year.

**Benefit limits**

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits are limited, as with most other veter-



ans education benefits programs, to 36 months of payments, with the ability to start and stop using them over time.

**Housing stipend**

A living expense, based on the military's basic allowance for housing, will be paid to most students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The stipend will not be paid to people using their GI Bill benefits for distance learning courses or to people attending school less than half-time.

The living expense will equal the Basic Allowance for Housing

of an E-5 with dependents for the ZIP code where the student is enrolled in school if the school is in the U.S. If the school spans more than one ZIP code, the stipend will be based on the rate for the ZIP code that covers the majority of the school, which is not necessarily the same as the majority of campus housing.

The average monthly BAH for an E-5 with dependents today is about \$1,328.

**Book allowance**

A book allowance, which also covers the cost of other supplies, will be paid in a lump sum at the start of a semester. A student may receive up to \$1,000 per academic year, but actual payments will be based on how many credits are being taken.

This is a flat payment, not a reimbursement, intended to cover books, supplies, equipment and other costs not covered by tuition and fees.

**Transfer rights**

While defense and service officials are still working on final details, the rules taking shape will allow the entire career force—including retirement-eligible members who are still serving—to transfer all or part of their earned Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to spouses and children.

Members will be able to decide how much can be transferred and can change or cancel the transfer at any time as long as

the order is done in writing. Benefits can be transferred to more than one person but cannot exceed the total 36 months of benefits earned by the member.

Service members must make new four-year commitments to transfer benefits and could be forced to repay any used benefits if they do not complete the four years. However, defense and service officials are working on their own transfer rules that will make exceptions when a member can't complete the four years, as when disability, high-year tenure or some other factor ends military service.

The basic law passed last year says benefits can be transferred to a spouse after a member serves six years and to a child or children after 10 years of service, as long as the new four-year commitment is made in writing.

Spouses can use benefits, with the service member's permission, while the member is on active duty and for up to 15 years after either the member's separation from the service or the member's death.

**Tutorial assistance**

Receiving a new benefit to cover the cost of tutoring requires a certification that the tutoring is necessary and is limited to students attending school at least half-time. Those who are eligible can receive \$100 per month for up to 12 months.

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<p>8" Sterling Silver herringbone bracelet w/lobster clasp (Italian 925), \$10; Exc condition, 850-803-5235, Niceville.</p> <p>Blue Fox Fur from Finland, made in Hong Kong, waist level coat, size: L, \$75; Exc condition, 850-803-5235, Niceville.</p> <p>Louis Vuitton Monogram Canvas Looping Replica Purse (M51146), new \$195, asking \$65. Exc condition, 803-5235, Niceville.</p> <p>Haverty's Children's Pine BunkBEDs with builtin desk and bookcase. Includes 6 drawer dresser. \$800.00 OBO (Navarre) 543-0692 LV. MSSG.</p> <p>Antique oriental teak wood dinner table, 2 captain &amp; 4 reg chairs, 2 leafs \$1000 obo. 376-4330</p> <p>L-shaped sectional sofa w/ 2 recliners &amp; sofa bed, tweed colored cloth. \$800 obo. 376-4330</p>	<p>Dining table, 4 chairs, 1 bench, \$350; computer desk \$65; end table w/drawer \$25, pro type mop bucket \$25. 376-4330</p> <p>Self-assemble type bookcase \$40 &amp; entertainment center (up to 27"tv) \$50, both dark color, both for \$70, 376-4330</p> <p>Philippine wood coffee table \$40; 23" x 23" glass top end table - \$20. Worldwide multi-system VHS - \$100 obo 376-4330</p> <p>Washer \$25. Dryer(gas) \$50. Diamond engagement ring and wedding band \$1600 obo. Call Ashley 850.598.5791</p> <p>Sport Cargo Carrier- \$90 or OBO; Leather suitcase look coffee table &amp; matching end table - \$50 or OBO. Pics upon request Sam 699-8890.</p> <p>Total Gym 2000, perfect cond., \$400.00 new, sell for \$100.00. 48R zip up AF Blues jacket with liner, \$25.00. Lee, 864-1433 after 5PM.</p>	<p>Riverside, solid oak (med stain) desk, drawers on each side, Exc condition, \$250 803-5235.</p> <p>Large seascape painting, \$45; Coach black leather shoulder strap purse, medium size, \$50; Exc condition, 803-5235.</p> <p>Craftsman rider mower. 13.5HP, 30" cut, electric start. Recently serviced. Excellent condition. \$450.00 (850)897-2010 between 8 a.m.-6 p.m.</p> <p>Dragon Heat RLP-35 35,000 BTU ready Heater, this is a Propane and it is nice used only twice last year \$100.00 682-1236</p> <p>Blk dining table &amp; 6 chairs - \$90 or OBO; Drawing table -\$15. Pics upon request Sam 699-8890.</p> <p>2001 POLARIS SPORTSMAN 500HO warn winch, front &amp; rear bumper, front &amp; rear racks w/rails, Benz Silent muffler, great condition \$3,500. 398-6600.</p>
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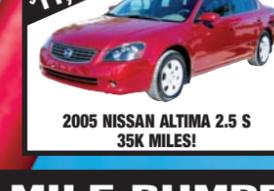
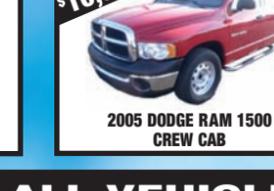
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