

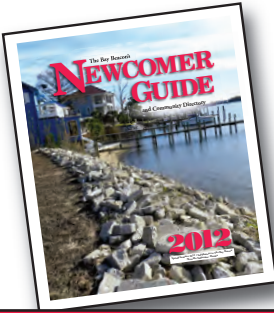
# The Bay Beacon

44 Pages, 3 Sections, 4 Inserts

Wednesday, February 22, 2012

50¢

Inside ...



**UP  
COMING**

Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.



Join Ms. Karen and Ms. Christina at the **Niceville Public Library** for story time where they will read **"Mother Goose and Friends."** Ages 3-5.  
Info: 279-4863, ext. 1514.

Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

The Niceville chapter of **LeadHer** will meet at Niceville Assembly of God. The meetings are designed to encourage women to make a deeper impact on the world for Christ.  
Info: 685-4959.

Friday, 6:30-9 p.m.



Niceville High School's annual **talent show** will be held in the NHS auditorium. Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door.  
Info: 833-4114.

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.



The **Military Order of the Purple Heart**, Chapter 811, and the **Northwest Florida Blue Star Mothers in honor of Florida's Fallen** will read the names of Florida's **321 service members** who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom from 2002-present. The event will be at the U.S. Armament Museum, Eglin Air Force Base and is open to the public.  
Info: 651-8945.

Calendar, B-3.

## Fire official allegedly misappropriated \$81K

By Del Lessard  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

The North Bay Fire District has fired its longtime administrative assistant for allegedly misappropriating nearly \$82,000, according to fire district records.

The assistant, Ralph Banegas, was dismissed Jan. 30, according to his termination letter, signed by Fire Chief Joe Miller.

The letter stated: "Our accounting firm, Carr Riggs and Ingram, has confirmed you have systematically misappropriated funds from the North Bay Fire Control District since June 7, 2006. The total amount of the funds misappropriated equals \$81,829.75. As a result of your actions, you are immediately terminated for cause."

Banegas signed the letter,



Ralph Banegas

acknowledging receipt, witnessed by the chairman of the fire commission, James Miller, no relation to the fire chief. Banegas was offered the chance to appeal his dismissal by Feb. 6. Chairman Miller said no appeal was filed.

Banegas is a retired Air Force enlisted man who started working full time as the fire district's administrative assistant in 1995, according to

Chief Miller. His salary was \$46,417 a year at the time he was fired.

The fire chief, the commission chairman and another commissioner contacted by the Beacon all declined to comment on the situation. Ralph Banegas did not return calls for comment.

A personnel file for Banegas could

Please see \$81K, page A-2

## Volunteer is 'Superwoman'



Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

Shawna Crist, a volunteer at Plew Elementary School, was recognized Monday by the Florida Department of Education as Region 1 Adult Volunteer of the Year. Monday she was serving in a different role, substituting for an absent teacher.

## Niceville woman honored for work in schools

By Tess Hollis  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

To students and faculty at James E. Plew Elementary School, Shawna Crist is not only a volunteer—she is an innovator.

Crist, of Niceville, Monday received Florida Department of Education's Outstanding School Adult Volunteer Award, 2011-12, for Region 1. Crist was the only recipient of the award in Okaloosa County.

The FLDOE presents the award to volunteers who have shown "exceptional dedication and meaningful commitment to quality education in Florida."

Top volunteers are selected based on the number of service hours, years of service and type of contribution and unique characteristics of services rendered. Crist, a former Okaloosa County teacher, has donated more than 950 hours as a Plew volunteer in the past year.

"I'm pretty shocked," she said. "I don't do it for the accolades. It is honoring and humbling, but I haven't done all this by myself. Plew has great parents who step-up and exceed our expectations."

Crist, who was Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year in 1995, said the desire to volunteer comes from her experience as a full-time teacher for 13 years.

Please see VOLUNTEER, page A-6

## BWB man 'better' after e-cig blast

By Del Lessard  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

"I'm feeling much better," said Bluewater Bay resident Tom Holloway a week after an electronic cigarette exploded in his face, knocking out some teeth, starting a fire in his house and sparking a chain of events that made worldwide headlines.

Holloway, a 57-year-old professional photographer, said Monday that the blast Feb. 13 "shocked" him, but did not knock him unconscious. His wife, Becky, called 911.

"There's a fire in one of the rooms, and I think I've got everything, but I don't know because it's still smoking," Mrs. Holloway told a 911 operator. "My husband was smoking an electric cigar. I don't know if you've ever seen those before, but it blew up in his face. His face is all blown up. He's bleeding."



Tom Holloway

Please see E-CIG, page A-6

## City weighs \$2.6 million sewer plant takeover

By Mike Griffith  
*Beacon Correspondent*

The Niceville City Council discussed proposals for the city to buy Okaloosa County's share of sewage treatment capacity at the regional sewage treatment plant on State Road 85 for about \$2.3 million. The plant is jointly owned and operated by the cities of Niceville and Valparaiso, as well as by Okaloosa County.

During a meeting Feb. 14, the Niceville council heard a presentation by Glenn Stephens, of Polyengineering, a firm that consults for the cities of Niceville and Valparaiso as well as for the county.

Stephens said that Niceville is currently at or exceeding its capacity at the regional sewer plant and would need to build expensive new sewage treatment facilities to keep up with growth, especially as a new housing development grows north of Ruckel Airport, where the Ruckel family has recently opened a large tract of land for development over

Please see SEWER, page A-2

## County OKs sidewalks, MSBU balks

Bay Drive project uncertain after citizen gets Okaloosa's approval

By Mike Griffith  
*Beacon Correspondent*

After asking the Okaloosa County Commission to help build new sidewalks in Bluewater Bay, members of the Bluewater Bay Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU) members have expressed concern because a private citizen persuaded the county commission to support only part of the project.

During the MSBU board's Feb. 14 meeting, MSBU management consultant Archie Jernigan told the board that on Jan. 10, the county commission had partially

reversed an earlier decision against helping the MSBU build sidewalks in Bluewater Bay.

After much discussion, the MSBU board took no action on the county's offer to share in building sidewalks at the west end of Bay Drive.

During meetings in June through December 2011, the board had proposed to the county that the MSBU, a special district that levies a tax to fund community upkeep in Bluewater Bay, would pay for materials to build certain sidewalks if the county

Please see MSBU, page A-3



Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

The Okaloosa County Commission has partly reversed itself, offering to share with the Bluewater Bay Municipal Benefit Unit the cost of extending the sidewalk at the west end of Bay Drive, pictured. The MSBU took no action on the offer.

## Masked man attacks waitress

By Del Lessard  
*Beacon Staff Writer*

A waitress reported she was attacked by a masked man wielding a stick in predawn darkness behind the Niceville restaurant where she works. She was not badly hurt.

Niceville police reports gave the following account:

Police were called to the Coffee Shoppe, 593 W. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, just after 5 a.m. Feb. 13 in response to a call that a man had tried to "assault" a wait-

ress and that the cook was chasing the assailant on foot. The suspect, whom she said she did not recognize, was described as being dressed in black clothes and wearing a black mask.

Police from Niceville and Valparaiso searched in the woods behind Bayou Plaza without finding a trace of the suspect. The restaurant's 60-year-old cook told police he broke off the chase when the man turned down a dark alley

Please see ATTACKS, page A-2





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**\$81K**

From page A-1

not be located at the fire station last week, according to the fire chief.

The day after Banegas was fired, his wife, Karen Banegas, resigned from the district's five-member governing board.

In a letter dated Jan. 31, Mrs. Banegas wrote: "It has been a real pleasure to be associated with members of the North Bay Fire Control District and its valuable work. I regret that a private personal matter will no longer permit

me to share its responsibilities. Thank you for your support during my time as a member of the Board of Fire Commissioners, North Bay Fire Control District."

Mrs. Banegas was appointed to the unpaid fire commission March 9, 2010, to fill a vacancy created when Commissioner Tim Stapleton resigned. She was subsequently elected to a four-year term in November 2010, running unopposed.

Mrs. Banegas' appointment in March 2010 had been delayed a month in order for the district to obtain a legal opinion as to possible conflict of interest because her

husband was employed by the fire district. Mike Mattimore, a labor lawyer, advised the commission that there would be no conflict so long as Mrs. Banegas recused herself from any vote concerning her husband or his position.

Mrs. Banegas had served as the secretary for the commission. The fire district, a self-governing tax district that has an annual budget of \$1.9 million, includes Bluewater Bay, Seminole, and nearby communities.

Mrs. Banegas did not return a call from the Beacon requesting comment.

The fire district immediately

began advertising the administrative position and received more than 50 applications by the Feb. 10 deadline. Starting salary was listed at \$28,000 to \$36,000, depending on qualifications, with fully paid medical insurance for the employee.

North Bay has also advertised the fire commissioner vacancy, asking any interested registered voter living in the fire district to submit a letter of intent by March 5. Fire commissioners will consider applications during a meeting March 13, at 7 p.m., at the North Bay fire station, 1024 White Point Road.

**ATTACKS**

From page A-1

leading to the rear of Badcock Furniture.

The 45-year-old victim told police she had just arrived for work, parking her vehicle and walking to the back door of the business. At that time a man

came from the woods behind the Coffee Shoppe and attacked her with a large wooden stick, hitting her on her back and left side.

The woman said her attacker never said anything but "just kept hitting" her. When she began to scream the cook exited the rear of the business, saw what was going on and gave chase as the suspect ran away.

Police found a large stick on the sidewalk used by the attacker, near where the victim had dropped a cigarette case and coffee cup.

After another employee reported that it was unusual that the lights east side of the building were not working, as they had been the day before, police found that the bulbs had been loosened

enough to stop illuminating. A green lawn chair was found positioned under the sabotaged lights.

The lights were screwed back tight and immediately came back on.

The victim declined medical treatment.

Police Tuesday said they had no suspects.

**SEWER**

From page A-1

the next several years.

The county, however, has recently opened its new Arbennie Pritchett sewage treatment plant in Fort Walton Beach, and no longer needs to use the regional plant it has been sharing with Niceville and Valparaiso.

Stephens recommended that rather than build new facilities, Niceville acquire the county's share of the regional plant.

No action was taken on the proposal, which was referred for further study.

Stephens said Niceville is likely to need 2.9 million gallons per day of sewage treatment capacity—about 1.45 million gallons per day more than it has now—to accommodate eventual build-out of the city's undeveloped land.

Taking over the county's share of the regional sewer plant would meet the need for new capacity, said Stephens, costing the city about \$2.3 million, significantly less than the \$4.25 million he estimated it would take for the city to build its own new sewage treatment facility.

"The city will never have another chance to buy capacity at this price," Stephens said.

A key county official expressed support for the proposal. Okaloosa County Water and Sewer Director Jeff Littrell said Friday that the transfer of capacity would not actually be a purchase, but that the county was willing to "convey" the county's share of the regional sewage treatment plant to Niceville, in exchange for the city taking over the cost of needed improvements to the regional plant and assuming the county's share of operating costs.

Littrell said the county's new treatment plant will meet the county's needs for the foreseeable future, so it is to the county's advantage to convey its share of the older plant to Niceville. For its part, Niceville would gain the capacity it needs without having to build a new plant, he said, although the existing regional plant needs costly improvements to meet current state and federal regulations. The city would assume more of these costs if it takes over the county's share.

The council directed City Manager Lannie Corbin to study the proposal further, and present findings in March.

In other business Feb. 13, the council unanimously gave final approval to the Waterview Estates development requested by Mike Parish, despite opposition from



Beacon photo  
**Niceville officials are discussing a \$2.3 million offer from Okaloosa County to buy-out the county's share of the regional sewer treatment system, including the treatment plant, above. Niceville currently owns 43.6 percent of the regional sewer system, while the county owns 36.4 percent and Valparaiso 20 percent.**

several residents who live near the proposed development of up to eight two-story homes off Georgia Avenue. The neighbors said they are concerned about the lack of a fence or buffer between the new development and their properties, and the cutting down of some 100-year-old trees within the development, which they said provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Neighbors also expressed concern about the hazards of additional traffic in their neighborhood and from water retention ponds to be built as part of the development.

Council members, after hearing the objections, approved the development. Councilman Heath Rominger said he does not think the development will be more

intrusive to neighboring areas than any other housing development.

Councilman William Thomas said the council must base its decisions on whether a proposed development meets the legal requirements of the city, and that Parish's plan meets those requirements. He said the only recourse left to neighbors would be to negotiate directly with Parish, asking him to change the plan or sell the property to the neighbors.

In other business, the council approved extending the franchise of Waste Management Inc. to continue providing trash collection and disposal throughout the city. The extension was granted on condition that the company not raise rates this year, and offer a senior citizen discount next year.

The proposed contract extension had been discussed at previous meetings, but the final approval given Feb. 13 was not preceded by any discussion. The extension, which was granted without dissent and without seeking competitive bids, had been questioned by a competitor, Republic Services, which sought the chance to compete for the contract.

Waste Management has held Niceville's exclusive franchise to pick up and dispose of residential garbage since November 1993, and commercial garbage since November 1992. Previously the city's sanitation department was responsible for all garbage and trash service in the city.

The city council has sought competitive bids only once, when the contract was first awarded to Waste Management 18 years ago. The city has renewed the agreement four times since then—always with Waste Management and always without allowing competitors to bid for the job. In Niceville, all customer billing is done through the city.

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# 2 hurt in accidental shootings

By Del Lessard  
Beacon Staff Writer

Two military men were wounded in Niceville last week in separate accidental shootings. No charges were filed.

Reports from the Niceville police and Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office gave the following accounts:

The first accidental shooting occurred Feb. 12. Police and EMS personnel were called to 571 Woodlow Road, Niceville. The 911 caller, a 24-year-old Marine attending the Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal school on Eglin, stated he accidentally shot himself while cleaning his gun.

When police arrived the man

was lying partially on a mattress on the floor with a gunshot wound in his left inner thigh. He said he was cleaning his handgun, a .40 caliber semi-automatic, and pulled back the slide, realizing a magazine was in the weapon and took the magazine out.

He said he didn't realize there was still a bullet in the gun. When he pulled the trigger to release the slide, the handgun fired into his leg, shattering his femur, or thigh bone.

He was taken to Twin Cities Hospital and transferred to the Eglin Air Force Base Hospital for surgery.

The second shooting took place Feb. 15 at 4080 Rocky

Drive, Niceville. Sheriff's deputies and EMS responded to a 911 call from the residence and found three men, all Air Force members assigned to Eglin's 96th Security Forces Squadron, in the house. A 22-year-old airman was sitting in the living room with a towel wrapped around his left lower leg and had a belt wrapped above his knee.

Deputies found a loaded, .40 caliber pistol on a table in the living room, and a spent shell casing on the floor.

In reconstructing the incident, deputies determined that a 25-year-old airman had picked up the pistol

a .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun to clear the weapon so

he could show it to the victim, but the gun discharged, striking the victim in the lower left leg. The bullet went through the victim's leg and exited without fragmenting, hit the concrete floor through the vinyl flooring, ricocheting in to the wooden frame of the couch and lodging in the kitchen counter.

The victim, who told authorities that the shooting was accidental, had been leaning on the couch next to the counter when the weapon discharged. The man handling the gun and a third man, 24 years old, applied a compression dressing to the wound and called 911.

EMS took the victim to the Eglin hospital.

## MSBU

From page A-1

would provide the labor from the county public works department. The initial proposal from the MSBU to the county was presented by MSBU board member Doug Burgess and included sidewalks to be built at four locations:

—The west end of Bay Drive from the Chacato Landing entrance, where the existing sidewalk ends, to the Marina Cove entrance.

—Winged Foot from Oakmont to the entrance to Winged Foot subdivision.

—Woodlands from Southwind Drive to White Point Road.

—Southwind Drive from the traffic circle on Bluewater Boulevard to the entrance to Southwind subdivision. That project, however, cannot be executed until a previously planned county storm water draining project is completed.

During previous MSBU meetings, Burgess told fellow board members that materials costs of the sidewalk projects would be \$43,088 for concrete and \$57,767 for asphalt, but that using asphalt would require less time by county work crews and possibly less overall cost.

The four-neighborhood sidewalk plan was rejected as too costly by the county commission in November.

During a meeting in December, the MSBU board learned that Bluewater Bay resident Neville Edenborough, president of a homeowners association near the proposed Bay Drive sidewalk, planned to make his own appeal to the county commission during the commission's Jan. 10 meeting, asking the county officials to reconsider, at least so far as Bay Drive was concerned.

During the December MSBU meeting, some board members expressed concern over Edenborough's plan to address the county commissioners directly. MSBU members Doug

Burgess and Joe Jellison said they were concerned that Edenborough might be misperceived as officially representing the MSBU, especially since the MSBU had its own monthly meeting scheduled for Jan. 10 and could not send a representative to the commission meeting to clarify its official position to county commissioners.

MSBU member Joan McCarthy said Edenborough would be acting as a private citizen and was free to address the county commission.

MSBU board member Dale Blanchard said that although Edenborough would not be speaking officially for the MSBU, the MSBU had already made it clear to the county that it favored the four-neighborhood sidewalk plan.

Jellison said the money originally set aside by the MSBU to buy materials for the sidewalks was still available and if Edenborough succeeded in persuading the county commission to approve the project, the MSBU should be happy to "let it fly."

At the Feb. 14 meeting, MSBU manager Archie Jernigan told the MSBU board that Edenborough had addressed the county commission Jan. 10 and succeeded in persuading the panel to provide labor for the Bay Drive sidewalk project. The Winged Foot, Woodlands and Southwind projects were apparently not approved, however.

According to minutes of the Jan. 10 commission meeting, commissioners James Campbell, Wayne Harris and Bill Roberts voted in favor of Edenborough's request to renew the Bay Drive sidewalk project, and commissioners Don Amunds and Dave Parisot voted against it.

At the Feb. 14 MSBU meeting, board members Joe Jellison, Doug Burgess and Dave Strunk expressed misgivings about the county commission's new, partial approval of their original request. Board members McCarthy and Blanchard were absent from the Feb. 14 meeting.

Jellison said the approval of

Edenborough's Bay Drive request by the county commission could "open Pandora's box," allowing private citizens to commit the MSBU to projects without official MSBU board approval.

Burgess said the idea of a private citizen committing the MSBU to such a project "sticks in my craw." He also said he was concerned that if the MSBU goes ahead with building the sidewalk along Bay Drive, what will happen to the other proposed sidewalk projects for Winged Foot, Woodlands, and Southwind Drive?

Some citizens attending the Feb. 14 MSBU meeting disagreed, saying the board should go ahead with the Bay Drive sidewalk since it has been approved by the county commission.

Brett Hinely, who owns the Bluewater Bay Marina, near the end of Bay Drive, said the new sidewalk will allow children to safely ride bicycles to and from the marina area and if the sidewalk is built, it will set a precedent for similar cooperation between the county and the MSBU to complete the other sidewalk proposals.

"This is good for all parties," Hinely said. "Let's get it done and enhance the community."

Susan Kloos, a resident of Whitetail Circle, also favored the sidewalk project, urging the MSBU board to "Leave conflict aside and think about our children and our children's safety." Bay Drive, she said, is a busy road leading to the marina and its popular restaurant, and the sidewalk will help keep pedestrians and cyclists safe from traffic along the road.

By the end of the Feb. 14 meeting, a decision had not been reached by board members regarding the Bay Drive sidewalk project.

"There is no proposal on the table," concluded board member Dave Strunk.

Edenborough did not attend the February MSBU meeting, and could not be reached by phone.



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Niceville's Newspaper



# 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

Jerry Drew Hill Jr., an air-conditioner tech, 41, of 7715 Brookmeadow Place, Pensacola, was arrested by Niceville police on an Escambia County warrant on a contempt of court charge related to child support.

\*\*\*

Cody Lee Newberry, 21, of 1487 Cedar St., Niceville, subsequent to a traffic stop for speeding, was arrested by Niceville police Feb. 10 on charges of knowingly driving while license suspended, possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Newberry was also arrested on an Okaloosa County warrant revoking bail bond on the original charge of dealing in stolen property

\*\*\*

Sarah Isabel Gideanse, 20, of 236 Madison St., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 7 on a charge of failure to appear on an original charge of domestic violence battery.

\*\*\*

Theresa Marie Haynes, 46, of 616 Ginko Ave., Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies Feb. 3 on a violation of probation charge on the original charge of resisting arrest without violence.

\*\*\*

Timothy Richard Connelly, unemployed, 20, of 101 Edrehi

Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, subsequent to a traffic stop in Fort Walton Beach, Feb. 6, on charges of driving on a suspended license, possession of less than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

## Thefts

A Niceville resident from the 1400 block of 29th Street reported Feb. 12 that unknown person(s) were trying to steal gasoline from his vehicles and damaged his vehicles. A garden hose had also been cut. He reported that a neighbor was having a similar problem.

\*\*\*

A Niceville resident reported Feb. 7 that he was made aware by the IRS that he was a victim of identity theft when he received a letter in December stating he owed \$207 in taxes for work for a particular company.

After telling the IRS the information was incorrect because he had never worked for such a company, the victim received another letter from the IRS Feb. 4 stating he would need to get a correction income statement or a written verification of income from the company.

The victim called the IRS Feb. 7 and spoke with a representative who stated he may be the victim of identity theft and would need to file a police report in order for the tax collec-

# Okaloosa seeks fugitives

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

**Name: Eddie Oneil Armstrong Jr. Wanted for: domestic violence battery by strangulation and fleeing and eluding police. Armstrong's last known address was on Shrewsbury Road in Mary Esther.**  
**Height: 5-feet, 7-inches**  
**Weight: 135 pounds**  
**Age: 19**  
**Date of birth: 12-07-1992**  
**Hair: black**  
**Eyes: brown**



**Name: Nathaniel Corneien Parker Wanted for: violation of probation on the original charges of possession of a controlled substance and resisting arrest without violence. Parker's last known address was on Cabana Way in Crestview.**  
**Height: 5-feet, 5-inches**  
**Weight: 180 pounds**  
**Age: 31**  
**Date of birth: 02-15-1981**  
**Hair: black, Eyes: brown**



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)

tion agency to stop sending letters to obtain payment or investigation.

The victim told police he was unable to contact the alleged company from the contact information he had and said the company's website was not working.

\*\*\*

A Niceville resident reported that unknown person(s) stole his \$350 bicycle while he was working at a Niceville restau-

rant, 1170 E. John Sims Parkway. The victim said he arrived for work Feb. 7, at 4:30 p.m. and left his bicycle in an area attached to the restaurant that was enclosed by a privacy fence. When he got ready to leave work at 9:30 p.m. his bicycle was missing.

## Criminal Mischief

A Niceville resident from the first block of Southwind Court reported Feb. 11 that unknown person(s) had spray-painted her 1993 Volvo blue sometime overnight. The blue paint was all over the back end of the vehicle, including the top of the trunk, tail lights and license plate. Damage was estimated at \$2,000. The incident happened in a gated community and deputies said there were several other reports taken for the same type of incident.

## Other

William Hakim Bently, 27, of 211 Green Acres Road, Fort Walton Beach, was issued a criminal summons by Niceville police, Feb. 12, on a charge of driving without a valid driver's license. Bently was also cited for running a stop sign and for a seat belt violation.

\*\*\*

Elizabeth Ann Magellan, 51, of 1624 Palm Date Drive, Niceville, was issued a criminal summons by sheriff's deputies Feb. 8 on charges of retail theft and resisting a merchant. Magellan is alleged to have concealed three pair of women's

# Fire Department Reports

## Niceville

The Niceville Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 13, 2012 through February 19, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
1 Structure Fire	21 Emergency Medical Calls		
0 Vehicle Fire	1 Vehicle Crash		
0 Other Fire/0 Vehicle Crash with Extrication			
0 Illegal Burn	3 Other Emergency Calls		
0 False Alarms	2 Hazardous Conditions		
E. College Blvd.	Smoke Scare	02/13/12	04:09
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/13/12	05:23
N. Partin Drive	Medical	02/13/12	06:12
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/13/12	10:53
N. Partin Drive	Medical	02/13/12	10:44
Lanman Road	Medical	02/13/12	10:21
Jones Avenue	Structure Fire	02/13/12	11:06
Capri Cove/BWB	Canceled	02/13/12	17:52
Iowa Street	Medical	02/13/12	21:49
21st Street	Good Intent	02/14/12	12:42
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/14/12	12:43
E. College Blvd.	Electrical Problem	02/14/12	14:01
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/14/12	15:19
Spence Circle	Medical	02/14/12	17:17
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/15/12	16:51
Everglade Drive	Medical	02/15/12	20:11
College Blvd.	Medical	02/15/12	20:19
Tala Way	Medical	02/15/12	21:17
E. College Blvd.	Medical	02/16/12	16:28
Coconut Palm Circle	Medical	02/16/12	21:00
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/17/12	06:19
W. John Sims Pkwy.	Medical	02/17/12	06:37
Riley Road	Medical	02/17/12	09:44
S. Partin Drive	Power Line Down	02/17/12	15:41
E. John Sims Pkwy.	Vehicle Crash	02/17/12	16:32
29th Street	Medical	02/18/12	03:12
Kelly Road	Medical	02/18/12	20:25
23rd Street	Medical	02/19/12	02:30

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

## North Bay

The North Bay Fire Department responded to the following calls from February 12, 2012 through February 20, 2012.

Street	Situation	Date	Time
White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/13/12	08:58
Range Road	Alarm system activation	02/13/12	09:07
Jones Avenue	Building fire	02/13/12	11:07
Parkwood Square	EMS excluding vehicle	02/13/12	11:30
Highway 20	Dispatched canceled	02/13/12	16:21
Highway 20 East	EMS excluding vehicle	02/13/12	17:44
Capri Cove	Overpressure rupture	02/13/12	17:53
Range Road & Hwy 20	Motor vehicle accident	02/13/12	18:05
Chadwick Lane	EMS excluding vehicle	02/13/12	20:54
East Highway 20	Medical assist EMS	02/14/12	10:38
21st Street	Dispatched canceled	02/14/12	12:43
East College Blvd.	Electrical wiring/equipment	02/14/12	14:02
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/14/12	19:37
White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/14/12	19:40
West Birkdale Circle	EMS excluding vehicle	02/15/12	10:15
Merchants Way	EMS excluding vehicle	02/15/12	14:54
Range Road	Alarm system	02/15/12	17:57
Meadowbrook Court	Medical assist EMS	02/15/12	20:54
N. White Point Road	Rescue, EMS incident	02/15/12	21:57
Cat Mar Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/16/12	08:31
White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/16/12	09:22
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/17/12	19:32
Merchants Way	Medical assist EMS	02/17/12	21:18
Sandalwood Circle	EMS excluding vehicle	02/18/12	10:16
Merchants Way	EMS excluding vehicle	02/18/12	12:22
E Hwy 20 & Lancaster	Motor vehicle accident	02/18/12	15:16
East Highway 20	Rescue, EMS incident	02/18/12	18:43
Bay Drive	Medical assist EMS	02/18/12	19:40
N. White Point Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/18/12	22:56
Ardmore Court	EMS excluding vehicle	02/19/12	18:23
E Highway 20	EMS excluding vehicle	02/19/12	22:45
Sailboat Drive	Dispatched canceled	02/20/12	09:23
Huntington Road	EMS excluding vehicle	02/20/12	09:27
Glenburn Court	Dispatched canceled	02/20/12	11:28

Visit northbayfd.org for more information.

underwear without paying the \$45 cost at a Mary Esther store, 300 Mary Esther Blvd.

\*\*\*

Christopher Allen Coley, 27, of 284 Grandview Ave., Valparaiso, was issued a notice to appear by Valparaiso police, Feb. 9, for violation of the city's bad dog ordinance. Coley is alleged to have left open the gate to his front yard. His dog got out and killed a neighbor's

cat in the 200 block of Montana Avenue.

\*\*\*

The Department of Children and Families removed two juveniles from a Valparaiso residence on Johnson Street, Feb. 9, after two people found a 2-year-old child standing in the middle of College Boulevard by himself at 11 p.m. The boy was wearing a light jacket and pants with one sock on and no shoes.

# FINAL NOTICE FILING DEADLINE MARCH 1, 2012 (FIRST-TIME FILERS ONLY)

The following ad valorem tax exemptions are available to qualifying properties, individuals, and institutions. To receive an exemption this tax year, proper application must be made in the Property Appraiser's Office no later than March 1, 2012.

- Homestead Exemption
- Additional Homestead Exemption for those 65 years of age and older with a household adjusted gross income of \$27,030 or less. Social Security income may not count (call for details)
- Deployed Military Discount (requires preceding year deployment overseas)
- Widows, widowers, and blind persons exemptions
- Exemption for total and permanently disabled persons
- Exemption for certain total and permanently disabled veterans and their surviving spouses
- Exemption for disabled veterans with 10 percent or greater service connected disabilities (also applies to surviving spouses)
- Exemption for disabled veterans confined to wheelchairs
- Charitable, religious, scientific, and literary exemptions
- Historic property exemption
- Hospital, nursing home, and homes for special services exemptions
- Nonprofit homes for the aged exemption
- Proprietary continuing care facility exemption
- Low-Income housing property exemption
- Educational property exemption
- Labor organization property exemption
- Charter school exemption
- Community center exemption
- Economic development exemption
- Not-for-profit sewer and water company property exemption

For additional information, call the Exemption Department in Fort Walton Beach at (850) 651-7240; or in Crestview at (850) 689-5900; or visit our Web site at [www.okaloosapa.com](http://www.okaloosapa.com)

Our office makes every effort to insure that property owners are made aware of all exemptions for which they may qualify. Again, as stated above, in order to receive the exemptions this year, applications must be filed in our office by the **March 1, 2012 statutory deadline.**



Pete Smith, CFA  
Okaloosa County  
Property Appraiser

**TOP SALES AGENT**  
for JANUARY 2012



**Dana Topel**  
218-4511

**TOP LISTING AGENT**  
for JANUARY 2012



**Roy Sutton**  
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**\$22<sup>95</sup>** most vehicles

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Available with full service  
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**THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER** —Mike Griffith

Location:  
Niceville Public Library

*What do you think about proposed cuts in defense spending, to include cuts in military pay, health and retirement benefits, and reduced purchases of the F-35 fighter plane?*



*"I don't think they need to cut the military at all. We learned through history that we need a strong military."*

Buddy Brown, 58, Niceville, retired



*"I have mixed feelings. I don't want to see our military people hurt, but I'd like to see our country spend less on fighting other people."*

Mary Cooke, 65, New York City, retired teacher



*"Absolutely not! We're totally dependent on the security provided by the men and women who fight for us. I believe cuts should be made in other areas."*

Chris Hollingshead, 51, Niceville, builder



*"My husband is in the military. I just hope for the best, and that he gets to keep his job."*

Jennifer Ramos, 33, Niceville, mom



*"We need our servicemen and our planes. If the U.S. gets attacked, we're done."*

James Edwards, 50, Niceville, unemployed



*"If we reduce purchases of the F-35, we can always crank that program up again later, but I don't see how we can maintain a volunteer force with reduced pay and benefits. I'm glad that retirees can't be furloughed!"*

Mark Tiedemann, 60, Shalimar, retired Air Force

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

**THANK YOU MILITARY!**  
**\$20 18 HOLES OF GOLF & BBQ!**

Active & Retired Military Come Play Golf (cart included) & Enjoy Free BBQ at Blackstone Tuesday, February 28th. \$20.00\* per person Includes 18 Holes of Golf, Cart Fee & a BBQ Lunch from 11-2 pm. Schedule a Tee Time: (850) 520-4670 (\*taxes not included)

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Earn extra cash of \$45 to \$140 or more each week in your spare time! The Bay Beacon seeks a reliable independent contractor to insert, bag, and deliver newspapers Tuesday night. You must be over 21 and have a reliable vehicle, a good driving record, a Florida driver's license, and proof of current liability insurance. No collecting duties. Earnings vary according to route and work load. Stop by the Bay Beacon for an information sheet and to fill out an application. The Beacon 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville • 678-1080 (Parkway East Shopping Center across from PoFolks)

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 Don't miss these special color ad pages from Beacon Newspapers!

**'Save Gas — Shop Locally'**

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 Capture your share of hometown spending with your ad in Beacon Newspapers' special color advertising pages:

**'Save Gas—Shop Locally!'**

**Don't miss this great selling opportunity!**

**Deadline:** Thursday, March 1, 2012.  
**Publication:** March 7 in The Bay Beacon.  
 March 9 in The Eglin Flyer, The Hurlburt Patriot, and The Green Beret.

**Prices:** Just \$14<sup>95</sup> per column inch in The Bay Beacon, 8 column inches min. Includes free color for your ad, plus page banner!  
 Add BOTH Air Force papers for only \$9<sup>99</sup> per col. inch total! Add Army paper at \$4<sup>99</sup> an inch!

**Beacon Newspapers**

The Bay Beacon • The Hurlburt Patriot • The Eglin Flyer • The Green Beret  
 1181 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville, FL 32578 (850) 678-1080 Fax 729-3225 info@baybeacon.com



**VOLUNTEER**

From page A-1

"Having been a teacher I realize the needs of teachers," she said. "If there's something that needs to be done, I'll do it. I'm not going to wait for someone to ask me. ...The need to help children and help the school just comes naturally to me."

In winning the volunteer award for Region 1, which includes 21 North Florida counties, Crist is entered in statewide competition.

Crist has designed and maintained the campus revitalization project, and along with Plew Panther Parents, she has planted gardens and painted campus outbuildings with murals. Crist is also responsible for starting the school's recycling program in the cafeteria.

"She's Superwoman, there's no doubt about that," said Plew Principal Carolyn McAllister, who nominated Crist for the award. "She has volunteered at Plew since her first child entered here eight years ago. There's never a task for her that's too

daunting, she just goes forward and just makes it happen."

Crist spearheaded the "Dream Machine Recycle Rally" last year, where students, teachers and parents recycled more than 1 million items leading Plew to win second place in the nation.

"It's important to teach children to value what they're given," Crist said. "If they get involved and see what's going on around them, they can learn from it and give back."

Among other activities at the school, Crist also donates her time to the circulation desk in the media center, helps with Accelerated Reader and is the weekly K-2 story time volunteer, often dressing in character. She mentors and tutors at-risk students, listening to them read to improve fluency and comprehension. In addition to volunteering, Crist serves as a substitute teacher at the school.

"No' is not in her vocabulary," McAllister said. "Her expertise in educating children and in environmental issues and landscaping has benefited our school so much."

Crist added that she will con-



Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

Shawna Crist has spearheaded several projects at Plew Elementary School, including painting murals on outbuildings and planting gardens throughout the school's grounds.

tinue to volunteer at the school indefinitely.

"When I put myself into things, I see it to the end and that's just how I've always lived my life. Growing up I was

always involved in projects, it's just a part of who I am and I hope to pass it on to my children."

The Outstanding School Volunteers will be recognized with a letter from Florida

Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson, a certificate of commendation in their school and featured in the Florida Association of Partners in Education newsletter.

"It is important to recognize the vital role that school volunteers play in a student's daily life and I congratulate them on winning this prestigious award," Robinson said in a statement.

**E-CIG**

From page A-1

In response to the call, North Bay firefighters were dispatched to the Holloway home on Capri Cove East Feb. 13 at 5:53 p.m., according to Fire Chief Joe Miller. Firefighters arrived at 6:02 p.m. and found smoke, but no fire in a home office, he said.

Firefighters said Holloway

had heavy soot around his nose and mouth. Medics discovered that he was missing some of his front teeth and part of his tongue, according to North Bay Division Chief Joseph "Butch" Parker.

A firefighter used a fire extinguisher on a smoldering chair cushion, according to Parker. There were burns in the carpet and melted plastic scattered about.

Mrs. Holloway poured salt on the burning materials before firefighters arrived.

Holloway was transported to a local hospital and subsequently transferred to a burn treatment center in Mobile, Ala. He was released from the Mobile hospital Feb. 15.

A scorched battery case was found on the floor near a melted carpet spot, according to the fire

department. The battery case appeared to be for a cigar-sized electronic smoking device.

Parker obtained the Holloways' permission to take the damaged battery case so he could report the incident to a national database to warn other agencies. The damaged case was later returned to the Holloways.

Electronic cigarettes and cigars are typically marketed as a

safer alternative to tobacco smoking, or as smoking-cessation devices. Also known as e-cigarettes, the battery-powered devices simulate the act of tobacco smoking by producing a mist that contains the drug nicotine, but not the cancer- and emphysema-causing tars associated with smoke.

Holloway, who owns and operates ProImage Photography

from his home, said he had been using the electronic devices for a couple of years to help him quit smoking.

He declined to talk about details of the explosion, but did say he was surprised by the media interest it created, including stories in regional, national and international press. Accounts of the accident made headlines as far away as China.



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 Now also offering more room for general repairs

*Advertising Feature*

For comprehensive auto care in the Niceville area, look no further than Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair. Tucked away on Elm Street in the heart of Niceville, its highly skilled staff is ready to take care of all of your auto care needs. Friendly, and straightforward, the people of Twin Cities Transmission offer quality solutions at competitive pricing, for more than just your transmission.

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. Quality diagnostics, experienced mechanics, and a reputation that you can trust, make Twin Cities Transmission the perfect one-stop shop for your vehicle's checkup.

Don't allow those little prob-



Twin Cities Transmission and General Repair at 610 Elm St. in Niceville, with new general repair extension.

lems 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.

Twin Cities Transmission is a member of the TECH-NET pro-

fessional program that assures strict adherence to automotive code of ethics. All its technicians are ASE-certified, and able to keep your car moving at top performance.

Repeat customers may notice a few additions to the business, including an expansion to its building. The new "General Repair" side has three lifts dedicated to general repairs. 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. That's not the only addition to the business. Senior K9 greeter "Pepper" has taken on a new assistant, year-old "Tony," who is eagerly learning the welcoming trade.

Twin Cities Transmission is independently and locally owned by Adam Marthis. Along with 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. Find out for yourself just how committed to excellence and customer service they are. And don't forget to say hello to Pepper and Tony!

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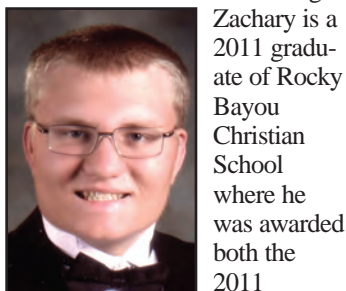
Brandy Pirc and the rest of the Twin Cities Transmission team are ready to take your call! 729-6629.



## Who's News

E-mail items to info@baybeacon.com.

**Zachary Joseph Gadzinski** has been named to the Dean's list for the fall 2011 semester at Northwest Florida State College.



Zachary is a 2011 graduate of Rocky Bayou Christian School where he was awarded both the 2011 Niceville Exchange Club ACE award and the Michael H. Minger Memorial Foundation award for 2011. He is the son of Len and Pam Gadzinski.

\*\*\*

**Marissa Marinan**, of Niceville, was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2011 semester at Flagler College. She was also selected for membership in the Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society, the official honor society of the National Communication Association for undergraduate Communication majors. Marissa is a junior, majoring in Journalism/Public Relations and minoring in Advertising. She is the daughter of Bob and Cathy Marinan.

\*\*\*

**Katherine Kaim**, of Niceville, and **Katherine Miller**, of Niceville, were each recognized by the Belhaven University Athletic Department for earning a 3.0 GPA for the 2011 fall semester. Kaim is a freshman pursuing a bachelor of science, and Miller is a senior pursuing a bachelor of science. Kaim and Miller are members of the Blazer's soccer team.

\*\*\*

**Brittany Boothe**, a senior at Rocky Bayou Christian School,



was honored for her exemplary volunteer service with a President's Volunteer Service Award. The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their communities and their country, was presented by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program on behalf of President Barack Obama.

\*\*\*

**Lorena Spillar**, of Niceville, was recognized at Waterstone Mortgage's Sale Conference last month in Las Vegas as the No. 2 Top Producing Loan Officer in the Company.

\*\*\*

**Lorena Spillar**

## Valentines for 33 years crowned King and Queen of Hearts

By Tess Hollis  
Staff Writer

Love was in the air on Valentine's Day as one of the most cherished couples at The Manor at Bluewater Bay was crowned King and Queen of Hearts.

Ed and Marion Miller, who have been married for 33 years, donned red crowns as a barbershop quartet serenaded them after their win. Visitors, staff members and residents voted for the King and Queen, who are crowned at the Manor's annual Valentine's Day Party.

"I never expected this, it's surprising," laughed 92-year-old Ed.

"It's been such a wonderful day," Marion added.

Ed said he was also surprised that his daughter, Karen Fruge, showed up for the party

to support the couple.

"I'm thrilled for them," Fruge said. "My dad is so outgoing and he loves this attention."

Activity Director Angela Griffin said the couple is loved by everyone at the Manor.

"They're so loving and sweet and I think the people who work here and live here see their inner person come out," she said. "Everyone takes care of them, and they are just genuine people."

Griffin said the couple has been together at the Manor for the past two years, but Marion, 79, was in another facility before moving to be with her husband.

"It's a night and day difference in my dad since they've been together here," Fruge said. "They take care of each other. If she doesn't feel well,



Marion and Ed Miller hold hands after being crowned King and Queen of Hearts on Valentine's Day at the Manor at Bluewater Bay. The couple has been married for 33 years.

Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

he's by her side worrying about her the whole time. He'd do anything for her."

Griffin added that Ed and Marion compliment each other well.

"He does anything for her, and she would do anything for him," she said. "Every night he

lays by her side, and kisses her goodnight. It's so sweet."

Before the King and Queen were crowned, residents and guests enjoyed lunch, spirits and dessert. The crowd was also entertained by the barbershop quartet, part of the Emerald Coast Chorus. Quartet

members James Given, Brad Williams, Phillip Coty and Frank Hall wooed party-goers with love songs, including "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

At the end of the celebration, Ed beamed that he was "absolutely happy" Marion was his valentine.

## Donations benefit warriors

Grade school serves as collection spot

By Tess Hollis  
Staff Writer

For a Marine battalion deployed to one of the most hostile areas in Afghanistan, a care package is more than just a box containing much-needed supplies—it's a reminder of home.

"The war has been going on for over a decade and a lot of people have forgotten about it," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Watson, assigned to Marine Squadron VMFAT-501. "It's good for those overseas to know that people back home still support them."

The Marines and sailors of Eglin Air Force Base's F-35B training squadron recently partnered with Bluewater Elementary to provide care packages for 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, "Beirut Battalion," out of Camp Lejuene, N.C. The battalion is deployed to Helmand Province in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Watson, a former member of the battalion, spearheaded the project for the squadron. The idea to put a donation box at Bluewater Elementary came from Kelly Liberman, whose husband is also in VMFAT-501.

"I just thought this would be a great opportunity for elementary children in our local area to participate in this office campaign," said Liberman, whose two children attend the school. "...I wanted to get our Bluewater community involved in these efforts, knowing that this community shows so much support for our military families."

Liberman first reached out to Tonya Johnson, her fourth-grade child's teacher.

"I've done this at a previous school," Johnson said. "I thought



Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

The students at Bluewater Elementary have donated items for care packages that will be sent to service members deployed to Afghanistan. From left: back row, Principal Dr. Connie Hall, Russell Liberman, DJ Tomassetti, Aubrey Johnson, Hailey Viehman and teacher Tonya Johnson. Front row: Zoe Viehman, Wilson Simpson, Bella Liberman, Grant Wheeler and Noah Fletcher.

it'd be a great for the kids, because they all know that many parents are deployed or currently have a parent who is deployed, and they don't know how to help out, but want to help out."

According to Johnson, some of the kids in her class have used their allowance money to buy items to donate. Her students are also writing letters, as well as making cards and inspirational posters.

Items that are most needed in the packages include: toiletries, snacks, baby wipes and powder, reading materials, coffee, white crew socks and playing cards. Although these seem like everyday items to most people, Watson said they will go a long way for the service members who receive the care packs.

"Right now a lot of them are living on military rations to eat, and they have no running water," he said. "...They are spread out at patrol bases, so these are not items they would get on a daily basis. We just wanted to help make their lives easier."

Liberman, who delivers the donations from Bluewater Elementary to Watson each week, said she hopes to fill as many

packages as possible by Feb. 29, the last day to collect donations at the school.

"PO3 Watson ordered 500 USPS boxes for their entire deployment," she said. "The sky is the limit for these 1,000 Marines, sailors, airmen and soldiers."

Watson said his main goal is to mail one box per company per week, which adds up to five or six boxes per week. He added that the squadron will accept donations indefinitely.

"As soon as I get the boxes, I pack them up and send them out," he said. "As long as donations keep coming in, I'm going to keep sending these packages out."

Johnson said the project goes hand-in-hand with the core and character values Bluewater Elementary teaches its students.

"It gives them a sense of pride, that they are helping out," she said. "It's important to support our military, because more than 50 percent of our students are military."

Johnson said that another donation box placed at the school would be a good idea.

"We've had so much support from this, I would definitely want to do it again," she said.



Beacon photo by Tess Hollis

A donation box sits in the Bluewater Elementary school office for children to drop off supplies that will be shipped to service members.

## Boating weather course offered

For the first time in this area, a seven-week weather course will be conducted for the public on Wednesdays, beginning March 7, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Anchorage building, 404 Green Acres Road, Fort Walton Beach. Students should arrive early on the first night for administrative tasks. Ownership of a boat is not required to attend.

The course, which will be conducted by experienced local boaters, covers all aspects of weather, including systems and patterns, predictions and safety. It

also includes tips about weather in and around local waters, and more.

The course should boost boat operator confidence, especially during uncertain weather conditions.

Tuition is free but there is a \$65 charge for materials

The course is sponsored by the Fort Walton Sail and Power Squadron, a unit of the United States Power Squadrons.

For more information, call Wil Hugli at 863-0874 or visit tfwsp.com.



## Local sorority donates to Shelter

Xi Beta Pi of Beta Sigma Pi, Niceville, dropped off their third delivery of goods on Feb. 7 to Shelter House. So far, more than \$800 of goods have been delivered. From left: Adrienne Wilson, Marja Wilson, LeighAnn Heubusch, Nikki Green, Joanne Labbe and Balon Lofton.

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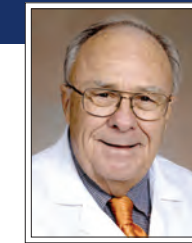
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# Ruckel ranks 10th in state among 583 middle schools

Ruckel Middle School was recently ranked 10th out of 583 middle schools in the state in school-by-school rankings released by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE).

"The reason that Ruckel did so well is because we increased our percentages of kids with learning gains in Math and Reading," said RMS Principal Debra Collins Goolsby. "We also increased the percentages of students that are on grade level and above."

In 2010, 91 percent of Ruckel's eighth grade students were on grade level or above in math. In 2011, 97 percent of students were on grade level or above.

"Once you get to 90 percent of anything, it is very difficult to show increases," Goolsby said. "That is nothing short of phenomenal to increase the percentage of kids that are on grade level or above once you get up into the 90th percentile."

Since 1998, the FLDOE has used school grades to help assess the quality of the schools throughout the state. The school rankings are based on points used to determine school grades.

According to the FLDOE's website, schools are ranked in the following categories: elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, combination schools that include high school grade levels

and combination schools that do not include high school grades.

Schools were ranked according to the number of school grade points they received for the 2010-2011 school year. The rankings for elementary and middle schools are based solely on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores. This is the first year the state has released a breakdown of school and district rankings.

Ruckel uses several strategies to increase learning gains including the way teachers handle lesson planning, which allows them to identify the standards, how they have been assessed and if they have been assessed in the same

way that the students will be tested.

Ruckel also uses DEA Assessments to identify deficits. Once teachers get the mid-year DEA results, they know what each student is predicted to score on the FCAT.

"If at the mid-year evaluation a student shows a deficit, the teacher will have an individual conference with that student," Goolsby said.

"The student then will create a contract with his/her teacher to work on that deficit so that they will be ready by FCAT."

Teachers also analyze the DEA Assessment results by class period to determine where the students need more instruction.

"The teachers base their lesson plans on the results of this test and are able to get down to specifics based on diagnostic information,"

Goolsby said. "When you do this school-wide and get it down to the individual child, it makes a difference."

Teachers at Ruckel also use instructional strategies that receive 100 percent engagement from the students. With a goal of total student participation, teachers use white boards, finger signs and clickers, to ensure that every student participates.



## NHS' Opus One puts on show at college game

Opus One, Niceville High School's premiere choral ensemble, performed the National Anthem on Feb. 4 at the Florida State University vs. University of Virginia men's basketball game. The game was played at the Tallahassee-Leon County Civic Center. From left: EJ Huston, Olivia Scruggs, Katie Pickler, Jordan Stein, Marisa Hancock, Sivu Schlegel, Haley Leibach, Jonathan Horvath, Ronette Kortbein, Austin Galloway, Madeline Kirkpatrick, Zach Pecore, Giselle Morrobel, Kim Bridges, Sam Fletcher, Mari Burdge and Danielle Fox.

## NWFSC Forensics Team takes home first place

The Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) Forensics Team placed first overall in Debate at the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) State Championship Tournament held Feb. 9 to 11 in Tallahassee. The college's six member team competed in 24 individual speaking events, as well as Parliamentary Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate. The team finished third in the state overall in Individual Events and third in the state overall for the entire tournament.

NWFSC team members scored high in numerous individual events, which contributed to the team's high standing for the tournament.

Individual honors included: Nicholas Tyler Corbin, Niceville, who took 1st in Prose, 2nd in Poetry, 3rd in Drama, 5th in Pentathlon and 6th in Extemporaneous Speaking. For debate he was 2nd in Lincoln-Douglas Debate and was semi-finalist and 4th overall in Parliamentary



The NWFSC Forensics Team winners of the State Championship Tournament, from left: Brittney Ostermann (Crestview), Kendall Gray (Crestview), Megan Rambo (Fort Walton Beach), Nicholas Tyler Corbin (Niceville), Shiena Normand (Niceville), Caleb Crow (Ponce de Leon).

Niceville, was semi-finalist and 3rd overall in Parliamentary Debate. Brittney Ostermann, Crestview, took 3rd in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, 6th in Duo Interpretation and 5th overall in Parliamentary Debate. Megan Rambo, Fort Walton Beach, was 6th in Poetry and was semi-finalist and 3rd overall in Parliamentary Debate. Shiena Normand, Ponce de Leon, placed 4th in Lincoln-Douglas Debate and was semi-finalist and 4th overall in Parliamentary Debate. Kendall Gray, Crestview, scored 6th in Communication Analysis, 6th in Duo Interpretation and 5th overall in Parliamentary Debate. Shiena Normand,

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## Obituaries

### Melvin Edward Hanes

October 22, 1920 - February 10, 2012

Melvin Edward Hanes, originally from Baltimore, MD, passed away quietly at his home in Centreville, Virginia on Friday, February 10th, at the age of 91 after a short battle with cancer. He was married to Margaret (Murray) Hanes of Rosyth, Fife, Scotland for nearly 50 years who preceded him in death July of 1992. He is survived by his children Verna E. Hanes, MD of Ronceverte, WV, Melvin A ngus Hanes of Houston, TX, and Lorna Margaret (Hanes) Morrison (Terrance) of Niceville, FL; eight grandchildren: Kathleen M.(Schultz) Leeble (John), Daniel A. Schultz (Susan), Misty D.(Hanes) Haren (Boyd), Gregory T. Hanes, Patrick A. Morrison, Megan E. Morrison, DO, Scott A. Morrison, Bryce M. Morrison; and seven great-grandchildren; also by Laura Scheuring, his very dear and closest companion, and her three children, who were like a second family to him. His passing is mourned by many other family and friends to whom he was known as Grandpa or Mel.



**Melvin Edward Hanes**

Visitation and Masonic services were held Thursday, February 16, 2012 at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home in Alexandria, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society. Condolences may be sent and additional information found by visiting <http://www.everlywheatleyfuneralhome.com>.

### Daniel L. Sambenedetto

Daniel L Sambenedetto Sr., USAF retired, originally from Cleveland, Ohio passed away peacefully at his home in Niceville and went to be with the Lord early Tuesday morning Feb. 14, 2012 following an extended battle with cancer. He finished well and even during his battle with cancer he was eager to share his faith in Christ.

After retirement from the USAF in 1982, he worked as Test Engineering Manager for DRS Training & Control Systems, Inc., formerly Metric Systems Corp, of Fort Walton Beach, until his retirement in 2006. He loved spending time with his family, playing and watching sports of all kinds (tennis especially) and hanging out with his boys at "The Land" in Baker. He will be greatly missed by his wife of almost 49 years, Linda Odle Sambenedetto; his children Daniel Sambenedetto Jr. and wife Kimberly, Melissa Sambenedetto and husband Vance, and Mark Sambenedetto and wife Leigh; and ten grandchildren.

Visitation of friends was held on Thursday, Feb. 16, from 5-7 p.m. at Heritage Gardens Funeral Home and Cemetery, 2201 N. Partin Dr, Niceville, FL.

A memorial service to celebrate his life was held on Friday, Feb 17, at 10 a.m. at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church, 2401 N. Partin Dr, Niceville, FL., followed by a graveside service with military honors at Heritage Gardens Funeral Home and Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations be made to the Heights Tutoring Ministry at Rocky Bayou Baptist Church, in memory of Daniel L Sambenedetto Sr. This organization is an outreach ministry of Rocky Bayou Baptist Church and exists to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ while ministering in practical ways to families and the local school systems in the community.

You may express condolences to the family and sign the guestbook at [www.heritagegardensfuneralhome.com](http://www.heritagegardensfuneralhome.com). Heritage Gardens Funeral Home of Niceville is entrusted with the arrangements.



### Exchange Club recognizes RCBS student

The Niceville Exchange Club recognized Cooper Eaves, a senior at Rocky Bayou Christian School as the February A.C.E. Student of the Month. The A.C.E. program (Accepting the Challenge of Excellence) honors students who have overcome great physical, emotional or social obstacles in their lives and will graduate high school. From left: Carol Mullins-Hernandez and Cooper Eaves.

### DWC, RWOFF scholarship apps

Both the Democratic Women's Club and the Republican Women of Okaloosa County have announced that they are accepting scholarship applications.

The Democratic Women's Club is accepting applications for their \$1,000 college scholarship. The application process is open to college bound high school seniors and the deadline is March 30. The guidelines, criteria and application materials are available through the high school guidance counselors, or online at [okaloosa democrats.com](http://okaloosa democrats.com), or [okaloosa schools.com](http://okaloosa schools.com). Contact Mary Anne Elsener for information at 862-

7272. The Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated are also accepting applications for two scholarships. The scholarships, \$1,500 each, have been established to assist high school female graduates pursue their college education.

Applications must be received by April 10. The scholarship winners will be honored at their high school honors day programs and at the May 2 RWOFF luncheon. For more information and a copy of the application, visit [rwoff.org](http://rwoff.org), or contact Marty Houston at 664-1267.

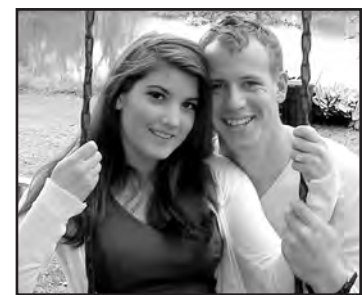
## Engagement

E-mail items to  
[info@baybeacon.com](mailto:info@baybeacon.com).

### Murray-Jopling

Alice Hale Murray of Valparaiso and Jamison Everett Murray of Beverly, Mass., announce the engagement of their daughter, Heather Michelle Murray, to Joel Anthony Jopling, son of Thomas and Valerie Jopling of Bowling Green, Ky.

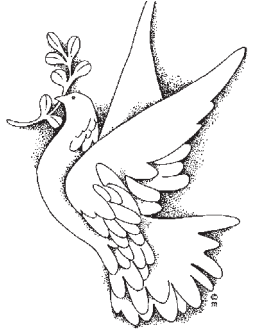
The bride is a 2008 graduate of Niceville High School. She is a senior at the University of West Florida, pursuing a degree in public relations. The groom is a 2008 graduate of Greenwood High



**Heather Michelle Murray and Joel Anthony Jopling**

School. He is also a senior at the University of West Florida, pursuing a degree in hospitality management. The groom has participated in Army ROTC during college and is scheduled to receive his commission in May 2012.

A June 2, 2012, wedding is planned at Niceville United Methodist Church.







**LeadHer local meetings**

The Niceville chapter of LeadHer will meet the first and third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Niceville Assembly of God, JV room, 108 Highway 85 North. The meetings are designed to encourage and equip women to make a deeper impact on the world for Christ. Info: 685-4959, or LeadHerNicevilleFL@gmail.com.

**Donations for troops**

Bluewater Elementary and VMFAT-501, Eglin Air Force Base, are accepting donations for the Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., while they are deployed to Afghanistan. Donations will be accepted at Bluewater Elementary until Feb. 29 and at the VMFAT-501 Squadron, 1005 Nomad Way, Building 1312, Eglin.

Items needed include: toiletries, snacks, baby wipes, powder, reading materials, coffee, white crew socks and playing cards.

Info: Kelly Liberman, 389-4045, or Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Watson, 885-5133.

**Library story time**

Join Ms. Karen and Ms. Christina at the Niceville Public Library, Feb. 22 and 23, 10:30 a.m., for story time where they will read "Mother Goose and Friends." Ages 3-5, program is free. Info: 279-4863, ext. 1514.

**Guild meeting**

The Sand Dunes Chapter of Embroiderers' Guild of America night group will meet Feb. 23, First United Methodist Church of Niceville, 6-8:30 p.m., room 400. The day meeting will be Feb. 27, 9:30 a.m.-noon, room 703. Visitors are welcome.

**Prismacolor workshops**

Art Orr, MFA, will offer two classes using Prismacolor (colored pencil) media at the Arts and Design Society's (ADSO) Art Center Studio, Fort Walton Beach, Feb. 23 and March 1, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Students may sign up for one or both classes. The course covers many different techniques of color pencil drawing. Cost of each class is \$30/ADSO members, \$35/non-members. Info: artsdesignsociety.org or 244-1271 during office hours, Tuesday-Friday, noon-4 p.m.

**'I Believe in Music'**

The Emerald Coast Chorus will hold a show, "I Believe in Music," Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m., Emerald Coast Convention Center. General admission, \$15 in advance, or \$20 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at: Bayou Book; P.S. Gifts; Friendly Florist; Connect with Flowers; Cat Clinic of Destin. Info: 496-1769, or emeraldcoastchorus.com.

**T-ball registration**

The Fort Walton Beach YMCA will begin T-Ball (ages 4-6) and Coach Pitch (ages 7-9) registration for boys and girls, Feb. 24-March 30. Practices and games will be at the FWB YMCA. Coaches and team sponsors are always needed. Forms will be available at the YMCA and at most south Okaloosa County public and private schools after Feb. 24. Cost is \$36/Y-members and \$48/non-members. Info: Bob Grant, FWB YMCA, 863-9622.

**Taste of the Bayou**

Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services presents the 16th Annual



**Fund-raiser benefits Girl Scouts**

Girl Scout Troop 1121, Niceville, visited with Chef Dan Pettis of One20 Modern Bistro in celebration of Destin Desserts, a fund-raiser based on the world famous Girl Scout Cookies. Destin Desserts will be Feb. 24, 6:30 p.m., at the Hilton Sandestin Resort. Tickets are \$75. Chefs from the area will prepare desserts using Girl Scout Cookies. Tickets are available to purchase by contacting Michelle Kyser at ekyser@gscfp.org, or 434-1333. Tickets can also be purchased at Bayou Book, 1118 John Sims Parkway East, Niceville.

Fare for Child Care "Taste of the Bayou," St. Mary Church, Parish Life Center, Fort Walton Beach, Feb. 24, 6-8 p.m. Food tasting 6-7 p.m., bidding 6-8 p.m. Cost is \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door, \$5 for children ages 5-10.

All proceeds benefit Okaloos-Walton Child Care Services. Info: Cheri Garrett, 833-9330, owcss.org.

**NHS talent show**

Niceville High School's annual talent show will be Feb. 24, 6:30-9 p.m., NHS Auditorium. Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door.

**Snake presentation**

E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, 4956 State Highway 20 East, Freeport, will present Joe Wyatt, Feb. 25, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., "Snakes, Snakes, and More Snakes!" Wyatt will be giving examples of how snakes play a role in the environment. Standard admission rates apply. Info: eowilsoncenter.org or 835-1824.

**Rug making**

Crocheted rug making, Feb. 25, 10 a.m.-noon, Indian Temple Mound Museum's Lazarus Education room. Jean Lucas will teach you how to make a rug out of recycled materials. Cost is \$25 for the public and \$20 for Friends of the Museum members. All class materials included. Info: 833-9595, or jlamott@fwb.org.

**Florida honors fallen**

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 811 and the Northwest Florida Blue Star Mothers in honor of Florida's Fallen will read the names of Florida's 321 Sons and Daughters who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom from 2002-present, Feb. 25, 10:30 a.m., U.S. Air Force Armament Museum, Eglin Air Force Base. The ceremony is open to the public. Appropriate dress: Participants/Speakers: service uniform or appropriate civilian attire. Guests/General Public: duty uniform of the day or appropriate casual attire.

Info: Northwest Florida Blue Star Mothers Military Order of the Purple Heart, 651-8945, 729-2748, or blue.starmom@rocketmail.com.

**Band on the Run**

The Third Annual Band on the Run 5K/Mile Fun Run will be Feb. 25, 8 a.m., Niceville High School. Early registration for 5K is \$15/Fun Run \$10. Student price is \$10 for either race. NWFTC members receive a \$2 discount. Special rate for groups of 10 or more. Late fee of \$5 added the day of the race. T-shirts for the first 200 entries. Email samacd@valp.net for any questions.

Proceeds benefit the Niceville High School Eagle Pride Band. Runners and walkers are welcome. Info: Dennis Samac at 678-6682.

**Inaugural Duathlon**

Emerald Coast Triathlon Club

will host its inaugural Bluewater Bay Duathlon at LJ Schooner's, Feb. 25, in support of the EOD Memorial Foundation and the Wounded EOD Warrior Foundation. This is a 2-mile run, 11-mile bike, 3.1-mile run. The race begins at 8 a.m. and the awards ceremony begins at 10:30 a.m.

If you are interested in racing, or would like to volunteer, please visit www.ecriclub.org, or email ecriclub@ecriclub.org. Athletes can compete as individuals or as part of a relay team.

**Trail Association banquet**

The Florida Trail Association will hold its annual awards banquet at Bear Lake in Santa Rosa County Feb. 25, 11:45 a.m.

Info: 654-1172, or choctaw.florida.trail.org.

**Computer expo**

Free computer tech expo for home computer users Feb. 25, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Northwest Florida State College, Niceville, in the college's Learning Resources Center. The free event focuses on the home computer user and features 25 free how-to workshops, vendor displays and door prizes. Info: nwfacug.org.

**Archaeology meeting**

The Emerald Coast Archaeology Society will hold its regular meeting on Feb. 25, 1 p.m., in the Lazarus Room of the Indian Mound Temple Museum, 139 Miracle Strip Parkway, Fort Walton Beach. A program will be presented on the Mayan culture of Mexico and Central America by Dr. John M. Vaughan.

**Tea Party meeting**

The Niceville-Valparaiso Tea Party will meet at Niceville City Hall, 208 N. Partin Drive, Feb. 26, 6 p.m. Guest speaker: Okaloosa County Tax Collector, Benjamin F. Anderson. Info: 729-2874 or NicevilleValparaisoTeaParty.com.

**Relay social**

American Cancer Society Relay for Life Survivor and Caregiver Social at Buster's Bar and Grill, 125 Poinciana Blvd., Destin, Feb. 26, 7-9 p.m.

RSVP: Rachel Carroll, carroll@walkton.k12.fl.us or Lindsey Brown, brown@walkton.k12.fl.us

If you are a cancer survivor or have been a caregiver for someone with cancer, we want to celebrate you. Join us for an evening of food, fun, music and prizes. Gumbo and salad will be provided by Buster's.

**Trail Association meeting**

The Florida Trail Association will hold its monthly meeting at Ed's Hometown Seafood & Steaks, Niceville, Feb. 28, 6 p.m.

Info: 654-1172 or choctaw.florida.trail.org.

**NARFE meeting**

National Active and Retired

Federal Employees Association, Chapter 1428, will meet Feb. 28, 11 a.m., Golden Corral, Fort Walton Beach. Guest speaker: Lee Williams, owner and primary agent of Williams Insurance Agency, Niceville. Info: 678-6045.

**Cooking School**

WZEP AM 1460 18th Taste of Home Cooking School, Feb. 28, 4:30 p.m., Walton High auditorium. Tickets, \$10, available at: WZEP AM 1460, DeFuniak Springs; by mail, P.O. Box 627, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435; or at wzep1460.com. Info: 892-3158.

**Therapy Spotlights RBSCS**

Independent Lifelong Learner—You and Your Child/Student, Therapy Spotlights, Feb. 28, 6:30-8 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, Rocky Bayou Christian School, 2101 N. Partin Drive, Niceville.

**Alzheimer support group**

Alzheimer's Family Services provides monthly support groups for family members or friends coping with a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. A support group will be held at 10:30 a.m., Feb. 29, First United Methodist Church, Chandler Center, 214 S. Partin Drive, Niceville. The support group is free and respite care is available. To register for this group or for information, call 478-7790 or visit AlzFamServ.org.

**Joint replacement class**

The Joint Replacement Program at Sacred Heart Hospital will host a class to help people learn more about the joint replacement process. The next class will be Feb. 29, 10 a.m., Sacred Heart Hospital Resource Center, suite 3 conference room. Info: Linda Ledford, 278-3646, or sacredheartemerald.org.

**Library artist of the month**

The March artist at the Coastal Branch Library, Greenway Trail Santa Rosa Beach, will be Wayne Pagnozzi, an "Artist of all Mediums." Library hours: Monday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. and Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Info: 267-2809.

**Star Soccer registration**

Registration has begun for Star Soccer, children ages 2-5. This activity is for parents and child to discover the beginning skills of soccer. Star Soccer will be at Meigs Park on Tuesdays (2-3 years) and Thursday (4-5 years) at 5:15 p.m. This activity will last six weeks and cost \$35. Registration closes March 10. Info: Community Life Center of Niceville UMC, 678-4411.

**DWC scholarship**

The Democratic Women's Club is accepting applications for their \$1,000 college scholarship. The application process is open to college-bound high school seniors. The deadline is March 30. Guidelines, criteria and application materials are available through high school guidance counselors, or okaloosa democrats.com. Info: Mary Anne Elsener, 862-7272.

**Movie day at library**

The Valparaiso Library would like to invite children and families to come to our Family Movie Day, March 1, 1:30 p.m. We will be showing "Puss and Boots" and serving drinks and popcorn. All ages welcome.

**Audobon Society meeting**

Learn how to get along with our native black bears at the March 1 meeting of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society. "Living with Florida Black Bears" will be presented by Andrew Jernigan of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The meeting will be held in the new Student Services Center, Room 132 (SSC 132) of the Niceville Campus of Northwest Florida State College, 6:30 p.m. The meeting is free to the public.

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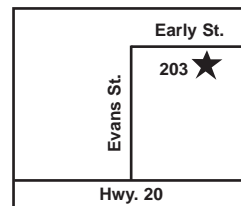


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# BEACONSPORTS



## Eagle wrestlers fall short in state tournament



From left, Niceville High School wrestlers Taylor Bartleson (160), Hank Monan (170), Mack Berger (113) and Eric Altreche (106). Bartleson and Altreche competed in the state tournament, while Monan and Berger served as workout partners.

By Kenneth Books  
Beacon Staff Writer

Neither Niceville High School wrestler who competed in the State Tournament in Lakeland won a medal, although both acquitted themselves well.

Junior 160-pounder Taylor Bartleson finished eighth after going 2-2 in bouts at the tournament. One more victory and he would have won a medal, according to Eagle wrestling coach Morrie Geselter.

One thing holding him back was his health. Geselter said Bartleson had a severe cold.

"He was feeling terrible," the

coach said. "He had given up only nine takedowns all season. But with 15 seconds to go and the score 1-1, he got taken down" and lost his first. His opponent was no pushover, finishing the season 38-3 and ranked third in the state. But, Geselter said, "on a normal day, Taylor would have beaten him."

Had Bartleson advanced, he would have faced the wrestler who won the gold medal. That wrestler went 47-0 on the season.

But the junior came back, winning two matches, 7-3 and 11-3. He wrestled for a medal

Saturday, but lost 11-6.

"He just wasn't himself," Geselter said. "You could see he was very, very tired and ill. He was coughing and hacking."

Altreche, a freshman 106-pounder, wrestled another freshman in his first bout, but lost 11-6 to an opponent who was an eventual medal winner.

"I thought Eric was very nervous the first match," Geselter said. "He wrestled a real tough kid the second match who cradled him three times."

Despite coming home with no medals, Geselter said, they learned a lot, as both are young,

first-time state qualifiers.

"It was just a great experience," he said. "This was a very young team. We are going to be very strong next year if they work hard in spring and summer wrestling. We had only one senior and only three returning kids from last year, but went 24-7-1 overall, and finished second in the district and sixth in the region."

The Eagle wrestling team will enjoy a banquet March 6. A kids wrestling tournament for those in first through eighth grade will be held Saturday, March 10 at the high school.

## Eagle seniors led the way on court and in the school



From left: senior Kyle Koszuta, Christian Vardaman, Christian Redmond, Iain Persaud and Shane Horton.

By David Middleton

With the Niceville High School men's basketball season now complete, it is a testament to the overall team approach that the season was a success as evidenced by winning the district championship. By any standard, they did well. But a closer look at the interworking of the team reveals more than what you would find in the post-game box score.

As with any high school athletic team, success on the court is heavily influenced by the experience and leadership of the senior class. This team is no exception. However, what set this group apart was more than their savvy on the court; it was their school spirit, extracurricular involvement, noticeable leadership and academic prowess that made them a rare

find. The moniker "student-athlete" rings true with this group of seniors.

Over the years, each of these seniors has been a participant in a multitude of activities. Nearly every type of club and organization sponsored by the school has had one of these players involved. From student government and KEY Club to the video production crew and debate team, this well-rounded bunch of young men enthusiastically participated.

During football season they orchestrated and led every pep rally. When the marching band conducted its halftime show, they led the applause from the front row. When student government called, they participated every year. And when the rigors of academics were presented, they withstood the challenge

with flying colors, with an average GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, including a heavy emphasis on Advance Placement courses. These efforts resulted in two players being selected for the NHS Hall of Fame and cemented a sense of camaraderie within the team and across the school.

It would be inaccurate to say that the non-seniors on the team roster weren't stars in their own right. But the overall support by this group of seniors toward their team and school throughout their high school years created a special bond within the student body. Through the avenue of high school sports, they have endured many challenges. And as a tight-knit group they've learned that a team can accomplish far more than what is individually achievable.

### Briefs

E-mail items to  
info@baybeacon.com

#### Soccer signups under way

Star Soccer for children ages 2 to 5 is registering now. This activity is for parents and child to discover the beginning skills of soccer. It will take place at Meigs Park Tuesdays (2-3 years) and Thursdays (4 to 5 years), starting at 5:15 p.m. The season lasts six weeks and costs \$35. Registration closes March 10.

For more information, contact the Community Life Center of Niceville UMC at 678-4411.

#### Bricks build tennis court

Niceville High School and Ruckel Middle School are working together to build home tennis courts for their schools and community. Residents can help by buying a brick, making a donation

and/or volunteering.

For information, call 737-1083.

#### Destin 50 Beach results

A Niceville man won the Destin 50 Beach Ultra Male Age 1-29 category at Sunday's 50-mile run on the beach at Destin.

Greg Cormier of Niceville, won the race in his age group with a time of 8:53:25. He came in fifth overall.

Ricardo Orozco of Niceville finished 26th overall with a time of 11:55:58, while Diego Acosta of Niceville finished 38th with a time of 12:55:48.

Soon Peng Cher of Niceville finished 28th in the 50K (31 mile) race with a time of 7:48:20, while Barry Reed of Niceville finished 30th with a time of 7:54:05.

The Eagles of Niceville finished sixth in the 50-mile team race, with a time of 7:12:01.

#### Son of a Beach 5K results

In the Son of a Beach 5K

Saturday in Destin, Ryan Potts of Niceville finished third in the Male 5K run 1-29 age group with a time of 23:01, while William Hermann, also of Niceville, finished third in the 30-39 age group.

Potts finished 11th overall, while Hermann finished 14th.

Eusebia Rios finished with a time of 27:30 to take second in the female age 40-49 age group. She finished 44th overall.

Also running from Niceville were Tony Becker, 64th overall with a time of 30:15, Samantha Hermann, 65th overall with a time of 30:17, Jamie Duncan, 79th overall with a time of 31:52, Christopher Clem, 104th overall with a time of 34:56, and Joyce Danser, 107th with a time of 35:07.

Bennett Blackman of Valparaiso finished 134th with a time of 39:37.

Rebecca Stacey of Niceville finished 11th in the 5K walk with a time of 51:42.



### Free throw winners

Students, ages 10-14, from throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties competed in the Knights of Columbus District-wide Basketball Free-throw competition Feb. 11 at Niceville High School. Winners in the individual age and gender categories are, from left: front, Katie Copeland, William Triplett, Nicki Cobble, Payton Rockwell, Kennedy Laughlin, Kamrin Mahoney, Jazzlynn Triplett, William West and Michael Shock; rear, Joe Purka, K of C District Deputy for District #3 and Ed Coleman, Director of Food Services, and Director Custodial Services, Okaloosa County School District. The nine winners will compete in the Northwest Florida Regional competition at Milton High School on March 10.

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The North Bay Fire Control District is currently accepting Letters of Intent for the position of Fire Commissioner. The requirements are: (1) be a Florida registered voter and (2) live within the jurisdiction of the North Bay Fire Control District. The North Bay Fire Control District is a Drug Free Workplace and an Equal Opportunity Employer. For more information, contact the Administration Office at (850) 897-3689. Please submit your Letter of Intent to the North Bay Fire Control District, 1024 White Point Road, Niceville, Florida 32578 by Monday, March 5, 2012. All applicants must be present for consideration at the next Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., at the North Bay Fire Control District.

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The essay winners from left: Jacqueline Beauchamp, Hanna Shelton, Matthew Marks and Victoria Mark.



### DAR announces contest winners

Amanda Harris, Committee Chairman, Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, announced the winners of the 2011-2012 American History Essay Contest and the Christopher Columbus Essay Contest. The winners were honored at the February DAR meeting. American History Essay winners are: Jacqueline

Beauchamp, a 5th grade home schooler; Gabriel Seabrook, a 6th grader at Rocky Bayou Christian School; Hanna Shelton, a 7th grader at Freeport Middle School; and Matthew Marks, an 8th grader at Lewis School. Victoria Marks, a junior at Niceville High School, was the winner of the Christopher Columbus Essay Contest.

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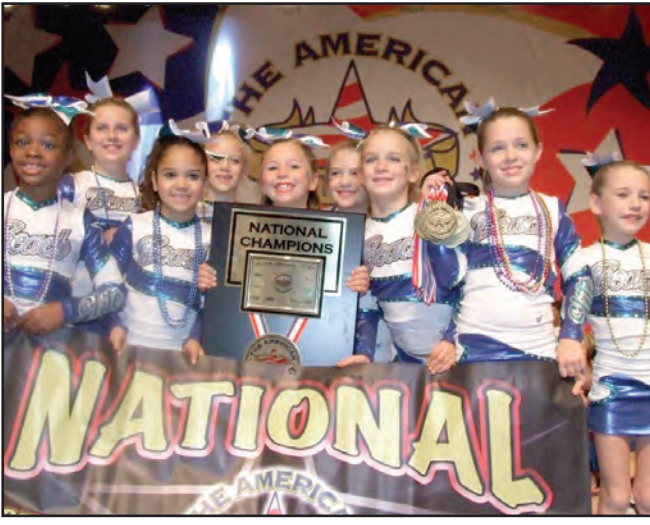
### RBCS A Team takes first place

Rocky Bayou Christian School's Varsity Academic A Team placed first in the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Annual State Brain Bowl Academic Competition on Feb. 9 and 10 in Orlando. Senior Josh Turner (captain) led his teammates, seniors Bill Hudson and Matt Steele, along with freshman Ian Kampert, in the state win.



### Children learn fire safety

Miss Christina and Miss Karen's preschool story time on Feb. 15 and 16 partnered with the Niceville Fire Department for a special "Stop, Drop and Read" program. After the session, an engine was parked near the children's park and kids were treated to an "up close" view of how it operates during emergencies. The fire department also presented age-appropriate safety information. From left: Jimbo Field, Christina Wyatt, Kevin MacDonald, Ken Revell, Karen Houston.



### Cheerleaders named champs

Beach Elite Level 1 Minis were named National Champions recently in New Orleans at The American Championships. They also were recognized at the competition for "Best Jumps." Beach Elite All Star Cheer is part of the U.S. Gold Gymnastics and Cheerleading family and the team is coached by Michele Kocour. From left: Layla Seaton, Alex Kent, Lilymar Torres, Maddie Roberts, Kalyn Solley, Elizabeth Hansen, Skye Snyder, Kayla Colson and Savannah Bowling. Both Maddie and Elizabeth live in Niceville.

### RBCS heads to state math competition

Nine RBCS middle school mathletes attended the Feb. 4 MathCounts chapter competition at Ruckel Middle School. Abby Alldredge, Seth Kerstein, Dylan Paskell and Kaitlyn Tiller represented eighth grade, while Ben Esses, Charis Allen, Twila Duarte, Dylan Josey and Ariel Schesniak represented seventh grade. Charis Allen finished in the top 10 individually. For the first time in school history, Rocky Bayou's team is headed to the state competition in Orlando in March. The team consisted of eighth graders Abby Alldredge and Dylan Paskell and seventh graders Ben Esses and Dylan Josey. The mathletes of MathCounts are coached by Ben Tidwell.



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## Benny's on the Fly

Bringing the homestyle cooking back home

**Advertising Feature**

Benny's On The Fly offers Benny's Bar-B-Que in a fast and friendly drive-thru, carry-out, or sit-in service.

Benny's slowly smokes all their meats with real hardwood for an old fashioned flavor that can only be described as delectable! Everyday, you can see their smoker slowly cooking the tastiest BBQ in town. In addition, you can smell the irresistible aroma that fills the surrounding air!

As Benny would say, "If we're not smoking, we're not open."

Benny Sr. began barbecuing over 20 years ago. Today, his son Benny Jr. carries on the family tradition. Perfected by four generations of great cooks, their homemade sauces are a well-kept family secret. Benny's sauces have been awarded a blue ribbon for "Grand Champion" in a Georgia State competition. With the perfect flavor combinations of ingredients including signature spice blends, Benny's sauces have been a favorite of many locals and visitor, over the years. Benny's award winning sauces enhances the flavor of all their meats and comes in four flavors: sweet, spicy, North Carolina vinegar,



Pulled pork and tender baby back ribs are a local favorite!

and mustard.

At Benny's, portions can be ordered by the combos, by the pound, or in family packs. Savory sandwiches, platters, and combos are sure to satisfy the heartiest appetites. Choose from a variety of meats such as ribs, pulled pork, beef, turkey, and chicken.

Benny's also offers an array of sides such as: homemade potato salad, BBQ beans, coleslaw, baked potatoes, onion rings, fries, and sweet potatoes. For those looking to top off a great meal with a tasty dessert, Benny's offers homemade banana pudding. Many customers drive-thru just to pick up a quart!

Benny's can provide a meal for one or cater for hundreds. Catering is available for many group sizes, and menus can be tailored as needed. Whatever your entertaining needs may be, contact Benny's for customized service.

Benny's On The Fly is open M-S from 10:30am-9pm. They are located on 1067 John Sims Parkway in Niceville. For any questions regarding menu items or catering, call Benny's at 279-6742. Benny's also has an expanded restaurant location right across the street at 1102 John Sims Parkway.

**Benny's on the Fly**

**GET A FREE\* PORK SANDWICH**  
 when you buy a Pork Sandwich Combo

\*Must show ad to redeem offer. Exp. 2-28-12

**(850) 279-6742**

**1067 John Sims Pkwy., Niceville**

**Bar-B-Que Drive Thru To-Go**



Great food, great prices and convenience in one location.