



COMMUNITY: This week's Veteran salute - "Bretz" Linger **page 3A**

Local schools lead way on FCAT

■ Gulf Breeze students post best results on 2008 Writing portion

BY JOE CULPEPPER
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Santa Rosa County high schools performed at or above the state average on the Spring 2008 FCAT Writing tests, and Gulf Breeze High, Gulf Breeze Middle and Oriole Beach Elementary had the highest scores on the county level.

For the fourth consecutive year, Santa Rosa high schools ranked 10th among the state's districts for cumulative totals in writing. The county posted a 321 mean scale score compared to a 302 statewide average.

"The success we have in Santa Rosa County is due to hard work of teachers and administrators really putting the pencil to paper, encouraging kids and motivating them to do their best," said Tim Wyrosdick, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

"We are so blessed here because we have great parents who complement that team as well. We're excited about the results. We saw a lot of positive growth that we would expect out of our students. We also saw some areas we can improve upon. But on the whole, what an outstanding job our students did on the writing tests.

"I hope it's a precursor of the reading, math and science results to come."

Gulf Breeze High sophomores registered the highest mean scale score of 334 - far above the state average. The number also is 38 points higher than the school's 2007 tally.

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Four-year-old Grant Overlade of Gulf Breeze shows off a striped bass he hooked Saturday during the Gulf Breeze Optimist Club Fishing Rodeo at South Shoreline Park. Overlade was just one of the kids who enjoyed the two-day rodeo under brilliant sunny skies. **Results, Page 4C**

David Standridge/Gulf Breeze News

Pill abuse gaining on marijuana

■ Insightful seminar sheds light on drug, alcohol trends among area youth

BY JOE CULPEPPER
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Prescription pills are second to marijuana in drug abuse by Gulf Breeze teens, and authorities see a significant rise in such usage during a particular time of year.

"Kids get the idea that drugs help them concentrate," Gulf Breeze Police Officer Mark Lyster said last week.

"We see a big spike in prescription pill abuse during and right after FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) testing. There's so much pressure on students, I guess, that use goes way up."

Lyster's revelation came during an informative May 15 community drug and alcohol awareness seminar at the Shoreline Park Recreation Center. Lyster, also Gulf Breeze High School's Resource Officer and a K-9 handler, spoke to a group of about 50 inquisitive parents and students about prevailing drug-use trends in Gulf Breeze.

Sponsors of the event were the Gulf Breeze Police Department and Pillars For Promise, a local non-profit, community improvement organization.

The purpose of the seminar was to empower parents with information to detect possible drug and alcohol abuse among their children and ways to prevent or deal with the problems. Similar seminars are planned for next school year.

"Prescription pill abuse is catching up with marijuana usage, and it eventually will become the No. 1 abuse," Lyster predicted. "There's a huge misconception that pills are safe."

"What have we been telling our children since



Joe Culpepper/
 Gulf Breeze News

GBHS Resource Officer Mark Lyster shows paraphernalia confiscated solely from Gulf Breeze residents.

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Island News **PAGE 1D**

- Traffic clogs highway
- Bubba's Beach

WEEKEND Weather

THURSDAY 5/22
 Isolated Storms
 high 86°
 low 72°

FRIDAY 5/23
 Scattered Storms
 high 82°
 low 70°

SATURDAY 5/24
 Isolated Storms
 high 83°
 low 69°

SUNDAY 5/25
 Isolated Storms
 high 84°
 low 68°

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"Mailing Statement is on Editorial Page"

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Sansom: '09 state budget also lean

BY PAM BRANNON
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State Rep. Ray Sansom says economic times will continue to be tough and warned that even more budget cutbacks in 2009 will affect every local taxing agency in the state from school boards to county and city governments to fire departments.

Sansom, a Republican from Fort Walton Beach, will be Speaker of the Florida House of

Representatives for the 2008-2010 legislative sessions. He assured members of the Navarre Area Board of Realtors (NABOR) last week that his roots grow deep in Northwest Florida, and he won't forget that during his term in the Speaker's chair.

Sansom was first elected to the state legislature by District 4 in 2002 and has been re-elected



Sansom

every two years since. "Florida was facing the worst economy in the history of the state," Sansom said, explaining why so many budget cuts were enacted during the last year.

"Florida's constitution says we cannot spend into a deficit, thank goodness. So we cannot ever get in the shape the federal government is in right now. That is why we had to reduce spending.

"Cutting the budget was not what bothered me. The reason we had to cut the budget is what

bothered me. The Florida economy was so strong in 2006 that we had \$4 billion in revenues come into the state coffers that were unexpected. That is how fast things can change."

Sansom said the state in recent years had approximately \$72 billion to work with in its annual budgets, but this year it suddenly had to be cut to \$66 billion.

"And you can expect more cuts coming for next year's budget. We should all prepare for

that," he warned.

When economists in Tallahassee took a close look at what happened, they pointed to two things: Tourism taking a nose dive, and the real-estate market falling to its lowest level in modern times.

"We were lacking visitors and investors, and businesses stopped locating here," Sansom said. "And there are several reasons we believe that happened. One reason more business is

•See SANSON, Page 2A ▶

Beef O'Brady's plans Gulf Breeze location

BY SCOTT PAGE
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The landscape of Gulf Breeze is continuously changing, and new eateries are a main feature on the menu.

Beef O'Brady's, a family sports pub, is set to join a growing list of new restaurants in the Gulf Breeze area and promises to bring a fun, family-oriented and affordable dining experience.

Terry Sanders, a Pensacola resident, purchased the franchise and has little doubt that he has chosen the

perfect restaurant and location.

"I'm a sports fan, but I didn't want to get into the bar business," Sanders said. "I wanted something with a family friendly atmosphere. Beef O'Brady's offered that."

"I did my research on locations and all indications pointed to Gulf Breeze, so I decided to buy the franchise there."

Although Beef O'Brady's is a national chain restaurant, it will operate more like a local establishment.

"This will be a family owned and operated restaurant," Sanders said. "Either me or my wife will always be there."

They are also committed to serving the community more than good food.

"They give a lot back locally, such as sponsoring little league," said Sanders. "That's something that I liked because I do it myself."

Beef O'Brady's will be located in the Gulf Breeze Shopping Center, but an opening date has not been officially determined.

"We are expected to open in August or September," said Sanders.

Two other restaurants, Acapulco Bar and Grill and Niki's Restaurant, are also slated to open in the area.

•See RESTAURANTS, Page 2A ▶

Rec committee eyes TPSA needs

Gulf Breeze News
 Members of the Tiger Point Sports Association frustrated by the county's lack of financial support might soon see some movement to improve the Midway facility.

The newly formed District 5

Recreational Advisory Committee recently heard recommendations from a TPSA representative, and chairman Jeff Helms says the 10-member group hopes to make suggestions to the county in July.

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