Nicerville council shuns F-35 noise stand

By Mike Griffith  Beacon Staff Writer

The Okaloosa County School District has proposed freezing teachers’ salaries this year by paying no across-the-board cost-of-living increases. The school district has proposed freezing across-the-board cost-of-living increases average 3 percent for every returning teacher, said Mike Forrest, the school district’s personnel director.

Although teachers have not gotten across-the-board cost-of-living increases in at least three years, Forrest said, they have continued to pay 3 percent annual step increases.

The action would save taxpayers nearly $1.2 million a year in payroll costs, according to the school district.

The Okaloosa County School District has told teachers it can’t afford to pay them the customary 3 percent annual raise.

The teachers union has responded by filing a grievance.

The school district has proposed freezing teachers’ salaries this year by paying no across-the-board cost-of-living increases and annual “step” increases.

The action would save taxpayers nearly $1.2 million a year in payroll costs, according to the school district.

In past years, annual step increases averaged 3 percent for every returning teacher, said Mike Forrest, the school district’s personnel director.

Although teachers have not gotten across-the-board cost-of-living increases in at least three years, Forrest said, they have continued to pay 3 percent annual step increases.

Teacher pay raises for the current year, if any, are still being negotiated.

Alexis Tibbetts, Okaloosa schools superintendent, said last week. However, she said, the school district’s 2011-12 budget contains no money for teacher pay raises. It’s too late to make any changes in the spending plan.

Tibbetts said a few hours before Monday’s school board meeting, during which the budget and tax rates were given final approval.

Karen Peck, president of the Okaloosa County Education Association, which

Please see SCHOOL, page A-5

Hearing set on tax, utilities hikes

By Mike Griffith  Beacon Staff Writer

Proposed increases in property taxes and in water and sewer rates will be subjects of a public hearing Thursday by the Nicerville City Council.

At the hearing, which will take place at 6 p.m. at city hall, Glenn Stevens, an engineer from Polylogmonitoring, a consulting firm employed by the city, will brief the council in greater detail on the water and sewer systems and the costs of running them.

City financial consultant Bill Fray will also brief the council during that meeting, regarding the city’s ongoing effort to secure low-interest bank loans to replace current bonds.

City Clerk Dan Doucet said that the proposed rate hikes will increase the base rate for city water customers from $11.15 to $13.15 per month. Water consumption rates for the first 2,000

Please see HEARING, page A-2

New access to bridge road

By Del Lessard  Beacon Staff Writer

Residents of Blue Pine Village, Parkwood Estates and others living in the vicinity of Range Road got an easier way to travel to Destin when the Bill-Bridging Connector Road opened a 1.5-mile, two-lane extension of Range Road.

Motorists using the completed connector will avoid as many as 14 stoplights in Niceville and Bluewater Bay.

Please see NOISE, page A-2

Destin bank seeks Niceville branch

By Del Lessard  Beacon Staff Writer

A Niceville branch bank with headquarters in Mississippi may be acquired later this year by a Destin-based bank.

First Bay Financial, a five-year-old state-chartered bank, has applied to the state of Florida and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. to establish a branch in Niceville through acquisition of the building now occupied by M&F Bank, said Ronny A. Clay, president of First Bay Financial and Farmers Bank, Inc., the parent company.

Please see BANK, page A-2

Authorities seek three in home invasion

By Del Lessard  Beacon Staff Writer

Nicerville police are investigating allegations that three masked men, one armed with a pistol, tied up two Nicerville men in their home, robbed a mother, and stole her car.

Nicerville Police Department reports give the following account:

About 4 p.m. Aug. 31, police received a call from Keegan McDermott, 19, saying three men had confronted him and his mother, Letitia McDermott, 44, when they returned to their home at 1401 Cape Lane, Nicerville. The three men wore bandannas over their faces and one held a pistol.

Please see DEVSSK, page A-5

Gaetz selection as next chief of state senate set

By Mike Griffith  Beacon Staff Writer

Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Nicerville, is scheduled to be designated as the next Florida Senate president during a ceremony Monday in Tallahassee.

The ceremony, which will be hosted by the Republican Caucus of the Florida Senate, will be at 3 p.m. (2 p.m. Nicerville time) Sept. 19 at The Florida Capitol.

Gaetz represents coastal areas of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties, including the Twin Cities area. Although already designated to become Senate president, Gaetz will not actually begin serving in that position until 2013.

Please see GAETZ, page A-5
HEARING

increase from $16.90 to $17.60

city limits.

on water bills inside and outside

about 58 cents per month. The
total rate hike will amount to

customer who uses about 7,000
gallons used. For an “average”
rate to 3.65, up from 3.6301.

said Doucet, keeps up with

customers, and by 2 percent for com-

property owners, and from $8.51

Due to the nature and length of this document, a detailed analysis is not provided. However, the text content appears to discuss various topics including economic changes, utility rate hikes, and potential implications on customers. The content may also touch on environmental concerns, such as the prevention of stormwater runoff, and economic impacts like job creation.

Water service to be interrupted

The city of Niceville announced a period of interrupted water service

Sept. 15, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,

utility repair

Saint Andrews Drive, Coral

effective in the

cessation of

service.

For more information,
call the Niceville Public Works office, 729-4064.
State fire event set

By Del Lessard

As many as 300 volunteer firefighters from as far away as the Florida Keys will participate in a series of training classes to be held in Niceville this week. Classes offered during the sixth annual Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighters Weekend began today and will run through Sunday. Classes and events will be centered at the Niceville campus of Northwest Florida State College.

In addition, classes will also take place at two Niceville models—the Quality Inn and the Holiday Inn Express—as well as at the first time at the Community Center of the Niceville United Methodist Church, according to Charlie Frank, president of the Tallahassee-based Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend Council, sponsor of the event.

The Northwest Florida Volunteer Firefighter Weekend began as an idea of the Florida State Fire College in 2005, according to Frank. The fire college wanted a fire department to host the event, and Frank then chief of the Valparaiso Volunteer Fire Department, agreed to do it.

The first two volunteer firefighter training weekends, which started in December 2006, took place at Lewis Middle School. The training weekend moved to the Niceville campus of NWFSC in 2008.

Now the event attracts firefighters from all over the state, as well as from Alabama and Georgia.

This week’s training classes are free to volunteer firefighters, Frank said. In addition to classroom training on Friday and Saturday, volunteer firefighters will get hands-on training in vehicle extrications, and rescue and fire attack techniques during a “live burn” at a specially constructed structure at the college. Such training is often difficult and expensive for many volunteer departments to schedule, he said.

“Live burn” training

Sunday, participants of the water safety class will take a “loop of faith” into the pool at the Quality Inn in full gear and air packs. Vehicle extrications and various fire demonstration will also take place, according to Frank.

 Volunteer firefighters can earn certification credit from the Florida State Fire College, Frank said. The training hours can go toward volunteers being certified as Firefighter-1, the basic certification level required to fight fires in the “hot zone.” At least six volunteers from the Valparaiso Fire Department had signed up for some of the training classes, according to Valparaiso Fire Chief Mark Norris.

Until the 1990s volunteer firefighters in Florida usually needed at least 40 hours of training to begin fighting fires. Then the state quadrupled the training requirement to 160 hours for certification as Firefighter-1. The increased training requirement put a strain on many volunteer fire departments whose firefighters typically work full time in addition to their volunteer firefighting duties. Several local fire departments subsequently shifted from volunteer departments to full-time and part-time paid firefighters, squeezing out volunteer firefighters in the process.

Norris said Florida recently increased the training hours required to be certified at the Firefighter-1 level by another 28 percent to 208 hours.

Frank said that about 250 volunteer firefighters had signed up for classes as of last week, and the group expected around 300 to attend. More than 200 volunteer firefighters attended last year’s event, he said.

Frank, who now works for the State Fire Marshal’s Office in Tallahassee, said the event’s sponsor this year received a four-year federal grant totaling $556,000 to continue the free training program for volunteers.

Nicveille site of annual training classes
A 14-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 28 on charges of indirect exposure, two counts, and lewd or lascivious exhibition by an offender under the age of 18, two counts.

Chase Allen Garet, a student, 18, of 1609 Crawford St., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 31 on a charge of domestic violence battery.

John Paul Burnett, 30, of 1405 Perdido Circle, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Wednesday after driving to a supermarket with a drug light and driving with a suspended driver's license. On Sept. 1, a charge of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine, was added.

Michelle Leon Stockle, 41, of 713B McKenney St. Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Sept. 4 on a charge of trespass after returning.

Larry Houston Lucas III, a resident of 3012 Cherry Dr., Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Sept. 6 on a charge of domestic violence buty.

Denise Greyson, 20, of 1403 Capt Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday for a charge of falsely identifying himself as a rarely used alias. Snow allegedly confessed a man and woman to a domestic violence charge on Aug. 30.

Jennifer A. Snow, 54, of 1277 Union Street, Niceville, was arrested by Niceville police Aug. 30 on a charge of assault. Snow allegedly confessed a man and woman to a domestic violence charge on Aug. 30.

Darren A. Thomas, 33, of 1405 Perdido Circle, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday after driving to a supermarket with a drug light and driving with a suspended driver's license. On Sept. 1, a charge of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine, was added.

Michael Patrick Hogan, a construction worker, 45, of 1403 Capt Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday for a charge of domestic violence buty.

Jessie J. Miller, 30, of 499 John MacArthur Drive, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday for a charge of domestic violence buty.

Lauren Ann Soule, 21, of 159 Pecan Creek, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday for a charge of domestic violence buty.

A Niceville resident reported that someone had broken into her home and taken a television off of Merchants Way, Niceville. An employee in the 1500 block of Merchants Way, Niceville, was arrested for being in possession of a scheduled substance, methamphetamine. Snow allegedly confessed a man and woman to a domestic violence charge on Aug. 30.

A 14-year-old Niceville boy was arrested by sheriff's deputies Aug. 28 on charges of indirect exposure, two counts, and lewd or lascivious exhibition by an offender under the age of 18, two counts.

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Michael Patrick Hogan, a construction worker, 45, of 1403 Capt Lane, Niceville, was arrested by sheriff's deputies, pursuant to a warrant, Thursday for a charge of domestic violence buty.
To actually become Senate president, Gaetz will first have to win re-election in November’s general election, and then at all stages of the legislative session he must be the majority, or the only, member present. The bullet following the redistricting announcement was in the Oct. 11, 2010 issue. If Gaetz is not the only member present, he will win a majority in the Senate during the lame-duck session after he becomes governor and does not become Senate president after all.

Current Senate President Mike Haridopolos, R-Indialantic, will remain in that position through 2012. Gaetz, 53, was first elected Florida’s District 4 senator in 2007. He has had a successful business career in Melbourne since 1992. He entered politics here, won the state Senate District 4 seat on the Brevard County School Board, and then to the state Senate District 4 seat. His son, Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, also represents the Valparaiso Elementary School district. The proposed new zoning category to the current Public Institution zoning category.

In a Sept. 6 phone interview with The Bay Beacon, Gaetz discussed the duties of a senator president. “The president of the Senate, he is the president of one of the state governments, in charge of the house of representatives, and president of the Senate. He also presides over meetings of the Senate, and appoints all the senators to their committee positions as well. He is also, of course, also, just as the speaker, which is the floor of the Senate to be voted upon.

“Who is the legislative is not in session, the job of the state of government must be agreed upon by the governor, senate and legislature, although especially decisions that involve state and county governments, like emergency declarations, he said, the senate president, not the governor if the elected governor does not have a majority. Senate presidents are elected by the Florida legislature. The Senate president is Matt Gaetz. Although those elections are such as the House of Representatives of the majority party, Gaetz said that he refused to seek his re-election for election when President Obama was first re-elected in late Jan, and he was therefore elected unanimously.

“I consider myself very fortunate,” Gaetz said, “to have been elected without opposition.” Asked if such a mandate would influence his influence in state government. Gaetz replied, “Yes—for the first couple of days.”

A school board representative at the city community meeting, attorney Jeff Burns, said the proposed new zoning district supports the Planning Commission’s version, and strongly opposes Wyckoff’s version. A final vote is scheduled for Oct. 12.

Both sets of ordinances deal with the proposed new zoning district for the 13-acre school board property that contains the former Valparaiso Elementary School and a portion of the school district closed in May, saying it didn’t have enough power.

The school district has not said what, if anything, it plans to do with the property. A South Florida lawmaker says it wants to revitalize the school as a charter school, notching with the school district’s new zoning category. The proposed new zoning call for a new category of Public Institution. Their recommendation came following a hearing several weeks ago. Gaetz also outlined some of his ideas for the Senate’s role in the state. “I think that we need to help our students to be more achievers in Florida, we have to begin to see in our opinion in our economic recovery. And a number of the Special Forces Group and the repurposed W.B. Wing, as well as the beginning of a recovery in our economy. Those are bringing an economic focus to our area.”

She said, “The overall quality of Florida economy continues to grow while the growth in the rest of the nation. There were no new businesses and like the growth in the rest of the nation. In the last year, the U.S. economy grew in the world, we have a lot of quality work force. We have had a lot of new level of influence in state government will affect Northwest Florida. We have had a lot of new level of influence in state government will affect Northwest Florida. Gaetz concluded by saying he had not replied by press time.

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Nic...
Eagles score 14-13 win in 4th-quarter comeback

Beacon correspondent
By Sarah Clauson

In their second game of the season, the Niceville High School Eagles traveled to Pace and pulled off a nail-biting comeback to continue their winning record. In the face of what looked to be a shutout, the Eagles rallied hard and gave a fourth-quarter fight that looked more like a playoff battle than an early season game. They overcame a 13-point deficit, turnovers, and an injured quarterback on the line, they prevailed.

Turnovers, and an injured quarterback, the Eagles struggled to find their rhythm. The defense held strong through the quarter, while the offense came through in the end. The defense held the field with the same strength they’d used all game long to force a punt, thanks in part to a quarterback sack by Steven Mayo on a 3rd and 9. With less than six minutes left in the game, the Eagles offense took the field and went to work. A critical completion to Tyree McCants put them on the 35-yard line. A fourth-down conversion and another key completion to McCants put the Eagles on the two-yard line, and after a handoff to Denzel Applewhite, they were in the end zone with 1:12 left in the game. The touchdown tied the game, and a kick by Alex Allen, in for Mitchell, gave the Eagles a 14-13 lead.

The impressive defense stopped once again and made certain the Patriots would not threaten the small lead. A quarterback sack and an interception by Sebastian Schulte solidified the win. Defensive Coordinator Rod Taylor was excited about the win, and his defense. “They were incredible tonight,” he said. “They played hard for 48 minutes. They gave us a chance to win and the offense came through in the end.”

Head Coach John Hicks also applauded the defense. As for having to call an Ashkon Hooker to replace Andrew Mitchell, “He did a great job. We had confidence in him.” Was the sophomore nervous about stepping into the game? “I was confident,” Hooker said. “I knew the line had my back.”

The Eagles hit the road again this Friday to face off against Pine Forest at 7:30.
What do you think about the start of football season?

Every year, school officials engage in negotiations with the teachers, who work under the State’s salary schedule and benefit package. The teachers union is seeking a new contract for the next school year that not only includes cost-of-living increases for teachers, but also a 2% step increase for all teachers.

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PAYING CASH FOR COINS
PRE-1970 & CURRENCY

We buy all Gold & Silver Jewelry

INVESTMENT GOLD
.999 FINE SILVER
PLATINUM
SCRAP GOLD

STERLING SILVER
SILVER
POCKET & WRIST WATCHES
COSTUME JEWELRY

MILITARY ITEMS & SWORDS
SPORTS MEMORABILIA
PRE 1934 PAPER CURRENCY
GUITARS

*This amount depends upon rarity, condition and what collectors are willing to pay.

WHO TREASURE HUNTERS ROADSHOW
WHAT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO SELL THEIR ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES
WHERE QUALITY INN BAYSIDE 322 MIRACLE STRIP PARKWAY FORT WALTON BEACH, FL 32548
WHEN SEPTEMBER 13TH - 17TH TUESDAY-FRIDAY 9AM–6PM SATURDAY 9AM–4PM
DIRECTIONS 850.275.0300 SHOW INFO 217.787.7767

The Bay Beacon Wednesday, September 14, 2011
Mid-Bay Rotary donates shelter

Jim Miller, Rotarian in District 6940 and ShelterBox volunteer, has gone above and beyond to support international disaster relief charity ShelterBox and its mission. The Mid-Bay Rotary Club of Niceville has sponsored a ShelterBox for each member of their club—a first-ever accomplishment for ShelterBox.

To his efforts, 49 ShelterBoxes, which included ten tents and other life-saving equipment, have been provided to families displaced by disasters worldwide. Miller has worked with ShelterBox USA over the past 14 years, placing by volunteers who deliver aid worldwide. In September 2008, Miller delivered aid to disaster survivors firsthand to disaster survivors of volcanic eruptions in the world.

“ShelterBox is an amazing story in and of itself. It’s been a pleasure to be a part of the growth—an incredible achievement in such a short amount of time,” said Miller.

“I enjoy being a Rotarian. I believe it’s one of the finest service organizations in the world with a simple motto, Service above self. That is why our Rotary Club has been a great supporter of ShelterBox throughout the years,” added Miller. “Mid-Bay Rotary Club is full of Rotarians—they are truly a special group of people.”

Lewis chorus council selected

The Lewis Falcon Chorus announced its newly elected chorus council for the 2011-12 school year. The council includes Blake Dean, president; Kinley Childress, vice president; McKenna Dean and Ash Hurlry, secretary; Tanner Dean, treasurer; Katelin Koontzghamer and Veronika Whildall, librarians; Mariska Bilo, Kelsey Howell, Miranda Hohman and Ken-Jacob Angel, media.

Rotarians give scholarships

The Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club presented recent high school graduates with scholarships. Carissa Hughey and her mother, Kris Hughey, were in attendance at the June 16 meeting of the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club to receive a scholarship check in the amount of $1,000. The Rotary Club recognized Carissa for her high school achievements and community service performed during her high school career. Carissa is furthering her education at the University of Central Florida. Carissa is the daughter of Lynn and Kris Hughey of Niceville.

The Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club presented $5,000 in scholarship checks to recent high school graduates in attendance at the June 16 meeting of the Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club to celebrate their lives together. Evelyn and Thornton Peck

Colonel (ret) and Mrs. Thornton C. Peck are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Peck and Evelyn were married in Dallas by Evelyn’s father Sept. 14, 1941. They have lived in this area since 1963, and Peck was the base commander of Eglin Air Force Base from 1969 to 1970. Currently, they live at Westwood Retirement Resort in Fort Walton Beach where friends and family came together recently to celebrate their lives together.

Ruckel honors first responders at pep rally

Ruckel Middle School held a Super Hero Pep Rally Thursday, Sept. 8, in honor of Okaloosa County first responders at Bay-FL. Principal Debra Collins Godley joined students, staff and parents in the tribute. The pep rally capped off a week of learning about the events of Sept. 11, 2001. The Ruckel Ram Cheerleaders posed with the first responders after honoring them with a token of their appreciation.

Anniversary

Evelyn and Thornton Peck

OCTOBER 14, 2011

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Our Town

Page 8-1

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

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Volunteers help ‘Save History’

Kleinman volunteers Ed Dunbar and Lynn Stephens helped set up for the Aug. 27 Yard Sale Spectacular at the Heritage Museum.

Niceville artist’s work on display at FWB Library

The artwork of Maria Armstrong will be on display in the Fort Walton Beach Library lobby through September. Armstrong, who lives in Bluewater Bay, is an artist painting the people, places, ideas, activities, emotions and feelings she has encountered in travels around the world. Armstrong paints the people, places, ideas, activities, emotions and feelings she has encountered in travels around the world. Armstrong graduated from Marshall University in West Virginia. She married, taught school and led a military family. Later Armstrong raised her children and traveling through different countries, she has lived in and traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe, and traveled to Asia, and South and Central America, all of which have influenced her art. Ave., her work comes from my life’s experiences, the things that live in my heart and are part of my soul. My goal is to capture ‘the feeling’ I get from my subjects, not merely to paint a photographic portrait of what I see,” Armstrong said.

Maria Armstrong’s works will be on display through September at the Fort Walton Beach Library. Pictured, “Whale’s Tale.”

Weekend events:

- **Garden club season opens**: The 2011-12 board members of the Valparaiso Garden Club include, from left, Darolyn Weiss, Ann Marie Burton, Susan James, Annabelle Jones, Jak Personal, Carlos Smith, Marcie Harrison, Beth Wilson, Marianne Con, not pictured, Marion Bushey. The club’s season will begin Sept. 14. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m., and the program at 9:30.
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**Barbershop chorus concert**

Barbershop singers from Northwest Florida, Alabama and Florida will perform at the Niceville High School auditorium on Thursday, Sept. 15, at 7 p.m. The chorus will be joined by members of the University of Florida’s Camerata, the NMS male chorus by Michael Wyck. Tickets are $10 and available at Bayou Books, Niceville, or at the door.

**Calendar**

**Niceville Community Center**

- **Monday, Sept. 12**: Film “Lost Airmen of Buchenwald” in the Library and you can visit the Buchenwald documentary in the lobby. Info: Lois Van Dam, vandaml@nwfsc.edu or 729-6009.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 13**: Book and bake sale. The Friends of the Niceville Library will hold a book sale at 600 Willard Drive. Registration is $2 and open to all.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 14**: The Niceville Library will have several great audio books on display. Of great screen time alternatives, and coloring sheets, guides and lists less” inspiration including specially included books in the audio and coloring sheets, guides and lists.
- **Thursday, Sept. 15**: Volunteers will be needed for the Mullet Festival Relay for Life 5K/1 mile Fun Run. The course will be at 10 a.m. Sept. 17 at the Mullet Festival. Info: nccf.us.

**Tea Party will hold its semimonthly meeting at the Castle Tower: A Samantha Mystery.” The book is “Clue in the Castle Tower: A Samantha Mystery.” Info: Libby Buckey, 729-5570.

**Panhandle Patriots meeting**

- **Tuesday, Sept. 13**: The Florida Panhandle Patriots will hold its semimonthly meeting at the Castle Tower: A Samantha Mystery.” The book is “Clue in the Castle Tower: A Samantha Mystery.” Info: Libby Buckey, 729-5570.

**Book and bake sale**

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**FAIR TAX Meet Up**

The Niceville Fair Tax Meet Up will be held 5 to 9 p.m. Sept. 17 at the Niceville City Council Chambers, 204 N. Partin Drive. The event will be open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Info: libraryfriends@niceville.org or 729-4980.

**Cub Scouts shooting day**

Cub Scouts will hold a shooting day Sept. 17 at the Mullet Festival. Info: 850-663-0130.

**Barbershop chorus concert**

For Barbershop singers from Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Pensacola, Panama City, Tallahassee and Mobile, Ala., will perform one a time. Info: Bobbie Smith, 850-892-9083.

**Niceville Stripped Parkway, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Speaker: Andrae Money will dis- cuss “The Second Amendment— How the right to bear arms keeps us free.” A donation of $5 is required for the meeting room. Beverages and snacks are available for purchase from the 3 1/2 LBC. Info: 865-5777 or sale@pudah- dycreators.com.

**Rotary club meeting**

Todd Gordon, head coach and general manager, and Willa Lucas, merchandising coordinator of the Panama City Ice Flyers will be at the noon Sept. 15 meeting of the Niceville-Volkswagen Rotary Club. Gordon and Lucas will share some of the exciting things the Panama City Ice Flyers will be doing up until the season opener Sept. 22. They will discuss games every Thursday at noon in Building K 4, Niceville State College. Info: accoradio@ymail.com.

**Science Friday seminar**

Dr. Thomas Kelley, director of the underwater crime scene investiga- tion program at Florida State University, Panama City, and co-ordinator of the criminal and inter- national justice degrees program, will be the Science Friday speaker at Northwest Florida Community College. Kelley will present “Underwater Crime Scene Investigation: Forensic Science and Technology.” Sept. 16 at 6:30 p.m. Info: 850-892-9083.

**Buy the Bayou event**

The Niceville Vocholrenocum Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society Northwest Florida Local will host the 12th annual Bayou Auction & Wine Tasting Fundraising Sept. 16. This event will include a silent and live auction, celebrity dessert auction, wine, beer, and plenty of networking.

**23rd annual Joe Walton Golf Classic**

This will be the 23rd annual Joe Walton Golf Classic. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. Info: Valerie Manley, 729-5570.

**Panhandle Patriots meeting**

The Florida Panhandle Patriots will take place at the DeFuniak Springs Town Center, 435 N. 46th St. Sept. 14, 7-9 p.m. Info: 850-663-0130.

**Village of Niceville Community Center**

- **Tuesday, Sept. 13**: Concert competition and plan for college or university gathered information, ask questions and plan for college or university.
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**Cubarborapony**

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A crowd of potential West Point students came to a U.S. Military Academy information session in Niceville. Maj. Tom Tolman, USMA ’01, gave a slide presentation about the school’s and its admissions process, and answered questions from participants. Beacon photo by Mike Griffith

By Mike Griffith

Catching a glimpse of how his son, Matthew, 18, will try to gain admission to the U.S. Military Academy, the parents of the new plebes are paid to go to school, traditionally earning half the pay of a second lieutenant, although many cadets earn more. Tolman said each year, about 20,000 applications are submitted to the academy. Of those, about 2,000 to 3,000 are selected to attend West Point. Tolman said each year, about 2,000 to 3,000 are selected to attend West Point. Tolman said each year, about 2,000 to 3,000 are selected to attend West Point. Tolman said each year, about 2,000 to 3,000 are selected to attend West Point.

Tolman also advised for prospective cadets. “The West Point experience involves the entire family,” he said. “My advice to parents would be to get involved with the West Point Parents Club of Northwest Florida to gain the perspectives and insights from parents who have visited the academy. The members of the West Point Society of Northwest Florida can also be a great source of information for the families of the new plebes (freshmen). Bottom line: They are not alone and many resources are at their disposal.”

Blaine Underwood, head of Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville, is the local admissions representative for the academy at Niceville. She is an Army Academy graduate of the academy and the academy combines a four-year university curriculum with constant military training, and is the most prestigious, and probably the most challenging, route to becoming an Army officer.

Tolman, USMA ’01, graduated from the academy in 2001. He gave the presentation and answered questions from cadets and their parents. He said potential cadets should begin the application process during their junior year of high school by writing to the academy and to their congressmen, their two senators, and to the president and vice president to request applications and instructional materials. Tolman said each member of Congress, as well as the president, vice president and the academy itself, has the authority to nominate students for possible admission each year.

An applicant who is not offered an appointment out of high school can apply each year up to the age of 22. Those who did not gain admission on their first try, can reapply in a civilian college with an Army ROTC program, and get in on their second attempt.

Leadership and personal qualities are important to West Point. They are interested in military leaders who are good people. They have the character, the physical abilities and the mental abilities to succeed. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country. They say that West Point is interested in choosing people who are driven by a desire to serve their country.

“Beast” is a term that comes up a lot. It refers to a grueling basic training course that is part of the West Point experience. The academy combines a four-year university curriculum with constant military training, and is the most prestigious, and probably the most challenging, route to becoming an Army officer.

The West Point Parents Club of Northwest Florida was established to provide a support network for parents of West Point students. The club hosts monthly meetings and organizes events such as surveys and socials. The club also provides resources and information to parents, such as a West Point news service and a West Point newsletter.

For more information, visit www.westpointparents.com. For more information, visit www.westpointparents.com. For more information, visit www.westpointparents.com. For more information, visit www.westpointparents.com. For more information, visit www.westpointparents.com.
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When Sen. Don Gaetz was designated as Florida’s next Senate president Monday the focus of the ceremony and many of the events will be from Northwest Florida.

Gaetz, a Niceville Republican, will be named as the 2012-14 Senate president at Florida’s Capitol Sept. 19. He will be the first Senate president from Okaloosa County since 1941, when Newman Brackin Sr. was chosen to lead the upper chamber.

The day will begin with a private Senate breakfast prayer at the old Senate chamber in Florida’s capitol Rotunda. The homily speaker at the prayer breakfast will be Shalimar Beach attorney Don Anchors, a longtime friend and counselor to the Gaetz family.

Shalimar High School’s nationally honored Opus One, under the direction of Michael Dye, will perform at the breakfast and will sing the national anthem.

"America the Beautiful," accompanied by Pensacola’s Prelude Brass, later in the day at the designation ceremony in the Senate Chamber.

Gaetz’s pastor, Rev. John Undrulh of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Niceville, will offer the invocation and benediction at the prayer breakfast and will oversee designation ceremony with prayer.

Shalimar resident Air Force Col. (ret.) Howard Hill, Vietnam War POW, will lead the Senate, governor cabinet and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance. Hill and Gaetz served together on the Okaloosa School Board for 10 years.

The national and state colors will be presented on the Senate floor by the Air Force Reserve Operations Color Guard from Hurlburt Field, which is one of five military bases in Gaetz’s district.

Nominating Gaetz for president will be senators John Thompson of Jacksonville and Joe Negron of Stuart.

According to a historic tradition, senators will vote by one call out Gaetz’s name to elect him due to last year, Gaetz will be joined on the Senate floor by his high school mentor, Adair Thompson, and Representative Matt Gaetz (R-Valparaiso). Seniors, Don and Matt Gaetz are the brother and son of Gaetz, senator-representative team to serve concurrently in the state’s history.