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Postal Customer Local

Keeping Military Families Together During Times of Medical Need

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

Publisher's Note: Our area is blessed with several military installations, serving thousands of military personnel and possessing a significant deployment commitment. Consequently, our family and friends in the military are continuously placed in harm's way. Fortunately, we have Fisher House, which provides a home away from home with no fee, where our military and their families from throughout the U.S. receive caring, unconditional support.

Fisher House of the Emerald Coast is a tangible "thank you" for those who have served in the military. Located on Eglin Air Force Base, across the street from the hospital and VA Clinic, this nearly 11,000 square foot five-star facility includes 12 private suites, a large common kitchen and areas where guests can rest and renew. Any time a military member or family member is being treated at any local medical facility, they are eligible to use the Fisher House.



The idea of Fisher House first started in the 1970s when Pauline Trost, the wife of Admiral Trost, saw an injured combat veteran return home and wondered where the family would stay during this time of crisis. She knew high-priced hotels would only add a financial burden to an

already difficult time. This thought never left her and it led to a critical partnership. Pauline brought the need for housing to her husband, and he reached out to Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher who were builders, philanthropists and patriots. They caught the vision immediately and went

to work. Since then, the Fishers have donated more than \$20 million in the building of homes that receive families of hospitalized military personnel, free of charge. Today, the number of homes has grown

FISHER HOUSE
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From the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office:
Spring Break



Spring Break seems to bring a wide-ranging combination of emotions to residents of Okaloosa County. However, there's no getting

SPRING BREAK
continued on page 2



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 Community
FISHER HOUSE*continued from page 1*

to 92 throughout the U.S. Fisher House of the Emerald Coast, our area's own, was built in 2010 and was number 48.

In 2019, Fisher House of the Emerald Coast hosted more than 1,100 guests and provided 2,900 bed nights, saving military families over \$290,000 in lodging.

It is the goal of Mia Hughes, our local Fisher House's Executive Director, for Fisher House of the Emerald Coast to be a home away from home when our military members need it the most. "If it's the birth of a baby and grandma doesn't live here but wants to come, she can stay at Fisher House. We've also had babies that were delivered, but mom got ill and couldn't be around the baby," Mia says. "They've stayed at our house so they could be close. On the other end of the spectrum, we've also had guests who were dealing with end-of-life situations



and were in their last stages. During the pandemic, however, because it's a military installation, they restricted some of the access. Life-ending scenarios were given higher priority."

"Many of our guests will only stay a few days, but our record is 13 months," Mia continued. "One family had a member going through oncology treatments and they were able to stay here. Before that, a guest of 11 months was blinded during the battle in Afghanistan, and he used our home for therapy. Fisher House was built to help lighten their load."

Fisher House of the Emer-



ald Coast serves every branch of the military from Pensacola to Panama City. So, guests will not be more than an hour from the therapies and services they require.

Fundraising efforts are continual; monies raised provide much needed funding to the house to support the operation and the maintenance of the home, and to provide the families with any necessary items needed during their stay. Are you interested in partnering with Fisher House? Mark your calendar to attend the Fisher House gala on October 27th with guest speaker Joey Jones,

Fox News Contributor and former marine who lost both his legs in combat.

There are additional unique ways you can help as well. "We've had corporate teams come for one week in the spring and fall to help clean the house," says Mia. "They do it for team building and we're always so grateful for the extra help. It's their way of giving back."

"We also have a young guy who lives in Birmingham, and his mom, who was a volunteer, passed away in 2016. On the anniversary of her passing, he comes to the Fisher House and makes her recipe for Cornish

Hens for those there at the time. It's his memorial tribute to his mom and he does it every year he can," she says.

Fisher House accepts meal donations, enough for eight to 12 people, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Because Covid protocols are still in place, the food needs to come from local restaurants. Although the fridge is always fully stocked, these needed donations bridge the gap. If guests have specific dietary needs or desires, the staff does their best to accommodate them as well to make the stay easier. As Mia says, "We love making people happy and want this to feel like home."

If you'd like to learn more, go to fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org or you can reach Mia Hughes directly at Director@fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org or 850-259-4956.

SPRING BREAK*continued from page 1*

past the fact that our beaches continue to be a major Spring Break hot spot for college and high school students, families and locals. The influx brings an economic boost to local businesses, but also the stereotypical crowded beaches and roadways.

The primary goal of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) during the time span that runs February 26th through April 24th this year is simple – keep people safe. "To a large extent, that involves putting the brakes on underage drinking, which often leads to binge drinking and all the related safety issues that can follow," said Sheriff Eric Aden. "As always, we have a zero-tolerance policy for underage possession of alcohol."

Last year over a 51-day peri-

od, the OCSO made 700 Spring Break arrests, the vast majority for underage possession of alcohol. 518 of those arrests were in Destin and 182 took place on Okaloosa Island. Members of the OCSO Beach Unit initiated 422 of the 700 total arrests. In addition, 125 of those arrests involved juveniles.

If caught with alcohol, juveniles ages 17 and under are issued a notice to appear and released to an adult.

Individuals 18, 19 or 20 years of age in possession of an alcoholic beverage are arrested and given a notice to appear before a judge.

Our public safety efforts are part of a partnership with the Tourist Development Council, the City of Destin and other first responder partners to include Fire, EMS, Florida Fish and Wildlife and the Florida Highway Patrol.



Property owners and managers also play a big role. We recommend they take preventative safety measures as well. Good strategies are to have your security disperse larger groups loitering on your property before the situation gets out of hand, monitor for law violations and report those promptly, evict guests who won't comply with the rules and, of course, contact us with any questions.

The OCSO will have extra beach patrols alongside an en-

hanced number of deputies on the roads. In addition, many area hotels and condos hire off-duty deputies for added Spring Break security.

"As we've said in the past, the vast majority of our visitors come down, have a wonderful time, and cause no problems. They get to leave here with great memories," said Sheriff Aden. "For that small percentage, however, who don't follow the rules and act responsibly, there will be consequences."

In the meantime, whether they love it or just tolerate it, most locals know what to expect during the Spring Break season.

"Stay vigilant on the roadways and exercise patience. Our deputies will be out there doing our best to keep the peace and keep everybody safe, because ultimately that's our biggest concern."



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Amvets Set Ride To Fight Autism

BY KENNETH BOOKS

There is no cure for Autism Spectrum Disorder. And the expenses for families with a member who has autism are steep. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that, in addition to medical costs, intensive behavioral interventions for children with autism cost \$40,000 to \$60,000 per child per year.

Amvets Post 78 of Valparaiso is there to help.

On April 2, the veteran's organization will sponsor the third annual Amvets 4 Autism All Wheels Poker Run, to benefit the Autism Spectrum on the Emerald Coast.

This is the third such event the Amvets have held, according to Geno Teichert, a member of the board of trustees. And its growth has been phenomenal.

"Last year, we had at least 75 entrants," Teichert said. "We

have a bunch. A lot of people go to the stops and don't make it back to the post."

The poker run will feature five stops. Leaving at 10:30 a.m. from the Amvets post, riders will stop at Nick's Seafood in Freeport, Amvets Post 178 in DeFuniak Springs, Amvets Post 35 in Crestview and return to the local post about 3:30 p.m., where they'll receive a meal and enjoy live entertainment. The cost is \$25 per rider and \$15 per passenger. The first 100 registrants receive a free T-shirt. Registration kicks off at 9 a.m. and coffee and donuts will be available.

"It's over by 5 or 6, Teichert said. "It's a long day, but we do it for the kids. We just want a bunch of riders. The more the better, the more money it makes."

The first year of the event garnered about \$4,000. Last

year, it brought in about \$9,000.

Numerous valuable door prizes will be awarded, such as a \$500 gift certificate for Jamie's Gun Shop. "We're getting sponsors," Teichert said. "A lot of grocery stores give us gift certificates."

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior.

People with autism might repeat certain behaviors and might not want change in their daily activities. Many people with ASD also have different ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to things. Signs of ASD begin during early childhood and typically last throughout a person's life.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) esti-



mates that one in 68 children in the U.S. have autism. The prevalence is 1 in 42 for boys and 1 in 189 for girls. These rates yield

a gender ratio of about five boys for every girl.

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- Cd Stereo - \$85
- Forman Grill - Onn - \$59
- Mr. Coffee Maker - \$29
- Toaster - Blk/Decker - \$22

Prizes Awarded: 04/03/22
Contest Ends: 04/03/22
Contest Starts: 02/10/22

Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! MARCH 2022

Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach

Destin Men's Club Meeting | 11:30am | American Legion
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios

St Paddys Day Delight | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk

Hydroflight Mondays | 6:30pm & 8:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Boomin' Tuesdays | 6:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Youth Climbing Club A | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Hydroflight Mondays | 6:30pm & 8:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin



Mac & Cheese Fest

Mac & Cheese Festival | 12pm | Destin Commons
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Youth Climbing Club A | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
Youth Climbing Club B | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf
Cocktail Making Class | 6pm | GraytRoom
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin

Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Women's Climbing Circle | 9am | Rock Out Climbing
Buggin' Out | 12pm-4pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
Drag Brunch | 10:30am | Enlightened Studios
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Youth Climbing Club A | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
FPRA Luncheon for PR Pros | 11:30am | The Grove 30a
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
Chamber's Tourism & Hospitality Lunch | 11:30am | Brotulas
Youth Climbing Club B | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Open Gallery for Real Estate Agents | 3pm | jLeon Gallery
Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | Harborwalk Village
St Paddys Day Pub Crawl | 5pm | Downtown FWB

Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Holi Festival of Colors | 12pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Event Space
St Paddys Family Party | 2pm | Harborwalk Village
Soiree On The Bay VIP Event | 1:30pm-3pm | 38 West Hodge Road
Soiree On The Bay Main Event | 3:30pm-7pm | 38 West Hodge Road
Rock the Docks | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin

Hydroflight Mondays | 6:30pm & 8:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
Youth Climbing Club B | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | Harborwalk Village
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Magical Thursdays | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Rock the Docks | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9:30pm | Enlightened Studios
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
Artisan Farmers Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
Sunday Cinema | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf



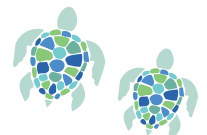
Boomin' Tuesdays @ Baytowne

Boomin' Tuesdays | 6:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
Youth Climbing Club B | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | Harborwalk Village
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Magical Thursdays | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin



Beach Church Service

Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
4th Annual International Festival | 10am | FWB Landing Park
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
Sunday Cinema | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Youth Climbing Club A | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing



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It's Almost Time for Gala & Golf Weekend 2022!

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC) is hosting its annual Gala & Golf Weekend presented by Jim & Tammy Pierce, March 12-13. The Gala features a cocktail hour starting at 5 p.m., with dinner served at 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 12, at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa. Guests, in coastal chic attire, will enjoy dinner and live entertainment by popular local musicians, The Will Thompson



Band, as well as live and silent auctions. The Gala is an energetic, yet important ECCAC fundraiser to benefit children by providing services at no cost to help identify, treat and support

child victims in abusive situations.

The Golf Tournament, also to benefit ECCAC, will take place on Sunday, March 13, at Kelly Plantation Golf Club with registration and a cook-out style meal from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. for a tournament shotgun start at 12 p.m. Tournament cost is \$400, which includes two tickets to the Gala. Gala tickets only are \$250 per couple. Please make reservations on-line at

<https://cbo.io/eccac/tickets>. 833-9237, Ext. 283, or email Sponsorships are still available. her at Mary@eccac.org. Contact Mary Fomby at 850-

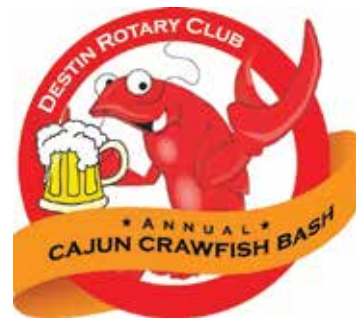
10th Annual Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash

If giving to those in our community is important to you, then you don't want to miss the opportunity to SPONSOR the Rotary Club of Destin's 10th Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash!

The Rotary Club of Destin is pleased to announce the Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash Charity Fundraiser will return this year to The Towne Centre at Seascape with co-host, Mezcal Mexican Grill on Friday, May 6 from 5:30 until 9 p.m. Event proceeds benefit young families in need through Food For Thought, Harvest House, Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast, Food For Thought, Harvest House and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation. A portion will also benefit the Destin Rotary Scholarship Fund.

The Rotary Club of Destin is known for serving up the best Cajun crawfish, libations and live music. Back by popular demand is Fais Do-Do Band performing their unique genre of zydeco music. Integrating a blend of R&B, soul, brass band, reggae, hip hop, ska, rock and Afro-Caribbean, attendees are guaranteed to be dancing! They can also enter an incredible raffle drawing and/or participate in a silent auction for themed packages from beach activities, bourbon baskets, concert tickets, golfing, restaurants, a grilling package including a Kamado Joe grill, and vacation stays — all to help fund the growing needs of the club's charitable causes and making a difference in our community.

Suitable for families of all ages and open to the public,



Destin Rotary volunteers will dish up fresh crawfish from Louisiana with the traditional potatoes, sausage and corn on the cob. For kids and those who don't crave crawfish, there will also be grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken available. A Kid's Zone will be onsite with activities for children.

Tickets are now on sale for \$35 per person for a large flat of crawfish and fixings, \$50 for All-You-Can-Eat crawfish and fixings, and \$15 for children or a non-crawfish meal (grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and rotisserie chicken); kids age three and under are free. Day of event, tickets are \$35 per person. For reserved seating, VIP tables for 8 people (including 8 regular crawfish tickets) are available for \$500. The VIP Table option also includes 10 regular crawfish meal tickets (which can be upgraded to AYCE for an additional charge).

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://bit.ly/destin-crawfish>. Or purchase printed tickets from any Destin Rotarian, including Destin Life publisher Lori Smith. Email Publisher@MyDestinLife.com.

To become a sponsor, email Marciahull13@gmail.com for ways your business can transform local lives!

The Towne Centre at Seascape is located at 80 Seascape Drive, Miramar Beach (one mile west of Silver Sands Premium Outlets).

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Community

In Memory of 'Chappie': 1st U.S. Black 4-Star General

By KATIE LANGE, DOD NEWS

There are numerous Black American service members who broke barriers and could be highlighted during Black History Month. On Feb. 11 however, it is the 101st birthday of Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr., the first Black man to become a four-star general in any U.S. military branch.

James died shortly after he left service in 1978, but his accomplishments are worth celebration. As an African American Airman who served in three wars, James overcame extreme poverty, racism and segregation — including in the military — to become a skilled tactician in

combat and a steady-handed leader whose speeches on patriotism and the American way were highly regarded.

Humble beginnings

James was born Feb. 11, 1920, in Pensacola, Florida, and was the youngest of 17 children. His dad was a laborer at a gas company and his mother was a teacher.

When James was young, his mother decided she would teach her own children because she wasn't impressed with the quality of education at the local segregated public school, according to an Air Force Magazine article. She started her own school,

which gradually attracted other neighborhood kids. She ran the school for 52 years until she died at the age of 82.

One of the most memorable things she taught her pupils was to never quit. Clearly, her youngest son took that to heart.

From dreams to reality

As a Black child in the segregated South, James wasn't sure what type of job he would one day be able to get, but he grew up watching the takeoffs and landings at nearby Pensacola Naval Air Station, Florida, which gave him the dream of being a pilot.

Chappie, as they called him



Chappie James became the first African-American general in the U.S. Air Force and was later the first African-American four-star general in any American military service branch.

awarded him the degree based on the credit hours he'd earned during his military career.

James met his wife, Dorothy Watkins, while they were both enrolled at Tuskegee. They married on the campus in November 1942 and had a daughter and two sons. The oldest of the two sons, Daniel James III, went on to have his own illustrious Air Force career.

James stayed at Tuskegee as a civilian instructor pilot for the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program until January 1943, when he joined the program himself.

He was commissioned into the Army Air Corps the following July. He was never sent overseas to fight in World War II after he completed his fighter pilot combat training. Instead, he spent the next several years training cadets in the U.S.

Combat capable

When the Air Force began implementing its desegregation plan in 1949, James was finally sent overseas. He was assigned to the 18th Fighter Wing's 12th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, an integrated unit in the Philippines. James later told his son that very few white service members initially talked to him, but he persisted anyway.

James was sent to Korea in July 1950 as part of the Korean War and completed 101 combat missions during his deployment. A year later, he was back in the U.S. and working his way up the ranks, including a stint at the Pentagon.

By the time the Vietnam War began, he was a colonel. In June 1967, James deployed to Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, where he was named vice commander of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. The unit was under the command of then-Col. Robin Olds, who James knew from working at the Pentagon.

James flew 78 combat missions into North Vietnam and helped Olds plan and lead the famed Operation Bolo in January 1967.

In what's often considered the greatest air battle of the war, U.S. fighters destroyed seven enemy MiG-21 aircraft during Operation Bolo, which was the

— a nickname that was his brother Charles' until Charles passed it down to James — graduated high school in 1937. At 6 feet, 4 inches tall and 250 pounds, the athletic teen earned himself a football scholarship to the famed Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

James was expelled from his academic studies at Tuskegee during his senior year for going on too many "escapades" that were frowned upon by the institution, said Howard E. Halvorsen, Air Force historian. However, he was still able to attend the Civilian Pilot Training Program offered through Tuskegee. It was one of the first training opportunities offered to minorities.

He graduated from the program in March 1942 with his civilian pilot certification. He eventually earned a bachelor's degree from Tuskegee too, Halvorsen said, but he didn't get that until 1969 when the school

Continued on page 14

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Celebrating 35 Years! The Sandestin Wine Festival Continues Its Success in 2022!

Thursday, April 7th - Sunday, April 10th | Friday 5-8 p.m. and Saturday 1-4 p.m. | The Village of Baytowne Wharf



Grab your friends and get ready to uncork some wine and fun in the sun in April at The Sandestin Wine Festival! Celebrating its 35th anniversary, the Sandestin Wine Festival is one of the most established and continuously running coastal wine festivals in the region as evidenced by its continued success; thousands know there's no substitute for this coveted four-day event that takes place in the charming setting of The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin.



Regarded as one of the top wine festivals in the country, voted "Best Event" by Visit South Walton and known as the "Kentucky Derby of Wine Festivals," the festival offers wine aficionados a wide range of experiences!

to perfection—just like a fine wine—with one-of-a-kind seminars, wine dinners, grand wine tastings and popular culinary experiences. Benefitting the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Sandestin Foundation for Kids, purchase your tickets at sandestinwinefestival.com.



The main events, the Grand Wine Tastings, Friday, April 8, 5-8 p.m., and Saturday, April 9, 1-4 p.m., showcase more than 500 domestic and international wines throughout the weekend. You'll enjoy the opportunity to talk to vineyard owners and wine makers about their favorite appellations in all varieties, styles and price ranges, and perhaps try something new. Treat yourself, family and friends to a gourmet experience courtesy of some of the best chefs on the Emerald Coast from your favorite local restaurants who pair delectable bite-sized appetizers with their current glass selections—the Savor South Walton experience! A new festival favorite, the Bubbly & Boozy tent, returns to the Grand Sandestin Lawn, featuring bubbles and specialty liquors. Local and regional music also set the vibe for fun days of discovery.

Spring has Sprung in Baytowne Wharf!

March Wednesday Night Concert Series-Tribute Series
Wednesdays, March 9-30, 7-9 p.m.

Sit back and relax as you take in the cool crisp air and enjoy live entertainment. This concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Concerts begin at 7 p.m. on the Events Plaza Stage each Wednesday!
March 9: Forrest Williams Band
March 16: Dion Jones and The Neon Tears
March 23: Casey Kearney
March 30: Six Piece Suits
 All concerts are FREE to attend.

Bubbly Baytowne
Thursday, March 10, 5-7 p.m.

Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf for an evening

full of FREE champagne and shopping during its Bubbly Baytowne. Sip and Shop through the village streets! Stop in various retail merchants as you enjoy a selection of premium champagnes.

* This event is free and for 21 and up only. The village will be open to the public during this event.

St. Paddy's Day Delight Paint the Village Green!
Thursday, March 17th, 6-9 p.m.

Celebrate the Luck of the Irish at The Village of Baytowne Wharf on Wednesday, March 17th from 6-9 p.m. featuring Carpenter Academy of Irish Dance and Live Music from Shenanigans!

Sunday Cinema
Sundays, March 20 - April 3, 7:15 p.m.

Grab a lawn chair or blanket and cozy up on the Events Plaza Lawn for a featured film.



March 20: The Croods: A New Age

March 27: Wonder

April 3: Trolls: World Tour

Monday Hydroflight Shows
Mondays, March 21 - April 4th, 6:30 & 8:30 p.m.

Enjoy shows from fly-board extraordinaire Ben Merrell over the lagoon! Watch as he soars to the sky and makes waves at Baytowne Wharf.

Boomin' Tuesdays
Tuesdays, March 22 - April 5 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Enjoy singing and dancing

with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Then watch as we light up the night sky with a breath-taking fireworks show over the Lagoon at 8:30 p.m.

Magical Thursday
Thursdays, March 24 - March 30, 7-9pm

Watch as featured pirate Captain Davy takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage!

All March Baytowne Wharf events are FREE to attend. Don't miss the fun!

 Community

Trends & Treasures



Winter is almost a memory. The signs of spring are all around! And we found some fabulous finds from City Market merchants where spring is putting on a show with the latest colors, styles, trends, flavors and fun!

Spring Beautiful! Spring Feel! Pure & Couture Salon

Want to brighten up for spring? Let Pure & Couture pamper YOU! When you're in the chair, you're the priority. From being greeted with a beverage to a scalp massage during your shampoo, Pure & Couture will try to make your experience the best. When you walk out of a salon, your hair says it all! Sashaying out with a blonde sparkle, brunette curls, or a gorgeous blonde blend + extensions will give you gorgeous texture for the outdoor spring weather! Warm up the color for warmer weather! Like magic, Pure & Couture's hand-tied hair extensions are a game changer for anyone, adding thickness and volume—a BIG answer for hair struggles! Add styling, makeup, color, a pampering facial, kinesiology or even a therapeutic massage and you will adore your mighty spring makeover—you are spring beautiful with a spring vibe! Pure and Couture Salon's team of stylists listen to what YOU want your hair to look and feel like and work with your skin tone, face shape, lifestyle and budget. Then show you how to maintain it with the best products. You were made to do beautiful things! Feel beautiful doing them this spring! Offering curbside pick-ups and online ordering, too!

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Cupcakes Call for Color! Sweet!

Smallcakes Destin

USA TODAY listed Smallcakes as one of the "Top Ten Cupcake Places to Try" in the country! And we're just lucky to have our very own right here in Destin! Smallcakes at City Market Beachside not only creates award-winning cupcakes that wow judges and find their way to celebrities, it's like spring cupcake heaven on earth with flavorful frostings and a variety of new cupcake flavors for March! Many will take you to memories of childhood such as the Orange Creamsicle—a reminder of the pastel ice cream truck with its music tinkering, rolling through the neighborhood and all the kids running to get money to buy the Dreamsicle! Or what about the Lucky Charms – Vanilla bean cake stuffed with mallo cream, marshmallow buttercream rolled in Lucky Charms cereal with a mallo cream drizzle! And if we're lucky, the Marble Cheesecake will be back this month. Or fit your flavor fancy, and request a custom order for, well, just about any creation you can think of! Then personalize with custom edible logos and images on gourmet cupcakes, custom cakes, mini cupcakes, birthday cakes, wedding cakes and tempting treats baked fresh with up to 18 signature flavors daily. There's even cupcakes in a jar and gluten-free options!

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sage from CRYO850 might offer just the relief you need to feel like you have your life back, healing both body and mind. Try the other impressive line-up of drug-free, self-care services, too—traditional therapeutic methods offered through advanced technology, including Cryo-Therapy in the Igloo—where you can recover smarter, recover faster and help alleviate pain. While cryotherapy is at the heart of the center, you'll find a long list of drug-free services beyond the cold. Take advantage of The Wellness Circuit—access to six therapies including: Infrared Sauna, Red Light Therapy, Whole Body Cryotherapy, Localized Spot Treatment Cryo, Vibration Plates and Compression Therapy. Membership offers access to the Circuit on a consistent basis. Visitors and first-time guests can enjoy the same services via a day, week or two-week pass. Beyond the Circuit, Pagani Muscle Recovery Therapy is a favorite for sore and strained muscles. Alternating hot and cold application creates the same healing as hours with heat and cold packs. For additional pain management and relief, the all-new Cocoon Fitness POD takes recovery to a higher level with combined heat, light and full body vibration. Pre-register online at www.cryo850.com.

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For centuries, savvy Southerners have been sporting their letters on everything from jewelry, clothing, cars and exquisite fine stationery to establish a form of identity. Ever wonder why monograms are so popular with



celebrities, stylists and your BFF?

People want them for family traditions, new names upon marriage, new babies, new homes with the family's personal home insignia or a beach house name. People love to feel connected to their ancestors and history. For many, monograms are a popular way to pass on their heritage, especially on pieces of jewelry. These personalized items become treasured heirlooms to pass down from generation to generation. The monogram trend isn't new, especially in the South. Rulers as far back as the early Greek and Roman history would put their seal on currency to help identify from whence it came. In the Middle Ages, artists took the idea and applied monograms to their work as signatures. Even later, the Victorians also made monogramming their own to show off their wealth and status by wearing precious jewelry and expensive embroidery with their initials. Now's the time to start your collection!

Shop now at FrillSeekersGifts.com or stop by the motherland of all things monogrammed!

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Once in A Lifetime Opportunity To Sell Your Home Be On The Coast™ Real Estate Group

"When selling anything, you hope for strong demand for the item, coupled with a limited supply. That will maximize your leverage as you negotiate the sale. Home sellers are in that exact position right now," according to Brian K. LoCicero REALTOR® with the Be On The Coast Real Estate team at Keller Williams. If you're thinking about selling your house in 2022, you truly



have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity at your fingertips. Here's why.

Strong Demand. According to the latest Existing Home Sales Report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 6.18 million homes were sold in 2021, the largest number of home sales in 15 years. Demand isn't expected to weaken this year, either. The Mortgage Finance Forecast, published by the Mortgage Bankers' Association (MBA), calls for existing-home sales to reach 6.4 million homes this year.

Supply Is Very Limited. The same sales report from NAR also reveals inventory just hit the lowest of the century. "Total housing inventory at the end of December amounted to 910,000 units, down 18% from November and down 14.2% from one year ago (1.06 million). Unsold inventory sits at a 1.8-month supply at the present sales pace, down from 2.1 months in November and from 1.9 months in December 2020."

Right now, savvy homeowners have maximum leverage—there may never be a better time to sell than right now. You need flexible negotiators that make very competitive offers. Tips in your favor when your house goes on the market: Competitive sales price; Flexible closing date; Potential for a leaseback to allow you more time to find a home; Minimal offer contingencies.

Now is the optimal time to list your home or condo. Contact Brian K. LoCicero, REALTOR® for a free analysis of your home and what price your property could bring in today's competitive market: (850) 739-3800 or visit BeOnTheCoastRealEstate.com.



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 Community

From the City of Destin



BY CATHERINE CARD, PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGER

Online Survey Launches for Joe's Bayou Recreation Area Improvements Project

In partnership with the city of Destin, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is implementing Trustee for this Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) restoration project resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. DEP selected Taylor Engineering Inc., DAG Architects Inc. and Half

Associates Inc. to engage the community and conduct project planning, permitting, design, bidding, and construction administration. The improvement project at the Joe's Bayou Recreation Area and Mattie Kelly Park and Nature Walk will provide and enhance public recreational opportunities and improve access to water resources. Public input and participation will provide planners with crucial insight on how to better

serve the community. Members of the public are encouraged to provide input through the at www.joesbayoudestin.com or scan the QR Code below, which began Tuesday, March 1 and ends March 30. For more information, please contact Gulf Coast Public Affairs Manager Rachel Schmalfuss at Rachel.Schmalfuss@FloridaDEP.gov.



ers, and visitors. There was also an interactive presentation that gauged the attendee's knowledge of the efforts and garnered input and insight on what matters the most to them. If you missed the meeting and would like to provide your input please take the survey at <https://www.menti.com/8t38uajhmo> or scan the QR code. Staff is seeking the greatest amount of input from the community and stakeholders to help guide the various efforts based on the community's priorities, vision, and goals. The survey will be available to the public until Thursday, March 31st.

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City of Destin Hosts Community Engagement Public Meeting

The City of Destin staff hosted a public meeting to engage and inform the community and stakeholders of the various planning efforts the Community Development Department is currently working on to include:

- The Land Development Code
- Harbor Capacity Study
- Mobility Plan
- Impact Fee Update
- Comprehensive Plan Updates

The meeting took place on Wednesday, February 23rd, at the City Hall Annex located at 4100 Indian Bayou Trail. The meeting was open to Destin residents, business owners, employees, property owners, community partners, service provid-

City of Destin to Host "Spring into Fun" Spring Break Camp

The Destin Community Center will offer a "Spring into Fun" Camp during Spring Break from Monday, March 21 through Friday, March 25. Camp registration is open to residents of Okaloosa County between the ages of 5 – 12. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Cost is \$100 for Destin residents and \$125 for non-Destin residents within Okaloosa County.

Camp runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. There will be water days, park days (weather permitting), recreation games, crafts and various activities planned throughout the week. For more information, call 850-654-5184 or email Recreation@cityofdestin.com.

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Around Town

NWFSC Receives \$2 Million Grant for Collegiate High School

In February, Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) received a \$2 million Early College Career and Technical Education grant from Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Education, which will allow it to expand the Collegiate High School by introducing the first class of ninth graders and implementing a new degree track. The new degree track will enable students to earn an Associate in Science in Computer Information Technology or an Associate in Science in Engineering Technology while simultaneously earning their high school diploma.

The Collegiate High School is a public charter school located on NWFSC's Niceville campus and is free to students.

Destin Men's Club Meeting

The Destin Men's Club (AR-MOD - Active Retired Men of Destin) will meet for its monthly luncheon meeting on March 11, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Ameri-

can Legion (311 Main St., Destin) and includes lunch (\$15)—Gumbo and minimal potato bar (butter, sour cream, cheese and bacon bits), salad, bread and Key lime pie. Mr. John Hofstad, Okaloosa County Administrator, is the guest speaker. To attend, contact ARMOD President Jim Wood at (850) 502-9468 or e-mail armyguyindestin@embarqmail.com.

Soirée On The Bay

Enjoy a lavish gathering with fine wine, food and spirits benefiting Children's Volunteer Health Network (CVHN). Presented by the Dugas family, the Soirée will take place on their stunning family estate overlooking the Choctawhatchee Bay in Santa Rosa Beach. The main event is Sat., March 19. Starting at 3:30 p.m., guests will enjoy a mix and mingle style event featuring small bites, wine samples, and live music from the Tip Tops Band. A sunset toast during the ceremonious shooting of the cannon and fireworks complete the evening. For tickets: www.cvhnkids.org/

soiree-on-the-bay. VIP - \$1,000 per person. Includes Friday's event, Saturday's VIP Party and Main Event. Main Event - \$300 per person. Proceeds from this event benefit CVHN's second mobile dental clinic, providing free restorative dental services to children in need throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Buggin' Out: A Vintage VW Festival and Car Show



Vintage Volkswagen lovers, start your engines and head to The Island Resort March 11-13—the 2nd Annual Buggin' Out Festival is a weekend full of spectacular vintage cars, poolside fun, live music and more! On Friday, March 11, festival guests are invited to a pool party at the grotto pool, with drink specials, a live DJ, and more. Saturday, March 12, is the main

event! From Noon to 4 p.m., more than 60 vintage cars will be on display, along with live music, local vendor booths, groovy cocktails, kids' activities and more. Attendance Saturday is free. All vintage vehicles are welcome in the car show, but only Volkswagen buses and bugs will be judged and eligible for awards. All vehicles must be registered in advance, as space is limited and on a first come, first served basis. Registration includes attendance at Friday's pool party, confirmed space for

your vehicle in the car show, breakfast at Fish House and complimentary drink tickets to be used at any of the four bars on The Island Resort. To register: <https://850tix.com/events/buggin-out-a-vintage-vw-festival-and-car-show-3-12-2022>.

2022 Emerald Ball Set for April 30th

The 2022 Emerald Ball to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast will be held Sat-

Continued on page 14

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 Community

You Bought a Short-Term Rental Property! Woo Hoo! How Do You Maximize Your Return on Investment (ROI)?



BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR

Real estate investing—it's a good thing! In fact, **90% of millionaires are invested in real estate.** Surely, they see the benefit of real estate investments! Following suit, you buy a short-term rental property and now you're looking forward to reaping the rewards—tax benefits, equity and cash flow, right? Here's a few easy tips, which aren't costly, to help you make your property stand out amongst the sea of rental properties in our area:

Not all renters understand your property is owned by a family; oftentimes they're dealing

with a management company, much like rental cars are handled by a company. Sometimes, not always, some renters don't take as good care of your property as you'd like them to. To shift that mindset, **add a little bit of your personality.** Add a family photo, not a BUNCH of family photos, just one, nice noticeable one. If you can, have a welcome basket with a thank you note from you, a list of favorite restaurants and attractions, even some local snacks and/or a bottle of wine. These small things will make your short-termers feel they're a guest "in your home," not just "in a rental."

Less is more. Of course, you want your guests to have a homey feel. However, you also want them to feel that your place is clean and tidy and that means **declutter the space.** Less stuff = less dust, too, which also makes it easier to clean. You may like a lot of knick-knacks and fake plants, but please keep them at home, not in your rental.

Even though, less IS more,



don't make it too sterile. Add some color with decorative pillows and throws. A great piece of artwork.

Maintain and update your property. Reality check: Short-term rental properties get beat up! Suitcases banging into walls on a weekly basis, spills on carpeting and furniture, sand coming in from the beach. YIKES! Plan on and expect to invest a little bit of money into property maintenance every year. Deep clean – cabinets, walls, moldings, doors, etc., Paint, clean furniture and carpeting (and if you have carpet, think about

switching it out to a more durable, easy to clean surface like tile or LVP flooring when it's time). Replace beat up, dated and broken furniture. Again, invest in furniture that's easy to maintain and durable for longevity; and don't go for what's in fashion today. Pick out pieces that are transitional and timeless.

Do an inventory of supplies. Self-evaluate: What would YOU want in a rental? Matching dishes? A decent coffee pot? Wine glasses? Beach toys for the kids? Flatware that doesn't feel like you got it at a discount store? Decent bath towels? A luxurious bed? A beginning supply of shampoo and soaps? **Special touches make guests want to return!**

Take professional photos! Eye appeal is buy appeal! So, don't skimp on hiring a photographer to take photos of your property that you're going to use for marketing! Better yet, hire a real estate photographer who specializes in taking property photos. There's nothing worse

than seeing bad pics taken with your cell phone of a fabulous property.

Your goal should be to fill your rental calendar every year with repeat customers and customers who refer your property to friends and relatives. (THEY are now doing the selling!) Getting new customers every year is a LOT of work! To get repeat customers, you need to make them want to come back next year and, to do that, your place needs to be comfortable, clean and welcoming. **Get 'em once and keep 'em!**

For more information about real estate investing or any other questions about real estate, please contact me today at 850.374.0454 or email Gail.Pelto@KW.com.

Gail Pelto is a full-time real estate agent with Keller Williams and a board member with both the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and The Rotary Club of Destin.

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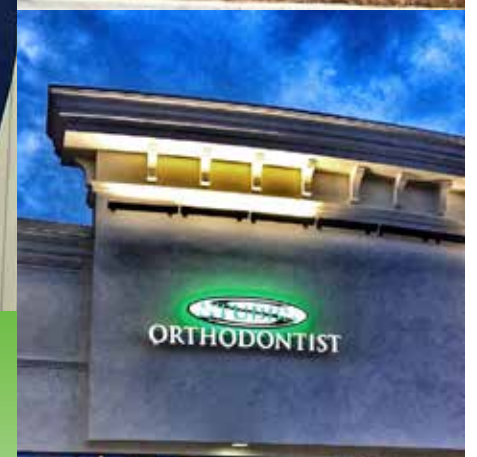
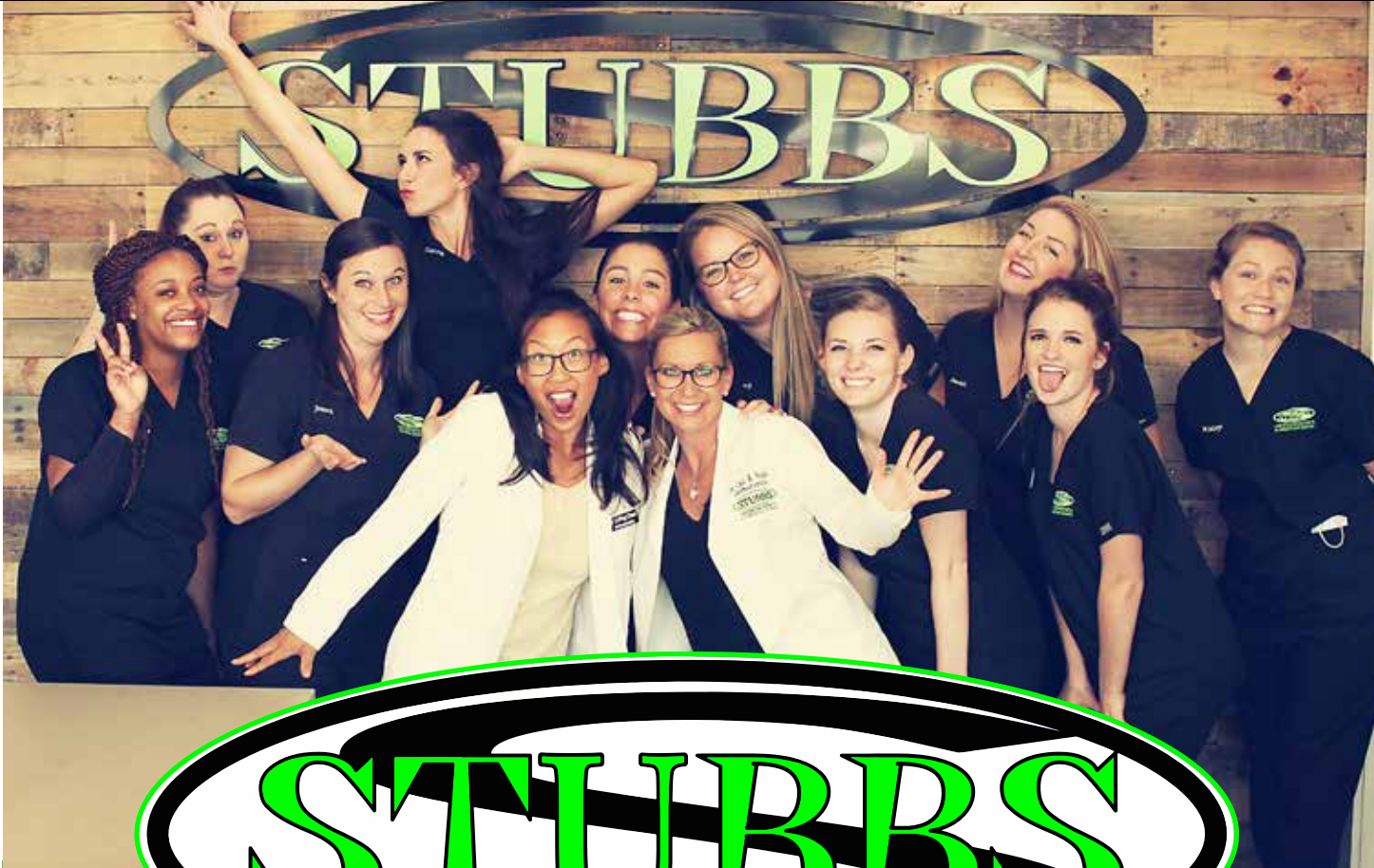
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha K.

Community

CHAPPIE

continued from page 6

highest total kill of any air mission during Vietnam. The mission, which saw no U.S. losses, is how the 8th TFW earned its nickname “The Wolf Pack” — because Olds told his pilots they would be “wolves in sheep’s clothing.”

Steady under pressure

After returning to the U.S., James served as vice commander of the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

He was persistent, tactically skillful and seen as a steady

combat leader — attributes that earned him his next role as the commander of the 7272nd Fighter Training Wing at Wheelus Air Base in Libya. It was August of 1969, and Muammar Gadhafi had just successfully overthrown the Libyan king.

The U.S. had agreed to turn Wheelus AB over to the Libyans prior to the coup, and James was responsible for the withdrawal. He kept a cool head despite the tensions, which led to a successful and conflict-free drawdown.

“James’ leadership and diplomatic skills were put to full use in that delicate situation in which the new anti-Western, radical

Libyan leader sought to expel the Air Force,” Halvorsen said. “Back home, James’ speeches on Americanism and patriotism were so well regarded, many were read into the Congressional Record.”

Military officials had begun to take notice of his public speaking skills when James was at Eglin AFB. After Libya, he was tapped to be a deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs. When he took the job in March 1970, he was also promoted to brigadier general, making him the first Black general in the Air Force.

In September 1974, James took over as vice commander of

the Military Airlift Command based at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He had been promoted twice by this time, attaining his third star as lieutenant general.

Making history ... again

On Sept. 1, 1975, James was officially promoted to the rank of four-star general, becoming the first Black man to attain the rank in the U.S. military.

“If my making an advancement can serve as some kind of spark to some young Black or other minority, it will be worth all the years, all the blood and sweat it took in getting here,” James said upon earning a fourth star.

Along with the promotion came the position of commander in chief of North American Aerospace Defense Command, which gave him operational command of all U.S. and Canadian strategic aerospace defense forces.

In December 1977, James took over as special assistant to the U.S. Air Force chief of staff,

but he retired two months later on Feb. 1, 1978, for health reasons. Sadly, James died in late February 1978 of a heart attack. The 58-year-old was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Legacy

James’ successes earned him numerous military and national accolades throughout his career, including the George Washington Freedom Foundation Medal in 1967 and 1968. He was also awarded honorary Juris Doctor degrees from at least five higher-education institutions — along with his Tuskegee degree.

James’ name lives on across the military, but perhaps most notably at the institution at which his career started.

In May 1987, Tuskegee University dedicated the Gen. Daniel “Chappie” James Jr. Center for Aerospace Science and Health Education to the general. The center includes the James Center Arena, where the school’s basketball teams currently play.



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AROUND TOWN

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urday, April 30, at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Sandestin. The inaugural event in 2019 raised an amazing \$217,631, thanks to the generosity of our community. This year’s proceeds are earmarked for a state-of-the-art CT scanner for the hospital’s pediatric and adult patients. The evening will begin with a cocktail hour at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and dancing. Entertainment will include live music by Tribute Show Band of Mobile, Ala. Plans also include a bourbon and wine pull and a photo booth for guests to capture memories of the occasion. A highlight of the evening will be the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree at McCaskill & Company. Tickets for this exclusive jewelry drawing will be available to purchase for \$100 each and limited to 150 entries. Individual tickets for the Emerald Ball are available to purchase for \$150 and include reserved seating, dinner and two drink tickets. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Local groups Host Fire Truck Pull to Benefit Twin Cities Pavilion

Multiple community organizations are teaming up to com-

plete fundraising for a major project at Twin Cities Pavilion (TCP). “You could say we are ‘all pulling together’ to sponsor a fire truck pulling contest on April 23 at 3rd Planet Brewing,” said Bob Hoffman, coordinator of the team effort to address safety and cosmetic issues at the front entrance area at TCP. “We’re looking for any community group or business willing to come out and have some fun to help the residents of TCP.” The Rotary Clubs of Mid-Bay Bridge, Niceville/Valparaiso, Destin and Fort Walton Beach, along with the Knights of Columbus from Christ Our Redeemer and Holy Name Catholic churches are supporting the effort with donations, planning and staffing. Also helping with donations and staff are the Okaloosa County Fire-Rescue Organization, Valparaiso Realty and Dynamic Software Solutions. There will be two divisions, with the Open Division being for the more serious competitors to show their stuff. A team consists of 10 people who pull the fire truck 15 feet one time, and the best time wins. There is a \$200 per team entry fee that all goes to the project. Prizes in the Open Division will include medallions for each team member

Continued on page 16

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Trey Gowdy: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Northwest Florida State College President Devin Stephenson is a visionary with purposeful determination. His caliber of speakers for the “President’s Speaker Series” reflects his keen leadership and focus. I consider Dr. Stephenson to be a persuasive communicator in his own right.

Most people have heard the cliché that “You get what you pay for.” Frequently, a true statement indeed, unless someone else foots the bill and invites you to come. This speaker series is FREE to the public, and Trey Gowdy packed the Mattie Kelly Arts Center with an eager, enthusiastic crowd.

When someone mentions Trey Gowdy, people tend to have opinions of him at opposite ends of an ever-widening spectrum. They generally admire him greatly or vociferously criticize him. Unfortunately, this is the political climate of twenty-first-century America. No matter, Trey poured out his heart, humbly baring his soul to a spellbound audience.

Trey started his message with amusing quips and stories that ingratiated him to his audience, but his innate passion showed as things turned serious. The audience sat on the edge of their seats, wondering what was coming next. Trey revealed himself as someone not ready to yank America’s life support from its socket. Instead, he believes that America needs to rediscover who we are, where we are going, and how to get where we need to be.

Granted, we are a politically divided country with red and blue sides more willing to shout things out than attempt to understand what drives the passions of the other side. Trey pointed out that every day carries the sense of it being like election day. So few people are forging relationships outside their sphere of fellow cheerleaders. He urged his audience to display an uncommon form of grace to bring us closer together.

Trey frequently transitioned to talk about his family and good friend and co-author, Senator Tim Scott. They developed



PHOTO BY NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

a close bond as they spent many eating opportunities together at the Capitol Hill Club. Trey told the audience of Senator Scott’s upbringing with his grandfather, who picked cotton and never learned to read. Yet, his grandfather believed in the power of knowledge and the magic of education, and he thought these things would make a difference in his grandson’s future. His grandfather raised a grandson who became a U.S. Senator and author of a New York Times #1 Best Seller.

Trey mentioned meeting his wife through a church youth group and traveling and the importance of faith, sometimes shaken by his life experiences. His early career included pros-

ecuting the worst criminals and how these interactions took their toll mentally, spiritually and physically. Like many politicians, Trey Gowdy left his hometown of Spartanburg, South Carolina, for our country’s capital to make a difference.

If you watch his famous social media sound bites, he comes across as a skilled prosecutor interrogating political adversaries. In person, he also comes across as genuine and caring.

After one hour of clearly articulating his thought-provoking speech, the last question pinpointed how this master of persuasion had moved many juries to agree with him beyond a reasonable doubt. He was asked why he was advocating compromise, although he never alluded to compromising with whom you disagree. Absent a court reporter to retrace his words; interrogator Gowdy kicked into overdrive to reiterate that he promoted dialogue—persuasion over argument. He encouraged

sincere communication with empathy, not a win-at-any-costs methodology.

Trey never alluded to compromising one’s beliefs. Instead, he pleaded for people to search for common ground. He encouraged practicing the art of persuasion rather than using insults as a means of self-validation. His appeal: we all should make an effort to listen to the “other side.” Insults make others determined not to give up any ground, and the mentality of crushing your opposition has eroded our society’s fabric.

Trey encouraged talking responsibly and ending the bitter feuding and fussing with neither side desiring to listen and learn from the other. His point was to be fair-minded yet encourage people to think for themselves.

Upcoming Event: Dr. Stephenson has invited Charles Payne to be the next speaker in the President’s Speaker Series on April 8, 2022. Come hear the Fox Business Network financial journalist and host of Fox’s Making Money. Mark your calendars and I’ll see you there.




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 Community



BY GREG DURETTE, FLORIDA HEALTH CONNECTOR

What to Check Before the End of Open Enrollment for Medicare

month's article). This article will cover what you should be checking up on before the March 31st deadline rolls around and locks you in until the next Annual Enrollment Period (October 15 – December 7).

So, what should you do to make sure this year's coverage selection treats you well and is something you will be happy with until next year? First, you will have hopefully had some time to try out your new coverage. Whether that be a visit to the doctor of your choice or a trip to the pharmacy, you likely have had a chance to use your current coverage. If you are one of those folks that needs neither, bully for you! However, even you should still take this time to conduct further

research into whether the doctors, hospitals and pharmacies you favor are included in your network at a reasonable cost. If you find some changes would be required of your intended selections, you have until March 31st to do something about that.

One point of note: If you have already made a change during this Open Enrollment Period, you have used your last bite at the apple for the year. Changes made during this period are final and cannot be changed. If you have yet to use this last chance opportunity then, you still have that one chance available.

Second, have you reviewed the functionality of your plan? What I mean is, are you able to easily use your new insur-

ance card and have the providers accept it without a hassle? Do you find it difficult to know why your neighbor with a PPO has a much easier time finding an in-network doctor or facility (especially when traveling) than you have with an HMO? Has your doctor or medical group suddenly stopped accepting your coverage with little to no explanation?

If so, it is time for you to get busy with the business of taking care of you. If you have read my articles for any length of time, you know I am no fan of the grand promises made by the sports figures and celebrities on television about the benefits, and here is the kicker statement, "You MAY be eligible to receive." Talk about slick!

The fact of the matter is, the proof is in the pudding. Nobody but you can get you what you need. Do the work. Do the research. Call people local and knowledgeable to get the details that matter to you. Once you make that final call for the Open Enrollment Period, you can sit back and relax in the comfort of knowing you did the very best for you. Happy 2022!

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for over 38 years and can be reached at his office at (850) 842-2400 or his mobile at (978) 509-2941.

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 14

in first, second and third place.

Debbie Bruce Honored as Destin Chamber's Business Person of the Month

During the Destin Chamber's Feb. 11 Business Before Hours Sponsored by Century



21 Blue Marlin Pelican, Debbie Bruce of A 2 Z Specialty Advertising was honored with the

Chamber's Business Person of the Month Award. This award is presented directly from the Chamber's Board of Directors to a Destin area businessperson showing vision for his or her business and leadership in our community. A 2 Z Specialty Advertising is a promotional product distributor with the ability to supply businesses with every

possible promotional product from more than 3,000 suppliers. Its mission is to help businesses create long-lasting relationships with their clients through the power of promotional products. Gabby Bruce, Debbie's late husband, purchased A 2 Z Specialty Advertising in 1997, after a long career in radio and entertainment. He was known throughout the community for

his work with local businesses and his involvement in many non-profit organizations. After Gabby's death in March of 2020, Debbie took over his role in the company and chose to honor his legacy through the "Gabby Bruce You Make a Difference Award," presented to 12 companies throughout 2021 for their significant impact on the community.



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John Farrow Has Construction In His Blood

By KENNETH BOOKS

John Farrow was born to be a contractor.

He said he became interested in construction “probably about the time I was 4 and started playing with Legos and building blocks. In summers in high school, I’d actually go work on construction sites.” He also put himself through school by working construction.

“I decided I love this, this is what I want to do and I went for my contractor’s license,” he said.



A residential project that stands out took place on the West Coast. “A gentleman wanted all concrete walls 20 feet tall, an entire slab concrete home,” John said. “Every aspect had to be completely balanced and measured. I guess he thought Armageddon was coming.”

Farrow’s company also handles disaster recovery. For example, a corporate office in downtown San Francisco had a huge water release on the 12th floor on the Friday before Labor Day, which flooded the entire building, including a Walgreens that was the building’s anchor.

“We mobilized 160 men from all over the country, including equipment – large dryer units, drywall folks, carpet folks, painters, and restocking all the supplies at Walgreens. By Tuesday, everything opened up and everyone was back in business.”



Today, John is owner of Farrow Commercial Construction, handling residential, commercial and fire and disaster recovery, founded and headquartered in Sonoma County, Calif.

In Destin, John has opened Farrow Contracting, Inc.

“We’d been coming to Destin for 20 years,” the San Francisco native said. “We have family here. We love the governor of Florida, we love the area and we love the people.”

John, 55, and his wife, J.K., have lived in Destin for about five years. But they soon will become landed gentry as they’re in escrow and are about to close on a ranch in Laurel Hill. There, they can enjoy Florida, Okaloosa County and their horses. They have two daughters, Montana, 24, and Peyton, 21 and a son, Clayton, 19. John said Montana will soon join the firm as project manager.

“I’ve had the personal benefit of working with folks here and I believe the way I do construction will be a huge benefit to the folks here in Florida,” John said. “We think we can make a difference and one of my slogans is that I like to do things differently.”

That penchant for innovation has come in handy in several Farrow Commercial Construction jobs.

The most challenging commercial job took place at the Magnolia Hotel in downtown Denver.

“That was difficult,” he said, “as far as staging, getting vehicles in and out and working on a hotel, adding 56 rooms, as well as working through the winter months with very limited parking to store and stage equipment and supplies.” Meanwhile, the hotel was occupied, so John and his workers went floor by floor.

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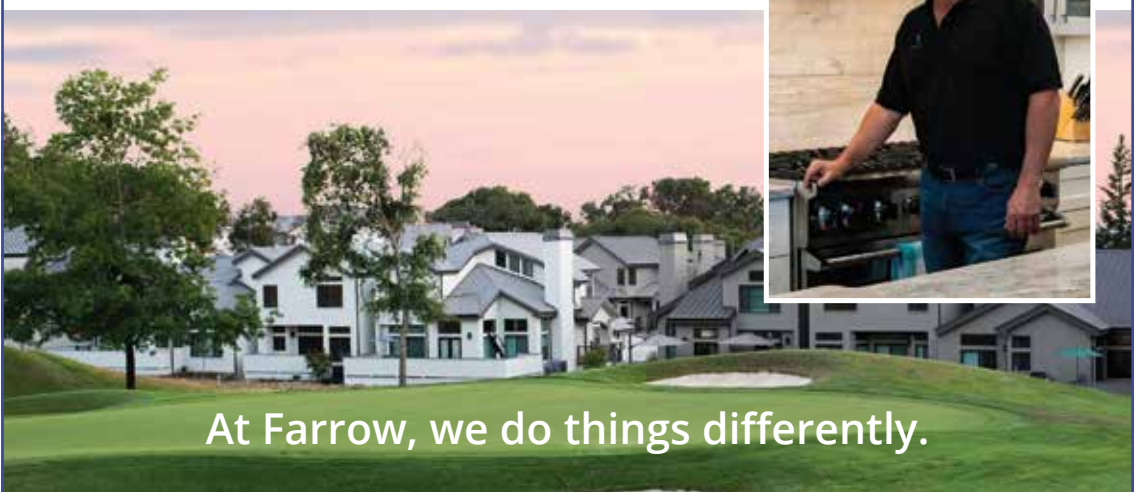


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 Community

Commissioner's Prayer Breakfast One of a Kind

By DOUG STAUFFER

I had the distinct pleasure of attending the 2nd Annual Commissioner's Prayer Breakfast sponsored by Mel Ponder in conjunction with Rocky Bayou Christian School. I caught up with Commissioner Ponder and asked him several questions.

What led you to start this gathering? Mel—It was on my heart to create an opportunity for Okaloosa county pastors to gather as a family reunion of sorts. This county-wide gathering includes faith leaders, business and community leaders, and elected officials. I do this in my role as a citizen who also serves as a county commissioner. I believe in unity, camaraderie and wisdom.

What part does Rocky Bayou Christian school contribute to coordinating the event? Mel—Doc Mike Mosley has been a gracious supporter, and his team manages the logistics. Additionally, he works with One Twenty Bistro to put on a delicious spread.

What is the purpose of the Annual Prayer Breakfast? The

theme has been "In One Accord," because I am a big believer in the corporate body of believers working together. The Bible repeatedly expresses that God did amazing things when the believers were in one accord.

What is your vision for the future of the Annual Prayer Breakfast? Mel—I want this breakfast to honor every role that believers play as we assemble in one accord to pray (Ephesians 4:16).

Why do you think prayer is so important for this county, state and nation? Our churches are independently to be Houses of Prayer with a heavenly mandate to pray. Our forefathers were people of prayer, making prayer a part of this nation's DNA. It is a foundational element that allows us to see heaven invade the earth with God's goodness prevailing.

I want to thank you for recognizing the veterans, active-duty personnel, along with the pastors. How have you been so successful in combining politics with the spiritual arena? Mel—We should be the same



PHOTO BY CHRIS MCKAY

person in and out of every arena of life, loving God and loving others. Christians are to be the light of the world. No matter the venture, we carry that light with us. There should not be any separation between our personal and professional lives. Christian principles should be the same ideals presented by politicians and preachers alike. We should exercise our faith on Monday just as much as we do on Sunday.

How did this prayer breakfast personally impact you?

Mel—When people go into their churches, they know who is on their team, but we need to know the many others in our community on our team too. I become very inspired when I see multiple churches sit together at the same table as Christ's fellow ambassadors.

I am sure you received some feedback; how were others impacted? Mel—The feedback I received was very positive. Some mentioned that the prayers were powerful, and others said that they needed this time set aside

to gather together. The goal was for people to hear messages from God and leave full of hope, and evidently, that happened.

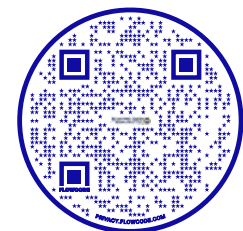
I have traveled the world several times and have seen the best and worst. I wish every community could be just like ours, which I consider one of the best. I pray that the spirit of this prayer breakfast impacts the other 364 days of the year and reverberates up to heaven and back.



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What Does Your Front Door Say About YOU?



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

Before you open your front door to welcome your guests inside (or shoo away the unwanted solicitor), you've already made your first impression. Yes, your front door is your first impression to all who knock. Your front door makes a statement. It should reflect YOU and compliment the overall exterior of your home.

Wait! Before you run outside to assess your front door color and your neighbor's, you should consider what story you're telling the world about YOU. Did you know that colors have meaning? Here's where "What does your front door say about you?" comes into play. Let's take a stroll down the col-

or spectrum and see what your front door says about your personality.

Red = A red front door is one of the most common colors used today, aside from white and brown. Throughout history a red door has meant "Welcome" no matter where you live.

Blue = A blue front door is associated with "prosperity and abundance." A darker blue door, such as Navy, projects a sense of "peace and elegance."

Brown = A front door that's painted/stained in a light brown shade says you're "warm and reliable," and a darker brown tells everyone you're "private."

Yellow = A bright yellow front door says you're "confident and curious."

White = A white front door tells everyone that you're "organized and serene."



Orange = An orange front door radiates "excitement" and says "you're ready for a new challenge."

Black = A black front door symbolizes "sophistication, power and authority."

Green = A green front door can be associated with "money, ambition and growth."

Purple = A purple front door tells your neighbors that you're a LSU Fan. Just kidding, but it does let them know you're "open-minded." A darker purple, such as aubergine or eggplant, is associated with "royalty and wealth."

Grey = A grey front door is

associated with "Intelligence," but also can come across as stand-offish. It all depends on the shade you select.

Aqua = An aqua front door radiates an uplifting sense of "friendliness," like us Destin Life readers.

Lime/Chartreuse = A bright lime/chartreuse front door attracts "attention," and lets everyone know you're living an "exciting life."

Coral/Salmon

= A coral/salmon front door says you're "nurturing, affectionate and cheerful." You may even be a "hopeless romantic," which is NOT a bad thing.

After reading this article,

does your front door fit your personality or are YOU ready for a color change? There are so many color options to choose from, but it should be in a hue that will also be complimentary to your home.

Undecided about what shade to select? Scared to take that leap? Sometimes you just need someone with a keen eye for color and Coastal Design by Kim is here to help YOU. (Don't be afraid to buck the trend in your neighborhood, but do get HOA approval if required.) Be the house with the WOW factor. Your curb appeal is counting on YOU!

Coastal Design by Kim is located at 981 Highway 98 E, Ste. #3-346 in Destin. Reach Kim at (850) 904-6622 or kim@coastaldesignbykim.com.

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Sticking it Out: Fun Drivers You Can Still Buy with a Manual

BY WILL ESTELL

If you're an automotive junky like me, and anywhere north of age 30, you can probably remember a day when all the cool cars had stick shifts and three pedals. It just seemed like a part of driving; that feeling of being at one with the car often associated with effortlessly—and oftentimes aggressively—shifting through the gears, while feeling a big smile come across your face that made you feel as if you could race cars for a living.

Over the past 20 years, however, increased technology brought the end of manual transmission cars being quicker than their auto shifting counterparts of the same model. This led to less manuals being produced, until such time that many people under 30 never even learned to drive one. Nowadays, making a stick-shift about the best automobile theft deterrent device you can have. With only 27 new cars even available in manual formats for the 2022 year, here are some of the sportier ones that can still put that big smile on your face as you run through the gears.

BMW M 3, M 4 and 2 Series

As someone who loves the responsive drive of a BMW, I'm encouraged that the brand decided to continue offering a manual trans in at least some models. My wife and I own a classic M Roadster as a weekend/fun car, and as cool as it is with the top down and that quad exhaust roaring, I can't imagine that car being even half as much fun if it was an automatic.

All M3 cars since the original E30 offered a manual, and BMW has chosen to keep that an option in their new M 2, 3 and 4 cars also. I mean who'd want 473 hp in a new M3 and not be able to clutch and shift? To be fair, I had a 4 Series coupe a few daily drivers ago, and I did enjoy that automatic with its paddle shifters. In addition to the M3 and M4 variants, rear-drive 230i, M240i, M2 Competition, and M2 CS can all be had with a stick.

Chevy Camaro

The brand with the blue bowtie might not offer a manual in the new mid-engine Corvette, but you can still get a six-speed stick in every version of the Camaro. So, whether you choose



the base turbo 2.0, the ZL1 or 1LE with the rambunctious supercharged 6.2-liter V-8, you can still show your muscle car's muscle while flexing your own a little, too.

Ford Mustang

I get that a lot of people probably haven't been opting for manuals in their pony cars for decades. But, the fact that you can is cool. Every 2022 model—other than the range-topping Shelby GT500—offers a manual option, whether you choose the turbo-four, 5.0 GT, the 480-hp Bullitt (probably my favorite current Stang) or the Mach 1.

Mazda MX-5 Miata

Contrary to what some may think about a Miata, it's regarded by most true auto aficionados to be one of the purest back-to-basic sportscars you can own. Pretty much what owning an early 70's Lotus Elise was five decades ago... but with reliable mechanicals in the Miata.

Ever since the first generation car hit the U.S. market in 1990, the Miata has offered a manual transmission to accompany the little rear-drive's sporty handling, peppy high-revving four, and well-balanced suspension. Driving a Miata at half its potential is often more fun than driving most cars... and the manual trans certainly plays a big part in that equation.

Toyota 86 and Subaru BRZ

I'm grouping these fun little sportscars together since the Toyota 86 and Subaru BRZ have been co-developed from the beginning—back when the 86 was originally badged as a Scion FRS. Both of these well-balanced 2+2s were reworked offering new designs, in and out, for 2022. Though each car offers a different engine based on its individual brand, they're very much alike in every other way; including the fact that both can be had with a six-speed manual.

Porsche 911, 718 Boxster, and 718 Cayman

I hope we never see a time when you can't get a new Porsche sportscar with a manual trans. Though having owned seven Porsches over the years, I understand why some people who buy them as daily drivers choose the ultra-convenient, and fast shifting, dual-clutch automatics.

For 2022, every variation of Porsche's mid-engine Boxster and Cayman comes with a stick as standard equipment, while the automatic is an option. In fact, the six-speed remains the only transmission available in the ultra-cool Boxster Spyder and race-bred Cayman GT4 iterations.

As for the iconic 911, every model comes standard with a manual, with the dual-clutch automatic available as the no-extra-cost option. Personally, I can't imagine buying a 500 hp 911 GT3 and not being able to dump the clutch and sling the rear-end out while laying black marks through first, second and third. Different strokes for different folks though.



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Our Local Pro: Stan Hall Makes Car Buying Fun!

Usually, the car buying experience is ranked right up there with getting a tooth pulled; necessary but filled with trepidation and anxiety. But Stan Hall takes pride in emphasizing two qualities every time a customer walks in or contacts the dealership looking for a car. “First, is the Golden Rule- treat people the way you want to be treated, and second, make car buying fun,” he said. And he is serious! After nearly 54 years in the car business, Stan knows the ins and outs of the business pretty well, and what becomes evident pretty quick, he’s more interested in a customer’s happiness than he is in making a sale.

Stan presents as a Christ-centered man who will go out of his way to anticipate and fulfill his customer’s needs. “To me, the Golden Rule in the car business is to concentrate on the customer’s needs and God will take care of the rest,” he said.

Emerald Coast Motor Cars operates as a car buying “concierge” service. Customers specify the kind of car they want, then Stan and his team track it down and bring it right to their doorstep. “No haggling, no deception, just great service and honest pricing.”

A quick look on the ECMotorcars.com website and the testimonies and reviews are glowing. There are pages of positive testimonies confirming the success of Stan’s concierge business model.

A key component to the overall success and growth of ECMC is the addition of Devon Kiss, a young 36 year-old from Tennessee who is quickly adapting to the car business, and he especially enjoys the Stan Hall concierge model. “Devon displays the same qualities of an honest car man in this new generation,” Stan Says. “And his background as a computer programmer, website designer, helps the company locate the best car for our customers by searching and negotiating coast to coast. Devon is learning the car business faster than anyone I have ever known.”

Stan and his wife, Bunny, moved to the Destin Area from Georgia 25 years ago, and while Stan takes pride in his business accomplishments, surviving cancer ranks even higher. In 2012, Stan beat throat cancer



and is now nine years free of that terrible disease. The experience left him with a renewed faith in the Lord Who greatly helped his healing process.

Stan and his team try to be very active in their community. A few of the organizations they support are: Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, Destin United Methodist Church and the Destin Chamber of Commerce.

Stan is also extremely proud of Bunny, “the most important and inspiring person in my life.” Bunny has 35 Years of experience as an interior designer, and recently opened her own business, “The Perfect Plan Destin, LLC.” You can reach Bunny at 850-830-3995 or bunny@perfectplandestin.com.

So, the next time you’re in the market for a new car, give Stan Hall a call. I think you’ll be refreshingly surprised.



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of Central Europe with Dave and I as we co-host with Phil and Carol Swartz an exclusive river cruise tour along the Danube. Your tour will begin in Budapest when you board our chartered ship, the Viking Tor where we will do our best to exceed your expectations. This relaxing yet fun and life changing journey will forever stay with you as you travel through medieval towns and grand cities. It will be breath-



taking and exhilarating as you see these glorious cities, romantic castles and stunning scenery come alive on the banks of the Danube.

You will sail the intricate waterways and enjoy your personal up-close view of Europe's most treasured destinations that lie on the mighty river as we visit UNESCO sites and see Destina-

tion Experiences like the Oberammergau Passion Play. We will explore Vienna for two days and visit the Gottweig Abby and explore Passau and Regensburg before heading to Munich and Oberammergau.

Oberammergau is a small village nestled in the Bavarian Alps about 50 miles from Munich. We will step back in time on this trip and visit two amazing castles, Neuschwanstein and Linderhof where the landscape is as beautiful today as it was in the 1740s.

Europe. In the 17th century the pestilence known as the Black Death had infested much of Europe and the quiet little Bavarian village of Oberammergau was no exception.

By 1633 nearly every family in Oberammergau had come to experience death and they feared extinction. The only thing left to do was to pray and they did, asking God for relief. They needed a miracle. So, they promised the Lord that if he would save them from extinction, they would never forget. They vowed they would give thanks every 10 years by performing a play depicting the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, and they have kept their word for over 400 years. This is the famous theatrical masterpiece, The Oberammergau Passion Play, where millions of visitors have come to see live on a stage with only the local villagers allowed to perform. In the beginning, the performance was in the graveyard of those who died from the plague. Eventually, the theater of today was constructed to accommodate more than 5000 visitors.

Join me on this life changing and memorable trip to these beautiful and historic places I have just described. View my YouTube podcast with Phil where he gives us an armchair tour of Exploring the Danube including tickets to the Oberammergau Passion Play.

Listen to my podcasts and we tell you all about our recent cruise to the Virgin Islands. This will be our third try. So, stay tuned to see if we made it!

Check out our website www.havetravelmemories.com and email me with any questions at jodell@havetravelmemories.com. You can also find our podcasts on YouTube

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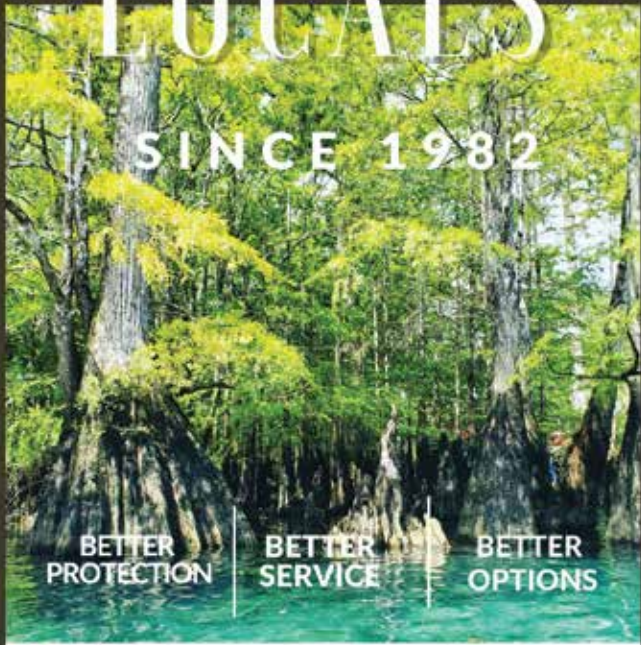






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New Restaurant: Mr. & Mrs. Scotches Bar & Grill Opens in Destin

Mr. & Mrs. Scotches Bar & Grill is NOW OPEN and celebrated its grand opening and ribbon cutting in February with the Destin Chamber!

Named after the Jamaican Scotch Bonnet Pepper, Mr. & Mrs. Scotches Bar & Grill serves American and Caribbean food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It has a full bar with an amazing daily happy hour and just released its new Caribbean/American menu.

The breakfast menu includes morning favorites such as meat lovers, three cheese and vegetarian omelets, and super creative plates such as Ackee and Saltfish served with a choice of fried dumplings, fried plantains, boiled bananas or boiled dumplings and Steam Cabbage and Saltfish served with a choice of fried dumplings, fried plantains, boiled bananas or boiled dumplings!

The tropical lunch and dinner menu includes incredible edible delights such as a Scotches Burger—an Angus patty with American cheese, tomato, lettuce, jalapeno, pickles, onion rings and scotches signature burger sauce, served with fries. Or how about a Mahi or Grouper sandwich, blackened or grilled? Have you ever tried Curried Goat? It's fresh goat meat simmered in curry sauce served with white rice and fried plantain. Or how about Oxtail. Yum!



There's also patron favorites jerk and curried chicken. I aim to try them all!

Varied daily lunch specials are only \$10.99! There's also numerous side items from which to choose as well as a kids menu, all reasonably priced.

Mr. & Mrs. Scotches is open 7:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. all 7 days and you can now order online at mmscotches.takeout7.com.

Visit the new restaurant at 34761 Emerald Coast Pkwy. Unit 104, right on Highway 98 in front of The Fresh Market. For more information, please call (850) 842-2684 or visit mmscotches.com.

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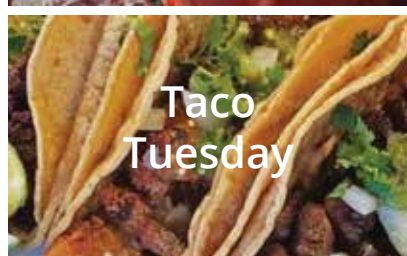
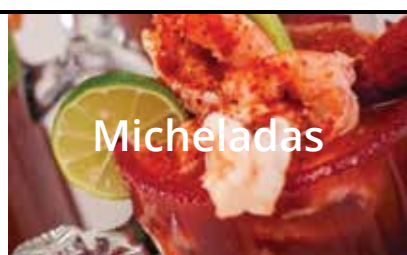

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Mi Genté

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AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

Home of the World Famous Jumbotron! You don't want to miss out on experiencing the 2022 season AJ's style. AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar is featuring the best sports all year long on the one and only Jumbotron, right here on the Harbor in Destin. Be sure to enjoy an adult beverage or two with AJ's branded vodka or savor the flavor of local beers brewed exclusively for AJ's by Props Craft Brewery. Serving up delicious daily specials and entertaining live music all week long, AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar is where you want to be.

(850) 837-1913

116 Harbor Blvd., Destin
ajsgdestin.com

Austons on 98

Offering a raw bar, happy hour and live music, Austons is home of the 102-foot bar including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw

oysters, New England style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail! Sports fans, Austons is ready for you during March Madness! There are big screen TV's all around, so not a bad seat in the house. Enjoy Football Specials including \$5 Pints, \$16 Buckets and more. Auston's on 98, of Nashville roots, open 7 days from 9am to 9pm also features its very own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce!" And don't miss the endless Mimosa and Bloody Mary Brunch featuring amazing chicken and waffles every Saturday and Sunday from 11am - 3pm with live music every Wednesday and Friday night. Check out more specials, beer selections and a full menu at austonson98.com.

(850) 842-3200

125 Poinciana Blvd.,
Miramar Beach
AustonsOn98.com

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Destin's best kept secret—it's where the locals go with live mu-

sic every night! Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's Gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked just the way you like 'em! The first Friday of every month the Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5pm - 7pm. Who wants a free keg? Bring a donation for the Emerald Coast Foundation to qualify for entry. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on Facebook for updates! Enjoy...

(850) 837-3645

288-B Harbor Blvd., Destin
Boathouseoysterbardestin.com

Café Destin

Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples such as pancakes, waffles with Nutella, omelets, Eggs Benedicts, biscuits & gravy and

more. For a lighter take, they also have a variety of Fancy Toasts (avocado, salmon and more) along with pastries and muffins. For lunch, choose from a variety of burgers, sandwiches and salads. You will love the full-service coffee shop, offering everything from hot or iced fresh, local Amavida coffee to espresso and lattes. And there's diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas. Open for breakfast and lunch 7 days a week from 7am-2pm. and has free WiFi, encouraging you to bring your laptops and work during the day. There's also a conference room available for small groups, and the dining area can be rented for larger groups for networking, luncheons and more. Be sure to make breakfast or lunch plans soon! And don't forget the coffee!

(850) 424-6777

985 US-98 E, Destin
cafedestin.com

Landshark's Pizza

Hey, Sports Fans! Hungry, thirsty, maybe a little of both? Come in and visit Landshark's Pizza. Owners Brian and Sue Hassmann have created the locals' favorite pizza, buffalo wings and sports pub and bar that serves great pizza AND awesome wings plus many other scrumptious eats for folks of all ages. There's plenty of seating for everyone and TV's galore, plus fun and games all week long. Sports fans from all over come and watch all their favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks. With a fully stocked bar serving up 95 different bourbons and 30 beers on draft, it's no secret why the locals love Landshark's Pizza Company.

(850) 424-6743

300 Harbor Blvd., Destin
landsharkspizza.com

Mi Gente' Supermarket & Taqueria

Open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week, Mi Gente' is one of Destin's hottest dining spots for the whole family and friends to enjoy. Enjoy Happy Hour from 5pm-7pm for 2 for 1 House Margaritas and 2 for 1 draft beer. With fresh ingredients and homemade recipes, this fun and festive restaurant will instantly capture your heart. Serving up huge portions, you can choose from an incredible select menu offering a diverse selection of delicious food from different Latin-America countries. Taqueria Mi Gente' is a treat you just have to experience for yourself. Enjoy a drink from the cantina, try a few tasty dishes on the menu such as rich and flavorful! Quesa-Birria Tacos topped with fresh diced onion, cilantro and a squeeze of lime juice served with the broth on the side to dip your tacos! Take a walk through their amazing and diverse supermarket and fresh meat department where you can buy a variety of Latin

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8pm Austin Jennings
- Fridays:** 4pm Jason Findley
8pm Airavata
- Saturdays:** 12pm Kelly Byrd
4pm Chasin Jayme
8pm Gunner
- Sundays:** 12pm Kelly Byrd
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288 Harbor Blvd, Destin
(850) 837-3645

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BoathouseOysterBar
www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com

DESTIN DINING

continued from previous page

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(850) 842-2992

733 Harbor Blvd., Destin

migenterestaurantandcantina.com

Oasis

A recent heartbreaking fire has temporarily halted in-restaurant dining. So, until the Oasis restaurant can re-open, Chef Divaldo and Chef Amy will be offering private dinners, bringing the Oasis experience to you! Choose from their sample menus or they'll create a custom menu for you. Enjoy a Private Chef dinner in comfort! Be it a romantic evening, a birthday celebration or a family get together, Oasis will offer you a unique way to enjoy a meal. They'll transform your home into an Oasis dining experience. On the day of the dinner, Chef will buy the ingredients, cook them at your house, serve the meal and leave everything spotless. So, you don't have to worry about anything! Dinners will typically include anywhere from 3-5 courses on average. "We do all on-site cooking, serving and clean-up. You enjoy your time and food with your guests," says Amy. "We can also offer cocktail service to go along with your dinner. We look forward to keeping the OASIS going while we wait for our beautiful space to be restored." Contact Amy at (850) 401-9149 to arrange your dinner party. Chefs Divaldo and

Amy look forward to seeing you. "Let's Eat!"

(850) 401-9149

306 Bald Eagle Dr.

theOasisSRB.com or

@theOasisSRB on FB

Tailfins Waterfront Grill

Start your day off right with Tailfins Breakfast every day from 8am-11am, 7 days a week! Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs or add a little flair to your morning with a Seafood or Cajun Omelet and even a Kids Smiley Pancake! Be sure to order up a round of Mimosas and Bloody Marys, a perfect way to start your day. Watch Tailfins' world-famous Sushi chef create right in front of your eyes! Featuring multiple levels of indoor and outdoor dining overlooking the Destin Boardwalk and Harbor, Tailfins is your go-to destination. With huge BIG screen TV's everywhere you look, watch your favorite sports teams all season long. Kick back and enjoy some of your absolute favorite food and drinks including Sushi Rolls and Sake Bombs, Scrumptious Early Bird Dinner Specials M-F from 4-6pm. Happy Hour from 4-6pm Mon. - Fri. featuring \$20 Domestic Bottle Buckets, \$5 House Wines and Well Drinks and \$5 Long Island Iced Teas. Live Music on the Docks all week long.

(850) 842-3333

On the Harbor in Destin,

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tailfinsdestin.com

Tequila's Sports Bar & Grill

EAT, DRINK, FIESTA!! Ready to shake it up a little?

And we mean literally - Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill has quickly become a local favorite. Let them serve up some of their world class, jumbo-sized Margaritas, sure to set the mood to watch your favorite game. Tequila's has some of the best seats in the neighborhood. Everyone's got a favorite—find your Mexican food fave here inspired by years of tradition and

authentic spices such as the Tequila's Plate, Chili Con Carne, The Three Amigos and the new MASTER PARRILLADA—a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes. Celebrate Taco Tuesdays with 2-4-1 Margaritas! Lunch specials offered daily Monday - Friday for \$8.99. Open seven days a week for lunch, dinner or call ahead to place your take out

and to-go orders.

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Destin Harbor

Live Music on the Docks

Shrimp & Grits Fest Breaks Fundraising Record for Local Boys & Girls Clubs

The 3rd Annual Shrimp & Grits Festival held in February at Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer was a huge success. The event raised a record-breaking \$40,000 and welcomed more

than 1,200 attendees in support of all local club kids.

"We are truly blessed to live in a Community that continuously comes together to support the next generation and invest

in the youth of our region. We must continue to seek out opportunities to speak light into the next generation and provide them the tools to be successful in today's society. Our part-



Ticket holders experienced classic southern dishes, great drinks, and live music from Cadillac Willy. Local restaurants and chefs competed on the Destin Harbor for the best Shrimp & Grits dish on the Emerald Coast.

Award winners are as follows:

People's Choice (1st Place): East Pass Seafood & Oyster House

People's Choice (2nd Place): Knife's Edge Private Chef and Catering

People's Choice (3rd Place): Local Roots

Best Overall (Judges Award): Knife's Edge Private Chef and Catering

Most Creative (Judges Award): The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast

Best Grits (Judge's Award): A&A Spice is Life

nership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast through charitable events allows us to serve the next generation through their programs and mentorship and we are very honored and humbled to help support their mission," Said Tyler Jarvis, CoFounder/Operating Partner, Bald & The Beard Restaurant Group.

"Our third annual Shrimp & Grits Festival was a huge success. We are extremely thankful to Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer, all of our sponsors, cook teams, and all that attended for making this year's event better than ever. Every cent raised through this event will make an impact on the over 5,000 youth we serve on an annual basis. Our team is already working on next year's event, we look forward to an amazing fourth year," said Shervin Rassa, Chief Executive Officer, The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

This event was made possible by these generous sponsors: The Bald and the Beard Restaurant Group, T-Mobile, Silver Sands Premium Outlets, Ben E Keith Co, Buffalo Rock Pepsi, Bayou Cora Farms, Camarena Tequila, RumChata Limon, New Amsterdam Vodka, Diplomati-co Rum, Imperial Dade, Abita Brewery, New Belgium Brewing and White Claw.

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Hospitality Heroes!

The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association (FRLA) Hospitality Hero Awards were held in February. The awards ceremony recognizes outstanding employees in the hospitality industry.

2021 Award Winners

Hotel / Resort

Front of House: Rosalie Wong
– Hampton Inn and Suites,
Destin

Back of House: Carrie
Pritchard – Newman-Dailey
Resort Properties, Inc.

Manager: Jeff Welch - Hilton
Garden Inn, Destin/Mira-
mar Beach

Restaurant

Front of House: Maggie White
- Slick Lips Seafood and
Oyster House, Miramar
Beach

Back of House: Alex Johnson -
Brotula's Seafood House and
Steamer, Destin

Manager: Steven Stephenson -
Crab Trap, Destin

Culinary Manager

Robert Preston - The Bay, San-
ta Rosa Beach

Sales And Marketing

Stacey Brady- Grand Boule-
vard, Sandestin

Educator

Julie Cotton - NWFSC, Oka-
loosa/Walton

Vendor

Supreme Paper

Veteran

Andrew Isolano - The Bay,
Santa Rosa Beach

Spirit Of Hospitality

Nick Sarra - Saltwater Restau-
rants, Destin

Golden Pineapple

Billy Martin - McGuire's Irish
Pub, Destin

A Diver's Wonderland

"Boat Yard" Artificial Reef Site Expands

For those who dive, the wait is over for the county's most recent expansion of its artificial reef program. Okaloosa County Tourist Development Department (TDD) Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism expanded fishing and diving opportunities with the deployment of a decommissioned tugboat—MISS JOANN. The 64-foot vessel is an addition to nearly 400 artificial reef sites offshore Okaloosa County.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DESTIN-FORT WALTON BEACH

Morgan Marine deployed MISS JOANN with oversight from the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Coastal Resource team on March 2. "We are fortunate to have a Coastal Resource Team dedicated to the continued growth of the artificial reef program," said Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. "Fishing and diving are important coastal activities to our county and reefs like this offer such a unique underwater experience for divers and snorkelers, not to mention an excellent opportunity for anglers."

In 2021, Morgan Marine was notified by the U.S. Coast Guard that its tugboat would require significant retrofits to bring it into compliance. Rather than invest significant funds in an older vessel, Morgan Marine donated the vessel to Okaloosa County to deploy as an artificial reef. Okaloosa County funded the remaining preparations and costs associated with the deployment. "Artificial reefs are essential to our community that depends heavily on fishing and diving as a recreational activity and tourism product. We lack the offshore natural reef habitat; therefore, artificial reefs are even more important here. The MISS JOANN will be a great addition to our artificial reef program and we hope it will be visited by divers and fisherman for years to come," said Alex

Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

MISS JOANN will accompany two previously deployed vessels, the DYLAN (61 ft.) and the BRANNON (65 ft.). Due to the smaller sizes of these existing artificial reefs, the MISS JOANN was deployed in close proximity to the existing vessels in 119 feet of water, but with 40 feet of relief, will provide a shallower option to the site if visitors don't wish to dive the deeper wrecks. The additional relief also provides habitat that supports prized fish species such as Amberjack and Cobia. The vessels are secured to each other for increased stability and to provide additional complexity to the site that has been named the "Boat Yard."

MISS JOANN was deployed 16.43nm SE of Destin Pass in the Okaloosa County Large Area Artificial Reef Site A (LAARS A).

For those who don't know, artificial reefs are man-made structures built to promote marine life and, in some cases, improve surfing. The reef struc-

paddleboards and kayaks out to our local reefs and enjoy the wildlife scenery such as turtles, stingrays and more. While they are free to visit, remember you are accessing them at your own risk. Always remember to heed the tides and the local beach flag system for safety.

Coordinates for all Okaloosa County artificial reefs can be found by visiting destinfwb.com.

For more information on Destin-Fort Walton Beach or the Artificial Reef Program, contact Stacey Young, Community & Media Relations Strategist at (850) 606-5389 or SLYoung@MyOkaloosa.com, or Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager at (850) 609-5394 or afogg@myokaloosa.com.

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 Off the Hook

CCA Florida to Restock Redfish in Okaloosa County

A donation, by a private party, to Coastal Conservation Association Florida (CCA Florida) leads to the first redfish restocking initiative in Choctawhatchee Bay.

Because of a \$25,000 donation to CCA Florida, the Coastal Resource Team of the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Department, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism will assist with the transport of

10,000 juvenile redfish between four and eight inches in length. The release will take place from the shore at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park in Niceville.

“The release is a beneficial project for the health of the Choctawhatchee Bay area fisheries and we are fortunate to have CCA Florida as a meaningful partner in this conservation effort,” said Okaloosa Board of County Commission-



ers Chairman Mel Ponder.

CCA of Florida invites the public, community partners

and media to be a part of the conservation event at noon on Tues., March 29. Children are

encouraged to attend. Anyone who is interested in physically taking part in the release, should wear athletic attire and water shoes.

Contact Amanda Krpan for additional details at akrpan@ccaflorida.org or view the Save The Date flyer [HERE](#). Date, time and location are subject to change. Follow along on Facebook [@CCA_Florida](#).

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Help FWC Report Horseshoe Crabs

It's almost spring and that means it's peak mating season for horseshoe crabs. Help biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) gather valuable information about these ancient creatures by reporting sightings on the online survey at <https://survey123.arcgis.com>.

Horseshoe crabs have blue blood which is very expensive, but with numerous medical benefits. Due to this coveted resource, it's become vulnerable to extinction. But, this highly-valuable resource worth protecting.

Horseshoe crabs mate by pairing up, with the smaller male attached to the larger female. They then crawl onto the beach

up to the high tide line where the female digs a nest and lays her eggs, all while the male is attached and fertilizing the freshly laid eggs. They mate year-round, but it is most common to see

mating groups along the shore of sandy, lower wave action beaches from March through October. Each season, usually May or June in our area, just one female crab can lay as many as 80,000 eggs!

Unlike other crabs, horseshoe crabs aren't actually crustaceans



– they don't have antennae and they have multiple eyes. They are an arachnid (in the spider family).

You will have the most luck spotting horseshoe crabs around high tide within a few days of a new or full moon. If you see a horseshoe crab on its back, you can help it flip back over by gently picking it up (holding both sides of the shell), turning it over and releasing it back into the water. Simple actions such as this help conserve this species and the many other species that depend on it.

Reporting horseshoe crab sightings provides valuable information about habitat use, population distribution and environmental conditions for nesting to the FWC. Although horseshoe crabs have existed for more than 450 million years, scientists are still learning about Florida populations. Public sighting information helps FWC researchers target nesting beaches for the Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch Program, a citizen science based initiative to collect data throughout the state.

You can report sightings by visiting MyFWC.com/research and clicking on "Crustaceans" then "Horseshoe Crabs" and selecting "Report Your Nesting Horseshoe Crab Sighting."

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See Makaira & the Blue Wave Fleet at Captain's Choice. The right choice for your Boating needs.

Gopher Tortoise Day is April 10!

Since its founding six years ago, Gopher Tortoise Day has been celebrated annually to raise awareness for Florida's only native tortoise. April 10 is approaching quickly, and now is the time to begin prepping festivities for this yearly event.

Ways to prepare for and celebrate Gopher Tortoise Day 2022!

Urge your local government to adopt a resolution proclaiming April 10 as Gopher Tortoise Day.

Get involved! Host or attend an event to raise awareness for gopher tortoises.

Spread the news on social media using #FWC and #GopherTortoiseDay.

Plan local events, such as invasive plant pulls or greenspace litter pickups, to help improve gopher tortoise habitat. Be sure to get proper approvals.

The gopher tortoise plays a significant role in many of Florida's ecosystems and deserves our recognition. Gopher tortoises are considered a keystone species, as their burrows provide refuge for over 350 different species of wildlife. Burrow associates range from common animals such as opossums and rat snakes, to rarer and lesser-known species such as the punctuate gopher tortoise onthophagus beetle and the Eastern indigo snake. Without gopher tortoises and their burrows, there would be fewer of these species. Some species could even go extinct! By raising awareness for this threat-



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Gopher Tortoise Day Coordinator at GTevents@MyFWC.com

ened species, we can all help to make sure gopher tortoises and all the other important species

that call their burrows home will be around for years to come.

If you would like to learn

more, visit

GopherTortoiseDayFL.com.

For questions, contact the

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 Sports

Go, Destin Sharks!

To start up and run a competitive Athletic Program, Destin High School (DHS) needs your help. DHS Athletics is seeking sponsorships for its April 9 5K Run/Walk. Funds raised will provide compliant facilities, equipment, uniforms, and sport medicine care for Destin Shark Athletic Programs. Community support is essential to provide the best quality educational experience. Sponsorship and donations will assist us in securing



these needs for our student-athletes.

The run starts and ends at DHS (via Commons Drive and Indian Bayou Trail). Check-In is April 9, 7-8:15 a.m. at DHS.

To register: <https://dhs-5k.cheddarup.com>

Pre-Registration: Before March 25: \$25; Registration After March 25th: \$35; Students \$20

Awards: Free t-shirt (guaranteed first 200), Medals for top 3 finishers in each category, Prize for Most Festive Attire.

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For more information, visit www.godestinsharks.com or contact race director, Tim Ventimiglia at ravenandtim@yahoo.com.

Westonwood Ranch Pro Rodeo

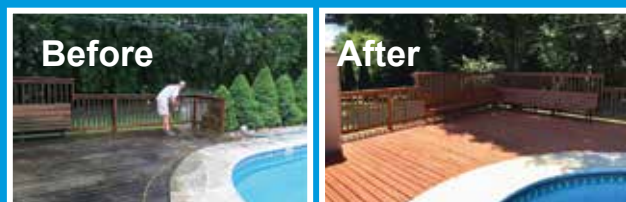
Westonwood Ranch announces the Third Annual Westonwood Ranch Pro Rodeo Friday, March 25 and Saturday, March 26 at the Freeport Regional Sports Complex in Hammock Bay. This year's event is presented by Shoreline Title, LLC, in partnership with The Walton County Sheriff's Office and the City of Freeport. This professionally sanctioned rodeo will feature the Professional Cowboy Association's (PCA) biggest superstars.

Tickets may be purchased at the gate for \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children. A family pack of four tickets (2 adults and 2 children) is also available for \$50. There will be no pre-sale of tickets, so spectators are encouraged to arrive early as we are anticipating a sold-out show both evenings. Additional sponsorship opportunities for this event are available. For more information about how to support the rodeo and Westonwood Ranch, email kelly@westonwood.org or visit our website at www.westonwood.org.

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Tim Seketa Hired as FC Dallas Emerald Coast Director of Coaching

FC Dallas Emerald Coast announces the hiring of Tim Seketa as the Director of Coaching and Player Development. Tim has been serving the club since 2013 and has contributed greatly to the success of the club during his time on staff.

Prior to working with FC Dallas Emerald Coast, Tim was a member of the MLS's Real Salt Lake Academy staff in 2012 and 2013 and worked under Martin Vasquez who was a US Men's National Team Assistant Coach at the time. "I am grateful & eager to have an individual with Tim's

professional experience and dedication leading our coaching staff and players," said Executive Director Louis Richard. "He has a wealth of knowledge and ideas and I look forward to his implementation of these concepts into all areas of the FC Dallas Emerald Coast organization."

Tim began his soccer career playing in Niceville with PAL in 1992. He graduated from Niceville High School in 2003 and went on to play NCAA Division 1 soccer at Jacksonville University. He currently holds a U.S. Soccer Federation National



"C" License and United Soccer Coaches Level III Goalkeeping Diploma.

"I am very excited to take on the role of Director of Coaching," stated Tim about his new appointment. "It is an honor and a privilege to be in a position to shape the soccer experience for so many young players in our area. I think it means that little bit more when you get the opportunity to take the reins of your childhood club. I look forward to helping advance the club by applying what I learned working for an MLS academy and find pathways for all of our players to reach their sporting and life goals."

FC Dallas Emerald Coast is Northwest Florida's Soccer is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the Center of Excellence and a primary provider of soccer opportunities for youth athletes across the Emerald Coast region since 2007. It supports more than 600 kids aged 4-18 with our recreational, academy and competitive programs as well as providing excellent learning and character-building experiences with a broad impact on the local economy.

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Boys & Girls Clubs 2022 Youth Winners

Since 1947, the Youth of the Year program has been the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier recognition program, providing the highest honor any teen member can receive. The addition of the Junior Youth of the Year extends these opportunities to youth ages 10-13 years old. The Youth of the Year (YOY) embodies the values of leadership, character, and service; academic excellence; and living a healthy lifestyle.

Each year, thousands of Club teens participate in local, state, and regional Youth of the Year events. Six teens advance to the National Youth of the Year, where one outstanding young person is named National Youth of the Year. This national teen spokesperson is a role model,



leader, and advocate for the millions of youth served by Clubs each year and all of America's young people.

"Youth of the Year winners embody the values of leadership and service and have proven academic excellence. This group of remarkable young people makes the lives of all those around them better by their kindness, leadership, service, and encouragement to others. Together, we congratulate each of them for all of their hard work and dedication to the Clubs and our community," said Shervin Rassa, CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

Junior Youth of the Year Winners:

- Joey S. (Fort Walton Beach Youth)
- Tania C. (Jacobe Turner Teen Center)
- Alyssa C. (Kenwood Club)
- Esabella F. (Destin Club)
- Stella J. (South Walton Club)

Evalynn H. (DeFuniak Springs Club)

- Emma A. (Riverside Club)
- Nashyree R. (Pensacola - Englewood Club)
- Connor B. (Montclair Club)
- Allana G. (Dixon Club)

Youth of the Year Winners:

Amia J. (Jacobe Turner Teen

Center)

- Dar M. (South Walton Club)
- Joseph S. (DeFuniak Springs Club)

Kalea S (Pensacola - Englewood Club)
Visit www.emeraldcoastbgc.org/ for more information.



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 Wellness

It's All About Sugar



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

It's a love-hate relationship.

We eat it to celebrate, comfort our souls and give as gifts. Enjoying special moments is a good thing. But even if you're an occasional sweet eater, you might be eating much more than you think. Sugar is more addictive than cocaine and causes inflammation which is the root cause of most diseases.

Sugar is in almost everything we eat: fruits, vegetables, breads, dairy (lactose), sweets, boxed, canned and frozen foods and the list goes on. Did you know that manufacturers add sugar to 74%

of all packaged foods? There are currently 61 names for sugar not counting artificial sweeteners. Regarding the latter, these have been associated with headaches, depression, fatigue, memory loss, gastrointestinal problems, etc.

Both sugar and inflammation can rob our cells of the required nutrients they need to function at their optimal levels. And since sugar has no nutritional value, it has to 'borrow' nutrients to digest it. It depletes the body of vitamins C and E and is particularly draining to the B vitamin

complex. It also leeches minerals such as calcium and magnesium from your bones and teeth.

Added to this list are refined carbohydrates such as pasta and breads. The body turns these into sugar for energy. However, the body doesn't recognize these as 'real foods' and processes them differently than it would a whole grain bread or gluten free pasta.

Natural sugars from fruit and veggies are a body's friend. Take time to read ingredient labels and begin choosing the la-

bels that have no added sugars. Watch out for 'low fat' or 'sugar free' items. 'Low fat' decreases flavor; so, sugar is added as a flavoring and many 'sugar free' items means artificial sweeteners might be added which wreak havoc on our bodies.

Take care of your body and cherish your health. Every step you take makes a difference. Shoot me an email with "Sugar List" in the Subject if you would like a list of names.

Kay Leaman, HealthyDay HealthyLife, succeed.hdhl@gmail.com

Self-Care Corner: Mani Pedi Magic!

BY KRISY WHITELY ANDERSON,
BEVERLY HILLS DAY SPA OWNER

You already know that a mani-pedi makes your nails look fantastic. And it IS time to get

ready for those toes to show this Spring. But, what you may not know is that a professional nail treatment actually has long-term and health benefits as well! There

are some excellent reasons why this should be more than just the occasional luxury experience.

1. Hand and Foot Massages Increase Blood Flow

Hand and foot massages promote blood flow and increased blood circulation, reducing muscle tension, thereby, allowing greater mobility in the joints and less strain in those overworked muscles.

2. Prevents Infections.

Over time, many germs, dirt and pollutants your nails are exposed to on a daily basis can get stuck in the hard-to-reach

areas beneath and around our nail bed. This can quickly spread germs to vulnerable parts of our body. A mani or pedi will thoroughly remove dirt and bacteria, lessening your chances of infection, nail fungi AND getting sick. The clipping, cleaning and cutting of your toenails will prevent your nails from growing inwards and causing an infection as well. Moisturizing the dry skin on your feet on a regular basis can also stop infection by preventing cracks that may form otherwise.

3. Boosted Nail Health

Deep exfoliation is as bene-



ficial as it is enjoyable. Calluses build up on the base of our feet over time, especially when we wear heels, exercise and walk around barefoot. Exfoliating the calluses on the bottom of your feet can help to even out the bottom and improve weight distribution – this may alleviate leg and back pain. Exfoliating is also vital for removing dead skin, smoothing wrinkles and stimulating collagen production in the skin, encouraging new cell growth, leaving your nails stronger and healthier.

4. It Can Make Your Hands and Feet Look Younger.

Manicures and pedicures improve blood flow, which is

Continued on next page

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Breast Cancer



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer in women and the second leading cause of death from cancer in women. Metastatic breast cancer tends to invade the bone causing intense pain and invades the brain causing dementia and memory loss. It is not a pleasant way to finish your days. Breast cancer

survivors will tell you that the return of breast cancer is something that weighs on their mind anytime something seems different. A catch in your back, a weird cough, or any number of minor issues can trigger that fear that the cancer might be returning. In addition, cancer treatments are invasive, painful and life altering. Prevention is really the key to survival.

But what is the likelihood of a woman getting breast cancer? When you look at all women, the risk seems relatively low. The rate of breast cancer in women is about 2.6%, but this number is deceptive because this is the risk for all women. What is my risk of breast cancer? This is the question women really want to know the answer to. There are many factors involved, but ad-

vancing age is a major factor and the risk of breast cancer with advancing age can be as high as 16%.

The Women's Health Initiative was a study started in 1991 and stopped in 2005. It originally reported that giving estrogen to postmenopausal women increased their risk of breast cancer. Unfortunately, this report was not entirely accurate. What this study showed was that women who received synthetic estrogen (estrins) have a higher incidence of breast cancer while women who received bio-identical estrogen (estradiol) actually had a lower risk of breast cancer. This change has been published, but was not reported with the fervor of the original reports. As well, not only did these women have a lower risk of breast

cancer, but also a lower risk of strokes and heart attacks as well.

A recent study was published in 2019 which looked at breast cancer risk in women who received testosterone pellet therapy. Yes, testosterone. Women have an idea that they don't need testosterone, but this is not true. In fact, women make testosterone in the ovaries and much of this testosterone gets converted to estrogen. So, women make more testosterone than estrogen. Anyway, the women in this study were followed for over 10 years. It turns out that the incidence of breast cancer in the women who received testosterone therapy was 40% lower than the women who did not receive testosterone.

So, now you see that both bio-identical estrogen and bio-identical testosterone reduce

the risk of breast cancer. This doesn't even touch on the benefits to bone density, heart health, prevention of depression and anxiety, increases in libido and the many other proven benefits of both estrogen and testosterone therapy.

If you are concerned about your health and wellness, please come see us.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD not only provides hormone therapy to men and women, but also teaches hormone therapy to doctors across the country. In addition, he treats many of the doctors in the area, is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country right here in Miramar Beach. Call today for an appointment at 850-837-1271.

MANI PEDI MAGIC

continued from previous page

important in reducing cellulite, tightening your skin, and strengthening your muscles — all of which can improve the visible appearance of your hands and feet.

5. Improved Mental Health.

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rience and pampering will free your mind from any tension, boosting your mental health and doing wonders for your stress levels!

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luxe pedicure includes a relaxing soak, shaping and buffing of nails, cuticle grooming, callus treatment, sea salt/sugar scrub, extended massage with hydrating oils, hydrating mask with hot towels, and finished with polish of your choice.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to not only look great, but FEEL amazing, pampered and healthy, too! Ready to schedule your appointment? If so, call me,



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 Wellness



By TODD CRAIG

I don't remember most of my dreams, but I'll never forget this one. In the dream, I am in the third-row seat of a car traveling down a straight highway. I am content with my situation until I am suddenly aware that the car is on cruise control, and I am supposed to be in the driver's seat! The rest of the dream is my struggle from the third row, over the second row of seats, and the center console to the driver's seat. In the several months I had the dream, I am not sure I ever made it to the driver's seat.

I had this recurring dream during a season of my life when I was living on autopilot. During this season, life felt more like something that was happening to me than a gift I got to live. I think all of us have had seasons, or days, when we've felt like this. Maybe there are areas of your life right now that feel exactly like this.

We weren't given life to be a passive passenger in the back seat. In nearly all areas of life, including our relationships, our

vocation, our health, our attitudes and our personal growth, we often have far more power than we think. The reality is, we are ridiculously in charge of the lives we've been given.

5 Ways to be ridiculously in charge of your life:

Let go of the need to be in control. If the last three years have taught us anything, it is that there are things outside our control. But even when we are not in control of everything happening in life, we are in charge of how we respond, our attitude and the actions we take in response to difficult people, circumstances and setbacks. Trying to control things outside of our control distracts us from the choices we can make. One of the great ironies of life is that we try to control what we can't control and play victim to things we are in charge of.

Be in charge: Make a list of things outside of your control and another list of things you can control. Be intentional throughout the day of focusing your energy on things you can control.

Acknowledge learned helplessness. There are many different reasons why we begin



to feel helpless. Sometimes, it's because we are trying to control things outside of our control. So, we begin to assume we have no agency in other areas of life. Sometimes, this happens when we see what others have that we don't (if I had their resources..., if I were as lucky..., if I were given the same opportunities..., if the world weren't against me..., if I had more time...). This view of life may let us off the hook for responsibility, but it will rob our lives of meaning. Being ridiculously in charge means shifting from focusing energy on what is not possible to how you will find a way and taking the next step.

Be in charge: In what areas of life have you learned helplessness? What one small step can you take forward?

Treat the past as a teach-

er not a master. The past becomes a master when we assume it is a predictor of the

future. You do not have to be imprisoned by mistakes or failures in your past, and you do not have to repeat them. Allow those experiences to teach you, not define you. Today is a new day, a new chapter. What story do you want to tell?

Be in charge: If you were to write the next chapter of your story, what would you title it?

Approach life as a possibility to be lived rather than a problem to be solved. The

Continued on page 46

Get the Smile You Deserve

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- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
- When you look through magazines, do you envy the models' smiles?
- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
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- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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ENERGY TIPS

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BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

According to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), December was the warmest December on record since recording temperatures began in 1880 by the administration. So, what does that mean? There are many different thoughts and ideas on this subject and I will let you make your own conclusions. What I do know is we all enjoy being comfortable. We buy jackets in the winter and breathable clothes in the summer. In February, I would run the heat in the morning and AC in the afternoon, just to stay comfortable. If you do a search for “things we insulate,” you will see the majority of sites and images are of attics, walls and windows.

But, we insulate much more than our homes. We are constantly looking for that right beach cooler or cup to keep our drinks and snacks cold and cool. YETI has become very popular and on the scene on just about every beach, tailgate or fishing outing. Just look around. If you don't own a YETI, your neighbor most likely does. One video on YouTube about what's inside a YETI cup has more than 8.3 million views. That's more views than the entire population of Tennessee and that's just one video.

It's no secret we care about insulating things and being comfortable and will pay a little more for quality and efficiency. So,

why when it comes to our biggest investment—our homes—we fall short of upgrading our home's efficiency and comfort? A Former U.S. president once said during a press conference on renewable energy that Insulation is sexy stuff and that if you haven't upgraded your home, it's not just heat or cool air escaping, it's energy and money that you are wasting.

Based on a study conducted by NAIMA (North American Insulation Manufacturers Association), the majority of U.S. homes are under insulated, wasting energy, money and decreasing your comfort in the home. To in-

crease comfort, there are simple solutions like weather stripping doors and caulking windows. Properly weatherizing your home and adding insulation will increase comfort, reduce pollutants in the home, control moisture and help your heating and cooling systems work more efficiently.

Dr. Levy, Professor of Environmental Health at Boston University, stated that if all U.S. homes were fitted with insulation based on the 2012 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code), residential electricity use nationwide would drop by 5% and natural gas use by more

than 10%. That's an impressive number and a positive impact on our environment. I don't know if I would call adding insulation sexy, but I do know adding insulation saves you money, increases your comfort and has a positive impact on the environment.

So, the next time you are putting ice in your cooler, sipping something refreshing from your cup or running the air conditioner, think about getting an energy upgrade for your largest investment—your home—and

remember our most sustainable energy source is not Solar, Hydro or Geo, it's YOU.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions, a Smile Provider Company. It provides smiles to its customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save this spring and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection. Call (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com and Beat the Heat!

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 Business

Pecan Jacks is Coming to Destin!

BY KENNETH BOOKS

Aficionados of sweet treats will find a new outlet for their passion as Pecan Jacks, a wildly popular ice cream and candy store, expands from its 30A location of nearly five years to the site of the former Hog's Breath store in downtown Destin.

The owners, Tim, Ronnie, Dustin, Samantha and Shelby Wyatt, promise a unique sugary atmosphere with creations of their own making.

"There's nothing similar," said family patriarch Tim Wyatt. "We set ourselves apart with quality and customer service that are second to none."

This is not your chain ice cream store.

"We create an experience, not just an ice cream cone," Tim said. "We're here to make people happy."

The unique ice cream spe-



The Wyatts, from left: Dustin, Ronnie Samantha, Tim and Shelby.

cialties include Oreo ice cream, which, Ronnie said, "is made differently than any other kind of cookie or ice cream;" Bailey's salted caramel and banana pudding.

"These are vintage recipes from our parents," Ronnie said.

The Wyatts ran a printing company for 25 years in their hometown of Richmond, Va., and their shift to goodies isn't

unusual. "We've always been in production," Tim said.

The Pecan Jacks candy is as singular as its ice cream. It includes southern praline, Caribbean Rum and lots of brittle.

"We hand-stretch all our own brittle and package it," Ronnie said.

The candy, like the ice cream, isn't just kids' stuff. It includes flavors like Espresso, Amaretto and bourbon.

The store will have a user-friendly feel when it is completed, which the Wyatts hope will be in April.

"It will be a unique feel like Vegas," Tim said, with separate but connected rooms for ice cream and candy purchases. And the youngsters haven't been forgotten, either. A raised area will let kids access the candy area, while a funhouse-style mirror will entertain them as

they arrive.

Pecan Jacks has won accolades for its 30A story, including a first-place 30A Hot Spot Award for sweet treats.

The family's move into Destin won't end its expansion. "We're experiencing growth right now," Dustin said. "We'll be at Greenway Station in summer."

And, he adds, new products are on the horizon.

"In the fall, we'll have a new venture – premium coffee," he said. "We're bringing new flavors to the area."

Dustin said the company has a 24-hour ice cream production schedule, making thousands of gallons.

Prices, Ronnie said, will be competitive with the area. But, she adds, "You're getting a premium product."

Everything You Need to Know About Coworking Spaces

BY MELISSA FERTITTA

Did you know that the U.S. is the world leader when it comes

to the amount of physical coworking space available? Upwards of 80 million square feet

is identifiable as a flexible workspace.

The coworking movement is not a hot new trend, though. Many enterprise level clients are realizing what freelancers, gig workers and small businesses already knew. Coworking is a way to cut expenses and maximize productivity.

So, what exactly are coworking spaces? How do they work and what are the benefits? Below are some ideas businesses



should take into consideration before renting in a coworking space.

How Does Coworking Support a Workforce?

1. Community

Coworking operators are entrepreneurs themselves, which means they understand the power of networks and communities. Many strive to support their members by offering structured networking and mentoring programs.

Whether a member is an employee of a larger company or an entrepreneur just launching their business, a community surrounds them when needed. The knowledge, referrals and resources that can be realized by connecting with members of a coworking community is of immeasurable value to both the worker and the operator. Coworking spaces want to be known as a resource for the business community, beyond just being an affordable space for meeting and working.

2. Flexibility and Affordability

Coworking is a flexible solution for entrepreneurs and companies of all sizes. They reduce the capital and operating expenditures associated with traditional leasing and real estate, generally by 20 - 40 % compared to traditional office rentals.

Many coworking operators



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For over a decade, Matthew Vanderford has worked in the Construction, Restoration and Insurance Industries as an Insurance Company Preferred Vendor, Insurance Industry Continuing Education Instructor, Public Adjuster/ Policy Holder Advocate and Licensed Contractor. He's proud to call Destin his home, with his wife Candice and four children: Matthew, Blake, Jordan and Scarlett.

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Continued on next page

Need Some Advice?

BY DAVE SAVIOLA,
ARBORBROOK FINANCIAL
CONSULTING FIRM

The poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar is given credit for saying: “Nothing is impossible for those who act after wise counsel and careful thought.”

We are certainly in a time where, for most of us, some very important decisions are about to be made that will have impacts on our own lives, our families, our businesses, and our communities for years and perhaps decades to come. How do we navigate through such waters? Common sense says we should not do it alone, but then what? How do I find the right advisor?

The answer comes from a story that occurred approximately 3,600 years ago ... give or take. At the time, perhaps the most powerful man in the world, Pharaoh, had a series of disturbing dreams. So, he summoned the “magicians and wise men”

of Egypt to tell him what the dreams meant. They could not.

A high-ranking waiter then makes a referral to Pharaoh, telling him that he knew a guy that could help. Oh, by the way, this guy is currently in prison. Nevertheless, Pharaoh must have been frustrated and desperate, because he sent for this prisoner at once to see if he could help.

The prisoner’s name is Joseph, and he has just been plucked from detention and given an audience with the ruler of all the land. A pretty big opportunity indeed and all he must do is tell Pharaoh what his dreams mean. The first words out of Joseph’s mouth are, “It is beyond my power to do this.” Wait ... what? But then the story turns to the source of all wisdom and knowledge, Joseph continues: “But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease.”

Joseph goes on to not only interpret the dreams for Pharaoh,

but give him specific recommendations of how to handle the situation. The king received this advice so well, he put Joseph in charge of all the land of Egypt, a pretty decent promotion from prisoner.

In this account recorded in

Genesis 41, Pharaoh goes on to describe Joseph as a man “in whom is the spirit of God,” declaring “there is no one so discerning and wise as you.” I often like to describe Joseph as the first financial advisor, and I would maintain that when looking for a

team to help you traverse today’s environment, it is critical for them to have received their credentials from the One who ultimately directs our steps. Indeed, nothing is impossible when God is the source of our advice.

COWORKING

continued from previous page

allow month-to-month memberships, which allows its customers agility in regards to staffing size as well as the markets in which they operate.

3. Results

One unexpected finding from the pandemic is how resilient and productive the workforce could be outside of the office. According to research by University of Southampton, pandemic-era productivity was not affected by remote work; in fact, 54% of survey respondents felt their productivity per hour worked was increased by working remotely.

The “autonomy afforded them by their employer when working from home was highly valued and allowed them to better regulate their thoughts and avoid distractions,” the survey found.

Coworking spaces are free from the distractions of working from home and their flexibility encourages the autonomy of control employees desire.

Choosing the Right Coworking Space

Consider the points above when choosing a coworking space for your business. Have conversations with the operator about your business needs

and ask how solutions can be customized to fit those needs. Check out Beachworx in Destin to learn more about the services and solutions for businesses of all sizes.

To sign up for Beachworx’s Virtual Office, visit thebeachworx.com/virtual-offices-life-media.

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Thoughts for Investors So Far This Year



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

As bond yields have risen for most of this new year (The bell-weather 10-year U.S. Treasury is at 1.92% as of this writing), and that has had an impact on equity and bond markets. For equities, the NASDAQ, S&P and Dow are all negative YTD with the NASDAQ the most affected. The NASDAQ represents over 3500 stocks while the Dow represents 30 stocks, and the S&P represents 500 stocks. It is significant to take note that S&P 500 makes up over 70% of the value of all U.S. traded stocks.

Why have the markets seen negative performance for most of this year? Take note that

certain “sectors” – the eleven subsets of the market are not all equally weighted. The S&P 500 has 28% of its value in technology (TEC) stocks yet only about 3% in Energy Stocks. The TEC sector is down over 9% so far this year, while the ENE sector is up over 23%. If there is almost 10 times the value of TEC stocks vs. ENE stocks, it might make sense to see that that is what has driven a lot of the volatility and performance. Most of the household name TEC stocks are negative for the year. The main reason that TEC stocks have been more volatile is that when bond yields rise, investors (large institutional investors) historically have sold lower dividend stocks and rotated to higher dividend or so-called value stocks (TEC representing so-called growth stocks).

So, when you see money coming out of one sector and wonder where it may be going or rotating to, the above is one significant, and recent example. That may be leaving individual (as opposed to institutional) investors wondering what to do now. It is important to note that diversification, patience along

with staying informed and aware have served investors well. The Wall Street Journal recently had an article that quoted the legendary value investor Benjamin Graham. Graham was quoted to have said, “I don’t know, (after many years of experience) what the market is going to do, but I do know what investors are likely to do.” In other words. We tend to see that as investors being reactive vs. being proactive. A proactive strategy to us is one where goals, time lines and risk tolerance are well known and thought through and then a strategy is adapted and followed over time. Human nature and instinct are motivated by survival and, hence, investors might give up hope at the worst possible time. And timing is a key. When markets move, they move swiftly up or down. It is next to impossible to know when those movements are going to happen. Have a look at this excerpt from Raymond James’ Weekly Headings on January 28th. It highlights the significance of time in the market vs. timing the market. The numbers are based upon the annualized rate of return of the S&P 500 over the past 20 years, which was approximately 5033 trading days:

- Average return for staying invested over the past 20 years: 7.3%
- Missed the best 5 days and your return would have averaged 4.9%
- Missed the best 10 days and your return would have averaged 3.2%
- Missed the best 15 days and your return would have averaged 1.8%
- Missed the best 20 days and your return would have averaged .6%
- On the other hand, what if you’d “known” which days to be “out” of the market:
- Missed the worst 20 days and your return would have averaged 15.2%
- Missed the worst 15 days and your return would have averaged 13.7%
- Missed the worst 10 days and your return would have averaged 12.1%
- Missed the worst 5 days and your return would have averaged 10.1%

The challenge is, who knows when those days will be? As the legendary Peter Lynch once

said: “They don’t ring a bell at the top and they don’t ring a bell at the bottom.” Again, market rallies and sell offs happen if a noticeably brief period making it almost impossible to predict.

We also encourage our clients to think about emerging trends which might be worth considering in their long-term strategy. We will start with semiconductors or computer chips. We have seen and heard a lot about the disruption that chip supply shortages have brought about. Chip production capability, advanced chips, have crimped revenues of many firms and contributed significantly to inflation. We note that advanced chip design is mainly in the U.S. and yet the advanced chips are manufactured overseas (Taiwan is the leader). Take note of the foundries (chip manufacturing plants) that are under construction or being planned in the U.S. Two of note are the multibillion-dollar facility that Taiwan Semiconductor is building in Arizona and the recently announced multi-billion-dollar facility to be built in Ohio by Intel. These are just two examples, but nonetheless, a trend we think is important. The U.S. sees the economic and strategic need to have these foundries in the U.S. vs. overseas.

The same can be said for battery production (for electric vehicles – EVs). The U.S. is a world leader in possessing the natural resources that go into these batteries, yet is the world’s laggard when it comes to refining the minerals and manufacturing the batteries. That, too, is changing as seen in the focus of the U.S. government and the commensurate activity in building the production capability.

How impactful could this be? Look at liquified natural gas (LNG). The U.S. now leads the world in the export of this high in demand, cleaner burning fuel. It is used to create electric at power plants and to heat homes and power natural gas fueled vehicles. Many years ago, the multi-billion-dollar investment in the infrastructure that was needed, started to take shape. Many wondered why so much money was going in to liquification and export facilities as the world demand was not seen. Fast forward to today and you can see China’s demand

has grown 50% which adds to the already resilient demand from Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. And now the U.S. has come to the aid of western Europe as countless ships are making their way there now loaded with LNG. The result has added to the earnings of ENE companies which are experiencing record revenues and hence cash flow and profitability.

Wrapping it all up we see that while the markets remain more unstable than they have been in the recent past, investors can continue to position their investments to participate in the ever-growing areas of opportunities represented in the world today and tomorrow.

The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd., Destin, FL 32541 with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8122.

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Maurice Stouse
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By JOE CAPERS,
INSURANCE ZONE

It's Time for your Annual Insurance Review

mon events that you may have experienced are if you have gotten married, had a baby, added a four-legged friend to your family, sent a kid off to college, a major renovation, bought a car, boat, RV, ATV or trampoline, replaced your roof, added a pool, made a big purchase like a diamond ring, fine art or a set of golf clubs, or started a business, your insurance is most likely out-of-date and it is time for a review.

There are many benefits to an annual insurance review. First of all, in the instance of a loss, you'll want your policy to be up-to-date to ensure that you're covered. During an insurance review, your agent will go over specific details about your life and insurance policies to make sure that all your needs are met. Secondly, you may find something that you don't currently have covered, a discount that you aren't taking advantage of, or an extra coverage to add at no additional cost. Finally, your agent can help you understand your current coverages and go over any changes in your



premium cost.

Here are a few important items to address in an annual review and this checklist will keep you prepared.

Your Auto Policy. Don't make the mistake of setting it and forgetting it and letting the policy automatically renew every period.

Change in Vehicle Use. Maybe you no longer commute to work or the distance may be shorter.

Older Vehicles. Vehicles depreciate so review increasing deductibles or eliminating coverage.

New Drivers. Additional or youthful drivers should always be added to prevent gaps.

Your Home Policy. Like the Auto Policy, don't renew without a review each year.

Home Value. Reconstruction costs have risen significantly, so the limits need to increase.

Renovations. This cost must be considered and coverages adjusted accordingly.

New Collections and Valuables. Did you add valuables to insure?

Home Inventory Checklist. This comprehensive list should be extremely detailed with photos and receipts, updated often and securely stored

Umbrella and Flood should be evaluated as well.

Your Life Insurance. Placing life insurance on those we care most about is a perfect act of love.

Life Events. Marriage, children, and retirement should trigger a coverage change.

Beneficiaries. Knowing who should receive the benefits sometimes without any disputes is the key.

Lifestyle Changes. As are income, assets and standard of living increase, so should the

amount of benefit.

The time is now. The best time to establish or expand the protection foundations is when we are the youngest and healthiest.

There's a reason to review your insurance policies each year. And there's an even better reason to listen to your agent's professional recommendations based on your situation and their experience and expertise. Your insurance policies are there to protect not just your life and property, but your bank account as well.



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BEST DESTIN
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 Philanthropy

Destin Rotarian Finds Non-Profit And Receives Help From Rotary Club Of Destin

By MARCIA HULL,
ROTARY CLUB OF DESTIN

The back story of Zhalman Harris, one of our very own Destin Rotarians, is one that is worthy of sharing. Born and raised in a suburb of Monrovia, Zhalman grew up middle class with a childhood dream of becoming a pilot.

Those childhood dreams were shattered when Liberia entered a civil war in 1989. Zhalman traded dreaming and childhood innocence for survival amidst random executions, famine, air strikes, cross fires and even escaping death during the gruesome war. Witnessing random executions and atrocities, Zhalman, in most ways still a child, emerges a resilient young man, with hopes and the ability to turn the darkest time of his life into something positive.

Orphaned, but with extended family, Zhalman escaped his homeland, relocating to Ghana as a refugee. For 10 years on the



refugee camp, he waits... waits for comfort... waits for peace... and waits for a place to call home.

The day Zhalman left Africa in the summer of 2000, he vowed never to go back, because of what he had seen and endured. Little did he know he would be overwhelmed with the urge to go back to Liberia 10 years later to help under-privileged children and educational needs.

Four years later in Destin, he met someone at a dinner party, who jointly set things in motion to go to Liberia. They



would start a foundation called Aletha's Hope in honor of his mother who was killed during that civil war in Liberia. A year later, Zhalman established Aletha's Legacy to focus on his commitment to meeting the educational needs of Liberia's orphaned children.

This story mesmerized and captured the hearts of Destin Rotarians and several community businesses. With the passion of several members of The Rotary Club of Destin and area community leaders, we stepped forward to lend humanitarian and financial support to Aletha's Legacy.

The Rotary Club of Destin sponsored a classroom in a newly-constructed educational facility at Abedu-Bentsi School in Logan Town, Monrovia. The project features 10 classrooms, cafeteria, kitchen, boys' and girls' bathrooms, library, science lab and computer lab.

Would You Like to Be A Host Family for A Foreign Exchange Student?

For the first time ever, the Rotary Club of Destin has been chosen as a host club for a Rotary Youth Exchange Student from a different country! Any family living in Okaloosa County has the opportunity to host and Destin Rotary is looking for TWO host families for this first-time opportunity. Wherever the first host family resides will be,

most likely, where the student will attend school. For those interested, family members over the age of 18 will undergo a background check. A Rotary member will also visit onsite and interview the potential host families.

The host family DOES NOT have to be a Rotarian, or have a child in the same high school,



but can be anyone who is interested and passes the site visit and interview. If your family is interested, please contact Makenzie Mainland at mmainland@ryeflorida.org or Ryan Simas at ryan@destinstucco.com, or visit <https://ryeflorida.org/host-a-student/> and fill out the Host Family application. Makenzie or Ryan can also set up a conference call to address any questions and/or concerns about hosting a high school student in their home. Host homes will be chosen by April 1. The student will arrive about two weeks before school starts in August and will either be leaving at the end of June or beginning of July.

The Rotary Club of Destin has been the proud sponsor of the Destin Middle School Interact Club for more than eight years. Now that Destin has a new charter high school, The Rotary Club of Destin has engaged with the new principal to establish a Destin High School Interact Club. Several Middle School Interact students who graduated to Destin High School will be able to introduce new students to join. Stay tuned for more exciting details on what our youth are doing on the humanitarian front in our community.

The Rotary Club of Destin has been the proud sponsor



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Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

The two girls knocked on my door. They wore Kelly green berets and green vests. I greeted them.

The two Girl Scouts went through their spiel. “We’re selling cookies, sir,” they began.

“Do you have any identification?” said I.

They exchanged looks. “Wait, what?”

“Well,” I said amiably, “how do I know you’re really Girl Scouts? A little proof would be nice. Dangerous world out there.”

I have a deep appreciation for Girl Scouts, and each year I buy a LOT of Thin Mints, which has made me quasi-famous in local Girl Scout circles. Last year, for example, my salesgirl won a pink Cadillac.

So the tallest girl gave me her name, rank, and serial number. “And this is my new American flag badge,” she added. “We had to iron it on because my mom can’t sew.”

“How about you?” I said to

the girl with pigtails. “Got any ID?”

Pigtails had no ID, but she did proudly display her proficiency badges, her Junior Leadership pin, her Junior Aide Award, her Daisy Safety Award pin, and her Purple Heart.

Then Pigtails described in painstaking detail how she earned her Junior First Aid badge, a process wherein she not only learned how to care for injured persons, but she rode shotgun in an ambulance, toured an emergency room, and extinguished a three-story residential fire single handedly.

I pointed to another badge. “And what’s that badge for?”

“Oh, this one?” she said. “This is the Junior Inside Government badge.”

The Junior Inside Government merit badge requires Girl Scouts to explore the ethics of American government. To do this, girls are given faux countries and charged with the task of making up fun, nonsensical, whacky laws for their countries, sort of like Congress.

I asked what kinds of laws they came up with for their faux countries.

“Um,” said one girl. “Well, my country was called the United States of Amandica. I had a law where you got to eat candy with every meal. Oh, and each house was required to have one swimming pool. Vegetables were illegal. And all dads had to have a permit before eating beans.”



I pointed to another badge. “What’s this one?”

“This my Lifesaving badge. This one was really hard. I had to basically swim in a pool for-EVER and learn how to save someone’s life in the water. I learned about things like spinal injuries, rescuing a drowning person, and how to give CPR.”

“You mean you know CPR?” I said.

She nodded proudly.

I pointed to another badge.

“This one?” said Pigtails. “This is the Playing the Past badge. I got this one when I was little. This is when you pick a period in history and you pretend you’re back in that time.

“I picked Colonial America. Me and my mom dressed up like colonial people and we had a party and ate colonial food.”

“Trust me,” her friend added, “you do not want to know what the colonists ate.”

I asked about another badge.

“This is the Social Butterfly badge,” the girl said. “It’s where you learn how to talk to people at, like, a dinner party or something. You have to make

conversation and not be awkward, and be super polite. You have to use your manners, learn how to use the right silverware, and learn table manners from other countries, like, eating with

chopsticks.”

“Yeah,” said Pigtails. “And then we had to write a BUNCH of thank-yous afterward. My mom said it was just like Junior League only with shorter people.”

After they explained several more badges, including the Practice with Purpose badge, Digital Leadership badge, Simple Meals badge, Staying Fit badge, Robots badge, and the Financial Management badge, I asked about another patch.

“This one? This is the Starts With Kindness badge.”

The girls explained that to earn this particular merit badge, Scouts are expected to hold the

door for someone, give hugs at random, leave happy notes around town, make gifts for others, or call someone who is not feeling well.

“For my badge, I wrote chalk messages of encouragement on the sidewalks,” said Pigtails. “‘Cause I’m really good at art. So I wrote on the sidewalk, ‘you’re an amazing person,’ or ‘you can do this,’ or ‘you are loved.’”

The other girl said, “For my badge, my mom and I baked desserts for everyone at my grandpa’s nursing home, and, honestly, we just showed everyone that we care about them, and how special they are, and everyone wanted their pictures with me.”

After our pleasantries my sales professionals got down to cutting bait like two savvy businesswomen.

“So how many cookies can we put you down for this year, Mister Dietrich?”

I paid in cash. I hope those girls win a few Coupe DeVilles.

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Musing



A Pastor's Ponderings: Nothing to Say

BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

The scene is a setup. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, the power-center of Israel, He stops to rest for the Sabbath. The Pharisees have hatched a plot to catch Jesus violating the law of the Sabbath so they can condemn Him in the court of the Sanhedrin.

A Pharisee invited Jesus to his home for the Sabbath meal and it's no accident he also invited a man with "dropsy." This affliction disfigures the victim, causing them to swell with edema in their arms, legs, and abdomen. Everyone present would see the victim's need for healing. The Pharisee set the trap for the renowned Healer.

Jesus asks his hosts if it is legal to heal on the Sabbath, and

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" But they remained silent. So, taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away.

Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" And they had nothing to say. Luke 14:1-6

they have no answer. He heals the man immediately, because that's who Christ is.

As the Pharisees gasp in outrage, Jesus poses the question, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" (Luke 14:5) Of course you would. So would I. If my son fell into a well, I would go in after him or die trying. So would the Pharisees. Yet, they remained silent.

With one sentence of divine insight, He dispelled the Pharisee's argument and foiled their trap. They would leave off condemning Jesus to another day.

Christ healed the man on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees were not happy because He broke their rules. They had no compassion for the swollen man. To the man with dropsy, healing meant relief from his pain and a new beginning.

"Dropsy" is a common illness today. Edema can be life threatening, but usually it's just irritating. Jesus feels our pain and will not turn away from us. The love of God seeks to restore the lost, hurting and afflicted!

When my daughter was a gangly third grader, she was running through the dining room, and she tripped. Falling

headlong into our heat radiator, she caught it square on the cheekbone. Her eye swelled so much her eyelids lifted off her bloodied eye. The meanest black eye you ever saw shadowed her beautiful face for a month. The night after her fall, I prayed for her at bedtime, and I asked her if it still hurt. Crying, she said, "Not my eye so much, but when people look at me, they wince and turn away like I'm ugly."

My heart broke. How could anyone think my precious child was ugly?

Jesus felt the same way for the swollen man and healed his condition and his heart. Instead of a freakish display for the Pharisees to use as a trap for Christ, Jesus saw a person made in God's image. Our Father sees us, and His heart breaks every time we suffer from hurt, pain, or even swollenness.

How do you feel when you see someone suffering? Do they look gross? Sound whiny? Do their scabs, swollenness, or disfiguredness make you feel queasy? Invite the compassion of

Christ to fill your heart. That's normal for a genuine believer, even if it causes criticism.

I wonder how many times we have seen people who were suffering, and we remained silent like the Pharisees? Do we wince and turn away with nothing to say? Or will we allow the compassion of God to move us to feel the pain of others?

Jesus has something to say, and His words brought healing. May we answer with Christ—it is always right to do good. It is God's will to heal and ease the suffering of others, no matter what day it is.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled "Extraordinary Jesus: Ignite Your Season of Miracles." You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidsHolland54@gmail.com.

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ArtsQuest Returns to Mother's Day Weekend

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival returns to Mother's Day Weekend, May 7 - 8, 2022, in Grand Boulevard Town Center and the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County invites you to get involved.

Purchase a Program Ad

Advertise your business and show your support for the arts in

the official ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival program! Copies will be printed and inserted into SoWal Life, Destin Life, Bay Life and more. Secure your spot today by contacting Courtney Malone.

Show Your Support as An Event Sponsor

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival is the ideal opportunity to align

your business with the thriving arts and culture scene in Walton county. There are a variety of opportunities for you to support this community-wide initiative. Discounts available for multi-year commitments. For more information, contact Gabby Callaway.

Calling All Smiling Faces

Join CAA in celebrating 34 years of ArtsQuest! Volunteers are needed May 6 - 8. Volunteer activities include event set-up and break-down, artist load-in, merchandise sales, ImagiNation (kids' art activities), gate greeters, bar-backs and more.

While a lot of adults are needed for ArtsQuest, the event is also a great opportunity for high school and middle school students to earn those needed volunteer hours. Sign up to volunteer at www.culturalartsalliance.com.

MKAF Spring Lineup



On Thursday, April 21, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) kicks off the 2022 Spring Concerts in the Village series with the showstopping Michael Jackson LIVE, direct from Las Vegas featuring Santana Jackson, one of the top Michael Jackson tribute artists in the world! The highly-anticipated season includes pop icon, Taylor Dane; fan favorites, Sister Hazel; and the Music of Led Zeppelin featuring Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

"For 27 years, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation has been at the forefront of providing arts entertainment and education to Northwest Florida. The annual Concerts in the Village is no exception and we are thrilled to announce this year's incredible lineup of guest artists," stated MKAF CEO Demetrius Fuller. "The revenue generated from these events enables us to provide the highest quality of arts education and community engagement throughout Okaloosa, Walton and Bay Counties. Thank you to all of our season sponsors, community partners, and members! If you are not yet a member, please consider joining," said Demetrius.

2022 Season MKAF Concerts in the Village | Destin, FL

Enjoy a night under the stars at the most beautiful outdoor music venue on the Emerald Coast. Bring a bottle of wine, your favorite craft beer, some de-

licious snacks, and a blanket or chair. Food and drinks are available for purchase!

Throughout the Spring concert season, concert-goers can expect exciting performances from an incredible lineup of artists.

Thursday, April 21, 2022:
Michael Jackson LIVE (Vegas Show)

Thursday, April 28, 2022:
Naturally 7

Thursday, May 5, 2022:
Shania Twain (Shania Twain Tribute)

Thursday, May 12, 2022:
Yacht Rock Revue

Thursday, May 19, 2022:
Six Piece Suits

Thursday, May 26, 2022:
Taylor Dayne

Thursday, June 2, 2022:
Alter Eagles

Thursday, June 9, 2022:
Sister Hazel

Thursday, June 16, 2022:
Sinfonia Gulf Coast Performing the Music of Led Zeppelin

Thursday, June 23, 2022:
Boogie Wonder Band

Gates open at 6 p.m. with concerts beginning at 7 p.m. for this come-as-you-are family-friendly outdoor concert series. Bring a lawn chair, picnic, wine or purchase food and beverages on-site prepared by featured restaurants and food trucks.

Continued on next page



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 Arts & Music

Classical Connections: The Soldier's Tale: Music of Stravinsky & Mozart

This is definitely not your average classical connections con-

cert. You will laugh, cheer, maybe cry? Join Destin Life for this family-friendly event on March 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Destin High School Auditorium.

Sinfonia Assistant Conductor Aaron King Vaughn leads the orchestra in this concert of riveting repertoire including Igor Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale" complete with theatrical narration and W.A. Mozart's whimsically charming "Symphony no. 29 in A Major." This is the perfect classical concert for the entire family.

"The Soldier's Tale" follows the story of a soldier, Joe and the Devil. The Devil tricks Joe into trading his violin for a magical book that provides wealth and success. This costs Joe his family, his happiness, and 20 years of his life. Written in 1918, the story is historically significant due to its incorporation of folk music and complex rhythm. The piece features the violin, double bass, clarinet, trumpet,



across the nation at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Courtyard Playhouse in New York City, New Horizons Theatre in Michigan and more. He also recently directed Picasso at the Lapin Agile at Northwest Florida State College. Bruce is currently serving as the Editor of the DeFuniak Springs Herald - Beach Breeze.

The concert will highlight music from around the world with pieces inspired by the dance traditions of Panama, the European works of Mozart, and the Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky.

TICKETS: \$29.50 Choice Seating Balcony | \$45 Preferred Seating

Purchase at: <https://bit.ly/SGCseason16>

For more information on Sinfonia Gulf Coast, visit SinfoniaGulfCoast.org, call (850) 460-8800 or e-mail info@sinfoniagulfcoast.org.

bassoon, trombone, percussion, and local, Bruce Collier, as the narrator that will portray various characters.

Bruce's long history of professional theatrical performances includes numerous local productions through Emerald Coast Theatre Company and the Seaside REP, as well as

MKAF CONCERTS

continued from previous page

Purchase tickets online at MKAF.org/events. Gener-

al admission varies per concert. Children (12 and under), and MKAF members are free. Those interested in becoming a MKAF member can learn more at MKAF.org. Children 17 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All sales are final; sorry, no refunds. Pets,

tables larger than two feet, and drones are not permitted. A limited number of VIP tables (provides a reserved table and seating with admission for up to 8 guests) are available. Those interested in sponsoring the 2022 MKAF season, please call 850-650-2226 for details.

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Registration still open until classes fill up. Classes will run through the academic school year.

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SATURDAY, MAY 21
1:30PM

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ECTC: Spring has Sprung and Summer's a Comin'

BY NATHANAEL FISHER

2022 has blossomed at Emerald Coast Theatre Company like a field full of wildflowers. It has been wonderful seeing full houses at our shows. Our wonderful VIP members, sponsors, winter visitors and local patrons alike have been living in the fullness of our season theme of "fun and funny." In March, we have our last weekend of *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, the incomparable Shirley Simpson as Katharine Hepburn, *A Taste of Jazz* at Ruth's Chris Steak House, *Songs by the Campfire* with Bryan Kennedy and *Forrest Williams* is returning March 16, and April 1- *Comedy on the Boulevard* returns! Our field is full of wonderful entertainment ready to create a cultural bouquet for you.

The Marvelous Wonderettes is showing March 3-6. Wipe that lipstick off your collar and time travel to the 1958 Springfield Prom with us where you can be serenaded with all the classics like "Lollipop" and "Dream Lover." Featuring over 30 classic '50s and '60s hits, *The Marvelous Wonderettes* will keep you smiling in this must-take musical trip down memory lane! Great music, fine wine and a good time are central to this cabaret stage addition to our professional season.

Shirley Simpson as Katharine Hepburn in *Katharine Hepburn* finishes out our Storyteller Series this season. An unforgettable one-time event, our very own Shirley Simpson embodies wit, charm and fierce grit as Katharine Hepburn. Simpson gives a humorous and touching portrayal of the fiery and independent Hepburn throughout her career and the events and people who shaped her life. A fascinating story performed by a fascinating woman. This is one you will not want to miss! This show is March 1.



Join us for *A Taste of Jazz* at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse this spring for the tastiest fundraiser around! If you have attended this event in the past, you know that Tyler and the team at Ruth's Chris Steak House lays out the most delicious offering of hors d'oeuvres to enjoy. In addition, local favorite Cheryl Jones and Company will be keeping the jazz theme alive, along with fantastic raffles and a wine pull to round out the evening. It's all happening on March 10th so save the date because this night sold out last year!

It's hard to describe how special a night it was this past fall when Bryan Kennedy and Forrest Williams brought their *Songs by the Campfire* show to ECTC. These two artists shared personal stories of their friendship, how a song they wrote was inspired, and sang with such honesty and authenticity that you truly felt like you were sitting by the campfire with them. They are coming back on March 16th with more songs and more stories. Don't miss it!

Comedy on the Boulevard is back and guarantees more than a few laughs with these April fools! ECTC presents some of the Southeast's most hilarious comedians hosted by resident funny guy Jason Hedden and featuring headliner Jenn Weeks. If you saw Jen Weeks and SummerPOP this past summer then you know the laughs will be

plenty on April 1st.

Parents! Summer is coming and ECTC has a bouquet of camps ready to inspire, educate, and entertain your child. From the Mini Player camps for Kindergarten through 1st grade to our Musical and Non-Musical production camps for 2nd Grade to 5th grade and Musical Theatre Intensive and Non Musical Production camp for 6th

through 12th grade, we have what you are looking for. One of the great things about our summer camps is that it provides an opportunity for children to try something new- and very often fall in love with it! It's not just about summer camp, it's also about the joy of live theatre and how it can teach children teamwork, empathy, and literary skills. Last year almost all of our camps sold out so please be sure to register early. Also, don't let pricing be an issue, check out our scholarship for all the educational classes and camps! To find out more information and to register go to: emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps

We look forward to seeing you at the theatre, where we do community through the art of theatre! More information, registration information, and ticket purchases can all happen

at www.EmeraldCoastTheatre.org or call the box office at 850-684-0323.

Upcoming Schedule:

The Marvelous Wonderettes

Musical by Roger Bean, Cabaret Stage: Musical Revue
March 3 - 6, Thursdays - Saturdays at 7:30pm, Sundays at 2:30pm

Katharine Hepburn by Shirley Simpson

March 1 at 7:30pm

A Taste of Jazz

Fundraiser at Ruth's Chris Steak House March 10 at 5:30pm

Songs by the Campfire with Bryan Kennedy and Forrest Williams

March 16 at 7:30pm

Comedy on the Boulevard

April 1 at 7:30pm

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CABARET STAGE: MUSICAL REVUE!
MARCH 3, 4, 5, 6

KATHARINE HEPBURN by Shirley Simpson
MARCH 1 at 7:30pm

A TASTE OF JAZZ
A Fundraiser at Ruth's Chris Steak House
MARCH 10 at 5:30pm

SONGS BY THE CAMPFIRE
with Bryan Kennedy & Forrest Williams
MARCH 16 at 7:30pm

COMEDY ON THE BOULEVARD
APRIL 1 at 7:30pm

FOR TICKETS & INFO:
Call 850.684.0323 or Visit EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG
Emerald Coast Theatre Company is located at 560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200, Miramar Beach, FL 32550



By PATRICIA LEE, DESTINITES

Ask Destinites: Job Listings and Volunteer Opportunities

book.com/groups/Destinites. We have almost 6000 members now. 85% are full time residents of our area and we add new local members daily. (The other 15% are out of state property owners; some of whom live here part time.)

Maybe I should actually title this article "Getting People Connected." If you are looking for a job or volunteer work in Destin or the surrounding area or if you have a job or volunteer opportunity to offer, you should post it in our Destinites local Facebook group at www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinites.

Every Monday morning at 8:30 a.m., I place a post titled "Monday Morning Job Report. You may list your job offer in the thread of that post every Monday, as needed. You must list the name of the company, describe the job and give contact info because transparency is a must

for the safety of our community. I have been placing these posts for a long time. Though many businesses are still hurting for employees, according to the positive feedback I have received, these job postings are helping. Give it a try if you have a hiring need.

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m., I place a post titled "Volunteer Opportunities." This is where organizations, non-profits, charities or other community related groups may reply describing what volunteer opportunity they have to offer. This is something

new I just recently started, but it is already helping. You might also find beach clean-up groups posting, in the thread under this post, letting us know their schedules.

Volunteering is a great way to meet other locals and do something good for your community at the same time. Give your life some extra meaning and purpose by reaching out to help others. You are so very much needed!

If you are a resident of Destin or the surrounding area, I invite you to join our very active,

private locals Facebook group with 5900+ members—a place where locals may reach out to each other for help, recommendations or just make new friends. We have a few laughs along the way, as well. If you are not on social media, I invite you to join our monthly email newsletter on our website at www.Destinites.com.

Patricia Lee, Owner: www.Destinites.com. Creator: www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinites.

IN CHARGE

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easiest way to get stuck in life is to focus on all the problems in life that need to be solved. When we do this, we start living life as a list of "should:" I should lose weight, I should read more, I should be a better spouse/parent, etc. Life soon becomes an obligation. When we shift our fo-

cus from the problem to the possibility, "should" becomes "can:" I can lose weight, I can read more, I can be a better spouse/parent. This approach to life is an empowering invitation to live the life we want to live.

Be in charge: What are your dreams? What do you want to be true?

Be intentional about yes and no. Being ridiculously in

charge means we recognize the everyday choices we make are helping us move towards our desired outcome or they are not. This is true of both the active choices we make as well as the passive choices. And, because we are limited beings, every time we say "yes" to something we are saying "no" to something else.

Be in charge: Once you identify what you want to be

true in your life, make a list of things you need to start and a list of things you need to end.

If you would like to connect with us, you can find us at journeybravely.com.

From childhood, Todd's great passion has been to see others discover and thrive in the life they were meant to live. With over 20 years of having clarifying conversations and guiding

people through life change, Todd has coached others using effective, strategic tools and questions to help them move life forward both at home and work. Todd, and his wife, Stephenie, offer coaching through Journey Bravely (journeybravely.com) in both professional and personal capacities toward identifying, developing and living your goals, desires and dreams.



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	JUN 9	Sister Hazel
	JUN 16	The Music of Led Zeppelin <small>Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing with Conductor Brent Havens and Vocalist Randy Jackson</small>
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