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DESTIN Life

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It's Almost Time for ArtsQuest! The Exciting and Historic Arts Experience Returns During Art Month

Saturday, May 7th | 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. • Sunday, May 8 | 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Grand Boulevard

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

As a child growing up in Grayton Beach in the 80s, Jennifer Steele never dreamed she'd one day become the director of a non-profit that would help cultivate the arts in our region. She just knew she loved visiting the little art shop of local Grayton Beach artist Susan Foster where she would buy postcards and photos. Susan's gallery was her first experience with fine art and as much a part of young Jennifer's childhood memories as Grayton Beach itself.

Susan, along with another local Jan Clarke, dreamed of having an art festival with other local artists to help bring the community together to provide a sense of community the art world provides. Susan and Jan began mentioning their arts festival idea to other locals such as Van Ness Butler, and the buzz began with



2019 ArtsQuest in Grand Blvd.

PHOTO BY SHELLY SWANGER

folks coming into the gallery talking excitedly. The Walton County Tourist Development Council, who also administered the festival's first TDC grant, recommended they schedule the event during a

slower time of year.

The rest is history. In 1989, with a small community gathering, the first Grayton Beach Fine Arts Festival, now called ArtsQuest, was born! Early organizers chose Mother's



2011 ArtsQuest in Seaside

PHOTO BY SHELLY SWANGER



2008 ArtsQuest in Grand Boulevard: Cameron Moore, Lee Moore, Jan Clarke (AQ/CAA co-founder), Jennifer Steele, Julie Steele

Day weekend with the event becoming one of the first in our area to promote a "shoulder season."

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Newly Reopened! See coupon pg. 47.

Easter Reflections: Death Gives Way to Life

BY REV. GUEARY CLENDENNING

Spring is here! The grass, dormant for several months, has turned from brown to a beautiful carpet green. Wilted plants and flowers are coming alive again, and the cold winter wind has been replaced with a warm gentle breeze. Yes, Spring is here!

Last year, in early spring, a friend and I traveled to Macon, Ga., hoping to see the cherry trees in bloom. It has been reported that Macon has more than 350,000 Yoshino

EASTER
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 Community
ARTSQUEST

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Many locals, all volunteers and names you might still recognize today, were involved in this first endeavor including Jeff Ellis, Chris and Manny Chavez, Malcolm Patterson, Paul Digiamico, Doug Krumel, Nicky Frye, Jack Houston, Hilda McDonald, Kitty Tyler and several more. Through the years, it evolved into a weekend event and has moved to various locations such as Eden State Gardens, Seaside and The Village of Baytowne Wharf to accommodate its growth.

In the meantime, Jennifer was growing up and witnessing it all happen in her hometown. Today, 34 years since the festival's inception, Jennifer is the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) Executive Director and ArtsQuest is one of the largest juried art shows in the region bringing in thousands of attendees from all over. Having evolved into much more than a community gathering, in a VIE Magazine article, Jennifer describes ArtsQuest as "an intricate and beautifully detailed tapestry, woven over the years by locals tooled with vary-

ing backgrounds, resources and talents."

Eventually, realizing the need for a non-profit organization to help cultivate the arts in Walton County, the CAA was formed as the official local arts agency. Its vision is to continue to make Walton County a home and destination for cultural and artistic excellence where lives are enriched, the economy is stimulated and the community is strengthened through the arts. It offers support, connection and access opportunities for all forms of art, every variety of maker, all levels of learners, and especially, art lovers all throughout the year.

Through sponsorships, advocacy, funding and educational programs, the CAA directly connects people to all things art related. ArtsQuest was the first event the CAA ever produced and has truly become a beloved CAA signature event — one of the most significant ways CAA is able to continue to fulfill its mission. It bridges the gap for those who either lack access to the arts or could uniquely benefit from the experience.

Each year, the CAA produces popular, large-scale events,



2022 Featured Artist
Orestes Barrios Marañón



including the 30A Songwriters Festival, Valentine Tour of Homes, ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival and the Flutterby Children's Arts Festival; operates The Foster Gallery, a local artist collective showcasing art works from more than 30 local artists in a quarterly rotation; and also

presents over 250 exciting and educational art workshops in its offices at the Bayou Arts Center. Further, the CAA recently partnered with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association to launch the nation's first permanent Underwater Museum of Art off the coast of Grayton Beach State Park. Visit umafl.org to learn more about this Art in Public Spaces program that is expanding the county's artificial reef system. The CAA also provides much-needed arts funding through its Art For All grant program to Walton County's teachers, students, artists and arts organizations.

Still a Mother's Day weekend tradition, this year's ArtsQuest, May 7 and 8, is being hosted by Grand Boulevard at Sandestin and features exhibiting national, regional and local artists as well as art workshops and live art demonstrations. With continuing support from Visit South Walton and additional support from the Florida Department of State, Division of Arts & Culture and Emerald Coast Magazine, the festival will provide an opportunity to view and purchase original art from more than 100 artists who con-

vene each year from throughout the U.S. They will display their original artwork in various mediums including, but not limited to, ceramics, glass, oil and acrylics, photography, sculpture, metal and wood. They will also compete for awards and cash prizes totaling \$10,000. Further, the festival will offer heritage art demonstrations, a CAA member artist exhibit, a Walton County student exhibit, continuous live music and entertainment and "ImagiNation: where kids rule." A full cash bar will be available throughout the weekend in Grand Park.

You will find this year's featured artist, Orestes Barrios Marañón, who was also the 2021 ArtsQuest 'Best in Show' winner, at the event. His featured piece, "Fable In Eden," is

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EASTER

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Cherry Trees that bloom in the middle of March for about 10 days. During this period, Macon is called the pinkest city in the world. At this time, Macon celebrates an event called the International Cherry Blossom Festival. Unfortunately, our visit was about a week too late to see the trees in bloom.

The history of the cherry trees began in 1949. A native of Macon, William A. Fickling, discovered a unique and unrecognized tree blooming in his yard. Later, while visiting Washington, D.C., he realized, seeing the same type of tree there, that it was a Yoshino Cherry Tree.

He and his family began distributing the tree throughout Macon, and well, the rest is history!

Tradition has it that the tree symbolizes eternity and the blossoms speak of renewal and new beginnings. Because of the blossom's short duration, they represent the briefness of life on earth. It seems fitting that the death and resurrection of Christ is celebrated in the spring of each year. The death of Jesus was like a bitter winter storm to all those who were close to Him. But His resurrection three days later—when death gave way to life—was the awakening of Spring!

Can you imagine the response of the women coming to Christ's tomb that early Sunday

morning and finding His body missing? Then two men, probably angels, dressed in white, appeared and said, "why seek the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen" (Luke 24:5-6)

Many today are living in an endless wintertime, seemingly without hope. We have a message to share: Jesus Christ is alive! There is hope for change. Spring is here and all who put their trust in Christ will experience a new beginning! Jesus said, "because I live you also shall live." (John 14:19).

This world is caught in the cold darkness of confusion and trouble. But because Jesus Christ arose from the dead, the Bible says "Therefore He is able to

completely save those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them." Hebrews 7:25)

So, dear friend, no matter the season you find yourself in, your life can be changed from winter to spring, through the living power of the resurrected Christ! This Easter can be a new beginning for you if you'll join the millions of Christians who will be celebrating what Easter is truly all about. Let the Easter message come alive for you, as Death gives way to life!

Happy Easter.

Rev. Gueary Clendenning is the retired pastor of the Valparaiso Assembly of God.



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Hope Squad: Positive Mental Health for Our Youth

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. According to the Florida Department of Vital Statistics, suicide was the third leading cause of death for individuals ages 5 to 14 in 2020.

Northwest Florida, from Walton to Escambia Counties, combined in 2018-2020, falls in the top five in youth suicides per 100,000 population for the State of Florida. It is time for our communities to come together on this topic and be aware of the challenges we face in keeping our kids safe.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a statewide school-based survey of Florida's public high school students, showed that 39.3% of high school students felt sad or hopeless. 17.7% seriously considered attempting suicide, 13.8% made a suicide plan and 8.9% attempted suicide.

Fortunately, there's the Hope

Squad, part of United for a Good Cause, a local 501(c) (3) charitable organization. United for a Good Cause is the lead entity that helps secure funding for and implements Hope Squad in our region's schools.

In 2019 after seeing the concerning statistics for our region, United for a Good Cause, Inc. took on the task of raising the money to bring the Hope Squad program to this region. Thanks to many area businesses like Eglin Federal Credit Union, United Way Emerald Coast, Okaloosa Cares Grant, Bit-Wizards, Emerald Coast Harley Davidson, and organizations like Impact 100, Sunday's Child, 100 Women Who Care, Niceville Strong, The Tatissa Foundation and numerous smaller donors, funding has been made possible to start a Hope Squad program in most elementary and secondary schools in Okaloosa and Walton School Districts and others over



the next year.

According to United for a Good Cause, Inc. Executive Director Peggy Brockman, "We have 18 schools that currently have their Hope Squad program in various stages of implementation. Fifteen of those are in Okaloosa County School District, one in Santa Rosa and two in Escambia County. Others will be onboarding their programs over the next year. We still have a long way to go, but we are moving forward in spite of a global pandemic slowing the process. Students are finding hope again and are learning that it is ok to speak up and seek help. 75% of

young people will tell a peer before harming themselves but will not go to an adult. That is why the peer-to-peer program is so successful across the country."

Recently, four regional "Community Conversation" meetings regarding the mental health of our youth were held—locally at Choctawhatchee and Crestview High Schools and Pensacola State College Milton and Pensacola Campuses.

Dr. Greg A. Hudnall, founder and Executive Director of HOPE4UTAH and creator of the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program, led the conversations. He has championed suicide prevention in schools and communities for more than 20 years. His expertise is not only sought after locally, but also nationally and internationally at the highest levels of government.

In addition, the seventh annual Youth Leadership Con-

ference took place at Niceville High School on March 5th and encouraged area 7th-12th grade students in public, private or homeschools to attend. It specifically was designed to help these students cultivate leadership skills, empower them with tools and resources, and inspire them to live and model civic action in the community while helping them discover their purpose and potential. The conference brought together students and youth from throughout the region that are interested in leadership—a great number already actively participating within the Hope Squad Peer-to-Peer Suicide Prevention Program.

For more information, contact our Executive Director, Peggy Brockman at (850) 259-8356 or e-mail: u4agchs@gmail.com. And please visit unitedforagoodcause.org, hopesquad.com or Facebook at United for A Good Cause, Inc.

Want to Join an Easter Church Service?

Destiny Worship Center Destin Campus

Friday, April 15

Good Friday Service 6pm

Saturday, April 16

Eggstravaganza Community Egg Hunt 3pm

Easter Service 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 17

Easter Services: 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am

DestinyWorshipCenter.com

Destin United Methodist Church

Friday, April 15

Good Friday Service | 6pm | Destin Life Center

Sunday, April 17

Easter Sunrise Service | 6am | Henderson

Beach State Park

Beach Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Restaurant

Scenic 98

Xalt Service Contemporary | 9:30am | Destin

Life Center

Traditions Service Traditional | 11am | Sanctuary

Destinumc.org

Village Church

Thursday, April 14

Maundy Thursday | Communion on the Greens | 6 pm

Sunday, April 17

Resurrection Sunday | Small Groups 9 am |

Worship 10 am

Egg Hunt Sunday | 11 am

VillageBaptist.org

Emmanuel Anglican Church

Holy Week April 10-17

Sunday, April 10

Palm Sunday Worship | 9am

Thursday, April 14

Maundy Thursday Foot-washing and Eucharist | 7pm

Friday, April 15

Good Friday Service | Noon

Saturday, April 16

Holy Saturday Service | Noon

Sunday, April 17

Easter Sunday Resurrection Worship | 9am

Iacdestin.org

TASTE THE Sunshine

AJ'S EL DORADO SUNSHINE LAGER

Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! APRIL 2022

..... 5
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Baytowne Live Music | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Boomin' Tuesday | 6:30pm | Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
..... 6
Spring Youth Climbing | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Silent Disco | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 7
Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | HarborWalk Village
Baytowne Live Music | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Sandestin Wine Festival Kick Off Party | 6pm | Village Door Baytowne
Open Poetry Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
..... 8
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Sandestin Wine Festival | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's HarborWalk
Drag Night / Spring Break | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 9
Trail Life Car Show | 8am | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds
5K Fun Run/Walk | 8:30am | Destin High School
Home Show | 9am | Emerald Coast Convention Center
Seas The Day Yoga | 9am | Sandestin Beaches
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt | 10am | The Gulf

Easter KEG Hunt Fundraiser | 10am | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Sandestin Wine Festival | 1pm | Baytowne Wharf
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
..... 10
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
Chakra Yoga | 9am | Enlightened Studios
Home Show | 11am | Emerald Coast Convention Center
Sandestin Wine Festival Brunch | 11am | Baytowne Wharf
Kids Flower Pot Painting | 12pm | 3rd Planet Brewing
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
..... 11
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 12
FPRA Member Mixer & Award Ceremony | 5:30pm | J.Leon Gallery & Studio
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
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Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Silent Disco | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
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Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | HarborWalk Village
Doggie EGGstravaganza | 5:30pm | Grand Boulevard
Baytowne Live Music | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Open Poetry Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
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"Old MacDonald" Theatre | 9am | Emerald Coast Theatre



Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Paint & Sip | 6pm | Palms Coffeehouse
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's HarborWalk
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
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SeaOat Planting | Okaloosa Island
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
City of Destin Easter Egg Hunt | 9am | Morgan Sports Complex
Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt | 10am | The Gulf
Bob Ross Day | 10am | Enlightened Studios
4 Legs & Easter Eggs | 10am | 3 Dogs & a Chick FWB
Easter Eggstravaganza | 3pm | Destiny Worship
90s Party | 6pm | 3rd Planet Brewing
Easter Service | 6pm | Beachside Community Church
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
..... 17 Easter
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
Chakra Yoga | 9am | Enlightened Studios
Easter Brunch | 10am | The Henderson
Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt | 10am | The Island Hotel
Drag Brunch | 10:30am | Enlightened Studios
Easter Brunch | 10:30am | Emerald Grande
Easter Brunch | 11am | Ocean Club Destin
Easter Bunny Visits | 1pm | LuLu's Destin
Visit the Easter Bunny | 2pm | HarborWalk Village
Easter Dinner Cruise | 5pm | Solaris Yacht
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga

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U.S.A.F. Historic Beach Flyover Honoring Doolittle Raiders | 5pm | The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
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Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Baytowne Live Music | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
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Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 21
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | Grand Boulevard
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf
Baytowne Live Music | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Poetry Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
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South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | Grand Boulevard
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's HarborWalk
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
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South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | Grand Boulevard
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Earth Day Clean Up | 8am | Okaloosa County Leave No Trace
Spring Festival | 9am | Chautauqua Vineyards + Winery
Firetruck Pull | 12pm | 3rd Planet Brewing
Destin Coastal Fashion Week | 7pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios

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South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | Grand Boulevard
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed Walline Beach
Chakra Yoga | 9am | Enlightened Studios
Artisan Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Ballet Conservatory Spring Dance | 4:30 | HarborWalk Village
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga
..... 25
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 26
Music Bingo | 6pm | FatBoys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios
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Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
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Open Poetry Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires Destin
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Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo | 6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's HarborWalk
Crazy for You | 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co.
Comedy Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 30
Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida 5K Run / Walk | 8am
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Crazy for You | 1pm, 4pm, 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co.
Exotic Car Show | 4:30pm | The Palms of Destin Resort
Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Ball | 6pm | Hilton Sandestin
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios



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Fire Truck Pull to Benefit Twin Cities Pavilion

Multiple community organizations are teaming up to complete 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 that will 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-Res-

cue Organization, Valparaiso Realty and Dynamic Software Solutions.

There will be two competitions—the Open Division for the more serious competitors to show their stuff. A team consists of 10 people who pull a fire truck 15 feet one time, and the best time wins. The \$200 per team entry fee all goes to the project.

“In the Business Division, any group can enter. They will get

their name or logo on T-shirts we’re making for competitors,” says Bob. “This could include businesses, churches, non-profits or even neighborhoods.” The \$250 entry fee helps the Pavilion and offsets the cost of the event.

Teams can register by scanning the QR code on flyers being distributed or visiting the Facebook pages and website of the organizations listed above, such as Mid-Bay Bridge Rotary. The TCP project involves

refurbishing the entrance area, which is also used by residents for sitting and relaxing outdoors.

The event will begin with team check-in at noon. Competition begins start at 1 p.m. There will be two food trucks, raffles and music.

Contact Bob Hoffman at (850) 428-3261 with additional questions.



Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash is Back!

The Rotary Club of Destin will host its 10th Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash Charity Fundraiser at The Towne Centre at Seascapes 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.

Back by popular demand is Fais Do-Do Band performing its 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! You 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 \$35 per person for a large flat of crawfish and

Continued on page 12

Schlatters Fine Furniture

Huge Store Closing Retirement Sale! | Every Item on Sale Including All Fixtures!

After some 55 years of being in business, we have decided to close our doors and liquidate all the merchandise at Schlatter’s Fine Furniture, your friendly neighborhood store for all your quality furniture needs such as Bedroom

sets, Living Room sets and Dining Room sets as well as Bookcases and Cabinets. The store founded by Mr. Doug in 1967 is finally closing its doors for good.

To thank all our loyal customers, friends and vendors for

their valuable patronage and at the same time accomplish our goals, we are having a **huge store closing retirement sale!** You can get **great discounts!**

hop, ska, rock and Afro-Caribbean, attendees are guaranteed to be dancing! You 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

Going out of business SALE!
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Blowout prices continuing into month two... Don't miss out on these GREAT DEALS!

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Fort Walton Beach**

Around Town

The **Active Retired Men of Destin** (ARMOD) will meet on April 8, 11:30, at the Destin American Legion (311 Main Street in Destin). Fred O'Bryan, representing the National United Veterans Service Organization, will be guest speaker. Lunch will be provided (cost: \$15). A special raffle will be conducted by the speaker for The National United Veteran's Service Organization (Tickets \$5). To attend, contact Jim Wood at (850) 269-0196 / (850) 502 9468 or armyguyindestin@embarq-mail.com. Please RSVP no later than April 1.

The **Building Industry Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties** will hold its 43rd Annual Home Show at

the Emerald Coast Convention Center on Okaloosa Island April 9 & 10, Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. If you're interested in being an exhibitor, call the BIA office at 850-863-5107. Visit biaow.org for the official 2022 Home Show Rules and Entry form.

Bring the family and hop on over to **LuLu's** to see the tropically clad Easter Bunny, Sunday, April 17, from 1 to 3 p.m. The Easter Bunny will be visiting with boys and girls and giving them an Easter egg with a toy inside. Located next to Legendary Marina; For more information, visit: www.lulubuffett.com/destin.

Bring your family Easter Sunday, April 17, to an Easter

egg hunt on the beach at **The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach** followed by a delicious brunch buffet on The Island Green. The Easter egg hunts begin at 10 a.m. and are divided into age groups. Enjoy an assortment of delicious entrees and treats including, a complimentary mimosa, an omelet bar, carving station, desserts, and more at The Island's Easter Brunch buffet as well as live music by the Jazz Cats trio from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Easter Bunny will also make a special appearance! Brunch 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on The Island Green. \$65.00 per person. The Egg Hunt is open to the public and participation is complimentary. Reservations for brunch are encouraged. Please call 850-337-9182.



Celebrate Easter on the **Destin Harbor**. Enjoy an Easter Brunch overlooking the Destin Harbor in the Emerald Grande HarborView Room from 10:30 am–2:30 pm (reservations recommended). Then hop on down to HarborWalk Village and visit with the Easter Bunny from 2–4 p.m. on the main stage. Adults: \$45. Children: \$20. Reservations Required: 850-424-0622.

Cruise through a relaxing Easter Sunday Dinner aboard the **Solaris yacht**. After taking in the warm coastal breezes and panoramic views from the sky deck, guests will indulge in a three-course dinner and special children's menu. Checkin 4:15 p.m.; cruise at 5 p.m. Reservations are required and available online at SunQuestCruises.com or by calling 850-650-2519. Adults \$86; Children \$48.

The **2022 Emerald Ball** to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast will be held Saturday, April 30, at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Sandestin. The inaugural event in 2019 raised an amazing \$217,631, thanks to the community's generosity. 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.

Join the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida** for a 5K Run/Walk, Saturday, April 30, that will take you on a beautiful scenic route around Historic Valparaiso. Parking will be available in the open field next to the Museum at 115 Westview Ave, Valparaiso, 32580. The race will begin promptly at 8 a.m. and afterwards you can enjoy free refreshments in the Museum's outdoor exhibit, the Paradise Gardens. All runners will receive a participation medal for completion. (shirt guaranteed for completion.) Cost: \$25 Museum and NWFTC members (Before 13 April); \$30 Non-member registration (Before 13 April); \$35 Regular registration (After 13 April). Call 850-678-2615 to pay and register.

For the first time ever, Destin has a **community resource deputy**. You might have already seen **Tim Trowbridge** around town, and you'll be seeing a lot more of him. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office chose him to be part of a new community policing program where deputies partner with us and those in our community to help solve community problems. "Destin is one of our partners in law enforcement. We provide public service to them, and public safety to them," Sheriff Eric Aden said in a YouTube video

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Don't Miss ALL the Fun this Spring at the Village of Baytowne Wharf!

April Wednesday Night Concerts: The Tribute Series
Wednesdays through April 27, 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!

April 13: The Long Run - Eagles Tribute

The Long Run is made up of some of Florida's finest and most respected musicians. Individual members of the band have performed with or shared the stage with great artists such as Lynyrd Skynyrd, Steppenwolf, Eddie Money, Beach Boys, .38 Special, Doobie Brothers, Trace Adkins...just to name a few. The Long Run reproduces the sound that made the Eagles one of the most successful musical groups in rock and roll history. They capture the energy, guitar technique and vocal harmonies of the Eagles to an art; five voices blending together that will please even the most critical of Eagles fans. You won't hear a tribute to the Eagles this great till "Hell Freezes Over."

April 20: Rust & Gold - Neil Young Tribute

Started by Nic Turner, Scott Rockwood, Shawn Hartung, Dan Hall and Roberto Padron, RUST & GOLD had emerged as an extremely accurate tribute band. Rust and Gold is a band that pays tribute to the music genius of Neil Young covering his greatest hits from past to present. Rust and Gold is one of the most authentic sounding Neil Young tributes in the world, keeping to his creative sound and vocals. From the harmonica tunes and unique acoustic, to the electrifying sound of "Cortez The Killer" Contact us at 850-502-1958 Rust & Gold is planning on it 2022 tour with Mel Senter, David Beaver and Cameron Mitchell.

April 27: Greggie & The Jetts - #1 Elton John Tribute

Greggie & The Jetts have, so far, entertained in the southeastern U.S., with big plans for



widespread concert dates approaching. The band would like to thank all of the venues that have booked them thus far, including: Brevard Parks & Recreation, Captain Hiram's Resort, Commons Park, Crest Theatre, Floridian Social Club, "Get Your Teach On" National Convention, Hard Rock Cafe, Heritage Isle, Kenny D's, Landings Club Savannah, Marriott World Center, Meg O'malley's, Old Cypress Resort, Pineapples E.G.A.D., Seaworld Orlando, Sugden Park (Fallen Officers), The Moon Tallahassee, Trump Golf Resort And Spa, Topsy Tiki, Victory Casino Cruises, Visani Theatre, Wickham Park Pavilion, Wild Rover Brewing Company.

All concerts are FREE to attend.

Easter Explosion!
Saturday, April 16th, 12-3 p.m.

Bounce on over to the Village of Baytowne Wharf for an Easter Explosion, Saturday April 16th! Enjoy a day filled with family friendly entertainment, face-painting, arts & crafts, and more! Plus live music! Also, don't forget to get your picture taken with the Easter Bunny!

Bubbly Baytowne
Thursday, April 21, 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



SAVE THE DATE!
Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios presents a Spring Concert
Tuesday, May 10th, 7-8:30 p.m. | Events Plaza Stage

All Invited! Please join Vocal Coach Alissa Steffens and some of her very talented students as they present a night of music! All Genres! Performers are Kids through Adults! May 10th at 7pm. Location: Baytowne Amphitheater! (Next to Zip Line) It will be a night to remember! Come on out and support local talent! Open to the public! No charge. Grab a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening! Can't wait to see you there!

Coach Alissa Steffens is a Performer, Professional Songwriter, Recording Artist and Vocal Coach with a history rich in the Nashville Music Industry! After moving to Sandestin/30a area a

few years ago, she continued her work as a Vocal Coach, specializing in Mentorship, Vocal Performance, Songwriting, Artist Development/Career Planning, Acting and Speaking. Alissa works with students regionally, nationally and internationally. Her students sing all different musical genres and range from the Beginner to the Advanced Career Artist. She and her students work on various projects together that involve vocal performance, songwriting, albums, tours, career planning, artist development, commercials, film acting projects, theatre, speeches, etc. Alissa has a big heart for giving her students both a voice and a platform.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf events are FREE to attend. Don't miss the fun!

enjoy a selection of premium champagnes.

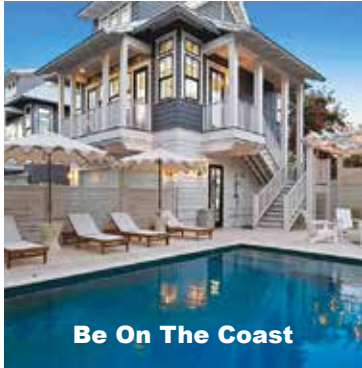
* This event is free and for 21 and up only. The village will be open to the public during this event.



Wednesday Night Concert Series!

A Tribute: April 13: The Long Run - Eagles Tribute
 April 20: Rust & Gold - Neil Young Tribute
 April 27: Greggie & The Jetts - #1 Elton John Tribute

Trends & Treasures



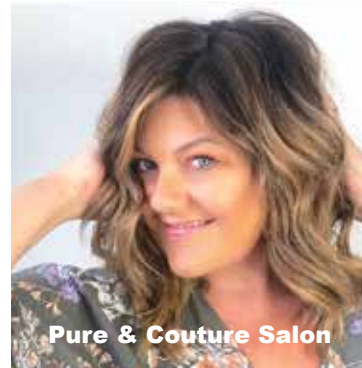
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Pure & Couture Salon



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A Hot Market: Get Your Home Ready To Sell

Be On The Coast Real Estate Team

Hot! Hot! Hot! “These three words adequately describe the real estate market from Pensacola to Destin, Miramar Beach to 30A and beyond,” said Brian K. LoCicero, Luxury Realtor® at Be On The Coast Real Estate. In many instances, a hot market can mean a faster sale at or above asking price. Before you get ready to watch the money roll in, you’ll need to get your property ready to sell. A seller in a hot market has a better chance of selling a home “as-is” without having to make major updates. Discuss with your realtor whether you, as a seller, should make any significant updates or repairs to your property before listing it. Your realtor can evaluate comparable properties in your neighborhood. A seasoned realtor will also give you a priority list of things to fix or update, in order to list your home at the best and highest price point. Your realtor may recommend a home inspection before listing your property, to identify areas that need to be addressed prior to the first showing.

In a hot market, buyers want to move quickly and are driven by first impressions of the property and emotions. The best way to make someone fall in love with your house is to declutter it, interior and exterior, and then “stage” it. Giving the home a “wow” factor will distinguish it from the rest of the homes viewed and give your property an even better advantage over any other homes for sale in your area. Clean out closets for a more spacious, organized look and feel. Furniture surfaces should be knick knock free and personal photos put away, so the potential buyer can best picture their own items in the home.

Make sure you have all rel-

evant property documentation to give to your realtor to share with potential buyers and the title company. Lastly, have a place to go. Hot markets mean quick sales and closings. Decide this before you list the property. Once offers come in on your property, you have greater bargaining power to use to accommodate special moving needs and timeframes. Don’t be afraid of negotiating. Your buyer is just as aware as you are of the limited options on the market. It doesn’t hurt to ask.

If you’re ready to buy or sell your property, call the Be On The Coast Real Estate team at (850)739-3800 or visit: BeOnTheCoast.com

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soothe fatigued limbs. For aesthetic touches, try the Pagani® Italian Body Contouring for fat and cellulite reduction and skin rejuvenation. Whether you’re a dancer, an athlete, a mom or dad, a student, a business person, whoever—you can benefit from an improved immune system, metabolism boost, better sleep, reinforcement of cognitive abilities, inflammation and pain management, improved athletic performance and antiaging.

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We Smell (and Taste) Sprinkles!

Smallcakes: A Cupcakery

Happy Spring Destin! Life is better with sprinkles on top (or on the nose)! Not to be left out, our furry friends love to be pampered with scrumptious pet treats, and yes, with the sprinkles from Smallcakes! April is here, ushering in a new wave of “ALL” cakes, in all flavors and varieties—cupcakes, cookie cakes, “mini” or “mighty” cakes, gluten-free cakes, brownies, cupcakes-in-a-jar, birthday and wedding cake heaven on earth! You can choose from an array of “frostacious” frostings and a variety of cupcake flavors to suit even the pickiest palate! Try Smallcakes for yourself or give a gift of sweets! You’ll be a hit when you take them back to school. Make your celebrations personal with custom edible logos and images to go on these tempting treats, baked fresh, with up to 18 flavors to choose from. As seen on the Food Network and Cupcake Wars, “ALL” cakes are perfect for birthdays, school events, grandmothers and grandfathers, moms and dads, anniversaries, celebrations, office or family reunions! All month long we will have Cookie Monster and Caramel Crunch available! Cookie Monster: Brown sugar and chocolate chip cake, topped with cookies buttercream and a chocolate chip cookie. Caramel Crunch: Devil’s food cake with caramel icing, topped with pretzels and sea salt. Yum!

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 Community

From the City of Destin



By CATHERINE CARD, PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGER

In 2017, the City of Destin started its Leave No Trace initiative to promote environmental awareness and pride in our city. We love Destin and we all play a vital role and must be conscious of our actions and how they can impact our environment and city.

Through a partnership between the City of Destin, Okaloosa County and the Okaloosa Tourist Development Department, our beaches and beach

trash cans are cleaned and emptied on a regular basis. In 2020, about 900,000 pounds of trash was collected off our beaches in a year of COVID-19 related travel impacts. In 2021, more than 1.1 million pounds of trash were collected from Destin and Okaloosa Island beaches. It is our hope that residents and visitors will take individual pride and initiative to ensure that our emerald waters and sugar white beaches remain beautiful.

Our Leave no Trace initiative goes beyond our beaches and waterways. We want our residents, businesses and visitors to take pride in our roadways, front yards, our parks as well as our entire city.

The Destin City Council, Mayor and staff hope residents, local businesses and visitors will join the effort and support the Leave No Trace initiative, and here is how you can participate! Businesses can promote the initiative by displaying the Leave No Trace logo on their digital billboards or simply post "Leave No Trace" on their marquee sign. We kindly ask all residents and visitors to remove all the items that they bring with them. We ask they take pride in Destin and keep our beautiful city clean. It is that simple.

The city works with many partners to collaborate on various clean-ups throughout the year and operates an Adopt-A-Street Program which allows local families, businesses and community groups to perform a valuable community service by adopting sections of a street to keep clear of litter and debris. For more information, please visit www.cityofdestin.com/leavenotrace.



and preschoolers are invited to follow the bunny trail where library staff will be handing out crafts, snacks and treats. There is no cost to attend, however registration is requested to make sure that there are enough goodies for every bunny. Click on the Easter Treat Trail event on the library cooperative's calendar at okaloosa.librarycalendar.com to fill out the short registration form. In case of rain, please refer to the library's Facebook page or their website at cityofdestin.com/library for cancellation information the day of the event.

The **Destin Garden Club** proudly presents its eagerly awaited annual **Plant Sale** on April 23rd from 9 a.m. to noon on the grounds of the Destin Library. Garden Club members will have lots of plants for sale, many grown by the club members themselves with a focus on Florida friendly plants. There will be a Master Gardner table with helpful information for everyone and club members will be giving tours of the Destin Library's beautiful Butterfly Garden. All are welcome for a wonderful day of horticultural therapy. For questions, contact the library at (850) 837-8572 or library@cityofdestin.com.

The **City of Destin's Annual Easter Egg Hunt** will be held on Saturday, April 16th, at Morgan Sports Center beginning at 9 a.m. Ages 12 and under can participate with a special egg hunting zone for crawlers and toddlers. Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this event are requested to notify the recreation manager at least 48 hours in advance.

For more information, contact the City of Destin Recreation Department at 850-654-5184 or emailrecreation@cityofdestin.com.

April is **Jazz Appreciation Month** and what better way to celebrate than with a **free, open-air concert at the Destin Library?** Sponsored by Friends Guild of the Destin Library, on Tuesday April 12th at 12 p.m., bring your lawn chair, pack a lunch and enjoy a performance by Destin's own Dr. Cheryl Jones outside on the veranda. Dr. Jones is a pianist, vocalist, composer and music director who's been the voice of the award-winning group Jones and Company for over 20 years. Free and open to the public. In the event of inclement weather, please check the library's Facebook page or website at cityofdestin.com/library for updates. For more information, contact the library at 850-837-8572 or library@cityofdestin.com.

You don't have to be Peter Cottontail to hop on down the **Easter Treat Trail** at the **Destin Library**. On April 13th at 10:30 a.m., toddlers

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The Arc of the Emerald Coast Hosts Its 11th Annual Burning Up The Beaches Car Show

May 5-7 | Destin Commons | The Island at Fort Walton Beach

Burning Up The Beaches is a fun-filled weekend with gearheads from throughout the U.S. Participating attendees will enjoy three days of events and show off their cars on the sugar-white beaches of Destin and Fort Walton Beach.

Burning Up The Beaches kicks off Thursday, May 5, at 2 p.m. at The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach. Once checked in, attendees will be

greeted with happy hour on the Buccaneer Pirate Cruise which will leave from Destin Harbor at 6 p.m. At 10 a.m. on Friday, May 6, the group will drive in the Main Street Parade in downtown Fort Walton Beach to show off their vintage cars. The celebration will continue with various events hosted at The Island Resort including a DJ at the pool and live music.

Saturday, May 7, is the big



show day! The Burning Up The Beaches car show will begin at 9 a.m. at Destin Commons. Valve cover racing will begin at 11 a.m. Participants will enjoy

a day of cars, music and more around Destin Commons.

The Main Street Parade and the Burning Up The Beaches car show are open to the public to attend. To participate in the parade, car show, as well as the other activities during the Burning up the Beaches weekend, registration is required.

For those looking for a place to stay during Burning Up The Beaches, The Island Resort

at Fort Walton Beach is offering special rates for registrants. Registration and information to book your stay at The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach can be found at www.burningupthebeaches.com

All funds raised during Burning Up The Beaches weekend will support The Arc of the Emerald Coast's mission to provide a path from disability to capability.

Women Unite to Improve Mental Health

“We live in a world where we are told to follow our dreams, but we weren't told how hard it would be to achieve our dreams. For a female in today's society, there are a lot of things that hold us back from reaching our full potential,” said Marlee Tucker, Director of Development, United Way Emerald Coast at the recent launch of United Way Emerald Coast's (UWEC) new Women United chapter.



PHOTOS BY KAITLYN SANCHEZ

118 women from throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties gathered at WaterVue at Brooks Street in Fort Walton Beach to celebrate and provide input for the causes they are passionate about. “As we come together this morning, we celebrate and honor the accomplishments of the women that came before us, those who paved the way for us to be where we are today. We also recognize that there is much more work to be done, to be where we want to be both as women and as a society,” Marlee said. “But, most importantly, this morning we decide how WE will be the ones to do something about it, how we will step up and improve the quality of

life for the women and girls in our area.”

The attendees also voted on the first focus of Women United. “We considered some of the most important issues in our local area as they relate to women and girls, and two issues kept being repeated in our discussions: mental health and education,” said President & CEO, Kelly Jasen. With a 65% vote, the group selected the mental health of women and girls as its focus.

“Women and girls need to know that it is OK to talk about mental health,” said Kelly, “to realize no matter your circumstances or your struggles, you are NOT alone.”

In Okaloosa and Walton counties, there are currently no existing support groups for women dealing with postpartum depression. Through this initiative, Women United hopes to help young girls learn their worth, build their self-esteem and practice developing healthy coping skills so they all feel loved and supported; help provide resources and treatments they need to overcome their mental

illness; and provide at least one supportive relationship that a little girl or a young single mother needs in order to change their life. “With the right tools and support, there's no limit to what women can do and as part of United Way, we have unparalleled resources to make lasting changes for local women and girls,” said Kelly.

Continued on next page

Save the date!

Burning Up The Beaches 2022

MAY 5-7, 2022

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 Community

A Superior's Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch

By MARTA ROSE THORPE

A Superior will once again host its quarterly Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch on Tuesday, April 12, at Faith Assembly Christian Church, 306 S. Geronimo Street in Miramar Beach from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. All area Veterans and First Responders are invited, as well as the local commu-

nity who want to welcome and support this group. A Superior will again give away an HVAC system to one Veteran or First Responder in need.

At the January 11th lunch, a U.S. Marine won the Q1 HVAC Unit Giveaway. Travis Stephens, who served his country for 18 years, was separating from service in January for medical re-

tiement. At that time, he was on a 60-day terminal leave with no job in sight. Travis lives in Crestview with his wife of seven years and two young children, ages 3 and 4. In December, the family's 20-year-old HVAC unit had stopped working and the parts to fix it could not be located. The family had placed some window units in the children's bedrooms

as all they could afford at the time. Needless to say, the gift of the HVAC system went to a very deserving man for his family.

"The bigger picture of all of this, and why we started this appreciation lunch in the first place," explains owner Jimy Thorpe, "is simply to be an example, and show other companies that they, too, can give back.

We saw that the way we could give back is by donating what we have – HVAC units. Others can use our event as a template to create their own program to give back." Veterans and First Responders may apply for the April 12th giveaway online at ASuperiorAC.com.



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WOMEN UNITE

continued from page 11

Women United is a network made up of female leaders who wish to affect change in their community through philanthropy and service. By investing their time, talents and treasures, these passionate ladies come together and address some of our area's most pressing issues as they relate to women and girls. "The Emerald Coast is home to some of the most caring and generous ladies in the world and I look forward to uniting with them to build a stronger community where women and girls can thrive."

United Way Emerald Coast has had a presence in this community for the last 65 years, fighting for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our two-county area of Okaloosa and Walton counties. Are you interested in becoming a member of Women United? Women United is open to women that donate a combined household gift of \$500+ a year (unrestricted funding) to UWEC.

Visit www.united-way.org/womenunited or contact womenunited@united-way.org to learn more.

CRAWFISH BASH

continued from page 5

fixings, \$50 for All-You-Can-Eat crawfish and fixings, and \$15 for children or a non-crawfish meal; kids age three and under are free. For reserved seating, VIP tables for 8 people (including 8 regular crawfish tickets) are

available for \$500.

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://bit.ly/destincrawfish> or printed tickets from any Destin Rotarian.

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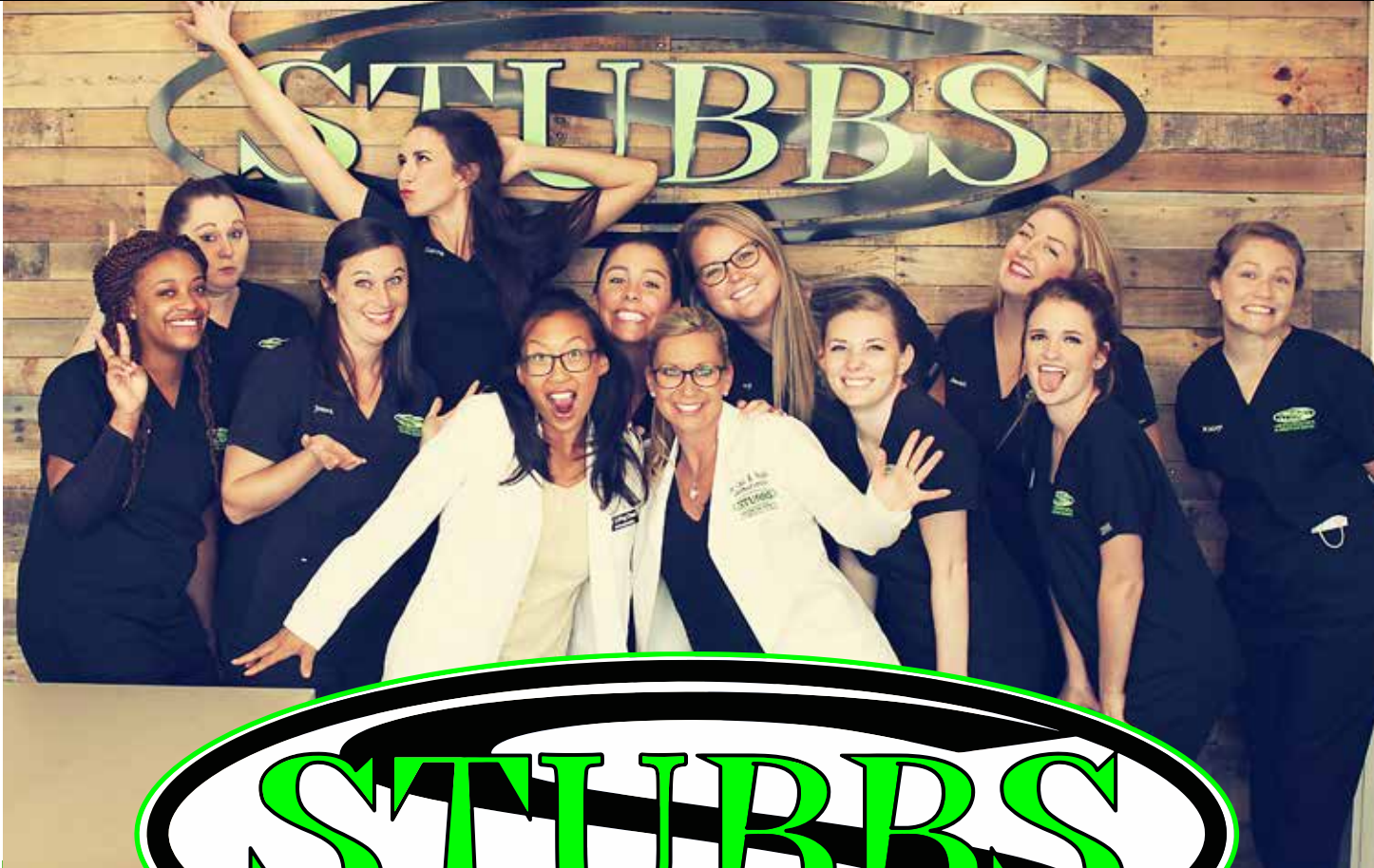
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Military News

Eglin Claims Air Force Hospital of the Year: The 96th Medical Group at Eglin Air Force Base claimed four awards recently, including Hospital of the Year, at the 2021 Air Force



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Medical Service Annual Awards and included individual and team awards. Individual category winners included USAF Biomedical Specialist of the Year - Field Grade Category: Lt. Col. William J. Chalmers III; USAF Diet Therapy Airman of the Year: Senior Airman Maylen J. Dumanas; USAF Physician of the Year - Field Grade Category: Maj. Roselyn Jan W. Fuentes.

This year's **Air Force Materiel Command Company Grade Officer of The Year** is **Eglin Air Force Base's own Capt. Troy D. Soileau Jr.** A prestigious major com-

mand award, Capt. Soileau performed as the flight commander, 47th Cyberspace Test Squadron, 96th Cyberspace Test Group, 96th Test Wing, Air Force Test Center, Air Force Materiel Command at Eglin Air Force Base. Capt. Soileau oversaw \$9 million of equipment in support of 12 critical aircraft and weapons cybersecurity test programs. Additionally, as the 96th Cyberspace Test Group Chief Data Officer, he made strides in transforming how the Group and Wing leveraged large data sources to create more lethal weapon systems for the Air Force.



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Inaugural FORCE BLUE Ocean Conservation School

Military veterans from FORCE BLUE launched their inaugural FORCE BLUE OCS (Ocean Conservation School) for Gold Star families recently at Vortex Springs in Ponce De-Leon. (A Gold Star Family is the immediate family member(s) of a fallen service member who died while serving in a time of conflict.)



The FORCE BLUE OCS program, made possible with support from PepsiCo, NAUI Worldwide and GoRuck, featured 11 Gold Star family “recruits,” ranging in age from age 10 to 23, who participated in three days of dive training, marine conservation education and veteran mentorship.

Marine biologist and New York Times best-selling author (“Blue Mind”) Dr. Wallace J. Nichols was also on hand, joining the cadre of FORCE BLUE instructors to deliver an important parting message to the OCS graduates. “It is not enough simply to be or to become a scuba diver. If you have the ability, you now have the responsibility to put your training to use in service of our oceans,” Dr. Nichols said. “Carry that wonder and awe you experienced here with you.”

FORCE BLUE Executive Director Jim Ritterhoff had high praise, not only for the

Gold Star family members who braved unseasonably cold temperatures to don their wetsuits, but also for the Vortex Springs staff and Holmes County residents who made the weekend possible. “We could not have picked a better spot to hold our inaugural FORCE BLUE OCS,” said Jim. “From the moment Angela (Vortex Spring Owner Angela Dockery) welcomed us home, we felt like a family. And that feeling permeated everything we did.”

Holmes County Commissioner Jeff Good, a retired Air Force veteran, treated FORCE BLUE team members and their recruits to his own home-cooked catfish recipe at Friday dinner. “It’s an honor to have them with us,” said Commissioner Good. “And to be able, in some small way, to give back to those who have served and sacrificed so much for our country.”

FORCE BLUE partnered with the Green Beret Foundation, Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, Pararescue Foun-

ation, EOD Warrior Foundation and Angels of America’s Fallen in selecting the Gold Star children who participated — each of whom received his/her NAUI Open Water Diver certification and a FORCE BLUE “challenge” coin upon graduation.

FORCE BLUE was formed in 2016 with the goal of addressing two seemingly unrelated issues — the rapidly declining health of our oceans and marine resources and the difficulty far too many servicemen and servicewomen have in adjusting to civilian life once their service

ends. It’s the only 501c3 organization in the world that retrains and redeploys former Special Operations veterans and military trained combat divers to work alongside scientists and environmentalists on marine conservation missions.

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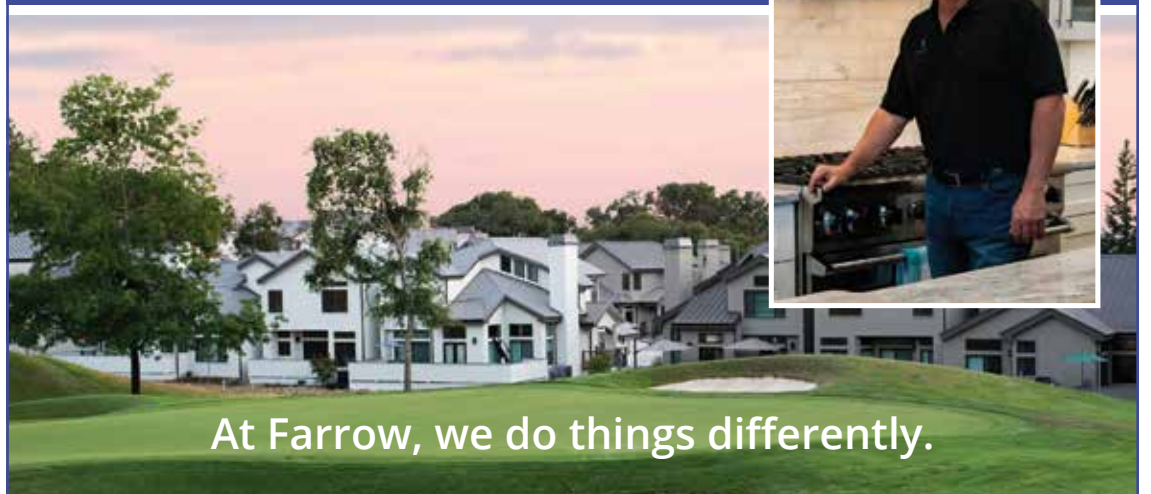
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 Community

Local Hospitals and ERs Become Part of the HCA Florida Network

By LORI LEATH SMITH

On this particular day, Olivia and her father were moving her to college—an exciting time in Olivia’s life. They were on their way when a terrible car accident abruptly stopped their plans—leaving both father and daughter in critical condition and Olivia on the brink of death.

Both were air-flighted to then Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, Olivia at one point even losing her pulse. Hospital staff quickly went to work. Due to the numerous caring doctors’, nurses’ and practitioners’ diligence, “both Olivia and her father’s lives were saved,” said Zach McCluskey, CEO, HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital. “But it took more people than are sitting in this auditorium today to make sure that was possible,” he said at a recent Chamber breakfast with roughly 250 in attendance. “After many months, we were able to return Olivia and her Father back to their lives. This is what makes it all worth it,” Zach stated emotionally, as he conveyed the hospital’s mission is to truly care for each life in our community.

Locally, Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, Twin Cities



Hospital, Destin ER and Navarre ER were four of more than 450 HCA Florida Healthcare affiliated sites of care across the state that united recently under a new, statewide, shared brand—HCA Florida Healthcare—and have become HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital, HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital, HCA Florida Destin Emergency and HCA Florida Navarre Emergency.

HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital has served the community for nearly 50 years. In the past five years, this hospital and other connected care sites have served more than 740,000 patients and invested in the community through the expansion of needed healthcare services, including the addition of freestanding ERs in Destin and Navarre; a 10-bed expansion

to the only acute inpatient care rehab facility in Northwest Florida; an expansion of its main emergency room and addition of a roof-top emergency flight helipad; a new parking garage and a multi-phase project that encompasses building a new two-story patient tower with the capability of expanding vertically to four floors, bringing total capacity to 309 beds.

It is a 267-bed full-service hospital and is the only Level II Trauma Center in the Tri-County Area, with over 300 physicians. For women and children services, it has 24/7 neonatologists available and is the area’s only Level II NICU. Its expanded emergency services include a dedicated Pediatric ER, 24/7 HCA Florida Destin Emergency, 24/7 HCA Florida Navarre Emergency, and full-service

24/7 HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Emergency. It is the only acute care hospital in the Tri-County area that offers open heart surgery, an Accredited Advanced Primary Stroke Center, an Accredited Chest Pain Center, and a Cancer Care Center that is accredited by the Commission on Cancer and an Associate of the UAB Birmingham Health System Cancer Community Network. HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital also has the only inpatient acute care rehab facility in the tri-county area – The Rehabilitation Institute of Northwest Florida, located in Destin.

Zach said he’s very excited about being a part of the new HCA Florida Healthcare network. “Our local hospitals and ER’s will now collaboratively be connected with approximately 11,000 staff physicians, 77,000 colleagues, 49 hospitals, more than 350 physician practices and freestanding emergency rooms and more than 50 urgent care centers throughout the state.”

Zach said last year, the state network saw more than 6.4 million patient encounters and represented over one quarter of the healthcare encounters across the country. “Because it’s now more connected than it’s ever been,” said Zach, “through this comprehensive network, HCA Florida Healthcare can offer the utmost quality and personal attention to its patients, expand access to care, address the ongoing nursing shortage, respond better during times of disaster, advance diversity in healthcare and fund and collaborate with non-profit organizations to address high-priority community needs.” With one baby born every 17 minutes at an HCA Florida Healthcare hospital and trauma outcomes better than the national average throughout the state, patients and families can continue to expect the same quality care from physicians and nurses, with no changes to facility hours of operation or phone numbers.

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By JOE CAPERS,
INSURANCE ZONE

Condominium Insurance and the Value of a Customized Unit Owners Policy

On June 24, 2021, Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida, suffered a collapse of the east wing, killing 98 people. This building was constructed in 1981 with 136 units. Although building failures of this nature in the U.S. are seldom seen, it is important to examine what happened to prevent similar collapses in the future.

The investigators are likely to uncover defects in the original design and construction. Settlement of the site may also be a contributing factor, as may have been the construction of an adjacent development. None of these were under the control of the board. However, there is also clear evidence from the site that some factors within the board's control are likely culprits. The structural deterioration was readily visible in some areas, even to a lay-person and this failure could have been delayed.

The current condo laws in Florida places fiduciary responsibilities on Unit Owners and

Board Members. It is very important to understand the requirements and design your policy to maximize your condo insurance program protection whether used as your primary, secondary residence or rental. And make sure your packages include Hurricane/Wind coverages and flood insurance as well.

Because the association is responsible for maintaining and insuring the exterior of the building (shell), **Condo Unit Owners need coverage for the replacement cost of Structural Elements Within** – from the paint in, including flooring, fixtures, cabinets, built-in appliances, and more. This coverage amount is arrived at by calculating the cost per square foot to rebuild multiplied by the square footage of the unit. Sometimes the developer will provide this number and typically the range starts at \$60 per square foot, and depending on the quality of construction, that can go up significantly. Your condo policy should always include Special Coverage A. This is broader coverage, changing the policy from a named peril to an open peril policy.

Another important coverage to consider is **Personal Proper-**

ty coverage which is replacement cost on furniture, accessories, clothing, appliances, electronics, and other valuables, basically anything that's not attached. Replacement cost insurance is defined as the cost to replace and/or repair the building with materials of like kind and quality following a loss. If policyholders have replacement cost insurance, they may receive advance payments for the depreciated value for furniture, televisions, clothing and other household items.

Loss of Use/Loss of Rents is an important feature as well. Depending on the carrier, they may offer loss of use but not loss of rent. If your unit is damaged and you can't use it for a period of time, you may be able to collect under loss of use if it's your primary or secondary residence. If you're losing out on rental income, check your policy to see if you have the Loss of Rents coverage. You should always make sure you have the correct policy for the right risk.

Loss Assessment is another important coverage on condo policies that Florida law requires. Its purpose is to pay up to your loss assessment coverage amount (typically \$2,000) for an assessment levied by the association

for covered losses to the common elements. An example of this coverage coming into play was when Hurricane Michael knocked down most of the fencing and damaged the roofs of an administration building and conference center that was covered under the master policy. Because these perils were covered under the association's policy, they had the option to assess each condo owner to help re-coup their out-of-pocket expense.

Flood coverage, which is typically a separate policy, is also important. The unit owner should carry flood insurance even if their unit is not on the ground floor. Some condo associations purchase a master program through the National Flood Insurance Program called the RCBAP (residential condominium building association policy). This policy does cover many of the interior build-out items for a unit owner, but it does not cover the personal property. So, does the unit owner still need their own condo flood policy? David Thompson, with the FAIA (Florida Association of Insurance Agents) says this: "If there is no RCBAP in place the unit owner needs his own primary flood coverage. If the RCBAP has a

large deductible and the unit owner sustained building damage, then their [flood] policy will respond. Should the unit owner be assessed by the association for a flood loss, the unit owner's policy will cover the loss assessment up to their building limit with no deductible. This alone is a compelling reason for all condo unit owners to have their own building flood coverage."

Liability and Mold and Water Backup, which are also important coverages on condo policies should be properly structured. And if you rent your unit, always consider excess of higher limits of liability protection. The bottom line is this - when it comes to condo insurance policies the average consumer isn't aware of their exposures and responsibilities. You should always talk to an experienced insurance agent so you can make the best coverage decisions for your situation.

Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their Video Library on www.ins-zone.com and watch our informative video on 'Condo Insurance Made Easy', or call 850.424.6979 and talk with one of our experienced agents.

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Coastline K9's New Location Is Officially Open!

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Congratulations to veteran-owned and operated Coastline K9 on its recent grand opening in Fort Walton Beach! With an elite team of prior military, Special Operations and Law Enforcement K9 handlers, Coastline K9 is a business that provides customized training for dogs and world-class protection dogs for family and other needs.

The trainers work with any breed, any age to be obedient. "But we're not your average protection dog company," said Byron. "Our leadership team is made up of special operations K9 handlers who have trained and utilized protection dogs in some of the most dangerous and demanding circumstances ever." He said because of that, the team understands the importance of security and protection in ways that many have never experienced. "These K9's serve as a personal security guard for you and your loved ones, a loyal companion that can go anywhere with you, and a highly intelligent

asset that can adapt and learn new skills," said Byron. "You can enjoy the life you've created for yourself while your protection dog takes on the responsibility of being hyper-vigilant."

"The dog thing found me," said Byron. In fact, Byron, a local who grew up in Destin and Pensacola, joined the military in 2001 and served our country as a Special Ops Army Ranger. While serving, he participated in the Iraqi and Afghanistan invasions, risking his life to protect ours, as do so many others. "That's why dog training is such a perfect fit," says Byron. "Anything can happen to anyone, and we train our dogs to handle it. That gives me a lot of satisfaction and also utilizes my experience and knowledge."

In 2009, he returned home as an instructor and taught a pre-scuba dive course for the Army's Special Ops Special Forces Combat Dive School on Eglin Air Force Base. Since then, Byron has worked as a contractor, an underwater welder, and in the



medical field's emergency services. "Now, I've found another purpose with training these dogs that help so many," said Byron.

Serving clients throughout the U.S., Byron and his partner, Trent McDonald, a well-known veteran dog trainer, expanded Coastline K9 to our area. The business originated in Naples by partner Erick Innis, also founder of the RESCUE 22 Foundation 5013{c}. Erick served as Special



Operations K9 Handler with his teammate, a Veteran Military Working Dog named Rex. You might have seen the recent movie, "Dog," about Rex. The two served two combat tours together throughout Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. After military service, Erick began training law enforcement canines in both the U.S. and Internationally as a civilian.

"The first step is to evaluate your individual needs to find the right dog and then provide customized training to suit your unique lifestyle." He said the

majority of the K9s are imported from Europe, where the world's best K9s have been bred for decades. "We hand-select the pedigree for excellent temperament—a balance between being loving, loyal and protective—and security attributes to perfectly suit an owner's personality, lifestyle and protection requirements."

Coastline K9 dogs are sourced from its partners in the UK, Holland, Belgium and Ireland. "We rigorously assess all prospects for the qualities and attributes that will perfectly suit your needs," says Byron. Once approved, training begins. When training is complete, your new companion is transported to you anywhere in the continental U.S. and your trainer will spend 3-4 days with you providing hands-on, specialized training.

The new Fort Walton Beach location, the largest on the East Coast is a host each month also to educational seminars for dog trainers that are open to the public. Along with the daily business, it is also a partner of the non-profit Rescue 22 Foundation training service dogs and has become Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office police dog trainers.

Visit coastlinek9.com, facebook.com/CoastlineK9 or give Coastline K9 a call at (850) 307-7771. 819 Navy Street, Fort Walton Beach 32547.



7th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza

The 7th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza, a hoppin' social where dogs hunt for eggs filled with yummy treats, will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., April 14, at Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. More than 500 eggs will be hidden at Grand Park to sniff out. Bunny ears,

chick outfits and dainty Easter dresses are encouraged. Cost is \$15 per dog, which includes a basket for the hunt and photo booth picture. For humans, there will be a silent auction, chance drawing, Dog-Harmony Ale from Destin Brewery and JC's Gourmet will be serv-

ing Somethin' Snappy smoked snapper dip, Poppin' Pimento cheese and Jommin' Jalapeños candied jalapeño garnish.

Proceeds benefit Dog-Harmony, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to reducing the shelter dog population through humane education.

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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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Education News

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis recently announced groundbreaking legislation that eliminates the high-stakes **Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)** test and replaces it with progress monitoring. Senate Bill 1048, sponsored by Senator Manny Diaz, Jr. and Representative Rene Plasencia, makes Florida the first state in the nation to transition fully to progress-monitoring for school accountability. Starting with the 2022-2023 school year, Florida students will have three short check-ins instead of multi-day, end-of-year, high-stakes tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics. This new system of testing will benefit students, teachers and parents by allowing for informed instruction in a timely manner, that can be tailored to each student's individual needs.

Northwest Florida State College (NWFS) was recently named a 2022-23 Military Friendly School with a Gold Distinction by MilitaryFriendly.com. Every year, institutions

earning the Military Friendly School designation are evaluated using public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Final ratings are calculated by combining the institution's survey scores with the institution's ability to meet minimum thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, and loan default rates for student veterans. Methodology, criteria, and weightings are determined with input from the Military Friendly Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community. The gold-level distinction is awarded to schools that score within 10% of the 10th best school in their category. These schools are considered to be setting the example with their programs and initiatives. For more information about Northwest Florida State College's military and veteran services, please contact our Veterans Success Center at 850-729-5375 or va@nwfsc.edu. The 2022-23 Military Friendly Schools list can be found at

www.militaryfriendly.com.

The **Collegiate High School** at NWFS received a \$2 million Early College Career and Technical Education grant from Gov. 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. This 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 NWFS's Niceville campus and is free to students. The high school is a designated Florida School of Excellence and routinely ranks among the best high schools in Florida.

A **FREE Apprenticeship Program** is available at NWFS, which is committed to helping the community and businesses attract and retain a talented, vibrant and skilled

workforce. The program offers apprenticeships in Construction/Carpentry, Culinary, HVAC-AC-Ventilation, CNC Machining, Plumbing and IT. It blends classroom instruction and On-the-Job training to provide business and employees world-class training leading to employer recruiting and retention and giving employees tangible skills and certifications to better their careers. If interested, contact NWFS workforce development staff at apprenticeships@nwfsc.edu. Fill out the application on NWFS's website for more information about a specific opportunity or meet with in person at NWFS. <https://www.nwfsc.edu/academics/non-degree-programs/registered-apprenticeships/>

Okaloosa County

The Okaloosa County School Board is in the process of upgrading its parent-teacher software to a program called FOCUS. The upgraded systems will streamline education services while at the same time put more information in the hands

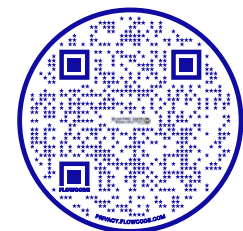
of parents than ever before. Different parts of the FOCUS system will come online periodically until the completed system is fully operational in October 2022. The FOCUS Parent Portal is a tool designed to enhance communication and involvement for you in your child's education and is accessible through the FOCUS mobile app or an internet browser. With this upgrade, parents will have access to their student's attendance, grades, accommodations and more in real time. Kindergarten registration is now taking place through FOCUS for the Fall of 2022. Parents will create a FOCUS Parent Portal account before registering their student and will have access to the new resources through the FOCUS software in September! Visit www.okaloosaschools.com/focus to view the roll-out timeline, see a sneak peek at what FOCUS looks like, and ask questions about the new system.



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An Area Rug Can "Make or Break" Your Room!



By KIM SCHNEIDER

Yes, you read that right. There are so many things to consider when selecting the perfect rug for your space. Choosing the right style, size, shape and material for your rug will create a statement. Selecting the wrong rug is too easy with so many choices available. Below are a few tips to help guide YOU in purchasing the perfect rug.

Style:

When selecting a patterned rug, consider how the pattern will play with your furniture. If the rug design has a focal point, make sure it doesn't get covered up with heavy furniture. If the rug has a repetitive pattern placement of your furniture won't cause you to visually miss the design.

Size & Shape:

Bigger is Better, but NOT too big! A few inches can make a big difference between the rug pulling the room together or making it feel disconnected. The size of your room and furniture layout will determine which rug size and shape will work best for your space. **Pro Tip:** Typically, round rugs work great in a dining room under a round dining table and rectangular rugs work best in a square or rectangular room.

Living Room – There are several layouts you can use, but my favorite is allowing all of the furniture legs to rest on the rug with a minimum of at least 6" of the rug extending past the furniture. This layout, requires a large rug and is the best choice for anchoring an open-space concept with floating furniture.

Dining Room – Again, I recommend allowing all of the furniture legs to rest on the rug. This layout looks best and is ideal for safety purposes. The rug in this room should extend at least 24" but not more than 36" beyond all ends of the ta-

ble. The 24"-36" allows for the chair to remain on the rug when pushed back. **Pro Tip:** Remember to include the size of your table when the extensions/leaves are in use.

Bedroom – Your bed should be both the focal point of the room and the base for your rug. My favorite is the same as above, all furniture legs on the rug. This includes your nightstands and bench at the foot of the bed, but does not include the dressers or other pieces of furniture in the bedroom. The rug should extend a minimum of 18"-24" past the edge of your bed/nightstand. If space allows, avoid having the rug flowing into the main walking area(s).

If you want to see more of your flooring, use a smaller rug, allowing only 2/3 of the bed to sit on the rug. This option still needs 18"-24" of the rug to extend on each side and beyond the foot of the bed. **Pro Tip:** An 8'x10' rug works best for a queen bed and a 9'x12' for a king.

Foyer/Entryway - It's best to let the shape of this space determine the choice of a round, rectangular or runner. The width of your front door can be used as a baseline for how wide your rug should be. **Pro Tip:** Make sure the pile of the rug isn't too high so the front door can open properly. Also, don't forget your rug pad. It will help prevent your rug from sliding around.

Material:

There is a broad selection of area rugs made from wool, synthetic, sisal and grass to name a few. Consider which material is right for your lifestyle based on the below.

Wool – A wool rug combines comfort and durability, but they also absorb humidity and can fade in the sun.

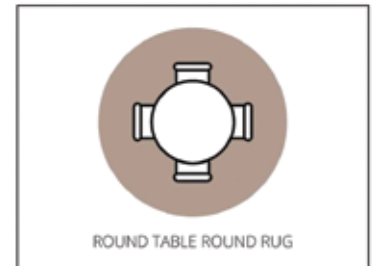
Synthetic – A synthetic rug offers a large variety of colors and patterns. They stand up to heavy traffic and are often pre-treated to avoid stains and are more affordable.

Sisal – Sisal rugs are extremely durable and made of natural fibers. They work well in the high traffic areas of your home but they are stiff compared to wool rugs.

Grass – A grass rug is natural and environmentally friendly

with no chemicals or additives. They add a sustainable feel and are easily customizable.

Rugs can be expensive, but they're worth it. It's art for your floor! Too many choices? Coastal Design by Kim is here to help YOU solve the puzzle. Contact us at (850) 904-6622 to schedule your appointment. 981 Highway 98 E, Ste. #3-346 | Destin 32541 | kim@coastaldesignbykim.com



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Travel

My Return to Sea



BY JODELLE HAVERFIELD,
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

I have finally returned to cruising! By the time you read this editorial, I will have visited 12 ports

in a months' time while sailing through the Western, Southern and Eastern Caribbean on three cruise lines.

For our last cruise, my husband and I decided to take his age 94 years mother on her first cruise. My mother-in-law is very sharp and spry for her age. She was so afraid of missing anything and was absolutely horrified if we suggested she might need to take a nap. The truth is she had perhaps more stamina than we did. Her main problem was hitching up her tiny new capris over her size 4 frame as she led the way.

She consistently declined shuttle rides down the pier into port no matter how long the walk

was. She was never the slightest bit motion sick and enjoyed exploring the ship, new foods and each port. By the sixth day, she did agree to the trolley ride back to the ship.

As I quietly observed my husband's mother throughout the cruise, I often found myself pondering as to whether I have 20 more years to cruise! At least I can say I have seized as many opportunities as possible to travel and cruise, especially with my family.



My in-laws consistently refused our invitations through the years to join us on a cruise. I wondered now that my father



in-law has recently passed away, was he kicking himself as he watched us from above.

It felt so amazing to be on the water again, meeting new people and renewing relationships with others. I never forgot how much I loved the sea. I kept walking out on our balcony just to make sure I'm not dreaming and to savor each moment. My memory has served me well although, I must admit, in the last two years I wondered if travel would return to normal.

The truth is, it's still not "normal." Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Lines are not requiring masks on-board except when inside the terminal and during boarding and disembarking. The ship's crew is required to always wear masks. It is rumored, however, that soon they, too, will be able to discard their masks. Carnival Cruise Line is still in mask mode for guests and crew.

The ships I have recently boarded sailed out of port at slightly over 50% capacity as is the case with most cruise lines at present. However, they are all steadily increasing capacity as well as their rates. For this reason, I recommend booking your next cruise as soon as possible. Lock in your rate now. The travel mandates are ever changing. So, I recommend calling a travel agent to handle all your needs and keep you informed. Remember there is no charge to use a travel agent.

Before I sign off this month's editorial, I must testify of my joy at this special time of year as we celebrate Easter. I am reminded of Christ and his resurrection. I know he lives today. I know he loves us and watches over us. I am humbled at the thought that he suffered, died and was resurrected for me. I wish all of you a very Happy Easter.

Thanks for Travelin' with JoDell!

Want to know the Value of YOUR home here on the Emerald Coast? Find out! Go to: www.DestinAgentGail.com

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The Melting Pot Destin: Melting Moments into Memories

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

It was a recent Thursday in Destin. We walked through the doors of The Melting Pot and were escorted to our table—a quaint booth with rose petals and candles on the table. It was our “Thursdate” and a memory for the books!

Our special Thursdate four-course menu began with our choice of cheese fondue, followed by a salad of our choice and an entrée that included tender filet mignon, Atlantic salmon, savory teriyaki sirloin, chicken, shrimp and lobster tail! To top it all off, as if that wasn’t enough, we chose a most decadent dessert, Flaming Turtle which has milk chocolate, caramel and candied pecans. Part of our experience was our server, Melody, who worked at our pace. And, believe me, it was a lot of fun and the food is out-of-this-world! We were never rushed; it was very relaxing. And turns out The Melting Pot is the premier “Fondue” restaurant on the Emerald Coast. If you are looking for a unique and interactive dining experience, this is the place.

Mark and Becky Chapman, two Florida snowbirds, recently took ownership. Both having grown up in Florida, Mark in Pensacola, they left the state when their jobs took them to Birmingham and then Oklahoma for the past 21 years. Seventeen years ago, they decided to purchase their first Melting Pot franchise in Tulsa. “We were drawn to Melting Pot’s efficient business model and fan-favorite Fondue which won over our hearts and many Americans who want to enjoy a special experience,” said Becky.

With two very successful locations, the other in Oklahoma City (a Top 10 in the nation) and with their children grown, Becky and Mark found their way back to their Florida roots. When the Destin location came up for sale, in less than three months, they were here.

“We have some big plans for this location,” said Becky. “New décor, upholstery and remodeling of the bar and patio are among them. We also plan to add a retail program where you’ll be able to order a dozen



roses or seasonal flowers for any day of the week and cookbooks, champagne flutes, old-fashioned recipes and teddy bears—fun things to enhance your celebrations,” she said.

Since The Melting Pot caters to locals as well as visitors, it stays busy all year and is very much involved in the community. General manager Erin Harris is always hiring servers. “It’s a perfect job for someone in college or trying to supplement their income with a second job,” said Becky, “since it is open for dinner only. And we want to find ways to give back to our community.”

The Chapmans have three grown children (and two grand-

children), and “our whole family has always been part of the business: our daughter is marketing director; one of our sons helped manage and one helps with maintenance.”

The Melting Pot is one place where diners are encouraged to slow down and talk while they ‘play’ with their food. A four-course evening begins with your choice of six classic cheese dish appetizers, unmelted in a hot, 6-inch melting pot. Next is your choice of salads. Your main entrée comes to your table unprepared. Yes, each diner cooks their own serving. For dessert, your server will bring you a warm Fondue bowl of fresh melted chocolate of your

choice. Throughout the process, you find yourself engrossed in the experience.

There are “fast Fondues” for those in a hurry or you can simply stop in after work, sit at the bar and order just one course: Cheese, Salad, Entrée or Chocolate. Eventually, Becky said they plan to add some hot foods which will complement the Fondue.

Specials each week include: Wednesdays BFF: Best Fondue Friends for ever – special price with drink specials; Thursdate – \$49 per person for a four-course meal including candles and rose petals on your table. Happy Hour is Monday-Friday, 4-6 p.m. – 1/2 price cheese and

chocolate Fondue.

And so, no matter the occasion or how many courses you choose, The Melting Pot provides an unforgettable, interactive dining experience that turns moments into memories. From the time the first piece of bread is dipped to when the last nibble of dessert is savored, you’ll have the time to discover new things about people you thought you knew, and those you’re getting to know.

The Melting Pot is located at 11394 US-Hwy. 98 in Miramar Beach. Call 850-269-2227 or visit www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl to view the complete menu or, as we would recommend, make a reservation.

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ajstestin.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! There are big screen TV's all around, so not a bad seat in the house. Enjoy 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 end-

less 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 the 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 music every night! Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializ-



es 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. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on FaceBook for updates! Enjoy...

Upcoming Easter Keg Hunt!

Adoption & fundraiser for Road Dogg Rescue! We hide kegs. You find them. Not as easy as you'd think! There are 2 winners: 1) First to LOCATE and DRINK from all 3 kegs and cross the finish line with the most collected eggs 2) Best costume. Registration receives an event shirt, koozie, sticker and 2 drink tickets. Additional drink tickets for bringing a 20 lb. bag of dog food. Eggs will be scattered throughout filled with goodies like drink tickets, jello shots, food coupons and a couple of VIP cards.

(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.

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Landshark's Pizza

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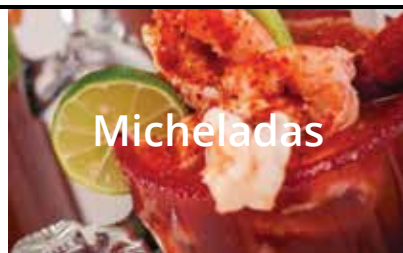
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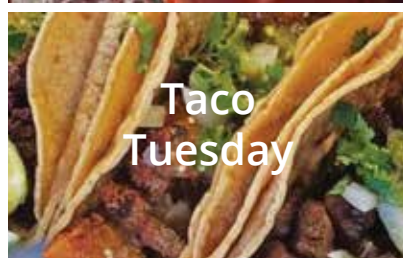
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DESTIN DINING

continued from previous page

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.
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300 Harbor Blvd., Destin
landsharkspizza.com

Mi Gente' Supermarket & Taqueria

Open for lunch and dinner, Mi Gente' is one of Destin's hottest dining spots for the whole family. Enjoy Happy Hour from 5pm-7pm for 2 for 1 House Margaritas and 2 for 1 draft beer. With fresh ingredients, homemade recipes and huge portions, you can choose from diverse and delicious foods from different Latin-American countries. 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 with broth to dip your tacos! Take a walk through their diverse supermarket and fresh meat department where you can buy a variety of Latin American groceries to take home. Get your fresh Tamales here! Open

7 days, 9am-9pm daily. Menudo Domingo de Menudo Sundays!
(850) 842-2992
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migenterestaurantandcantina.com

Oasis

A recent heartbreaking fire has temporarily halted in-restaurant dining. So, until the Oasis restaurant can reopen, 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. 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. "Let's Eat!"

(850) 401-9149
306 Bald Eagle Dr.
theOasisSRB.com or
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Scotches Bar & Grill

Scotches Bar & Grill is NOW OPEN! Scotches serves deli-

cious food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They have a full bar with an amazing daily happy hour and just released their new menu. The breakfast menu includes morning favorites such as meat lovers, three cheese and vegetarian omelets, 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? Varied daily lunch specials are only \$10.99! Entertainment includes Live music and Karaoke. Call for details.

Scotches is open 7:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. all 7 days and you can now order online too.

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SOF Missions Needs Your Help to Support Veterans

The non-profit veteran service organization, SOF Missions, is hosting its 6th Annual SOF Missions Destin Gala on April 9 at 6 p.m. at the Henderson Beach Resort.

The gala is open to community members and business

owners who want to make a difference in the lives of our "at risk" veterans.

"This wonderful event is a night to come together to raise funds, awareness, and support for our military veterans and their families," said Dr. Damon

Friedman, president of SOF Missions. "Our aim is to collectively heal warriors who are struggling with the visible and invisible scars of war."

SOF Missions began 12 years ago when Dr. Friedman found out he was suffering from

traumatic brain injury. That, coupled with post-traumatic stress, took a toll on his mental health and he was in a very dark place until he finally found help outside of the military and the VA. He vowed to do everything in his power to make sure no veteran goes through that pain.

The gala demonstrates the power of community and provides individuals and businesses the unique opportunity to sponsor warriors through a four-part healing process called The Resiliency Project.

The program is free to veterans who ask for help.

Marine veteran Nate Roberts was one of those veterans who decided to reach out. He said service members go through unique stresses and challenges and then they come home and whether or not they stay in the military, they can become isolated and broken. He said it breaks you, it hurts you, and it's hard to find a way out. He said the program truly helps.

However, Dr. Friedman worries about the many veterans who don't seek help or don't

know about the help available to them. "Together, we are making a difference," said Friedman. "The word is getting out about the challenges our service members face, but there is still so much more work to do and we need to get the word out. We can't thank those enough who step up to help support our warriors."

Come to the gala, the largest fundraiser for SOF Missions warriors, and hear stories of their struggles and triumphs. Enjoy an evening of delicious food, raffle items and stories of bravery and redemption, all while supporting this life-changing event.

Warriors like Nate need your support.

Tickets: \$100 per person | Attire: Cocktail | <https://sofmissions.org/gala/>

Ticket price includes dinner, dessert and drinks. Guest speaker and silent auction.

For more information about the SOF Missions Destin Gala, please contact Kristi Beckman at 850-503-5201 or email at kristi@sofmissions.org.

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DESTIN DINING

continued from previous page

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Off the Hook: **Spring Fishing**

BY CALI HLAVAC,
TO DO IN DESTIN

We are loving this warm weather and the fish are, too! We've had some rough waters this month, but overall the bite has been decent. The Choctawhatchee Bay is a bit slow this time of year, but the Gulf action has been picking up.

March 1st kicked off Triggerfish season, which many offshore anglers were excited for. In our area, Triggerfish are normally found nearshore and offshore, hanging around artificial reefs and natural bottoms, in depths between 50 to 300 feet. They share the same habitat as Red Snapper and Gag Grouper. So, catching a Triggerfish is usually a sign that additional species are below as well.

The average size of the Triggerfish ranges from 12 inches to 20 inches, with females growing larger. They are a distinctive gray in color and have the ability to change their color while swimming in open waters. The



mouth is small but mighty, containing a set of sharp teeth even the most experienced anglers don't want to mess with. Along with the teeth, Triggerfish have a strong jaw that can make a hook difficult to set.

We like to call them Bait Stealers – which is exactly what they like to do. Triggerfish are aggressive feeders; a plus if you've set out to catch them specifically, but a con if you were

trying to reach the Red Snapper or Grouper they hang around with. Shrimp and any sort of cut bait on a circle hook will do the trick as they typically chase anything they perceive as being food. Catch and keep them legally until May 1.

Also, in April, the Cobia will begin their migration through our area with the warmer water temps. They are best found by sight fishing, running the lengths of the beaches until you spot one, or around buoys, navigational markers, structures or other large fish where they feel safe. An average Cobia is 20-40 lbs., with a 60 lb. fish considered a large catch.

Cobia put up a great fight

and are often compared to or mistaken for a shark once they hit the line and take off. You can keep Cobia year-round, with a size minimum of 33" and 2 per

boat. They are a tasty, white meat fish with a hint of lemon flavor -great as grilled steaks. This is a season our local anglers look forward to year round!



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Off the Hook

Fishing NEWS

One million registered Florida recreational vessels

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) today announced that Florida continues to lead the nation and has passed the mark of 1 million registered recreational

vessels across the state. Florida, with its great year-round weather and plenty of access to fresh and salt water, is the “Boating Capital of the World.” With more people calling Florida home and more vessels on the water, it’s important that resi-

dents and visitors practice safe boating.

The top five counties for vessel registration in Florida are Miami-Dade (74,622), Pinellas (53,867), Lee (50,304), Broward (47,741) and Hillsborough (41,495).

“Crossing the million mark just confirms what we always knew - Florida is the top state for boaters. And with more boats on the water, we want to spread the word about boating safety to both residents and visitors enjoying Florida’s year-round boating season,” said Maj. Rob Beaton, Boating and Waterways Section Leader. “A safe day while boating is a great day. Nothing can ruin a fun and memorable experience on the water faster than a boating accident.”

Boaters are encouraged to wear their life jackets, maintain 360-degree awareness and know the dangers (and penalties) for operating a vessel while impaired.

Visit MyFWC.com/Boating for boating safety tips. You can even search there for the Florida Boat Ramp Finder to help you find a great place to launch your boat!

(annual renewal is required). To learn more, visit MyFWC.com/Marine and click on “Recreational Regulations” and “State Reef Fish Survey” under “Reef Fish.” Sign up today at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com.

Spotted seatrout reopened in the Western Panhandle Management Region, which includes all state and federal waters from Escambia County through the portion of Gulf County west of 85 degrees, 13.76 minutes west longitude but NOT including Indian Pass/Indian Lagoon.

Snook reopened in some Gulf waters, including Escambia County through State Road 64 in Manatee County, and waters south of Gordon Pass in Collier County through Monroe County (also includes Everglades National Park).

Snook remains catch-and-release only in state waters from State Road 64 in Manatee County south through Gordon Pass in Collier County through Aug. 31, 2022.

Learn more about recreational fishing regulations at MyFWC.com/Marine by clicking on “Recreational Regulations.”

Saltwater Fishing Reopenings in the Gulf

Gray triggerfish reopened in Gulf state and federal waters to recreational harvest on March 1. If you plan to fish for gray triggerfish in state or federal waters from a private recreational vessel, you must sign up as a State Reef Fish Angler

Nets on the Beach?

If you’ve been getting out to the public beach lately, you might have seen poles and nets that extend from the shoreline out into the water and wondered what it was and what it’s doing there. It’s actually a NuShore beach renourishment project facilitated by Okaloosa County—porous “groynes” or nets in the form of fencing to capture sand to widen the beach and extend the shoreline seaward. Having kicked off in November 2021, this “fencing” results in sand accumulation that widens the beach and extends the shoreline seaward, thereby renourishing the beaches and increasing coastal resiliency to storms and other erosive events. Designed to help restore Okaloosa County beaches where steady erosion and beach loss has already occurred, “This system actually slows down the sand that may be suspended in the water column and allows it to accumulate within the system,” said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager for Okaloosa County, in

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Continued on next page

It's Turtle and Shorebird Nesting Season!

Each spring and summer, sea turtles, shorebirds and seabirds nest on our local beaches. Because our shorelines are critical for sea turtle and waterbird nesting, beachgoers can make a big difference in helping them.

Our area had a successful green sea turtle nest hatch early in the morning on October 19, 2021! Out of 93 eggs, 90 of them hatched, giving the nest a 96.8% hatch success. In November 2021, Coastal Resources and Gulfarium staff released 12 sea turtle hatchlings (6 loggerhead, 6 green) 50 miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach and the Gulfarium are partnering to host educational turtle talks. The talks take guests on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Gulfarium's C.A.R.E. Center to share information about sea turtle nesting habits and

demonstrate a mock intake of an injured sea turtle. For additional information, visit destinfb.com/explore/ecotourism-hotspots/turtles

Keep your distance! Getting too close (50 feet or less) to nesting sea turtles can cause them to leave the beach before they complete nesting. Remember, it is illegal to harm or disturb nesting sea turtles and their nests, eggs and hatchlings. Not keeping enough space from nesting shorebirds, seabirds and wading birds can cause them to flush from their breeding sites, leaving vulnerable eggs and chicks exposed to the elements and predators. Egg temperatures can increase to lethal levels after just a few minutes of direct sun exposure. Shorebirds and seabirds nest in shallow scrapes in the sand and their eggs and chicks are well-camouflaged,



making them vulnerable to being stepped on unless people look out for them and avoid walking through flocks of birds. As a general rule, it is best to keep at least 300 feet from nesting birds and to avoid walking through flocks of birds or entering posted areas.

Stash the trash! Obstacles on the beach can prevent sea turtles from nesting as they crawl from the water, across the sand, to lay

their eggs. Trash and other obstacles can also prevent sea turtle hatchlings from reaching the water once they emerge from their nests. Food scraps attract predators, such as raccoons and crows, that can prey on sea turtle hatchlings, shorebird eggs and chicks. Litter on beaches can entangle sea turtles, birds and other wildlife. Beachgoers can help our native wildlife by properly disposing of all trash, filling in human-made holes in the sand, and removing boats, beach toys and furniture from the beach before sunset. Fishing line can be deadly to sea turtles, waterbirds and other wildlife, so be sure to dispose of it properly. To find a monofilament recycling station near you, visit mrrp.MyFWC.com.

Lights out! Any lighting can misdirect and disturb nesting sea turtles and their hatchlings,

leading them away from the ocean and toward potential danger, so beachgoers should avoid using flashlights or cellphones on the beach at night. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches can do their part by turning out lights or closing curtains after dark to ensure nesting turtles are not disturbed as they come ashore, and hatchlings will not become disoriented when they emerge from their nests. If lighting could still be visible from the beach, be sure it is long, low and shielded.

For more information about nesting sea turtles and how you can help, visit MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle. Other ways to help sea turtles include reporting those that are sick, injured, entangled or dead to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

Lionfish Tourney Time!

It's time for the world's largest lionfish tournament, the Emerald Coast Open, held right here at the Destin Harbor. Calling all spearfishermen to join the tournament and remove this invasive species. Participate and win cash and Gear prizes! The more lionfish you remove, the more prizes you can win! There's huge cash prizes for the Main Tournament. In 2019, ECO had 189 participants and removed 19,167 lionfish throughout the tournament – 14,119 in 3 days! ECO gave away \$48,000 in cash prizes, and over \$10,000 in gear prizes.

Families will enjoy the Lionfish Removal and Awareness

Festival with educational opportunities, lionfish tasting and festivities. Bring the family and learn about lionfish, see lionfish, and even taste lionfish!

Sample lionfish at one of Destin-Fort Walton Beach's featured restaurants during the

Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Restaurant Week! Local chefs will highlight lionfish in unique dishes to help bring awareness to the lionfish invasion in the Gulf of Mexico.

For a full schedule of events visit www.emeraldcoastopen.com.

ECO Pre-tournament:

February 1–May 12, 2022

ECO Main tournament:

May 13–14, 2022, Destin Harbor

Lionfish Removal and Awareness Festival:

May 14–15, 2022, Harbor-

Walk Village

Emerald Coast Restaurant Week:

May 8-14, 2022 (AJs Seafood & Oyster Bar May 14!)



FISHING NEWS

continued from previous page

a YouTube video. "It's a more cost-effective method of building back the beaches here."

Each groyne is spaced every 100 feet along the beach and extends roughly 150 feet seaward from the mean high waterline—each system covering 1,500 feet of beach.

Funded by tourism development dollars, it will likely be taken down soon before turtle season and more visitors hit the beach.



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Area Athletes Win in Sports and Academics

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Recently, the All Sports Association (ASA) held its 53rd Annual Banquet where it recognized and honored some of the finest Northwest Florida athletes (top high school, collegiate, amateur, professional and Special Olympics athletes as well as individuals who have fostered youth activities and made a significant impact in our community) who are contributing to their sports and their community. These exceptional athletes not only excel in sports, but also in academics, community involvement and overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals.

Bay Life spoke with several to find out what the awards mean to them and where they're going from here.

Niceville High School Senior Eric Trapp won the Taylor Haugen Trophy award, one that has become one of the most impactful in our region. An overcomer due to a bout with depression, Eric feels this award symbolizes his perseverance through this challenge and his recovery. "I learned I was at my best when I kept going and kept working hard, even though everything might not be good all the time. Football was an escape of sorts and I was all in." He feels the adversity now has given him a

platform in the mental health arena. "Through my faith and being open about this has really helped me overcome it. It's been my testimony, my purpose, and I feel others going through it can notice that positivity and feel 'If he can do it, so can I.'" Assuming his love of football from his mom, Eric said, "This award, I believe, is truly the best award in the area, because it symbolizes everything I think a young man should possess. I'm so blessed that the Haugen Foundation believed that person was me to be able to carry on Taylor's legacy."

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2019 with a BS in Systems Engineering and an MS in Management Science and Engineering, Senior quarterback **Isaiah Sanders** of Stanford University was the 2021 recipient of the Wuerffel Trophy. Isaiah's adversity came when he felt terribly isolated at the Air Force Academy. But, he pushed through and has now realized his dream of playing football. Being able to go through the adversity of Covid with his Stanford teammates was actually one of the greatest experiences of his life. An overcomer who gives all Glory to God for the platform he now has, Isaiah wants to leverage that story. "When it comes to leadership, it comes to so much

more about how you can serve the people around you."

Ranked #1 in her senior class of nearly 500 students, Niceville High School senior **Page Doll-off**, a two-sport athlete (swimming and tennis), is the 2022 Female Scholastic Award Winner. She also earned an AP Scholar Award and is the Niceville High School Heisman Scholarship School 2021 winner. "I was more than honored to be nominated for this award. To win is an even greater accomplishment," said Page. "I couldn't have done it without all my supporting teammates, coaches and parents. To be recognized by this association and represent Niceville High School is truly amazing." Page will be headed to the U.S. Air Force Academy after graduation.

2022 Male Scholastic Award Winner **Noah Harman** is a two-sport athlete in football and track and field at Niceville High School, also carrying a 4.6 GPA. "Not only did winning this award tell me that all the hard work I have done has paid off, academically and physically, it also showed me that all my efforts have been recognized, for my family and friends who have also sacrificed as well as young kids who ask me how to get here." Going the extra mile in his studies, Noah plans to attend Cornell University in Engineering.

Male Collegiate Award Winner **Juanyeh Thomas**, from Walton and Niceville High Schools, makes his presence known on the gridiron at Georgia Tech on defense and special teams. This three-time high school All-State football player set a high school national record as a sophomore when he returned interceptions for touch-



PHOTO by DOUG STAUFFER

Pictured are athlete award winners with ASA's 53rd Annual Banquet keynote speaker, Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Glavine.

downs in five consecutive games.

This year's Amateur Award Winner, Fort Walton Beach native **Johnathan Newby**, is currently ranked in the top 1% of all-time natural powerlifters in the world. After a successful sports career at Fort Walton Beach High School and college football career at both Saint Francis University and Cumberland University, he now competes with the U.S. Powerlifting Association. Many of our readers probably know him best as a member of the Niceville Police Department's Tactical Response Team. He also serves as a certified state referee for USPA competitions.

Professional Athlete Award Winner **Richie Grant** played high school football at Choctaw and then UCF. Finishing his college career at UCF with 291 tackles, 10 interceptions and five forced fumbles, he was also first-team All-American Athletic Conference for three consecutive years (2018-2020) and was a finalist for the Jim Thorpe Award, given to the best defensive back in college football. Now a member of the Atlanta Falcons, Richie said "My name being on that plaque is particularly meaningful to me. It goes to show it doesn't matter where you

come from (having grown up in a small town in Mississippi), if you do hard work and prepare like you're supposed to, it pays off." He says his uncle, his role-model who played football for Alabama, had the most influence on his life and now career.

This year's Special Olympics Athlete Award was given to **Shane K. Kamm**, a graduate of Silver Sands School where he played in Special Olympics Basketball and Bowling. Overcoming his fear of deep water, Shane now excels in paddle-boarding which has become his favorite sport. "If it wasn't for God, I wouldn't be receiving this award," Shane says. "This is a real honor. I've never received an award like this."

Female Collegiate Award Winner was **Emily Madril**. After playing soccer at Navarre High School, she was integral on FSU's 2021 top-ranked team that won the 2021 NCAA Division I Women's Soccer National Championship! She was also named the Atlantic Coast Conference Defensive Player of the Year for 2021. Still reeling from this win, Emily says she was born into soccer. With a master's in IT, Emily says she likes being a mentor and hopes to begin teaching soccer camps in the area. She also wants to play soccer professionally in the U.S.

"In the past eight years, our organization has given over 1.5 million dollars to local youth and to support youth athletics. Our primary fundraiser for the year is this banquet..." said Carter Zorn, ASA President. "We have over 100 dues paying members who contribute their time to our mission. Bear in mind that we have no paid staff or administration. So, 100% of our money raised after expenses goes right back into our community."

For more information, visit allsportsassociation.com.

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Spring Into Fitness

BY LISA LEATH TURPIN,
HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

It's spring and not too late to get into fitness. With spring comes more sunshine, warmer weather and the urge to wear less... like tank tops, shorts, sleeveless dresses and swimsuits. So, if you messed up on New Year's resolutions, don't let that hold you back or feel like you have to wait another year to "start." There IS no better time than the present. And the "present" is any day that has a beginning and an end. Knowing what to do makes that hurdle less intimidating. First: Figure out your goals.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, fitness is "the condition of being physically strong and healthy...usually through exercise and nutrition." Exercise can achieve several outcomes such as, strength, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, strength endurance, and power/speed. Everyday life calls for a combination of these. If you begin exercising you will be more "fit" to live LIFE. It's actually essential and those that don't exercise choose to create unnecessary obstacles for themselves due to fatigue, tightness, illness and weakness.

A basic fitness lifestyle will fo-

cus on being healthy through a consistent routine of cross-training to achieve a mixture of the above outcomes. An example of cross-training can be rotating through two days of strength training, two days of yoga or Pilates, and two days of sports, swimming, cycling or jogging. The different modalities of exercise will give you different outcomes and the consistency will offer you the improvement overall. Any consistent activity, along with a nutritious and reasonable diet, will help you lose weight if that is your goal. But having strong muscles through strength training will raise your metabolism, thus helping your body burn more calories, even at rest. So, strength training is an important key component to being fit.

All weight bearing exercises, whether it be bodyweight (i.e. yoga/Pilates) or training with free-weights or machines, help build strong bones. This is so very important and the benefits are accumulative. The earlier you start the stronger your bones will be; so, don't wait until a doctor tells you that you have to. Please don't worry about getting bulky from weight training. Most likely, if you feel you are bulky

while weight training, you probably have excess fat covering your muscles. It's so extremely difficult to grow big muscles, just ask any bodybuilder. They are extremely dedicated to THE GOAL of building as big of muscles as possible and it does not happen overnight. Your muscles draw in tighter to your skeletal system when you tone and strengthen them. They will begin to take on their shape due to their functional purpose.

For instance, the biceps are small at the insertion at the shoulder and small at the attachment of the inside of the elbow, yet larger in the middle. Once fat is removed, you will see that definition and the arm, on most individuals, will look lean and

slender. Understand, most fat is "subcutaneous," meaning it is just under the skin. So, your body should have this order: bone, muscle, fat, then skin. You can imagine that while you begin strength training, any layer of fat will look more prominent, because it's closer to the skin. That's why a moderate diet helps in your efforts if you give your efforts the deserved time your body needs. In other words, don't give up! Like I have said before, "be active." Just get moving! All movement plays a role in your fitness level.

Lisa Leath Turpin is a degreed and certified health and fitness lifestyle coach and consultant who has devoted her life to motivating and strength-

ening the body and mind of others. With over 20 years' experience, Lisa has a B.S. degree in Sports & Fitness Management from the University of Alabama, developed and managed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Health & Wellness Facility and programs in Huntsville, Ala., is board certified by the National Board of Fitness Examiners and possesses certifications from AFAA, Polestar/Balanced Body, Reebok U, SCW Fitness and American Heart Association. She is currently a group exercise leader at Destin Health & Fitness and an independent personal trainer in the Destin area, diversely and extensively trained in classical and modern Pilates, lifestyle management, personal training, group exercise and post-rehabilitation. Have a fitness question for Lisa? Email BeActive850@gmail.com.

Destin High Athletics to Host First Foolish 5K Fun Run/Walk

With a theme of 'dress like a fool', 'run like a fool', the community, students and their families are invited to sign up for Destin High Athletics' Foolish 5K Fun Run/Walk that starts and ends at Destin High School (DHS) on April 9 at 8:30 am. BOTE Destin is the title sponsor for the 5K which is the first of a planned series of annual runs.

According to DHS Athletic Director Philip Dorn, "The Destin community has come out in full force to support DHS since its inception. With this support, the school has been able to field 22 athletic teams within 8 months of opening. There are 11 boy's teams and 11 girl's teams in all genres of sports. We need to raise funds at the 5K to help us provide facilities, new equipment, new uniforms and sports medicine care for our DHS Shark student athletes."

Whether one runs or walks the 3.1-mile course from DHS to

Indian Bayou Trail and back to DHS, or one is a spectator, there will be fun for all with food from Crawfish Billie and Skipper's Seafood, bounce houses, raffles, music games and more all morning on the grounds of DHS.

There will also be medals for the top 3 finishers in each category, and a prize for the most festive 'foolish' attire.

With free t-shirts and swag bags for the first 200 registrants, register on-line at www.godestinsharks.com. Early packet pick-up at BOTE Destin on April 8, 383 Harbor Blvd., from 3 - 6 pm. Or, one can sign up, pick up their packets and check in at DHS on April 9, from 7 - 8:15 a.m. Cost: \$35. Students \$20. Sponsorships are still available.

DHS is located at 4325 Commons Drive W. in Destin. For more information, call (850) 204-4044, email Coach Dorn at dornp@destinhigh.org or visit www.destinhighschool.org.



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 Wellness



By DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

There seems to be a misconception that testicles are supposed to work forever while ovaries go through menopause. Unfortunately, this is not true. Men routinely ask me what they can do or take to naturally bring their testosterone levels back to normal. There is NOTHING over-the-counter and NOTHING you can do on your own to increase testosterone to optimal

Hormone Therapy for Men

levels for health and symptom relief.

Men eventually go through ANDROPAUSE, which is basically male menopause. This typically occurs between age 35 and 55 but can occur earlier. This process occurs slowly and symptoms creep into our lives unnoticed until they begin affecting those around us. Symptoms include weight gain, lack of energy, irritability, fatigue, loss of libido, erectile dysfunction, loss of muscle mass, reduced exercise tolerance, weight gain, impaired memory, poor concentration, nervousness, depression, insomnia, sweating and the feeling that you are past your prime. Is it any wonder that men go through a midlife crisis?

Testing is easy. We can provide a lab order for you to take

to your lab or we can draw your blood at any of our offices. If you have already had your labs drawn you can send them to us for review. But, often it is best to have labs redone as most offices fail to order everything that is needed. Labs should be drawn in the morning and although fasting is not required, it is recommended. At The Hormone Restoration Center, we look at testosterone and other labs that are often affected by low testosterone levels.

Treating low testosterone can reduce or eliminate every symptom discussed above. But not all treatments are the same. Some treatments improve symptoms and improve health.

Some treatments improve symptoms, but increase the risk for disease and death. For exam-

ple, research shows that testosterone shots can increase risk for heart attacks, strokes and death from heart disease. The risks are not the same for every form of testosterone replacement.

At The Hormone Restoration Center, we use bio-identical testosterone replacement that can help reduce the risk of aggressive prostate cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, muscle loss, osteoporosis and much more.

In addition, estrogen levels are vitally important in the proper treatment of andropause. Unfortunately, many physicians forget to consider this issue or some incorrectly block estrogen production which increases the risk for disease and death.

There are many considerations when treating low testos-

terone in men. Although symptoms may be universal, treatment MUST be individualized.

Treating testosterone properly should not only resolve your symptoms, but also improve your health. At The Hormone Restoration Center we do this every day. We are certified in the use of bio-identical hormones in men and women for the treatment of andropause, menopause and many other conditions.

Dr. Richard Chern specializes in bio-identical hormone and thyroid optimization. He is the only Platinum Provider for BioTE in the region and mentors other physicians on the practice of bio-identical hormone therapy. Call Dr. Chern at 850-837-1271 for an appointment and turn your body back on!

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

National abuse statistics are alarming. According to the National Children's Alliance, the national association and accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers, nearly 700,000 children are abused in the U.S. annually. Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment with 75% suffering from neglect,

17.2% from physical abuse, and 8.4% from sexual abuse. About 4 out of 5 abusers are the child victim's parents.

Many do not realize the peril our children can experience and have to deal with right here in Northwest Florida. There are approximately 1,100 cases of child sexual and physical abuse



reported annually in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, an average of three a day. Despite those big numbers, nearly 2/3 of the

actual needs to help child victims go unmet due to lack of reporting to authorities. It is estimated that for every one child ECCAC helps, there are two children out there who are not helped.

ECCAC, a multi-disciplinary team with all support services and personnel under

one roof, provides services 24/7 in a child-friendly environment to abused and neglected children and their families. With two locations, the Children's Advocacy Center in Niceville serves Okaloosa County and the Pierce Family Children's

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It Boils Down to Inflammation



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

Inflammation is both good and bad. When the body is invaded by foreign bacteria, viruses, chemicals, plant pollen, etc. or an injury occurs, white blood cells release specialized proteins into our blood and tissues to clean up debris, fight infection and heal damaged tissues. This raises our blood flow, and can cause red-

ness, warmth and swelling.

Acute inflammation is short lived such as when we get a cut or abrasion, broken bone, etc. This type of inflammation is beneficial and necessary. However, when this acute inflammatory response fails to shut off and becomes chronic it wreaks havoc in our bodies.

Chronic inflammation can begin to break down healthy tissue and over time can prematurely age us, damage our DNA and keep us from feeling our best. Issues like allergies, asthma, arthritis, sinusitis, tendonitis, dermatitis, etc. can begin to surface.

Underlying every chronic disease condition is inflammation. It contributes to the onset of cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, arthritis, cog-

nitive decline, dementia including Alzheimers, auto-immune disorders (when immune system activates inside the body when there are no invaders or injury thereby causing injury) such as celiac disease, rheumatoid arthritis, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, etc.

When dealing with chronic inflammation we can experience symptoms such as fatigue, body pain, depression, anxiety, gastro-intestinal complications (diarrhea/constipation), weight gain or loss, or persistent infections.

So what causes inflammation to become chronic? Smoking, obesity, alcohol, chronic stress, poor diet (refined carbohydrates, fried foods, sugary beverages, margarine, shortening, lard, red meat) and lack of exer-

cise (lifestyle).

What can we do to help our body reduce this cycle?

Exercise. Get up and walk, stretch and 'just move' your body.

Eat a Mediterranean diet. (For a list of foods to incorporate this type of diet into your lifestyle email succeed.hdhl@gmail.com with Med Diet List in the Subject line.)

Decrease Stress. None of us can escape stress but we can learn to recognize and control it. Deep breathing exercises can stop the stress response and calm us down and this can be done anywhere at any time.

Turn off the TV! Listen to your favorite music, sit outside, read a good book, spend time with friends.

Consume a highquality sup-

plement containing anti-inflammatory ingredients in their correct forms and amounts (fish oil, lipoid acid, curcumin, ginger, garlic, cayenne, certain mushrooms, etc.).

Avoid processed foods. If it has an ingredient list it has been processed. When purchasing these foods look for the package with the least ingredients and avoid colorings, harmful preservatives such as BHS and BHT, etc.

Be aware of what you put on your skin. ewg.org is a great resource to look up ingredients and how they are rated (toxicity level).

*Here's to Your Health!
HealthyDay HealthyLife,
succeed.hdhl@gmail.com*



BY KRISY WHITELEY ANDERSON,
BEVERLY HILLS DAY SPA OWNER

It's Spring! So, what about your skin? Do you remember what it feels like to have clean, smooth skin? Remember how beautiful your skin looked until all those "blackheads" popped up? Well, skip the skin care aisle — I want to tell you about the Ultimate Skin Refiner.

After only three treatments with the Ultimate Skin Refiner H2O Facial Treatment, you can minimize and deep cleanse pores, refine skin tone and texture while infusing potent anti-oxidants and anti-aging bene-

Self-Care Corner: Skin

fits. This is a way to safely clean your pores of dirt, debris and oil; fresh, clean, clear skin is the result.

It uses water along with nutrient filled serums and oxygen infused to cleanse and hydrate your skin in four steps to exfoliate, extract and hydrate all in one. It helps remove dead skin cells, extract all the blackheads, resurface the skin, refine fine lines and wrinkles, plump and hydrate, brighten and soften, minimize pores, promote healthy blood circulation and minimize breakouts. Extractions are easy and fun with the extraction mode and ultrasonic skin scrubber. It lifts the muscle and stimulates ATP with its microcurrent (optional), and then moves trapped fluid on your face or body with lymphatic drainage.

"It has been truly amazing with the hydra skin refiner," says a happy customer. "I applaud



you and such fantastic machinery; it's truly been a game changer for me!"

If you're ready to make a major change in YOUR skin health for Spring, and have it look more beautiful, simply schedule an appointment with me at Beverly Hills Day Spa for an in-depth consultation.

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 Wellness

Journey Bravely: Stay in Your Lane



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Do you ever find yourself feeling anxious, irritable and out of control? You've got that person who refuses to do things the way you think they should and it's causing stress in your life and theirs. You believe deep down that if your child, partner, co-worker, parent, sibling, random driver on the road would just do things "the right way" (your way), things would be so much better for everyone. You spend energy thinking about how you can change them. Then, you find yourself frustrated and resentful when you realize they are going to continue doing things their way. Often, you spend energy that could be spent managing yourself focused on the other person. And, all of this results in more feeling out of control and stuck.

It's uncomfortable when other's choices cause inconvenience, stress and pain for you. Maybe someone in your life is

drinking too much. Maybe they are choosing an unhealthy relationship. Maybe they aren't showing up emotionally for you. Maybe someone is in a self-destructive space and you can't help them snap out of it. Regardless of how much you care about the well-being of others, one thing is true. The only person you can control is yourself. You cannot control your friends, family, children or anyone else.

So, what are you supposed to do with this tension of believing life would be better if only others would do what you say and the reality that people are only in charge of their own thoughts, feelings and actions? Finding your lane of healthy self-control and developing the discipline to stay in that lane is the pathway to your freedom.

5 Ways to Find Your Lane and Stay in It:

Accept what you can and can't control. You can only control yourself. Your energy is best spent focusing on managing your thoughts, emotions, and actions well. Focusing on others' behavior is an unhelpful distraction and a waste of energy. Try making imaginary bins for what you can and can't control and sort things into them when you find yourself in frustrating situa-

tions with others.

Notice anytime you are saying or thinking, "If they would just..." Thoughts and conversations that revolve around what others should be doing differently indicate you're driving in someone else's lane in which you have no control. This will result in consistent frustration and exhaustion. Try reminding yourself to get back in your lane where you have healthy power and self-control.

Focus on understanding and mastering your own lane. Think honestly about how you are managing your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Notice things you might want to change such as taking better care of yourself, developing healthier coping skills, working on your relationship skills. Try choosing a couple of specific areas and intentionally focus your energy on your personal growth.

Pay attention to boundaries. Often when you are out of your lane, it means you need to adjust boundaries. Instead of focusing on changing someone else's behavior, try focusing on how you will adjust your engagement in the relationship if the other person continues with unhealthy behavior. Maybe spend less time with them, share

less vulnerable information, and invest less energy. Or with parenting, perhaps you reduce privileges or make electronics contingent on responsible behavior.

Ask for what you need directly with kindness. When someone else's behavior is negatively impacting you, it is more effective to have a direct, kind conversation than to try to control their behavior. Try saying, "When you _____, I feel _____, what would work better for me in our relationship is _____." Once you've had the conversation, you can observe whether the person responds with openness and intention to

respect your needs. If they do, great. If they don't, stay in your lane by changing your boundaries in the relationship.

Staying in your lane is not selfish. In fact, it's one of the most healthy, loving things you can do for others. By staying in your lane, you provide space for others to learn the healthy practice of staying in and managing their lane. As you are learning how to stay in your lane, remember to connect with us along your journey at Journeybravely.com.

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- Are you embarrassed about smiling in front of people?
- Do you ever put your hand up to cover your smile?
- 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?
- Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, you may be a good candidate for **A Smile Makeover.**



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The Year Was 1797



ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

If we could go back in time to 1797, we would witness John Adams becoming the second U.S. president, the first ship of the U.S. Navy, the frigate USS United States being commissioned and the first washing machine invented. Yes, the first washing machine, a simple tub and ridged board, was used to wash clothes. Now, fast forward 225 years and some of you knew who our second president was and some of you knew the date of our first commissioned Navy ship. I'm going out on a limb and guessing no one knew when the first washing machine was invented. But, we all use one today and it has become an appliance used as often as several days a week or several times a month. So, what do washers and dryers have to do with energy savings? Washers and dryers are among the costliest appliances to operate; so, it's worth taking steps to reduce energy use while using them.

Here are some things you can do to save in the laundry room and reduce wear and tear on clothes:

Wash with cold water.

Using cold water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use by more than in half. Many detergents clean just as well in cold as they do in warm or hot. So, save the hot water for your shower.

Wash full loads.

Your washer will use about the same amount of energy no matter the size of the load. So, fill it up.

Dry right-sized loads for your machine.

If the dryer is too full or too small, it will take longer for the clothes to dry. You spend more per item when running the dryer to only dry a few things.

Use dryer balls.

Wool or rubber dryer balls will help separate your clothes and get more air to them, cutting drying time. The wool balls are said to absorb some moisture, further cutting drying time.

Switch loads while the dryer is warm.

This will allow you to use the remaining heat inside of the dryer for the next cycle.

Clean the lint filter on the dryer.

The dryer will run more efficiently and safely. If you use dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month with a toothbrush to remove film buildup that can reduce air circulation.

Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer.

This will remove as much moisture as possible before drying, reducing your drying time and the wear on your clothes from the high heat of the dryer.

Use lower heat settings in the dryer.

Even if the drying cycle is longer, you'll use less energy and be less likely to over-dry your clothes.

Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothes.

You'll spend less time drying the lighter-weight clothes.

Check with your utility company on time of use rates.

Utility companies offer reduced kWh rates every day called off peak times, almost by half.

Check with your utility company when off peak hours are and use high demand appliances at those times: washers and dryers, pool pumps, dishwashers and sprinkler pumps, during those times, saving you money.

Quick Tip: Over 25% of energy loss is through under insulated attics and over 10% of energy loss through improperly sealed gaps in your home. By taking a few simple steps, you can save energy and increase

comfort. Contact a local insulation pro and Beat the Heat!

Chris Balzer is founder and president of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions, a Smile Provider Company. It provides smiles to customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com.



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Destin-Fort Walton Beach Seeks Volunteers for Dune Stabilization Project

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism continues dune restoration and stabilization on Okaloosa Island beaches. Community volunteers are needed to help with a project, funded by Okaloosa County Tourist Development and a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation matching grant. Volunteers will assist with dune stabilization by helping to plant 200,000 sea oats on Saturday, April 16th at 7 a.m. "The dunes are an important part of our coastal landscape," said Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. "We are fortunate that Destin-Fort Walton

Beach Tourism is dedicated, not only, to keeping our highly-visited beaches pristine but to help fund this project that ensures resiliency to our coastlines in the event of a storm by reinforcing

the dune system." In November, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism installed 10,600 feet of sand fencing

Continued on next page



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 Business

What's a Virtual Business Address?

BY MELISSA FERTITTA,
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS,
BEACHWORX

Since the pandemic of 2020, we've all learned about the many changes the traditional workplace has endured. "Hybrid work" and "remote work" are both approaches aimed at retaining talent. They're paradigm shifts that place more value on results than presenteeism, meaning employees can work whenever and wherever as long as they're hitting their metrics and producing.

According to International Workplace Group, "cloud-based tech" is "central to the success of hybrid working" and, as long as this trend continues and ad-

vances, workers will be able to successfully deliver no matter where they are physically located. As long as workers have a professional environment, with the ability to tap into these cloud-based systems, the traditional workday can evolve into something more flexible and worker-friendly.

This one reason why coworking spaces are trending for digital nomads and enterprise clients, alike. The best coworking spaces offer employees a professional environment with the tools to conduct remote work, namely reliable high-speed internet and private call spaces to conduct video meetings. The spaces may be trendy or tradi-

tional, sprawling and open for collaboration or private and designed for quiet, individual occupancy. Some industry-specific spaces are even popping up in larger markets (think biotech labs you can rent by the week and podcast and film studios that can be rented by the day).

In resort towns, like Destin, coworking spaces meet multiple needs. Without the "central business district" larger towns enjoy, resort towns often have fewer commercial office spaces for lease. This makes coworking spaces attractive for small business owners and entrepreneurs who desire affordability and flexibility over long-term leases or purchasing a building. The

coworking model also offers tourists an "office at the beach." While we all start with the best of intentions to work while on vacation, real world scenarios of crowded condos and residential internet stressed by multiple devices can make it difficult to deliver on that promise. The coworking space is a welcome alternative to the local coffee shop or library. Daily, weekly rental options help tourists get the work done and quickly get back to the vacation.

If you are a small business owner with the best of circumstances, who can successfully work from home, you may only need a coworking space for its virtual address. What's a virtu-

al address? It's another resource coworking spaces offer, allowing you to use the coworking space's physical address as your business's own. Virtual addresses protect your privacy, lend credibility to your small business, help you establish an online presence and expand into new markets. There may even be tax benefits to having your business virtually registered in business-friendly state, like Florida.

Beachworx is a flexible, affordable coworking space in the heart of Destin that delivers all of these solutions. Find out more by visiting

<https://thebeachworx.com>.

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VOLUNTEERS

continued from page 35

along three miles of Okaloosa Island public beaches and John Beasley Park with the assistance of a partnership with Trees on the Coast. Teams of volunteers made the sand fencing installation a success. The fencing helps expand the dunes and mitigates

impacts that have been made to nesting sea turtles, piping plovers and other nesting birds in the area. Planting sea oats along the existing sand fencing allows for dune restoration and stabilization which are key to the natural coastal environment and provide additional wildlife habitats as well as protection for upland structures during storm events.

"The dunes provide a sand source that keeps our beaches healthy. The first step to building up the dune system is to install sand fencing to trap and build sand. The next step is to plant vegetation that stabilizes the dune and prevents sand from blowing or washing away. This project has resulted in the installation of 3-miles of sand fencing and now the planting of 200,000 sea oat plants. Community support has been essential to the success of the dune stabilization project," said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

Visit destinfbw.com/sea-oat-planting-rsvp/ to register for this April 16th volunteer opportunity. Volunteers will sign a waiver and pick up sea oats to transport to assigned beach accessways where team leaders will be stationed to offer instruction and assistance. Equipment will be provided but volunteers are asked to bring water, sunscreen, and gloves.

For more information on Destin-Fort Walton Beach or dune restoration and stabilization, contact Stacey Young, Community & Media Relations Strategist (850) 606-5389 SLYoung@MyOkaloosa.com or Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager (850) 609-5394 afogg@myokaloosa.com. Learn more about how tourism works for Okaloosa County at myokaloosa.com/tourist-development/home.



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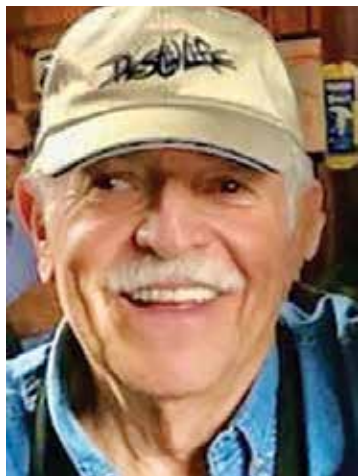


A2Z Specialty Advertising Celebrates Gabby Bruce

By DONNA MONTALVO, A2Z SPECIALTY ADVERTISING, INC.

We are honored to announce the next winner of the “Gabby Bruce You Make A Difference” award. The award goes to The Jay Odom Group and was presented to Jose Marengo, Group Sales/PR Director and Emily Gregory, Property Manager at the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce’s First Friday Coffee in March.

Beyond The Jay Odom Group being an industry leader in real estate development, they teamed up for Operation Holiday Cheer to make sure soldiers who are part of mission readiness had free holiday dinners. The Jay Odom Group created a scholarship fund for special forces, donated to AMI Kids,



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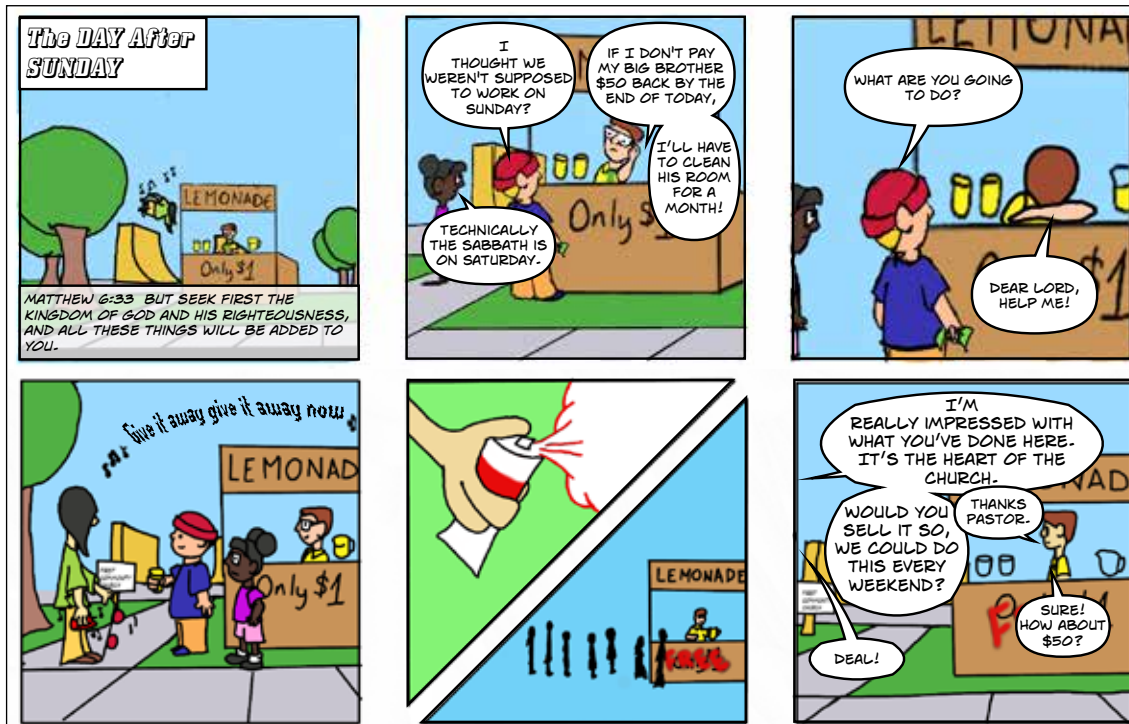
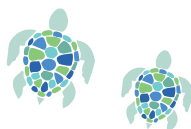
he had and continues to have in our community! This is our 9th award so far and we have three more to go by June 2022.

The awards are given out based on nominations through our commercials on Cumulus Radio and Destin Life. We look for nominations for an organization who makes an impact by their generosity and personifies Gabby’s giving back to our community.



Future Stars Football Clinic and Kids Connecting through Fort Walton Beach High School, just to name a few. The Jay Odom Group has a history of experience, excellence, proven success and giving back to our community also!

Do you know of a local organization that makes a difference? Please email your submission to donna@a2zDestin.com. We look forward to hearing from you and continuing to honor Gabby and our local businesses.



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Financial Research and Commentary March 25, 2022

Will Money Become Scarce Again?



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

It seems that these days everywhere you go there is a shortage of service, a shortage of product or a shortage of labor, or people to help you. Americans have never been in stronger financial shape, savings have never been higher, and it seems like jobs have never been so plentiful. The jobless claims number just reported this week shows the lowest number of claims since 1969 (of course the labor market and population are much larger now). Americans are flush with cash more than ever before. And that has shown up in housing prices, stock prices

(in 2020 and 2021) and other asset prices except perhaps for investment grade bonds.

Inflation is a much bigger consideration in investing today than it has been in past decades.

The Federal Reserve and the federal government applied massive stimulus and relief going back almost two years ago as America and the world plunged into the pandemic. Almost 25 million jobs suddenly went away. Restaurants and businesses across the land had to close until further notice. That massive stimulus came in two forms: 1) new spending bills passed and signed by the President and 2) the lowering of interest rates and the buying of Treasuries and mortgage backed (and other) bonds by the Federal Reserve. The latter unleashed almost \$5 trillion dollars of new money into the financial system. That more than doubled what the Fed had done in history to date. And the Fed "printed" about 30% of all money created in the US for over the past 200 years in that short two-year time. That eventually (adding to



the supply chain problems) unleashed monetary inflation: Too many dollars chasing suddenly fewer goods and services. When considering an investment, we encourage individuals to look at the real rate of return (after inflation) as they make their evaluation.

The Fed is acting.

Now the Fed is, very carefully, moving to address inflation and has raised its shortest-term rate, known as the Federal Funds rate from 0% to .25%. That is also known as the overnight rate. Banks are an immediate benefactor of this because any funds they park overnight with the Fed start receiving this, vs zero or close to zero. Investors are also seeing an immediate benefit as the yields on money market funds have also increased. We therefore continue to be encouraged by long term opportunities in the banking industry, which is part of the Financial sector of the S&P 500. We think that clients should consider the top 40 largest banks (measured in terms of total deposits) in particular.

The Fed's balance sheet

The greater impact, we believe, on inflation, and asset prices of all kinds, will be when the Fed begins to reduce the size of its approximately \$9 trillion balance sheet. We feel that has much more impact as it makes money scarcer. The Fed is being, in our opinion, very practical and tactical as it tries to slow the rate of inflation without harming this very strong economy. With the Fed not competing to buy Treasuries and mortgage-backed securities,

that could mean less price support and yields could continue to rise. Not good for bond prices but could help slow the rate of inflation. The Fed has indicated that action on the balance sheet could come by May or by summer.

The question becomes, will those two major components increase by the same amount in 2022? We don't think so. We think money will slowly become scarcer and that will mean a lowering of prices for just about everything. We do believe inflation will range from 3-5% by year's end.

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

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tice. Information provided is general in nature and is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision and is not a recommendation or a solicitation to buy or sell any security. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Investors should consult their investment professional prior to making an investment decision.

Investing in oil involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors.

There is an inverse relationship between interest rate movements and fixed income prices. Generally, when interest rates rise, fixed income prices fall and when interest rates fall, fixed income prices rise.

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency issuers are not registered with the SEC, and the Bitcoin marketplace is currently unregulated. Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are a very speculative investment and involve a high degree of risk.

Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses of an exchange traded fund carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other information and should be read carefully before investing. The prospectus is available from your investment professional. The companies engaged in the communications and technology industries are subject to fierce competition and their products and services may be subject to rapid obsolescence. Investing in the energy sector involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors.



Your usual?

Familiarity bias means sticking with what you know – but there may be a lot that you don't. Familiarity might be playing a role in some of your decisions.

Think Before You Act

To help you keep familiarity from overly influencing your financial plan:

- Don't confuse awareness with understanding or expertise. Rely on objective research.
- Take the time to consider your motivations for selecting certain investments or strategies.
- Don't rule out an investment or financial strategy because it's foreign to you.

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What's Your "Company Culture"?



BY GAIL PELTO,
KELLER WILLIAMS

I belong to a powerful networking group called Master Networks. What makes us unique from other formalized networking groups is that, in addition, to passing referrals to those we know, like and trust, we also share, and learn about, best business practices.

A few weeks back, we had an insightful conversation about what we believed to be each of our company cultures and then, did we actually have our company culture written down and formalized? NONE of us did. Here's your sign; THAT was

my homework. I needed to put down in writing what I truly believe is the Gail Pelto, Realtor & Team Company Culture.

Here's what it says on the web: **Company culture is how you do what you do in the workplace. It's the sum of your formal and informal systems and behaviors and values, all of which create an experience for your employees and customers.** Some of the signs that you have a good company culture are low employee turn-over, repeat customers, high quality employee referrals (both employee and client referrals), positive reviews, an atmosphere of excellence, high level of trust and ALL of your employees have clarity of your company values. Are you hitting the marks, ticking all the boxes?

Homework done! As an independent contractor, here's my formalized, written down company culture for Gail Pelto, Re-

altor and my team. (I welcome any suggestions for improvement!)

Mission: Deliver unequalled value, service, and professionalism. This is who we are; this is what you can count on—guaranteed.

Vision: To assist you in achieving YOUR goals. With our focus on how we can help you achieve YOUR goals, we don't worry about reaching ours.

Our Core Values: (known in our office as the "WI4C2TS." By the way, these are from Keller Williams and one of the reasons I chose them as my brokerage):

- Win-Win:** or no deal
- Integrity:** do the right thing
- Customers:** always come first
- Commitment:** in all things
- Communication:** seek first to understand
- Creativity:** ideas before results
- Teamwork:** together everyone achieves more

Trust: starts with honesty
Success: results through people

Working Together with Like-Minded Professionals: We have a belief that success begins at the individual level, with tangible benefits that ripple outward surrounded by like-minded professionals with shared values and core beliefs and a commitment to put them into practice by supporting each other – this makes our culture stronger.

Giving Back to the Community: For us to survive, our community must survive. It is important to donate – whether it's time or financially – to sup-

port the community in which we live, work and play. The hand that is open to give, is also open to receive.

We come from a place of contribution. How may we help you?

What is YOUR company culture? For a few tips on how to develop your company culture, or to find out more about Master Networks, please reach out to me at 850.374.0454 or at 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.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

continued from page 33

Advocacy Center in DeFuniak Springs serves Walton County.

Nautica Caswell, ECCAC's Community Outreach Manager said, "Join our initiative to paint the town blue! Blue is the color for Child Abuse Prevention Month and you can help us spread the word. For the month of April, our Centers are selling

signs and blue lightbulbs to raise child abuse awareness. For a donation of \$20, purchase a yard sign along with a blue light bulb. Proudly place the sign in your yard, window, home, or business; replace your front porch light or other fixture as a signal of hope for the kids in our community."

Order online at eccac.org, or contact Nautica Caswell, Community Outreach Program Manager at 850-833-9237, Ext.

267, or email her at Nautica@eccac.org.



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Using Radio to Spread Good News

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Some of us have a word of the year – mine is ‘moderation’; but, this year I also have a phrase of the year that grabbed me recently on the Road to Redemption podcast, an interview with Dr. Mike. Here it is: The more you listen to God, the louder He speaks.

I love it, because it’s so true. And it looks like John Martin has been a good listener. The idea for Road to Redemption came to him when God’s Holy Spirit impressed upon him that he should start a show sharing powerful testimonies to reach those looking for hope. One day he thought, “Wow, we have so many people with Road to Redemption stories,” and that’s when he knew the Holy Spirit was the one bringing him back to an idea that had been percolating for some time in his heart.

John, in obedience to God’s direction, reached out and began partnering with his church, Destiny Worship Center, to produce a weekly radio show and podcast titled “Road to Redemption,” interviewing folks from all walks of life with compelling stories of how God brought them by, sometimes, difficult paths to where they are today. The show seeks to bring glory to God by showcasing how formerly broken and wandering souls have been brought into the fold and saved.

John’s vision for Road to Redemption is first and foremost to reach the lost for Christ. He wants to give the Holy Spirit the platform to use stories of people who love Jesus and desire to share their journey and testimony in order to evangelize those who are seeking joy and peace.

John, and his team, ask the

Holy Spirit to lead them to the right people to share their life experiences with Road to Redemption’s listeners. They interview locals from all walks of life, including business owners, retirees, homemakers, young people, famous and normal everyday people like you and me.

Their first podcast was this past December, and John says, “The feedback has been incredible, and the show has already touched many lives.”

Each interview is approximately 20 - 30 minutes long. You can listen to them live every Monday at 2 p.m. on Destiny Radio 91.1 FM, or later, via Apple Podcast and Spotify. All the episodes are archived on the show’s website at www.roadtoredemptionpodcast.com.

John doesn’t do all this on his own. His awesome team includes Nate Kelly, Aliya Yellen,

Walker Beach and Drew Powell. Together, they work to conduct the interviews and produce a high-quality radio show and podcast.

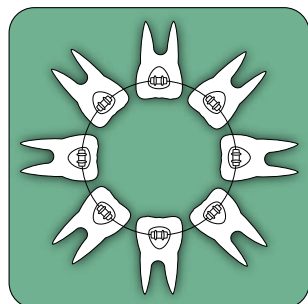
You can listen to Shanna’s testimony, an abused wife who was delivered and set on a new course. Or you can learn about Ricardo, who ran afoul of the law and ended up behind bars. That’s where Jesus found him and changed the course of his life. Then there’s Dr. Mike, who God called to live and minister in the Destin area, making a difference in his professional and personal life, learning more and more every day to listen to the Holy Spirit and act in obedience.

These and many more podcasts are available to encourage, uplift and instruct. Like the Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 3:15, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

John Martin has been faithful to his area of service, giving us an example of how we need to look for our area of service as well. As Jesus told us, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Luke 10:2 ESV)



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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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You could have it answered in one our columns.

Sean of the South: **Easter**



BY SEAN DIETRICH

A few years ago, I attended my first Catholic mass in a busy church outside Birmingham. It was Easter Sunday. I sat in the nosebleed section.

People greeted me with the words, “He’s risen.”

And because I was not raised under a rock, I answered with: “He’s risen indeed.”

I was not reared Catholic. I was born into a fundamentalist family with a mother who sometimes prayed in tongues over our meatloaf.

But after my father died, I learned that he had been raised Catholic. He went to Catholic school, he played Catholic baseball.

He didn’t talk about it. I never knew that version of him.

All I knew was a man who did not dance at wedding receptions for fear the pastor would catch him.

There in the Catholic cathedral, the priest announced, “He is risen.”

“He’s risen indeed,” said the congregation.

I was an outsider in the room.

The priest recited the Liturgy of the Eucharist, people formed a single-file line to drink out of a chalice.

Easter Sundays in my family were nothing like this. My father was an usher at our little church. He’d stand by the front door and hand out bulletins that advertised upcoming Baptist church events.

For example:

—Thursday fundraiser, dinner on the grounds. Bring a covered dish.

—Young men’s Bible study, 6 P.M. Bring a covered dish.

—Women’s Sunday school class is holding an upcoming prayer vigil against beer. Bring a congealed salad.

—Men’s group is recruiting for its annual mission trip to Biloxi.

On Easter, my father always gave folded bulletins to those approaching. He would say, “He is Risen.”

And any Baptist worth his salt would answer with, “He’s risen indeed.”

Most who attended our church on Easter were only visitors. They came twice per year. My father called them “nose-bleed Baptists.”

I never heard anyone else use that term. I asked my father what this meant.

“Well,” he said. “Some fans only come to games once a year and sit in the nosebleed section. And other fans never miss a ballgame, even when the pitcher stinks.”

“Which ones are we?” I asked.

“You’ve heard our new preacher, you tell me.”

Our preacher delivered fiery sermons. He would remove his jacket and preach to heartless sinners, drunks, and those who danced at wedding receptions.

The church services of my youth were lengthy. Someone in the congregation would either faint from low blood sugar, or be suddenly overcome with the spirit of narcolepsy.

But this Catholic business was different. Mass was foreign to me. It was exotic, and beautiful.

All my life, my father refused to step foot in a Catholic church. And he wouldn’t even talk about it.

But then, there was that one time.

On the way home from a Boy Scout meeting, he pulled into a Catholic church. I knew my father was having a rough time at work. I’d overheard him talking with my mother through the hot-air vents.

“The boss is killing me,” my father once said. “I can’t sleep, can’t eat...”

At night, sometimes I found my father vomiting in the bathroom from stress. I would ask what was wrong, he would tell me to go back to bed.

That afternoon, Daddy wheeled into a Catholic church and turned off the truck. There was a man cutting the church lawn with a push mower, he

wore a white collar.

My father told me to wait in the vehicle.

Daddy was in that chapel for almost two hours. When he came back his face was wet and his eyes were pink. I never asked why. And he never told me.

Anyway, Easter mass was lovely. I’ll never forget it. The priest told the people that “Easter is when dead things come back to life, when we remember how the finger of God can touch dead wood and make it green again.”

I had to write that down I liked it so much.

After the service, I stayed in the chapel until all people had left. The priest sat in a pew behind me. He introduced himself.

“Father,” I said, “I’m not Catholic, but I really enjoyed mass.”

“Yeah?” he said. “Thanks for celebrating the Resurrection with us.”

“Can I ask you a question, Father?”

“Shoot.”

“Have you ever lost anyone?”



“Yes. I lost my mom, my dad, and my brother.”

“Do you think about them a lot?”

He ducked his head. He let out a sigh. “Every second. Actually, I was thinking about Mom this morning. You know, when I was growing up, she would always laugh about the big Easter crowds and call them ‘nosebleed Catholics.’ Isn’t that funny?”

It sure is.

On my way out of church, the priest and I took a slow walk down the aisle. I admired the statuary, and the beautiful stained-glass windows.

The priest hugged me, then said, “He is risen.”

And well, you know the rest. Happy Easter.



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A Pastor's Ponderings: Up From the Grave

BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

Hell stunk of sulfur that day. The essence of rotting eggs wafted through the dark air of Hades as demons and all manner of horrific creatures poked and prodded the new arrival. Fresh meat to taunt gave them a sick pleasure. Laughing and kicking the corpse until he woke up, the evil minions asked each other, "Who is he anyway?"

Lucifer laughed manically, "Jesus, they called Him 'King of the Jews' and now He's mine, all mine." Eruptions of hisses and boos cascaded through the smokey caverns of hell. "This miserable, bleeding human was supposed to 'save people from their sin,'" he mocked. All the inhabitants of Hades reveled in their master's contempt. Then

the corpse moved.

Bloodied and beaten, Jesus rose and preached to the captives, "Turn in faith to God."

"Oh, you silly so-called Messiah, don't you know they're mine now for eternity?"

Ignoring the ancient liar, Jesus proclaimed, "I am the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world. All who believe in me shall be saved."

"Yet, here you are," Satan smirked.

"Turn from your ways and follow me," Christ implored the captives.

A condemned human called out, "Follow you? Where are you going? You are here with us in the dungeon of the dead. Why should we listen to you?"

"Behold my bleeding hands; put your hand in my pierced side. I died as a sacrifice for you and all humanity. Put your faith in me and I will deliver you from this place."

At that moment, a breeze unlike any other swept through that stifling place. Even the demons smelled it, "What was



that? The imp cried?"

A fallen angel sneered, "Shush foolish goblin, that is the Breath of Heaven."

The Savior's voice grew stronger as He rose, imploring the masses, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Look to Me and be healed of your wounds. Come and I will deliver you from the torment of hate, doubt and fear."

The Spirit-Wind swirled with growing intensity and the Christ began to rise above the stench of death and the grave. "Believe in Me," He called out, "and this day you shall be with

me in Paradise." And faith rose in the hearts of the captives of sin, death and the grave.

"No!" Satan roared. "They're mine. Their own guilt condemns these stupid, wretched humans."

Wrestling the keys of Hell from Satan, Jesus declared, "I redeemed them by paying with my life. We rise to go back to the Father and place my blood on the Mercy Seat."

Christ arose by the power of the Holy Spirit leading captivity captive. Multitudes followed Him and His ragtag band ascended beyond the gates of Hell and through the portals of heaven.

Multitudes of angelic creatures wondered at the spectacle parading into the Holy Place. They recognized the Son of the Highest, bloodied but unbroken. Seraphim gasped. "What manner of creatures are these with Him, still wreaking of sulfur and stained with guilt?"

The Ancient of Days stood from His throne and heaven hushed as the Lamb ap-

proached the brazen altar. Wiping His bloody hands there, the Christ moved past it to the Mercy seat. The Lamb of God lay there with His pierced side still bleeding.

"Boom!" The scepter of the Great God pounded the golden floor of heaven.

"Innocent!" He shouted for all creation to hear. "The sinless blood of My Son paid the price for all who believe. He redeemed humanity from every kindred, tongue and tribe forever.

All heaven stood on tiptoe shouting, "Jesus has risen. Christ has risen indeed."

Celebrate Easter in the Word of God with Dave Holland and his daily devotional, "Extraordinary Jesus." He recently released this devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke. You can get a copy from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com.

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ARTSQUEST

continued from page 2

a parody of fables and everyday life, creating stories with each of the characters that live in it. His wide range of work will be on display and “Fable In Eden” is the featured image on all ArtsQuest marketing materials.

An independent engraver, painter, cartoonist, sculptor, designer, set designer and children’s book illustrator, Orestes was born in Cuba in 1963, studied at the Provincial School of Arts of Pinar del Rio specializing in plastic arts and graduated from the National School of Arts “Cubanacan” in Havana in 1983. Orestes has received more than 20 national and international awards for his artistic work as well as various recognitions for his teaching. He

has had eight personal art exhibitions and participated in more than 70 collective exhibitions in Cuba, Canada, Germany, Argentina, Spain, France, Uruguay and the U.S.

ArtsQuest is now part of a full month of art activities in May! Art Month Walton Coun-



ARTS FESTIVAL ORGANIZERS Hilda McDonald, Sue Foster and Kitty Taylor helped make the Arts Festival a success.

ty is a collaboration of visual, performing and literary arts events presented in diverse formats and venues throughout the county. It includes “Under

the Sea”—a fundraiser for the Underwater Museum of Art, Digital Graffiti Festival at Alys Beach, the Longleaf Writers Conference, Music on Main in DeFuniak Springs, Sinfonia Goes Pop, Xanadu—a production from Emerald Coast The-

atre Company, gallery events and more.

Would you like to help and join the rich history of volunteers for ArtsQuest? Sign up at CulturalArtsAlliance.com/volunteer. ArtsQuest will happen rain or shine. Open to the

public with only a \$5 admission donation requested, visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com or see the inserted Art Month program for more information. Destin Life looks forward to seeing you there!

Northwest Florida Ballet Académie Auditions

The Northwest Florida Ballet (NFB) Académie will hold auditions by appointment at its downtown studio on Perry Ave. for the 2022-2023 academic year in April. Auditions for incoming third-grade students will take place on April 23, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and April 24, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Incoming fourth-grade students will audition on April 23 from 3-4:30 p.m.

Appointment reservations are required for all auditions and must be made by 2 p.m., on April 21. Space is limited, and the time slots are assigned in ad-

vance. Dancers will be required to sanitize their hands upon entering the building, and parents must remain outside, as the NFB lobby will be closed.

Prospective Académie students and their parents are encouraged to attend a tour event at the NFB studios scheduled for April 19, at 10:15 a.m.; April 20, at 6 p.m.; and April 21, at 10:15 a.m. For all requirements, the audition reservation form and additional details on the NFB Académie, please call (850) 664-7787 or visit www.NFBallet.org/Academie.

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Bad Charlotte Live
Sat, Apr 9 at 9 pm
Bad Charlotte Live
Thu, Apr 14 at 9 pm
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Hollow Decks Live
Sat, Apr 16 at 9 pm
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- JUN 2** Alter Eagles
- JUN 9** Sister Hazel
Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing The Music of Led Zeppelin with Conductor Brent Havens and Vocalist Randy Jackson
- JUN 16** Boogie Wonder Band
Followed by Elena Disco
- JUN 23**

 Arts & Music

Gulf Coast Jam Brings Country to the Coast

BY WILL ESTELL

If you're a fan of great country music and America's best beaches, you've probably already heard a thing or two about Gulf Coast Jam. What started as a decent size outdoor music festival 10 years ago has now grown into one of the top-ten largest, and most popular, country music festivals in the nation.

Having covered the festival editorially for four years, I can assure you it does not, and will not, disappoint. I've seen everyone from Tim McGraw, Brad Paisley, Luke Bryan and Florida Georgia Line to Riley Green, Big & Rich, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Brothers Osborne and Kid Rock play to Gulf Coast Jam's growing crowds of music lovers. Every single year the shows get better while the crowds get bigger. With attendance topping the 30,000 mark for the headlining shows in 2021, this year's festival is proving to be even more popular, with some ticket packages already sold out months in advance.

Taking place June 2-5 at Panama City Beach's Frank Brown Park, this world-class music fes-

tival is just right down the road if you reside anywhere in the vicinity of Destin, Niceville, Fort Walton Beach, South Walton and the surrounding areas.

Spring 2022 Gulf Coast Jam's headliners encompass some of country's biggest duos, including long-time hitmakers Brooks & Dunn headlining June 5th while the festival will be one of the last venues that local favorites Florida Georgia Line will perform at (having recently announced they are taking a break) on June 4th. Additionally, the newly minted ACM Group of the Year, Old Dominion, will headline on June 3rd.

When asked about some of the highlights of the upcoming 10TH Anniversary festival, Gulf Coast Jam's executive producer, Rendy Lovelady, said, "Florida Georgia Line is not only one of the most-requested acts we've ever had at Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, but both Brian and Tyler are fixtures on the Florida Panhandle. We can pretty much guarantee a party when they play Panama City Beach!"

As if the top-notch array of festival headliners isn't enough bang for your buck, the 10th



Will Estell with Florida Georgia Line band members.

Anniversary Jam features a smorgasbord of entertainment that includes some of the biggest names in music—every single night. For the first time in the festival's history, this includes a bonus kickoff show featuring Brett Young on Thursday June 2nd, included for all of those who purchased a weekend pass.

Thursday night's lineup also includes Jameson Rodgers, Niko Moon and Casi Joy, while Friday night brings to the big stage: Tyler Rich, Jordan Davis, Gary Allan, Randy Rogers Band, Presley & Taylor, Ryan Griffin and Tigerlily. Saturday features well-knowns Chris Janson, Maddie & Tae, Darryl Worley, Frankie Ballard, Steve Moakler, Nate Barnes, and Chandler Flint. Finally the culmination of the entire festival weekend will start Sunday, and includes one of my personal favorites, Georgia's own, Corey Smith, along with

Scotty McCreery, Tracy Lawrence, Confederate Railroad, Mitchell Tenpenny and Elvie Shane.

Having attended and written about concerts by a wide array of artists, the one thing I am always in awe of is that even with today's ever-increasing ticket pricing for single concerts, somehow the producers of Gulf Coast Jam still find a way to offer a remarkable package that allows a concert goer to see in excess of 20 well-known artists, over four days, on a single stage, and make it affordable. I mean where else can you experience all of this music, first-hand, on a \$159 general admission weekend pass? People pay that to see one or two groups at most large venues around the nation.

Festival COO, and Panama City Beach Mayor, Mark Sheldon, agrees that the price has a lot to do with how popular Gulf

Coast Jam continues to be, stating, "Four days of fun, sun and great music – you just can't beat that!"

My friend, Craig Campbell, of Campbell Entertainment Group in Nashville, has played an instrumental role in orchestrating various behind the scenes aspects of Gulf Coast Jam since its first year, and he's told me, firsthand, that the talent alone runs well into the multi-millions each year.

Campbell went on to explain, "it's actually because of our great sponsorship by Pepsi, as well as the generous support of Panama City Beach, Jim Beam, Bud Light, and our many other valued sponsors and festival partners that the promoters are able to continually make this one of the most affordable music festivals in the country, year-after-year. That's one of the aspects that Rendy and Mark are most proud of. Bringing great music to Panama City Beach and making it attainable to most everyone."

In addition to weekend passes, Thursday-only tickets are available starting at just \$29 for general admission. This is the first time the festival has offered a one-day pass, though, as I mentioned above, everyone who purchases a three-day ticket will automatically get the fourth night free as a bonus.

Four-day Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam passes were still available at the time of this article. General Admission passes are currently \$159.00 for the full four-day weekend, with special college student passes only \$139.00, and Military, First Responder/Medical Personnel passes just \$129.00.

There's also VIP Pit and Super VIP passes at \$459.00 and \$659.00, respectively. And, trust me they are worth every penny for that location and stage view. There are also very limited numbers of Side Stage passes available for \$1,150.00. All passes are available at www.GulfCoastJam.com, while they last.

For additional information you can follow Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam on Facebook and Instagram. However, the best way to get in on all the action is simply to grab your tickets and music-loving friends and get to Panama City Beach to experience it all yourself.

Savvy Leigh

PHOTO

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THURS, APRIL 14 | 11:30AM



Tickets:

\$55 per person
MKAF Members

\$75 per person
non-members

Visit
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(850) 650-2226

Raiders of the Lost Ark in Concert is Family Friendly

Relive the magic on the silver screen with the original great adventure, Raiders of the Lost Ark with John Williams' epic score performed live to picture by Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Saturday, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. at the Destin Fort Walton Beach Convention Center.

The year is 1936, and profes-

sor of archeology and "obtainer of rare antiquities" Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) is tasked by U.S. Army Intelligence to recover the legendary Ark of the Covenant before it falls into the hands of the Nazis. Indy's quest takes him to Nepal and Egypt, reuniting him with an old friend (John Rhys-Davies), an old foe

(Paul Freeman), and an ex-flame (Karen Allen) who falls somewhere in between. Armed with his hat, whip and wits, our intrepid hero must face formidable enemies – and impossible odds – to save the day and the world. Student tickets are avail-

able for purchase for this adventurous concert.

TICKETS: \$20 Student | \$25 Active Duty Military | \$29.50 Choice Seating Balcony | \$45 Preferred Seating | \$55 Premiere Seating

Tickets available for purchase here: <https://bit.ly/SGC-season16>

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

studio6twenty5 Fall Registration Now Open!

studio6twenty5 is proud to include the American Ballet Theatre® National Training Curriculum, a breakthrough 9 level program that combines high-quality artistic training with the basics of dancer health and child development. The ABT® National Training Curriculum consists of a comprehensive set of age-appropriate, outcome-based guidelines to provide the highest quality ballet training to dance students of all ages and skill levels. Pre-Primary through Level 3 is taught by ABT® Certified Teacher, Rachel Prescott, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 3 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum.

SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays
9-10am: Adult Barre +
11-11:30am: Pre Primary Ballet A
11:45am-12:15pm: Pre Primary B Ballet
1-2:30pm: Adult Ballet

Wednesdays
12:30-1pm: Pre Primary A Ballet
1:15-1:45pm: Pre Primary B Ballet
Fridays
9-10am: Adult Barre +
Saturdays
9:30-10am: Pre Primary A Ballet
10:10-10:40am: Pre Primary B Ballet
10:50-11:30am: Pre Primary C Ballet
11:40-12:30pm: Primary A Ballet
12:45-1:45pm: Primary B Ballet

Pre-Primary Ballet and Primary Ballet creative dance classes are part of the classical curriculum for the youngest dancers, instilling foundational elements of movement through creative experience, expression and play. Both boys and girls are highly encouraged. Classes occur once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday.

Visit website for additional level and adult classes, or to register online: studio6twenty5.com. Please email any questions to rachel@studio6twenty5.com.
studio6twenty5
625 Harbor Blvd. (Upstairs)

ECTC Presents Family-Friendly Children's Musicals

ECTC Mini, Little, and Big Players Present: "Willy Wonka Jr."

Big Players: April 8 at 7 p.m. & 9 at 10:30 a.m.

Little Players: April 9 at 3 p.m. & 4:30 p.m. & 10th at 2:30 p.m. & 4 p.m.

Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka Jr." follows enigmatic candy manufacturer Willy Wonka as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. Whomever comes up with these tickets will win a free tour of the Wonka factory,



as well as a lifetime supply of candy. Four of the five winning children are insufferable brats, but the fifth is a likeable young lad named Charlie Bucket and

Continued on next page



RAIDERS of the LOST ARK IN CONCERT!

A family friendly event!

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 | 7:30 pm
Destin Fort Walton Beach Convention Center
Tickets: \$29.50 - \$55.00

SCAN HERE FOR TICKETS



SINFONIA BOX OFFICE: 850.460.8800 SinfoniaGulfCoast.org

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Pre Primary B Ballet: ages 3-4
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*Students must be enrolled in Primary A or B Ballet to register for Primary A & B Jazz/Lyrical.

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Visit studio6twenty5.com for more information.
Located at 625 Harbor Blvd. Destin-upstairs



Ask Destinites: To Our Spring Break Visitors

By PATRICIA LEE, DESTINITES

Spring break is in full swing now until about mid-April. Every year I see concerns posted by locals, in our private Destinites Facebook group. I am going to address a couple of those concerns here, because it isn't just locals who read this paper. So, VISITORS, this one's for YOU!

#1. When you go to the

beach, the first thing you need to do is look for the flags. They are on very tall polls and could be flying any one of four different colors; Red (High hazard - rip currents present), Yellow (Medium hazard), Purple (Dangerous marine life present - could be jelly fish or any other dangerous sea creatures), or Green (Low hazard - Best conditions for swimming but always stay aware). DOUBLE RED FLAGS mean swimming is closed to the public and you could receive a \$500 fine for entering the water. This is because you are putting rescuers in danger; not just yourself.

We locals realize you have spent a lot of money for your va-

cation, but it is sad and unnecessary to have to send you home in a body bag or have to call the family of someone who tried to save you from a rip current and lost their own life, in the process. Keep an eye on the flags while you are out there, because they can change in a heartbeat. They are there to help keep you safe. Please pay attention to them!

If you are staying in a condo or hotel, you can most likely find a flag chart displayed in your room. Please familiarize yourself and your entire party with it. Some beach entrances also have a billboard displayed with descriptions of the flags. Take time to be aware so that you will have a fun and safe trip.

#2. Driving around town: Before you get in your car, take a deep breath and bring your patience. Roads are packed with visitors, but also locals, as we go about our daily routines. Please slow down and do not weave in and out of traffic. Speed and weaving are two major culprits in causing wrecks. Rear enders can be high on the list, too, since visitors are trying to find an address or just look at scenery while driving. Please keep your eyes on the road and do not stop on a bridge to take pictures, which is dangerous.

#3. Please don't drink and drive! A taxi ride may cost you a little, but if you kill yourself or someone else, the

cost will be a whole lot higher, in more ways than one.

I invite everyone to visit our Destinites website to sign up for our monthly newsletter, as it is open to all. If you are actually a resident of Destin or the surrounding area, I invite you to join our very active, private locals Facebook group with 6000+ members, and a place where you can come to reach out for immediate local help or, ask for recommendations, find out about community happenings, meet your neighbors and make a new friend. See you there!

Patricia Lee, Owner: www.Destinites.com

Creator: www.facebook.com/groups/Destinites

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 6

about the program. "It's another nugget or tool in our chest that we can use toward building relationships and maybe helping solve some additional crime down there."

The **4th Annual Mac & Cheese Festival** held on Sunday, March 6, 2022, at Destin Commons was a record-breaking success. The event raised \$65,000 and welcomed roughly

1,500 attendees throughout the day. Proceeds from the event benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast. "Our fourth Mac-N-Cheese Festival was a huge success and thoroughly outperformed our own expectations. We are extremely thankful to all that attended, all of our cooking participants, Destin Commons, and all of our sponsors for making this year's event amazing. Every cent raised through this event will make an impact on the over 4,000 youth we serve on an an-



Jackacuda's, Judges Choice Winner

nual basis," said Shervin Rassa, Chief Executive Officer, The Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast.

Award winners are as follows:
Judge's Choice: Jackacu-

da's Seafood and Sushi
People's Choice: Smoke N' Whiskey BBQ
Kid's Choice: Dixieland Chicken

ECTC

continued from page 45

his grandfather. The children must learn to follow Mr. Wonka's rules in the factory — or suffer the consequences. Tickets: \$16 for adults, \$14 for senior/military, \$10 for students, ages three and younger free.

ECTC Teen Players Present "Crazy for You"

April 29, 7:30 p.m.
April 30, 1 p.m., 4 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

"Crazy For You" tells the story of young New York banker Bobby Child, who is sent to Deadrock, Nevada, to foreclose on a rundown theatre. In Deadrock, Bobby falls for spunky Polly Baker, the theater owner's daughter. But Polly takes an instant dislike to the city slicker, so Bobby vows — through cunning, razzmatazz, and a hilarious case of mistaken identity — to win Polly's heart and save the theater. Tickets: \$18 per person for adults; \$16 students, \$14 for children (12 and under); ages three and younger are free.

All performances are staged at ECTC's performance space located at 560 Grand Boulevard (upstairs) in Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach. For more information, call (850) 684-0323 or visit www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

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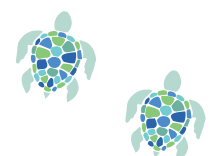
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