

Memories of a good friend

Joseph Eddy touched the lives of many in South Walton County

BY PASHA CARROLL
SUN REPORTER

"It's like the biggest void, that is the only way I can explain it," Amber Oglesby said.

That same spot in many people's lives has been empty since Joseph Reginald Howard Eddy died Dec. 16 in an auto accident.

From Seagrove to Blue Mountain Beach, from England to New Jersey, people went to Santa Rosa Beach Community Church just two days before Christmas to lay the vibrant 24-year-old to rest.

Oglesby, a close friend of Eddy's, remembered the morning he was killed.

"My mom called me and said, 'Your brother is trying to get a hold of you, something happened to Joseph.'

So I talked to my brother, he said, 'Eddy was in an accident. They airlifted him to Pensacola.'"

Eddy was driving to work on County Road 30A around 7:30 a.m. but only got about a mile away from his Blue Mountain Beach home. It was the same road his Ford F150 had traveled many times over the past two years.

"Before we even got there, we found out he passed away," Oglesby said.

According to a report filed by the Florida Highway Patrol, a flatbed truck was parked in the eastbound lane of 30A unloading construction material. Unable to stop, Eddy's truck plowed into the rear of the trailer.

"Everyone is looking to blame the flatbed truck driver because there were no cones up," Jeff Goodman, Eddy's former boss at Bruno's Pizza said. "It was 7:30, maybe he (Eddy) was playing with the radio and maybe



Courtesy Photo

Joseph Eddy, 24, was killed in an auto accident nine days before Christmas. He was well known in the South Walton Community and will be missed by many.

he was on his cell phone. Everyone around here just thinks it's a terrible accident," he said.

Family and friends gathered at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola only to be told it was too late.

"There were so many people there," Oglesby said.

Friends and co-workers in Walton County were

shocked when the news of Eddy's death raced through the South Walton community within hours of the accident.

"(Eddy was) that person you always go to, he was that person that had such great control on this life that you really want to know their feedback. You wanted to know, 'What do you think?'" William Orr, a close

friend of Eddy's said.

As a child, Eddy had a special quality that made people want to know him.

"I saw him walking by. He was wearing an Angus Young outfit, an Andy cap — you know, little short shorts, a white shirt — and he wore a tie. And he had a black Samsonite

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Development deadline nears for Boys & Girls Club

By DEBORAH WHEELER
SUN REPORTER

As the deadline for beginning development nears for the new Boys and Girls Club to be built in South Walton, it is no closer to being ready to begin construction.

Moving forward with the club has been stymied by opposition citing environmental and logistics concerns that has tied the project up in court.

However, construction must begin by Feb. 22 to be in compliance with the Development Order.

Bear Henley, executive director of the club, said talks and negotiations with the opposition are ongoing. While he is hopeful of a resolution, if one is not found by Feb. 22, some form of construction will begin, such as breaking ground or maybe installing some playground equipment.

The 22.3 acres of land donated for the facility rests on County Road 30A, and a stone's throw from the beach on the road's south side, just west of Butler Elementary School.

Henley said that while people have talked about other locations they believe to be better sites, Henley said nothing beats the club's current location. In addition, he said the club has not specifically been offered any other land. He said that while Chat Holley Road is far from Butler, it has some advantages, such as the nearby high school. The problem would be having funds to get children from Butler to there.

"The perfect place is where we are. We're sincerely working to make things work. We have clear title and permission to do what we need to do. We continue to negotiate and it's going pretty good. There are some productive

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briefcase that he claimed was bullet proof," Orr recalled about the first time he saw Eddy at Freeport Elementary when both were still boys.

"So that character right there made me go, 'Who is this guy? I want to know who he is,'" Orr said.

Even then, a big part of Eddy's character was his passion for videogames, Orr said.

"He had those little books that told you everything about the map of the games," he said.

"He was a little bit more homebody-ish," Oglesby said. "You go to work, go to school, do whatever you do, get home and play Dark Ages of Camelot. That is a big part of who he was, that game."

"You make yourself. I think that's what he liked

about those games, role playing games they call them, like Final Fantasy and Dark Ages of Camelot," Orr said. "He could pick up a video game fast."

The news of his death was posted on an online message board that Eddy often visited for Dark Ages of Camelot. One person who Eddy had played with online came all the way from New Jersey for the funeral, Oglesby said.

Along with a passion for video games and computers, Eddy loved skateboarding in his neighborhood. Orr and Eddy used a nearby tennis court as a makeshift skate park.

"We ended up skateboarding there and building ramps all in the place," Orr said. "We took it over. And it got so popular that people from Panama City Crown (Skateboard Shop) came over and built us an actual half pipe and kind

"I told my wife I would be perfectly happy if our two boys grew up to be just like Joseph."

Jeff Goodman
owner Bruno's Pizza

of scouted us out.

"They ended up sponsoring two people that were skating there, young kids. There were some young kids around the block that looked up to us and we'd teach them how to skate," Orr said.

Eddy's fascination with four wheels did not stop there. He also had a love for cars.

"He thinks that like, if it is fast, he is into it. If you can hook it up and do all those crazy things to it, that was the car for him,"

Oglesby said. "He had a Prelude, a BMW and an Eclipse, all those little fast race cars."

"I think he wanted to be a stunt driver at one point, Orr said. "He was just real gray on what he wanted to do. He watched things on TV and was like 'I want to be a stunt driver.' I think after he flipped the BMW, he decided maybe not.

"We both had Mitsubishi's. We were the Mitsubishi brothers," Orr said. "He loved that car, it was fast."

Eddy was also notorious around town for being a work horse. Although he was working at Seagrove Glass at the time of his death, he had previously worked at Bruno's Pizza for four years.

"I told someone I felt like he was still one of my employees," Jeff Goodman, the owner of Bruno's said. "Even after he worked here the first thing

he would do when he came in was look around and see if any tables needed to be bussed."

"He was the favorite, everybody knew that" Oglesby said.

"I told my wife I would be perfectly happy if our two boys grew up to be just like Joseph," Goodman said.

Goodman was used to seeing Eddy come in with a co-worker from Seagrove Glass twice a week. When Eddy's co-worker came in alone last week, it hit Goodman that he would never bus another table at Bruno's again.

"It was the first time it hit me because Joseph wasn't with him," Goodman said. "It's a lot of shock and disbelief, he was too young."

Adulthood led Eddy to pursue a higher education. Eddy attended Okaloosa Walton College but wasn't sure exactly what he wanted to do. Orr said that only a month before his death, Eddy had talked to him about a possible move to Orlando to go to school for computer animation.

According to Orr, Eddy's mother supported the decisions he made. Jackie and Wynn Parks, Eddy's mother and stepfather have lived in Blue Mountain Beach for about 14 years. Eddy was an only child and still lived with his parents at the time of his death.

"Jackie was behind him in whatever he wanted to do. She was a very good mother," Orr said.

"A lot of her (Jacqueline's) family came, which is amazing that they could make it so last minute. It's

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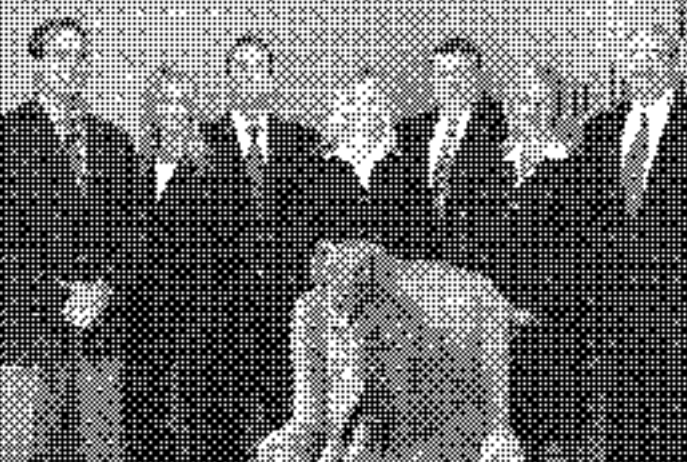
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News

Men who violated probation wanted

Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers will pay a cash reward to the anonymous caller who leads authorities



Gainer

to Tommy Lee Gainer or Martin Curtis Courtney. Gainer is wanted for violation of probation on the original charge s of manufacturing, possession, and selling a controlled substance. He is a black male, with black hair and brown eyes. Gainer is 43 years old, six feet tall and 213 pounds. His last known address was in Fort Walton Beach.

Courtney is wanted for violation of probation on the original charge of second-degree arson and possession of a controlled substance. He is a white male, with blonde hair and green eyes. Courtney is 21 years old, six feet one inch tall

and 160 pounds. His last known address was in Crestview.



Courtney

Anybody with information about Gainer or Courtney can contact Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers at (850) 863-TIPS (863-8477) or toll-free at (888) 654-TIPS. Callers may remain anonymous while still receiving cash rewards. Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards up to \$1,000 for information that solves crimes, leads to the apprehension of wanted fugitives, or results in the recovery of stolen property or illegal narcotics. No taxpayer dollars are used in the reward fund. Donations can be mailed to Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers, Inc. at P.O. Box 2335, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32549.

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not like they were coming from another state — they came from another country," Oglesby said about family from England who attended the funeral.

"I hope it sinks in to everybody that it is important to spend time with family and it is important to spend time with people you care about," Oglesby said. "You never know what is going to happen tomorrow."

"I am just happy he was in my life at all," Oglesby said.

"A lot of us will be closer together, and realize what we had and think about what is important because when something like this happens, it is nice to have someone that close to you," Orr said. "I think it brings us closer, which I think was a good thing because if it's not your family that gets you through things, it's going to be your friends."

"I hope that something good can come out of it," Oglesby said.

Deadlines

Continued from Page A1

points in negotiation. But we're willing to consider any and all options that would benefit the kids," he said.

Henley's office is currently located at the Fort Walton Boys and Girls Club, which has 8,000 square feet.

The South Walton facility will have 65,000 - 68,000-square-foot and was heralded to be the largest in the United States when plans were drawn. It was initially expected to have a minimum of 400 kids a day and possibly as many as 1,200. The club will employ a staff of 14.

There are more than 3,000 Boys and Girls Clubs nationwide. The mission of the Boys and Girls Club is to help kids of all backgrounds, including the dis-

advantaged, to develop qualities to become leaders. The club will offer after-school tutoring and a variety of after-school programs such as the Toastmasters program. It is also anticipated it will become a 24-hours-a-day facility, with drop-off service available.

South Walton's club will be one of the few in the country with a senior facility and offer programs for seniors. Henley hopes the seniors will get involved with the kids and establish a mentoring process.

Plans call for a 25-meter pool, a cardiovascular lifting area, men's and women's lockers, running track, racquetball court, gymnasium, game area, offices, two activity rooms, a multipurpose room, two soccer fields, two baseball courts, a baseball field and a Little League field. There is also

space allocated for a future second gymnasium, leisure pool and day care facility.

The 24 acres the club will be built on and the \$8 million needed to build it were donated by the Pennington Foundation.

Groundbreaking was initially expected to begin at the first of 2002 with construction beginning immediately after, with completion in 18 to 24 months.

The club's operating budget will be funded through club membership fees with leasing out a portion of the building for commercial use a possibility.

Henley is in his 10th year as executive director. He played football at the University of Alabama from 1973 to 1975 for Bear Bryant as a walk-on defensive end, and earned a degree in advertising and public relations.

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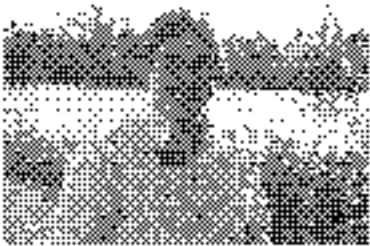
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