



DECEMBER 2022  
VOL. 5, NO. 5

# DESTIN Life

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## A Destin Holiday!

Visits with Santa, Holiday Lights, Parades and Much More!

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

For many years, our piece of Paradise has ignited the holiday spirit in each of us and allowed the season to come to life for the young and young at heart. With a unique blend of theatrical storytelling, musical notes and beautiful and whimsical Christmas lights, we are welcomed into a world of Yuletide nostalgia and local flavor and personalities where reindeer fly, sugarplums dance in our heads and Christmas comes alive in our own area – coastal style. I invite you to explore the vast, unique holiday traditions, some many years in the making and new ones to delight our senses, and usher in the “reason for the season” – the celebrated birth of Jesus, our Savior. Join Destin Life in some of these holiday celebrations where you can create some new family traditions of your own while rekindling your favorites.

You can **visit St. Nick at The Village of Baytowne**



PHOTO BY LAND, AIR & SEA PRODUCTIONS

**Wharf** at his sleigh Wednesday, Dec. 7, 14 and 21, 6-8 p.m. Tap your feet to some of your favorite sing-along classics each Wednesday during the holiday edition of the Wednesday Night Concert Series. Dec. 7 – Gateway Academy and Fort Walton Beach High School Choir; Dec. 14 – Niceville High School; Dec. 21 – Matt Mc-

Carty Band. Plus, visit with Santa 5-7 p.m. Dec. 4 during Tuba Christmas! Visit baytownewharf.com.

Visit **Santa at Harbor-Walk Village** weekends until Dec. 18, 1-4 p.m.

Visit **Santa at Bass Pro Shop** at Destin Commons through Dec. 24. There are also free games, crafts and a

free 4-by-6 professional photo with Santa, as well as a free digital download. To book, visit basspro.com.

**Jolly Jubilee**, a festive celebration of the holiday season, happens every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at **Destin**

**DESTIN HOLIDAY**  
*continued on page 3*

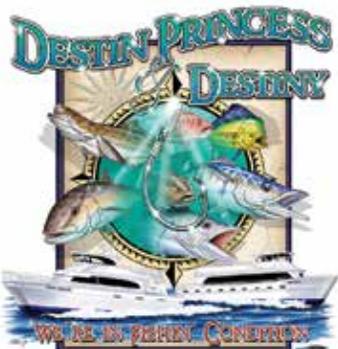


## Christmas Memories: Christmas in Illinois

BY GUEARY CLENDENING

Many years ago, My wife, Linda, and I lived in Illinois. Memories of driving to southern Illinois to spend Christmas with her family are truly cherished! On one particular Christmas, we left on Christmas Eve, driving down on Interstate 57. We traveled at night and had the car radio tuned to KMOX, a St. Louis, Mo., station. During Christmas Eve, the station would visit several area churches and broadcast their Christmas Eve services live. The drive of 210 miles in the snow to Southern Illinois was so much fun-

**CHRISTMAS**  
*continued on page 3*



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### DESTIN HOLIDAY

continued from page 1

**Commons** through Dec. 24. Centered around the iconic 50-foot Christmas tree, there's magical free entertainment featuring Christmas carolers, local vocalist groups, student ensembles, theatrical groups and more!

**"Keep a Little Christmas in Your Heart" with the Fort Walton Beach Community Chorus** as they sing through a lovely and humorous collection of Christmas songs sure to get you into the holiday spirit. From traditional tunes like "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger"

to more modern hand-clapping toe-tapping pieces like "The Big Guy in Red" and "Jingle All the Way," there is sure to be a song everyone in the family will enjoy. Shows: Friday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 11, 3 p.m. All shows held at Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium. Tickets: <https://fwbc-chorus.square.site/>

Movie lovers will delight in this year's **Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Pops: "Christmas at the Movies"** being presented at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center in Niceville on Friday, Dec 9, 7:30 p.m. You'll not want to miss the mix of film favorites from past to present as well as traditional holiday selections, featuring guest soloist Lakisha Jones, and the NFSO chorale and artists from our college community.

Grab all your slacker friends and come down to **Deck the Halls Slacker Event at the**

**Boathouse Oyster Bar**, Sunday, Dec. 11, 2-4 p.m. for a good cause. Individuals or teams will visit partner locations and put their skills to the test competing in activities such as hopscotch, hula hooping, toilet paper toss, corn hole and more. Slackers are asked to bring toys for charity in exchange for extra drink tickets. Cost: \$30 in advance/\$35 at the door. For more info, <http://boathouseoysterbardestin.com/events>

**Join Santa for a joyous breakfast** Dec. 11, 17, 18 or 19 in **Harborwalk Village's Grande Ballroom**, seating times, 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m., featuring a festive buffet of the Grinch's Fruit Kabob Station, Cindy Lou Who's breakfast items, Whoville Bakery and Max's Donut Station. Also enjoy a Create your own Christmas Chow station, letters to Santa, and visits with Santa.

View Menu: <https://bit.ly/3eHi56y>. Kids: \$18 | Adults:



\$25 plus Tax & Gratuity. Reservations required: (850) 424-0622.

**Emerald Coast Theatre Company** presents fantastic shows to get you in the holiday spirit! The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical runs Dec. 8-18, Thursday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m., and Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2:30 p.m. Christmas Cabaret at the Boulevard will sing you into the Christmas spirit, Wednesday,

Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 17, 2:30 p.m. Enjoy classic holiday songs and join in some carols as well. All will be held on the second floor of 560 Grand Boulevard in Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach. Purchase tickets online at [emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org).

**studio6twenty5 presents The Nutcracker** Dec. 9, 5:30

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### CHRISTMAS

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as we listened to Christmas choirs celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Linda's parents lived on the outskirts of a small town. It didn't matter if it was Christmas or another time, Linda's dad would often be sitting at a window watching for our arrival. I would blow the car horn and blink the lights as we drove into their yard. These gatherings were so refreshing. The girls would be in the kitchen, preparing the Christmas dinner. The aroma of the food cooking and the chatter coming from the kitchen was just the right environment for me to lie down on

the sofa and take a nap.

Linda's dad always kept a small pony for the grandchildren. There wasn't much riding, but regardless of how cold it was, he always wanted a picture of the children on the pony!

I'm sure you can imagine what dinner was like. And then came dessert time! For Linda, it was a German chocolate cake with double icing. For my brother-in-law, Earl, it was a chocolate pie, and I got a coconut pie. All were homemade by Linda's mother.

There was something special that would always happen! Before opening gifts, we would read the Christmas story of the birth of Christ and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for God

sending His son. But something else would happen at the dinner table. We all knew this would occur, we just didn't know when. Linda's dad would begin to speak these words, "I am the happiest and richest man in the world, I have all of my family together."

There would always be tears that followed. His words mean more to me now as time passes. Several sitting at that table have passed into eternity and I look forward to the day of finally being reunited with them forever!

His words remind me of God's greatest desire for us. It's found in Ephesians 1:9-10: "God's secret plan has now been revealed to us. It is a plan centered on Christ, designed long

ago, according to his good pleasure. And this is the plan: at the right time, he will bring everything together, both in Heaven and on Earth." God's ultimate plan is to have all his family home with him forever!

I trust you are planning to be there! According to John 14:6, Jesus is the way to his father. We soon will be celebrating the birth of Christ. If you are not a part of God's family, this would be a wonderful time to reserve your place at God's dinner table! (Read John 1:12 and Romans 10:12-13. See you at the table. Merry Christmas!



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Community

# Heroes: The Horse Soldiers of ODA 595 (Part 1)

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Sept. 11, 2001: the first enemy attack upon American soil since Pearl Harbor. World attention immediately focused on the innocent victims of the attack and the first responders who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Until recently, another heroic part of the story remained classified and hidden from public view. The release of a Warner Bros. movie called "12 Strong" gave the world a glimpse into the secret missions that took place in the aftermath of 9/11. The film depicts the true story of the retaliatory attack by the first Special Forces soldiers entering Afghanistan.



These soldiers were tasked with a broad mission: defeat the Taliban; eliminate the terrorist haven in Afghanistan. The Special Forces team chosen to lead the offensive was the Operational Detachment-Alpha 595 (ODA 595). The mission, expected to take several years, toppled the Taliban in just a matter of months. ODA 595 led an unconventional warfare

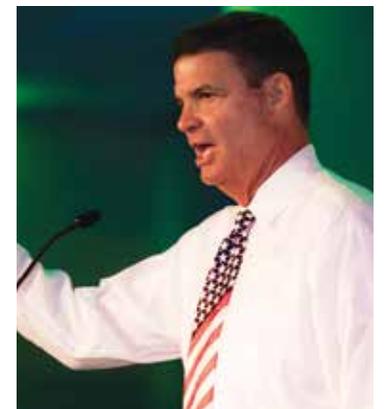
campaign by partnering with indigenous forces to topple the terrorist-supporting Afghan government. The Western media appropriately labeled ODA 595 "The Horse Soldiers."

The Greater FWB Chamber of Commerce, with President and CEO Ted Corcoran at the helm, celebrated history by making history. The Fort Walton Beach gathering was the first time the Horse Soldiers

reunited. Remarkable as that is, the Chamber is the only organization in the world to host the final reunion of the Doolittle Raiders in 2013 and the first reunion of the ODA 595 Horse Soldiers.

Backstory: conflicts have raged in Afghanistan for more than 100 years. Ethnic factions have been continuously at war. The ODA 595 operation was aptly described as a 19th century Afghan military using horse cavalry with 20th century weapons systems. When ODA 595 arrived, it added 21st century technology and the might of the most powerful nation on earth to eradicate the threat. The mission brought devastating air power with the full force of the United States military's advanced weapon systems. The mission of ODA 595 was not accomplished with tanks or mechanized vehicles but on horseback with only one man experienced with horses. Horseback riding lessons started as the men traveled through the treacherous terrain.

ODA 595 was inserted about 100 miles from Mazar-i-Sharif, which linked up with ethnic Uzbek fighters under Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum. They had to earn Dostum's trust and help



PHOTOS BY TIM WOODRUM, EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

him capture Mazar-i-Sharif, opening a beachhead into the rest of the country.

Ted said the Chamber is no stranger to honoring our brave military heroes. Earlier this year, it held the Final Goblet Ceremony honoring the Doolittle Raiders. Just like the goblets for the Raiders, the Horse Soldiers will have silver canteen cups, the Army equivalent of goblets. The Chamber commissioned

these mementos, which were unveiled at the banquet, with the support of the local business community.

"The United States of America has been attacked twice," said Ted. "Pearl Harbor, with the first group to retaliate being The Doolittle Raiders. Sept. 11, 2001, with ODA 595 being the first in Afghanistan to defend

*Continued on next page*

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# Remember our Seniors During the *Holidays* Caring for Those that Cared for Us

The holidays are here and once again, we are most thankful to live, work and play along the Emerald Coast. It is also time to remember to spend time with those that have cared for us. The holidays can be a depressing time for a lot of people, especially seniors. It tends to serve as a reminder about who is not there to celebrate anymore and how they cannot often go to where everyone else is gathering. Long-Term Care/Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities often have seniors without any extend-

ed family in the area. Little to no visitors, birthdays and holidays often leaves an empty feeling for our aging population. While caregivers do their best to make every occasion special, having a visitor, friend and/or family member visit makes all the difference in the world to each individual. It is human nature to feel loved, appreciated and cared for.

One reason why the holidays are so important to seniors, is they give them time to reflect on their lives. Looking through photo albums is a great way to

reminisce about the past. Taking time to look at photos and ask questions creates an opportunity for one to "tell a story." Becoming a "senior" is an achievement in life. We need to remind them how blessed they are and how much richer our lives are for spending time with them.

Perhaps it is time to start a new tradition this holiday season and carry it through 2023. All facilities have a volunteer program. Have you considered including in your holiday plans to adopt a "grandmother or grandfather"



in a facility? Maybe your church or civic group would be interested in volunteering and spending time with seniors. Spare a little time to help bring joy to others during this joyous time of the year.

Perhaps this holiday season is your year to "make a difference" the lives of others. Happy Holidays!

~Teresa Halverson  
Director of Business Development & Community Relations  
The Manor at Blue Water Bay

## HORSE SOLDIERS

*continued from previous page*

our country. Brave bombers, heroic horsemen." The Green

This retaliatory mission is considered the most successful unconventional warfare campaign in modern history. It is hard to describe what it was like to meet

picts a Special Forces soldier on horseback, honoring the special operations teams who headed into Afghanistan in the weeks

following the 9/11 attacks. Now America has the Silver Canteen memorabilia to serve as a reminder, never to be forgotten.

This is only the beginning of a historic story yet to be finished. (To be continued)



Berets advised Afghan commanders for two months and directed a massive air campaign to rout the Taliban from power.

10 of the soldiers gathered together in the room.

New York City erected a statue near Ground Zero. It de-

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Community

# Cali's To Do In Destin! DECEMBER 2022

..... 1-31 .....

**Baytowne On Ice | All Month Long** | Baytowne Wharf

**Christmas Cruise with Captain Santa** | 6pm | Destin Pontoon

..... 6 .....

**Chamber YP Ugly Sweater** | 5pm | Third Planet Brewing

**ECPro 30th Anniversary Holiday Party** | 5:30 | TASTE | FWB

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

**Cruisin' into Christmas** | 6:30pm | Emerald Coast Harley-Davidson | FWB

**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer

**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

..... 7 .....

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Holiday Concert Series & Visits with Santa** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Sordid Secrets of the Stars** | 6 & 7 pm | Planetarium | FWB

..... 8 .....

**Yule of Yesteryear** | 10 am | Heritage Museum of NWF | Valparaiso

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**Sip n Shop** | 5pm | Wild Flier

**Holiday Cocktail Workshop & Charcuterie** | 5:30pm | Blue Magnolia Studio

**Trivia** | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen

**Latin Dance Lessons** | 7pm | The Block FWB

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuires Destin

..... 9 .....

**S'mores with Santa** | 5:30pm | American Legion

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Karaoke** | 7pm | Destin American Legion

**NFSO's Holiday Pops: "Christmas at the Movies"** | 7:30pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

**Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Holiday Pops featuring The Doo Wop Project** | 7:30 pm | Destin-FWB Convention Center

**StudioTwenty5 The Nutcracker** | 5:30pm | Destin Community Center

**FWB Chorus Keep a Little Christmas in Your Heart** | 7 pm | FWB Civic Auditorium

**Rumours: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac** | 6pm | Club L.A. | Destin

**One-year Anniversary & Holiday Market Party** | 3pm | Maxine Orange Art & Design Gallery | FWB

**A Rat Pack Christmas with Ron Adams** | 7pm | The Palms | Destin

**2022 Fall Mackerel Classic After Party** | 6-9pm | Angler's Beachside Grill | Okaloosa Island

**Latin Dancing** | 9pm | Bric a Brac

..... 9-11 .....

**Building Industry Association's Parade of Homes** | 12pm | Multiple Locations

..... 10 .....

**Christmas in the Courtyard** | 1-3:30pm | Alaqua Animal Refuge | Freeport

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8am-11am | Aegean Shalimar

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Baytowne

**Farmer's Market** | 8am-1pm | FWB Landing

**Breakfast with Santa** | 9am | Henderson Beach Resort

**Mistletoe Market** | 11am-6pm | Harborwalk Village

**Christmas CuddleCot Concert benefiting Asher's Hope** | 2pm | Crosspoint Bluewater Bay

**Visits with Santa** | 1-4pm | Harborwalk Village

**Winter Extravaganza** | 9am-2pm | EO Wilson Biophilia Center | Freeport

**Holiday Pops Concert featuring Sinfonia Gulf Coast** | 5pm | Seaside Amphitheatre

**Eden Gardens State Park Illumination** | 5-8pm | Santa Rosa Beach

**Women's Climbing Circle** | 9am Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**FWB Chorus Keep a Little Christmas in Your Heart** | 7pm | FWB Civic Auditorium

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**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8, 9:30, 11am | Emerald Grande

**Sunday Breakfast** | 8:15am | Destin American Legion

**Billy Claus** | 1-3pm | Lulu's | Destin

**Mistletoe Market** | 11am-6pm | Harborwalk Village

**Visits with Santa** | 1pm-4pm | Harborwalk Village

**Dock The Halls Fundraiser** | 2pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar

**Champagne & Sparkling Wine Walkabout** | 2pm | Wine Bar - Destin

**Holiday on the Harbor - Ballet Performance** | 4:30pm | Harborwalk Village

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**Destin Boat Parade** | 6pm | Destin Harbor

**FWB Chorus Keep a Little Christmas in Your Heart** | 7pm | FWB Civic Auditorium

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**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Bingo Night** | 6pm | Destin American Legion

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**Music Bingo** | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer



**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

..... 14 .....

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Holiday Concert Series & Visits with Santa** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

..... 15 .....

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**Trivia** | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen

**Planetarium Night** | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB

**Latin Dance Lessons** | 7pm | The Block FWB

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuires Destin

..... 15-21 .....

**Live Nativity** | 6:30-8:30pm each night | First Baptist Church FWB

..... 16 .....

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**S'mores with Santa** | 5:30pm | American Legion

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Outdoor Movie Night: Grinch** | 5pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Karaoke** | 7pm | Destin American Legion

**Latin Dancing** | 9pm | Bric a Brac

..... 17 .....

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Baytowne

**Farmer's Market** | 8am-1pm | FWB Landing

**Wreaths Across America** | Noon | Destin Memorial Cemetery

**The Grump** | 12pm-4pm | The Island Resort FWB

**Santa Paddle Parade** | Noon | LJ Schooners | Bluewater Bay

**Visits with Santa** | 1pm-4pm | Harborwalk Village

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Christmas Boat Parade** | 5:30pm | Bluewater Bay Marina, Nelson's Cove and Rocky Bayou

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**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8, 9:30, 11am | Emerald Grande

**Sunday Breakfast** | 8:15am | Destin American Legion

**The Grump** | 12pm-4pm | The Island Resort FWB

**Santa Send-Off** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village

**Photos with Santa** | 5pm | Henderson Beach Resort

**Holiday on the Harbor - Chanukah** | 5:30pm | Harborwalk Village

**Temple Beth Shalom 1st Hanukkah Celebration** | 6pm | The Landing FWB

..... 19 .....

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande

**Hilton Holidays - Gingerbread Welcome** | 2pm | Hilton Sandestin

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Bingo Night** | 6pm | Destin American Legion

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

..... 20 .....

**Hilton Holidays - Indoor Pool Winter Wonderland** | 12pm | Hilton Sandestin

**Mingle & Jingle Holiday Party** | 5pm | Maxine Orange Studio

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer

**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

..... 21 .....

**Holiday Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

**Hilton Holidays - Cocktail Making Class** | 12pm | Hilton Sandestin

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Holiday Concert Series & Visits with Santa** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

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**Hilton Holidays - Cookie Decorating** | 12pm | Hilton Sandestin

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**Christmas Trivia Night** | 6pm | Enlightened Studios

**Trivia** | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen

**Latin Dance Lessons** | 7pm | The Block FWB

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuires Destin

..... 23 .....

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm-8pm | Grand Boulevard

**S'mores with Santa** | 5:30pm | American Legion

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Karaoke** | 7pm | Destin American Legion

**Latin Dancing** | 9pm | Bric a Brac

..... 24 .....

**Holiday Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Baytowne

**Farmer's Market** | 8am-1pm | FWB Landing

**Jolly Jubilee** | 10am | Destin Commons

**Christmas Dinner** | 5pm | Ovide at Hotel Effie

**Primrose Christmas Eve Dinner** | 5pm | The Henderson Resort

..... 25 .....

**Christmas Day Brunch** | 10am | The Henderson

**Christmas Dinner** | 5pm | Ovide at Hotel Effie

..... 26 .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Bingo Night** | 6pm | Destin American Legion

..... 27 .....

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer

**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

..... 28 .....

**Holiday Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

..... 29 .....

**Trivia** | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen

**Latin Dance Lessons** | 7pm | The Block FWB

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuires Destin

..... 30 .....

**S'mores with Santa** | 5:30pm | American Legion

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Karaoke** | 7pm | Destin American Legion

**Latin Dancing** | 9pm | Bric a Brac

..... 31 .....

**Farmer's Market** | 8am-1pm | Baytowne Wharf

**Farmer's Market** | 8am-1pm | FWB Landing

**Holiday Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

**New Year's Eve Party** | 5pm | Harborwalk Village

**Rockin' NYE Spectacular** | 5pm | Hotel Effie

**NYE Dinner** | 5pm | The Henderson Resort

**Baytowne Countdown** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

**AJ's NYE Hello 2023!** | 8pm & Midnight | AJ's Destin

**SunQuest Cruises' NYE Cruise** | 8pm | Solaris Yacht

**New Year's Eve Fireworks** | 8pm | Okaloosa Island Boardwalk

**New Year's Eve & LLB Farewell Show** | 9pm | AJ's Grayton Beach

**New Year's Eve Celebration** | 4-9pm | Seaside



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# Holiday Magic All Season Long! Then Baytowne Countdown at the Village of Baytowne Wharf!

Twinkling lights, skating on ice, magical tunes and streets filled with sparkle, tinsel, holly and jolly beckon your inner child to “believe” in the magic of the holidays all over again. Kids know it and we know it, too! The wonder of Santa and the holiday season jingles in our hearts and in the joyful Village of Baytowne Wharf!

Wednesday Night **Holiday Concerts Holiday Edition + Visits with Santa** usher you into the holiday spirit! Listen to some of your favorite holiday classics from 6-8 p.m. during the holiday edition of Baytowne Wharf’s Wednesday Night Concert Series. Each concert features a festive choreographed light show and fun. Visit with St. Nick and share your holiday wish list on Dec. 7, 14 and 21 from 6-8 p.m. for a Holiday Concert and Visits with Santa. No cost to attend!

**December 7** | Gateway Singers of Gateway Academy and Fort Walton Beach High School

**December 14** | Niceville High School

**December 21** | Matt McCarty Band

Lighting up the holiday nights are **12 Nights of Lights!** Enjoy a festive, choreographed light show where the tree lights in the events plaza will dance and blink to music every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday in Decem-



ber (2-23) leading up to Christmas on the Events Plaza Lawn! This sparkling event will also be featured during the special holiday edition of the Wednesday Night Concert Series. No cost to attend, watch three dazzling shows on the NEW Village tree at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Baytowne On Ice** continues through February 5th! You can’t help but be in the winter spirit at The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s Baytowne on Ice. For those visitors who miss the cold and ice, this seasonal ice rink is the perfect opportunity to share some of your favorite holiday traditions. Sponsored by JVC Broadcasting, Rock 92.1, 102.1 The Wave, Highway 98.1 Country and Florida man Radio 103.1, hours vary daily. You can check the schedule at [baytownewharf.com](http://baytownewharf.com). The cost is

\$13 for 90-minute skate and \$3 skate rentals. You can rent the rink for private parties and functions starting at \$300. For more information call 850.428.2736 or visit [baytownewharf.com](http://baytownewharf.com).

Put a little snark in your holiday spirit with **The MEAN One** on December 16! Meet the maven of mischief himself for a photo opportunity from 5-7 p.m., then enjoy a movie showing of Dr. Seuss’s How the Grinch Stole Christmas starting at 7 p.m.

And don’t forget the **Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf** each Saturday through Dec. 31 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

All holiday events are **NO COST** to attend!



After a full season of holiday magic, ring in the **New Year at Baytowne Countdown | NYE** from 6 p.m. – 1 a.m.—The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s end-of-the-year celebration! It’s an evening to remember with two breathtaking fireworks displays at 8 p.m. and midnight. Enjoy fun for kids and kids at heart from 6-8 p.m. with face painting, kids’ activities and LIVE music on the Baytowne LIVE stage with DJ TreVy. Finish off the family friendly evening with our first fireworks display at 8 pm.

But, the fun doesn’t stop there! Dance the night away with LIVE music from Bay Kings Band from 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. featured on the Events Plaza Stage! With sets that range from Motown, classics to rock and everything in between, Bay Kings Band will have your feet



tapping in no time. End the night with a spectacular, midnight fireworks show. There is no better place to ring in 2023!

\*21 and over after 10 p.m. 20 and under must be accompanied by a legal guardian after 10 p.m.





## Community

### DESTIN HOLIDAY

continued from page 3

p.m., at the Destin Community Center and features the studio20twenty5 Children's Program as well as Adult/Open Division dancers.

Staging, arrangement and choreography by artistic director Rachel Prescott, with original choreography by Shaye Smith; guest performances by Luminary Entertainment Company and choreography by Lydia Faith. Reservations are recommended with a suggested donation of \$10/ticket with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting the studio20twenty5 Children's Program. Donations can be made at Will Call upon check-in. Reserve seats at [studio20twenty5.com/events](http://studio20twenty5.com/events).

**Join Sinfonia's Holiday Pops, featuring The Doo Wop Project** Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m., at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. The Doo Wop Project boys will get you into the holiday spirit! Hear old-school holiday classics like The Drifters' White Christmas, The Temptations' Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, along with "Doowopified" contemporary hits like This Christmas and Last Christmas. It's sure to be a jolly good time! Tickets at [SinfoniaGulfCoast.org](http://SinfoniaGulfCoast.org).

**The EO Wilson Biophilia Center** will hold its **Winter Extravaganza**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10. There will be a special visit from Santa, a hot chocolate bar, food trucks, games, and more. Please bring any canned food and nonperishable goods you can spare.

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida presents the Yule of Yesteryear Annual Christmas Event Sat., Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Gather together to enjoy the carols and other festivities after the Niceville Christmas Parade ends for free admission to the museum, food vendors, craft vendors, walton guard reenactors, school choir groups, bake sale, raffle ticket prizes, letters to Santa and more! 115 Westview Ave., Perrine Park, Valparaiso.

Grab your chairs and find your perfect spot in front of the **Seaside Post Office** for the magical holiday tradition of **Every Christmas Story Ever Told**. Back for its 12th year, The REP Theatre's complimentary holiday smash hit returns with all of your favorite Beloved Holiday Classics packed into one show of high-energy jolly and hilarity! Three REP actors, armed with a bazillion props and costumes, send up everything from Charles Dickens and Dr. Seuss to Jimmy Stewart and Chewbacca in this ever-evolving REP favorite. Dec.

9, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 18 at 11 a.m.; Dec. 20, 21, 22, and 23 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Suitable for all ages.

On Sunday, Dec. 11, 5 p.m., Sinfonia Gulf Coast presents the **Sinfonia Youth Orchestras in concert at Destin High School**. Holiday Magic is a fun and festive annual tradition that showcases the talent of our area's finest young musicians performing holiday favorites.

This year's concert will feature both Sinfonia Youth Orchestra and Sinfonietta Strings. Selections on the program include international folk songs such as Good King Wenceslas and Dreidel; favorite Christmas carols such as Let It Snow!, Here Comes Santa Claus and a special medley from A Charlie Brown Christmas, plus the traditional Ukrainian Bell Carol and more.

Enjoy a memorable family holiday experience at **LuLu's** (at the foot of the Mid-Bay Bridge) for its seventh annual **Billy Claus** free event Sunday, Dec. 11, 1-3 p.m. Billy Claus is Santa's warm weather-loving brother who lives in the Caribbean, but comes this way every year to help Santa. The LuLuBelles are Billy's version of Santa's elves. Billy will pass children's wishes on to Santa and will be available for photos. In addition to kid's arts and crafts activities, there



will be a reading of the children's book authored by Lucy Buffett, Billy Claus and the Spirit of Christmas. [LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin/](http://LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin/) (850) 710-5858.

Don't miss the **33rd Blessing of the Live Nativity** at the corner of 2nd Street and Church Avenue, hosted by First Baptist Church in Fort Walton Beach, Thurs., Dec. 15-Wed., Dec. 21, 6 - 8:30 p.m. each night. Drive through or participate in direct interaction with Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus and pet and feed the animals. Get your photo taken in the nativity scene and enjoy a cookie, coffee or hot chocolate! Children receive a candy cane and learn the Christian story behind its invention. To illustrate the complete salvation story from Jesus' miraculous birth to his crucifixion and resurrection, there are Roman soldiers at the Cross and angels at the empty tomb. [fbcfwb.org](http://fbcfwb.org).

Visit the **Festival of Trees at Grand Boulevard** at Sandestin through Christmas Day, an annual event in the park at Grand Boulevard shopping center showcasing uniquely decorated Christmas trees from 12 local, non-profit organizations. Participating non-profit organizations compete to win cash prizes totaling \$7,000 for beautifully decorated Christmas trees. Cast your vote for the People's Choice award.

Enjoy free **horse-drawn carriage rides around the Town Center at Grand Boulevard** at Sandestin while taking in the Coastal White Christmas lights and the Festival of the Trees display. To add to the festivities, get a professional photo with Santa while listening to the seasonal sounds of the Emerald Coast Theatre Company's Dickensian Carolers singing popular holiday carols, Dec. 2-17 Fridays

and Saturdays, 5-8 p.m.; Dec. 19-23 all week, 5-8 p.m.

**Eden Gardens State Park will be illuminated** Saturday, Dec. 10, 5-8 p.m. More than 2,000 luminaries will light the garden paths of Eden Gardens at nightfall. The Historic Wesley House will be decorated for Christmas and visitors can see all the rooms decorated by local organizations from throughout the community. Music and carolers' voices will fill the air throughout the evening and cookies and hot beverages will be provided by the Friends of Eden Gardens. The event is free and park entry fees will be waived from 5-8 p.m.

Hosted by the City of **DeFuniak Springs** through New Year's Eve, Chipley Park lights up with the annual **Christmas Reflection Displays**, a light display like no other in our area with more than 10 million lights reflecting on the lake and throughout the park. You can view the lights by walking, driving or even taking a horse-drawn carriage ride. Friday-Saturday, 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Sunday-Thursday, 5:30-9 p.m., nightly. \$5 per person, free for children under 5, Tuesday discount for military; \$10 for carload up to five people. Carriage rides are available on select nights. \$10/person. (850) 978-2999.

Main Street **DeFuniak Springs** brings back **Merry Main Street!** Free to attend, Merry Main Street boasts live music and theatrical performances, an outdoor market, food trucks, rides on the Choctaw Express Train, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, kids character appearances and more family fun, all taking place outdoors along Baldwin Avenue. Events occur every Friday and Saturday

Continued on page 12

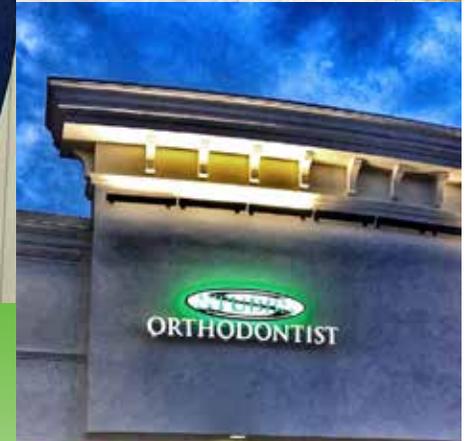
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha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



## Community

## Holiday Trends & Treasures



### Give the Gift of Sparkle! Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

Specializing in diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry pieces, the Beyond Measure Jewelers' showroom, in its new location at The Market Shops, is full of diamond and gemstone bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings! Make her spirits bright with a stunning engagement ring. You know the holidays are the perfect time to pop the question!

Or perhaps a diamond flex bracelet paired with a bezel set emerald and diamond bracelet is her style as shown above?

- 2 carats Diamond Flex
- Emerald + Diamonds
- 1 carat (larger diamonds) flex

All I want for Christmas are diamonds...I mean YOU! Owner Ashleigh Woolly is pas-



sionate about exquisite and custom-designed jewelry. No matter what your taste, plan to be amazed! So, what's on your wish list this Christmas? Stop by and create your own list to give or get.

Nominated for Best in Destin, At Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting!

(850) 424-7011 | [Facebook.com/beyondmeasurejewelers](https://www.facebook.com/beyondmeasurejewelers)  
[beyondmeasurejewelry.com](http://beyondmeasurejewelry.com)

### Prioritizing Health. So much more than cold. CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center

It's time for New Year's resolutions and routines...eating better, exercising more, and a wellness routine. CRYO850 offers exciting technologies to prioritize your health. Our six-service Wellness Circuit is a great



way to add routine wellness to your life. We have so much more to offer outside of our namesake cold.

The Infrared Sauna detoxes the body to fight off infection. Red Light Therapy enhances sleep quality and focus and increases testosterone for men. Compression and Vibration Therapies move the lymphatic and circulatory systems. The Cocoon Fitness Pod provides full body muscle relief, relaxation, and weight loss. For serious health seekers, Pagani® Detoxification removes the layer of brown fat built up from years of sugars, alcohols and processed food flushing the body of unwanted toxins. While our services are primarily focused on wellness, pain management and athletic recovery, all have esthetics benefits to improve skin, lose calories and shape the body. For those focused solely on Esthetics, our WILD ICE® Collagen Enhancement Treatments and Cryo Express Facials revive dormant collagen and elastin to rejuvenate aging skin. Membership options start as low as \$99 a month with military discounts of 10%, spousal discounts of 20% and students always get 30% off!

(850) 279-4145 | [Facebook.com/CRYO850](https://www.facebook.com/CRYO850)  
[www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com)

### Sparkle, Radiate and Shine Through the Holidays Pure & Couture Salon

Look your absolute refreshing best this holiday season. With all the shopping and planning, taking a little time out to stay rejuvenated goes a long way in getting things done! So, stop by Pure & Couture Salon's Holiday Sip and Shop on Dec. 15th from 5-7 p.m. There will be Charlotte Tilbury pop up giveaways, gift cards and product incentives, and drinks provided by Tippy Mule! Pure & Couture owner Adrienne Bracket and her talented team of experts will make sure you get a little fun,



relaxation and information you need to be beautiful or handsome throughout December and ready for the new year! Purchase Gift Cards to give all the holiday vibes in addition to hair care flair, a bit of color, styling, extensions, makeup, a pampering facial or even a therapeutic massage. With all this, anyone on your list can experience a mighty makeover. Stuff your stockings with Pure & Couture's travel bar, candles and amazing lines of essential styling products all with custom gift wrapping! Adrienne's talented team of professionals hold certifications in oncology, pregnancy, sports and medical massage, with a mission to provide quality care, resolve specific conditions and assist in improving quality of life for men and women of all ages. To book, call (850) 424.3935 or [www.pureandcouture.com](http://www.pureandcouture.com).

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[pureandcouture.com](http://pureandcouture.com)

### The Holiday Gift-Giving, Go-To Place Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

If you're looking for the perfect personalized Christmas gift to give this year, Frill Seekers Gifts is the place to shop. From custom acrylic names to spruce up the Christmas stockings that will adorn your mantle this holiday season, to custom personalized notepads, notecards and fine stationery... giving a personalized gift shows that you took the time to select a treat that will be memorable and treasured for years to come. Frill Seekers in City Market Bayside offers gorgeous gifts that can be customized for a loved one, co-worker, neighbor or dear friend. With fast service and free gift wrap, it's truly no surprise that Santa shops at Frill Seekers too, shouldn't you? If you're looking for a unique way to keep in touch during this Christmas Season, send one of



Frill Seekers Gifts "storyline" photo cards! Share everything your family has been up to. Give gifts that become heirlooms and treats that become treasures. With fast service and free gift wrap, it's truly no surprise that Santa shops at Frill Seekers, too! Shouldn't you? Shop now online at [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com) or visit the store located in City Market Bayside.

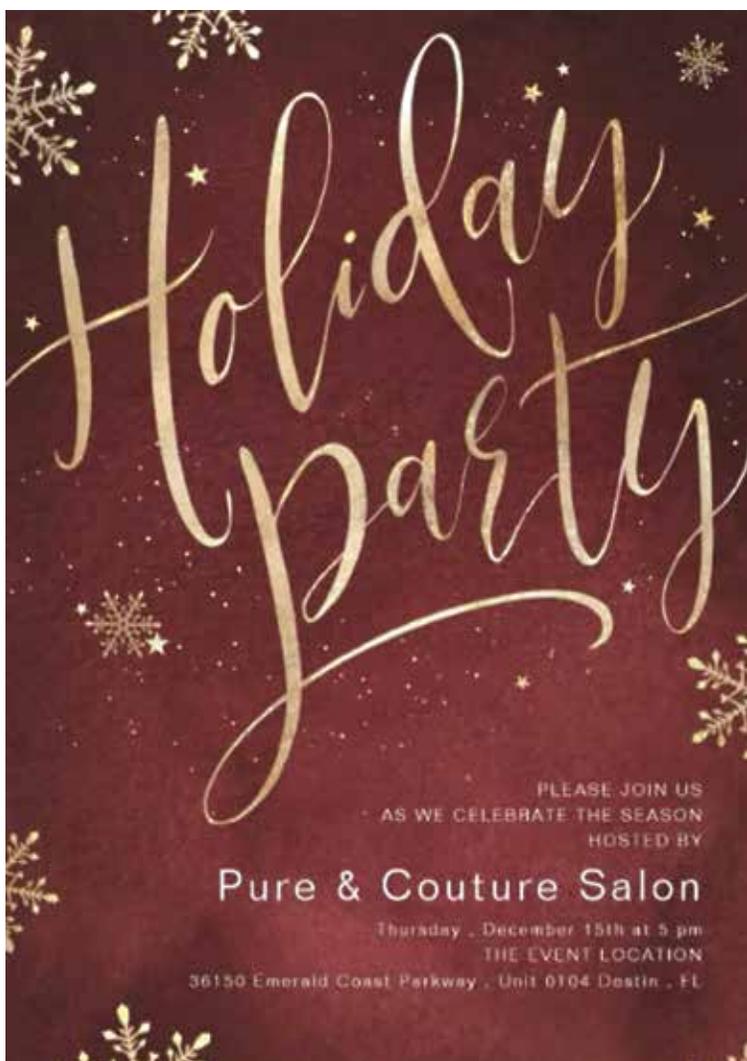
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[frillseekersgifts.com](http://frillseekersgifts.com)

### Live The WATER•COLOR Lifestyle

**Brian K. Locicero, REALTOR®,**  
[BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com)

WATER•COLOR is one of the most sought after "beach neighborhoods" in the country.

"The appeal of the WATER•COLOR lifestyle grew in part, as beach lovers began taking up permanent residence in vacation towns. Many are now working from home or remotely, driving them to seek solitude in a space and place they love," according to Brian K. LoCicero, REALTOR® founder of the Be On the Coast Real Estate team at Keller Williams. Brian said he's seeing a lot of buyers coming to the Destin-30A area from Nashville, Dallas, New Orleans, Jackson and as far away as California. "These folks quarantined, in their own town and realized they wanted more. And by more, they want a more beautiful setting, walking trails, tennis and pickleball courts, a championship golf course, closer proximity to the sugar white sand beaches and access to gorgeous emerald green waters," he added. If you're ready to own property in the 30A area, view Brian's new WATER•COLOR listing, which is pictured above-MLS #894624. Contact Brian at (850) 739-3800. View homes for sale now at [BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com).





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Community

# Unexpected Gifts

BY COURTNEY LINDBERG

We are in a unique time right now, perhaps “such a time.”

In our own business and personal lives, and, as we know well, some of yours too, we continue to face great challenges. To make the challenges even greater, we find ourselves distracted by what seems an ever-changing landscape in our country. How can we climb the mountain we’re called to when the very ground beneath our feet seems to shake, to the point where it is enough just to keep standing?

What now lies before us, whether we have sought it or not, is change. Much change. And I am reminded that when

we have faced times of transition ourselves, or with our clients, the first place we consistently find ourselves being led is Identity and to Purpose.

If we know our Heavenly Father, and who we are in him, and certainly I hope that for all of us, then we know our Identities in him never change. We are always going to be his children, but our Purposes may change from time to time. To put it another way, the fact that we love someone may never change. It is a constant. But the way in which we express that love may change from season to season or from day to day, for that matter.

Transition is nothing new,



small and so weak deliver us? And for those wise men who knew what was happening, who witnessed the birth of the Savior, how many years did they have to wait after his birth to see him do what he was born to do?

What do we do in the face of change when we don’t know what exactly that change will be? What do we do as we wait for it?

Our encouragement to you is to seek the One who designed you, created you for such purposes and for such a time as this. If change is upon you, it is not a surprise to him and he has the strategies and vision for you to overcome. Let us remember that our value, our peace and our joy are rooted in our identities, created by our Heavenly Father, way more than our designed purposes.

God cares more about the dreamer, than He does the dream.

We serve for his honor and we will serve you if we can. Merry Christmas from our families to yours. Godspeed to the New Year upon us and may God bless us all.

though. The seasons continue to change and we have now entered one of generosity and celebration, of a long awaited change. For thousands of years, the Hebrews awaited their rescuer, many expecting this hero to come on horseback, leading a vast army, to overcome their oppressors by force. What came instead was a vulnerable, naked child.

How could something so

## DESTIN HOLIDAY

*continued from page 8*

until Christmas. [https://bit.ly/MSD\\_MerryMain](https://bit.ly/MSD_MerryMain), [Info@mainstreetdfs.org](mailto:Info@mainstreetdfs.org), (850) 296-9051.

Saturday, Dec. 17, join other volunteers with binoculars for the local, 52nd annual **Christmas Bird Count**, sponsored by the local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Text Malcolm Swan of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society, 210-452-4899, for a check-list and instructions about how to participate. Malcolm, who coordinates the count, is especially seeking birdwatchers of any skill level who have bird habitat in yards

that are within the official Count Circle, including Destin (west of Crab Trap) and surrounding communities. Backyards can only be surveyed by their owners. “We count birds along with tracking birding effort in terms of hours birding, and miles walked and driven, to calculate index values that ornithologists compare from year to year,” said Malcolm. See also <https://www.choctawhatcheeaudubon.org> to join the local Audubon group, which offers bird walks and nature programs during the 10 cool months of each year.



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# Want to Help Make Paradise Even Better?

of serving Destin by being on a committee/board.

*With service in mind,  
Bobby Wagner  
Mayor of Destin*

Please apply at: <https://www.cityofdestin.com/volunteer>

For more information about how to join a city committee, please get in touch with City Clerk Rey Bailey at (850) 837-4242. Below is a list of all committees/boards with their descriptions:

### Board of Adjustment

The Board of Adjustment's role is to hear and decide upon applications for variances, special exceptions, and administrative appeals when it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by an administrative official in the enforcement of any zoning ordinance. Members of the Board of Adjustment are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure form for which there is an automatic per day penalty imposed by the Ethics Commission for late filing.

Meetings: First Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., as needed

### Parks & Recreation Committee

This committee focuses on environmental issues that will improve the appearance, aesthetics and ecological quality of life for our community. The committee also identifies and recommends to the City Council projects relating to recreational matters, including the need for additional parks and recreational programs and facilities for the citizens and visitors

of Destin. The committee shall also perform such duties and services as may be assigned to it by the City Council.

Meetings: Fourth Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m.

### Harbor & Waterways Board

The purpose of the Harbor Board is to inventory all existing and potential sources of pollution; to monitor the overall condition of Destin Harbor; to review and recommend plans for future growth development of Destin Harbor, including the review of projects requested to be located on the harbor; and to review plans for development on the waterways of Destin, including Choctawhatchee Bay, bayous, and other estuaries.

### Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee

The Harbor CRAAC was created to provide recommendations to the CRA Board of Directors on how best to implement the adopted Harbor CRA Plan.

Meetings: Second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

### Local Planning Agency

Recently revamped in responsibility, the Local Planning Agency's major focus is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters relating to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code amendments, re-zonings, and vacations of rights-of-way/easements. Members of the Local Planning Agency are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure form for which there is an automatic per day penalty imposed by the Ethics Commis-

sion for late filing.

Meetings: First and Fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

### Public Works/Public Safety Committee

The Public Works/Public Safety Committee's role is to identify and review various functional areas relating to public works, including street construction and maintenance, public parking areas, sidewalks, city rights-of-way and the like; assess the need for projects relating to matters of public safety including, but not limited to traffic signals, street lights, crosswalks and the like and to make

recommendations to the City Council.

Meetings: Second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

### Town Center Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee

The Town Center CRAAC was created to provide recommendations to the CRA Board of Directors (City Council) on how best to implement and improve Main Street and surrounding areas inside the adopted Town Center CRA Plan.

Meetings: Third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

#### FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

As your new mayor, I am honored to lead our community forward to better serve the residents, small businesses, and tourists—in that order. But I cannot do it alone.

Are you looking to make a positive change in Destin?

Destin needs passionate residents looking to improve their community through critical and creative thinking. With a newly elected 2022-2026 Destin City Council, it is now time to appoint citizens to Destin's trusted advisory boards and committees to help lead Destin forward with a local voice.

Committee volunteers are appointed officials by city council members. Your role will be to evaluate new ideas and issues facing the city, collaborate with city staff and fellow committee members at meetings, and create well-crafted recommendations to present to the council that will solve problems and improve the quality of life for all.

For positive change to take place, we each must BE the change we wish to see!

Currently, the city has seven different committees/boards with twenty-three openings to fill. Please review the following committees/boards and consider joining the one that calls to you. Thank you for taking the time to consider the possibility

**The Nutcracker**  
presented by studio6twenty5

Friday, December 9, 2022  
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## Community

# Locals' *Holiday* Gift Ideas for Every Personality

It's that time of year again, time to spend with family, time to enjoy the Christmas season, time for all of the parties, and of course, time to shop for everyone on your Christmas list. Whether you're local or want to shop like a local, why not give back to our many small businesses right here in Destin? The following is a gift guide that is sure to please even the fussiest on your list:

### Gifts \$25 and under:

**Pecan Jack's, The Melting Pot, Café Destin, Holi Indian Cuisine, AJ's, Fatboys, Austons on 98, Tailfins, Landshark's Pizza, Tequila's, Boathouse, Oasis, Harbor Docks** \$25 gift certificate for lunch or dinner.

**HoneyMed Raw Honey** with three powerful superfoods – Turmeric, Ginger and Cayenne Pepper. 16 oz. \$25; or HoneyMed Raw Honey with

Bee Pollen, Propolis and Cinnamon. 8 oz. \$18. Visit local Farmers Markets or [honeymedbiz.com](http://honeymedbiz.com).

### Gifts \$50 and under:

**Otto's Express Car Wash Membership** \$29.98 per month, or the Supreme Car Wash Membership for \$43.98 per month; both include unlimited washes and free vacuums. [Otto-scarwash.com](http://Otto-scarwash.com).

**Hotel Effie's Spa Lilliana**

Classic Manicure \$50. Hotel Effie at Sandestin. Call 850-351-3020.

**Destin's Founding Father: The Untold Story of Leonard Destin** book for \$33, available at the Destin History and Fishing Museum at 108 Stahlman Ave., Destin. Also, be sure to check out their cute starfish ornaments!

### Gifts \$75 and under:

A favorite year after year, **Timberview Helicopters** Destin Harbor Helicopter Tour \$59 per person for 10 miles of unforgettable views of the Destin Harbor and jetties of East Pass, call (850) 774-0991 or [Destinhelicopters.com](http://Destinhelicopters.com).

**Beverly Hills Day Spa**, \$50-60 for 30-minute Massage. 114 Palmetto Dr., Suite 6, Destin, or call (850) 654-8544.

Private Personal Training with Lisa Turpin, [LisaTurpin-Fitness](https://www.facebook.com/LisaTurpinFitness) on Facebook, or call (850) 974-2005.

**Hotel Effie's Spa Lilliana** Classic Pedicure \$70 60 minutes. Hotel Effie at Sandestin. Call 850-351-3020.

The gift of music that keeps on giving. **Holiday Pops: Featuring The Doo Wop Project** on Fri., Dec. 9 at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. Benefits Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education initiatives. Tickets range \$15-\$55. Purchase online at <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=142924>.

### Gifts under \$100:



**Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Membership** for the art lover in your life! Memberships from \$75. They will enjoy discounts and benefits to Festival of the Arts, Concerts in the Village, Artful Dining events and more all year long. Choose the level that best suits you and yours. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its art education community outreach programs. <https://mkaf.org/membership/>

**Today's Boutique** Katie

Knit Keyhole Wrap - Snowflake \$70 (850) 269-0781, 4106 Legendary Drive, Destin Commons (Next to Belk). Call (850)837-5565 or visit [todaysboutique.com](http://todaysboutique.com).



**Beverly Hills Day Spa**, \$85-\$95 for 60-minute Massage; \$85-\$95 for Hydra facials and Facial peels. 114 Palmetto Drive, Suite 6, Destin, or call (850) 654-8544.

**CRYO850** Paganini Cryo Facial (\$80) Call (850) 279-4145 or visit [facebook.com/CRYO850](https://www.facebook.com/CRYO850) or [www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com).

**Frill Seekers Gifts** DOGGONE PAWsome Pet Gifts. Customize and order online at [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com) or visit in person at City Market Bayside off Hwy. 98 in Destin. Call (850) 460-2700 or visit [facebook.com/FrillSeekersGifts](https://www.facebook.com/FrillSeekersGifts) [frillseekersgifts.com](https://www.facebook.com/frillseekersgifts).

**Ron Adams Las Vegas Elvis Tribute**, NYE-Lucille's Music Hall at Seascape from 7:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Buffet tickets available; band starts at 9 p.m. Tickets \$49.99-\$99.99 at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

Party Boat Fishing Charter on the **Destin Princess or Destiny**, 6-Hour Trip Adult \$99; Military/Senior/Child/Rider \$94. (850) 753-8667, [info@DestinPartyBoatFishing.com](mailto:info@DestinPartyBoatFishing.com), [DestinPartyBoatFishing.com](http://DestinPartyBoatFishing.com), Destin Harbor.

**Spa Lilliana**—When you purchase a gift card for \$100 or more, you receive a free deluxe LATHER gift set. Call (850) 351-3020.

### Luxury gifts:

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*Continued on next page*

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[FloatBrothers.com](http://FloatBrothers.com)



# Sinfonia Music & Artistic Director Appointed to Young Concert Artists BOD

Young Concert Artists (YCA), the prestigious New York-based international advocacy organization which champions young classical musicians, has honored Sinfonia Gulf Coast Music & Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller with an appointment to its board of directors.

“Maestro Fuller has a long association with our organization and has engaged many YCA artists over the years,” said YCA president Dan Kellogg. “He cares deeply for our mission and supporting young artists. It will be a gift to have his voice on our board as we begin the many bold initiatives outlined in our new strategic plan. He not only brings the passion and expertise of an accomplished conductor, Demetrius is also a skilled administrator and fundraiser.”

A versatile conductor and accomplished musician, Fuller founded Sinfonia Gulf Coast in 2005 to “redefine” the symphony experience in Northwest



Maestro Demetrius Fuller awarding the Sinfonia Gulf Coast Prize to saxophonist Steven Banks in 2019.

Florida. The nonprofit orchestra is in its 17th season of innovative musical programming, designed to entertain, educate and inspire the community.

A Fort Walton Beach native, Fuller trained at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, receiving bachelor and master of music

degrees. He has been chosen to work with some of the world’s most prestigious conductors and orchestras. He is an award recipient from the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts, the Werner Foundation and the International Music Foundation.

“I am honored to join the board of the Young Concert Artists, a venerable international institution dedicated to nurturing young musicians. As a prize giver each year for a winner, Sinfonia already has a standing relationship with YCA and I am excited to serve in this additional capacity to help the organization continue to be a leading and guiding force in the development of young musicians.”

Follow Sinfonia Gulf Coast on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Join us and be a part of the conversation using #SinfoniaGulfCoast.

## HOLIDAY GIFT

*continued from previous page*

mond ring from **Beyond Measure Jewelers**, \$1,165. 4495 Furling Dr #170, Destin. Call (850) 424-7011 or visit [beyondmeasurejewelry.com](http://beyondmeasurejewelry.com).

**CRYO850** Wellness Circuit Two-Week Pass \$249; Three-Week Pass \$299. Three-month Student Season Pass (\$333). Call (850) 279-4145 or visit [facebook.com/CRYO850](http://facebook.com/CRYO850) or [www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com). City Market Destin.

**Pure & Couture** Gift Card An array of services including hair color, extensions, makeup, makeovers, therapeutic massages and amazing facials. (850) 424-3935 or visit [facebook.com/Pureandcouture](http://facebook.com/Pureandcouture), [pureandcouture.com](http://pureandcouture.com). City Market Destin.

**Ara Rooftop Pool and Lounge at Hotel Effie New Year’s Eve celebration!** Tickets \$200 per couple; \$500 poolside daybed for up to 4 people. Jam out to live music from DJ DFunk, sip on hand-crafted cocktails, and enjoy the stunning panoramic view of the Baytowne Wharf fireworks shows. Hotel Effie at Sandestin.

Visit [hoteleffie.com](http://hoteleffie.com) or call (833) 873-3343.

Gift Cards for Botox, Laser Aesthetics or other services in any amount. **Destin Botox Laser and Facial Esthetics**, 4942 U.S.-98 #19, Santa Rosa Beach, [destinbotox.com](http://destinbotox.com). Call for consultation at (850) 267-0777.

**Enneagram Coaching with Todd Craig**, 6 Sessions for individual or couple - \$900. Make 2023 your best year ever! Enneagram coaching helps people gain self-awareness, clarity and confidence to become their best selves using practical tools and powerful growth strategies—a great gift for anyone wanting to pursue personal transformation, improve communication skills and strengthen relationships at home or work. Call (918) 740.1232; [www.journeybravely.com](http://www.journeybravely.com).

Anything from the Verragio line at **Emerald Lady Jewelry**. 34940 Emerald Coast Pkwy. #161, Destin. (850) 344-1678. [EmeraldLadyJewelry.com](http://EmeraldLadyJewelry.com).

**30a Songwriters Festival Tickets.** Weekend pass \$425 presale rate (Access to all venues throughout the 4-day weekend



on a first come, first served basis); Weekend Pass + VIP Access \$995 presale rate. Visit [freshtix.com/events/2023-30asongwritersfestival](http://freshtix.com/events/2023-30asongwritersfestival).



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Community



# 'Twas a Few Weeks Before *Christmas* – in the Real Estate Market

BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR  
*(a twist on 'Twas the Night Before Christmas by Clement Clarke Moore)*

'Twas a few weeks before Christmas along the Emerald

Coast,  
Home Buyers and Sellers were busy making toasts.  
Offers have been made, negotiated by all,  
Everyone is happy, no closing was stalled!

A crazy year in real estate... now interest rates on the rise, BUT, Buyers, don't worry, You can refinance with their demise!

Sellers, too, DON'T WAIT!  
Selling prices are good and Buyers exist!  
If you want to sell, NOW is the time to list!

Now Inspector! Now Appraiser!  
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We'll all be working hard for YOU!

If it's your time to invest, buy or sell,  
Speak with a good realtor, someone who'll treat you really well!  
In fact, if you're really contemplating a sale,  
Remember you can call me, just ask for Gail!  
And for reading my column, thank you ALL for a great year!  
Hope I've helped in some way, dispell some of your fears.

Home buying and selling has a lot of pieces and parts,  
Reading Destin Life info is definitely a good start!  
And now 2023 is nearly in sight!  
Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays to all,  
And to all a good night!

## Meet Bobby Wagner—Destin's New Mayor

On November 8th, Bobby Wagner, 28, won the Mayoral Election for Destin. This makes him among the youngest mayors to ever serve in Florida. "I want to say thank you to every-

body who made this campaign successful—my family, friends and community who have supported me and this vision for the future of Destin," Bobby said.  
Having lived in Destin since

6th grade, Bobby's background is in business, environmental non-profit, and he served one year on the Destin City Council. "This win represents the next generation of local government that prioritizes projects over politics," he said.

His mayoral campaign was a donation-funded grassroots campaign that took a hands-on approach, utilizing community workshops in order to understand the needs of the citizens

of Destin. "My number one priority is this community's concerns, goals, and aspirations as we move Destin into the future. We will never be political, but always about the projects. Getting them started, funded, and completed for us, the community of Destin."

Bobby ran on the platform "Revive, Reclaim, Sustain." His campaign focused on strategic green development and revitalization, the reclamation of



beaches and natural spaces, and the sustaining of Destin's natural environment. "It's time to revive Destin. These waterways are our heritage, and it is up to us to protect them. Together we will protect and preserve not only the waterways but our heritage, businesses, and this unique place of paradise that we get to call home," he said.

Bobby won in the majority Republican Okaloosa County while running on an independent platform that put "projects over politics."

Okaloosa County Political Breakdown:

Democratic: 8,831(19.18%)  
Republican: 29,979 (65.10%)  
No Party Affiliation: 6,554 (14.23%)  
Other: 685 (1.49%)

Moving forward, Bobby will continue to establish a strong vision for Destin that holds values of community, family and local identity at its core. He hopes to unite the council and proceed with projects that will serve the 13,000 residents of Destin as well as the 4 million visitors it receives each year. The City of Destin operates under a council-manager form of government with seven at-large elected councilors and a mayor.

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# Sorting Through the Noise of Medicare Annual Enrollment



BY GREG DURETTE

For those folks new to the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), the overwhelming volume of mailing pieces, emails and phone calls are dizzying. For those folks more experienced in this time, the sigh of despair and cries of “Oh no, not again!” can be heard from every balcony and rooftop.

Keep in mind, the closer we get to Dec. 7 (the official end of the AEP), the more intense it will get if you let it. Regardless of your experience level, there are some things you can do to quell the noise and help make the best possible decision for you.

First, make sure you pay attention to the mail and phone calls you receive from your existing insurance company. These communications will be very valuable to you as they likely will be about the changes to your current plan in the new year. Too often, because of the volume of clutter mail, folks tend to throw these out along with everything else just to try and keep the kitchen counter clear. As the saying goes, don't throw the baby out with the bath water!

Next, try to make a real effort to understand everything you can about your current plan. Know the exact name and type of plan as well as how much you are paying in premiums. Is it a Supplement Plan? If so, which

one; M, N, G, F, etc.? Know which type of Part D or Stand-Alone Prescription plan (if any) you have, to go along with this Supplement Plan. Know your deductibles, co-insurance and copays. Know if you are able to use your pharmacy of choice. Know how the coverage Gap (commonly known as the “Donut Hole”) works in your plan.

Perhaps you have an Advantage Plan instead. Again, know the exact name and type of plan as well as how much you are paying in premiums. Being that most Advantage plans have the Prescription coverage built in, you will likely not have a separate premium for Part D. However, you will need to know the deductibles and co-insurances for the entire plan. Oftentimes, there will be a separate deductible for the Advantage Plan and the Prescription coverage within the plan. Also, know your copays and whatever Extra Coverages your plan offers such as Dental, Hearing, Vision, Rewards Programs, Silver Sneakers, etc.

The two last, most important pieces of information you will need to know about your current plan is, what your premium will be and are your doctors/medications going to be on the plan in 2023. Will you have in-network options in other States? Some plans get better, some plans not so much. Some get more expensive and some reduce to as low as \$0 per month. Some doctors stay and some doctors go. Some medications get more expensive, less expensive or simply are not covered. It all depends on where you live and the plan you have.

Now, finally, you are armed and ready to attack that onslaught of external information. Be careful of where you look! Many of those ads you see on TV with famous sports figures/



actors are nothing more than marketing companies looking to get your information to sell to anyone willing to pay for it. If you respond to those ads, you will only make the onslaught of

mail, emails, texts and calls that much bigger.

Work with people you know and/or reputable insurance companies you know and recognize. Deal directly and don't be

afraid to let someone know you would prefer they not contact you again if you have settled on what you want to do.

That is the final important point. Now that you are well informed and have made a well-informed decision, you will feel much better about changing the channel when the next Medicare ad shows up on TV. You can sort your mail over the trash barrel. Talk about stress-free living!

*Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for over 39 years and can be reached at his office at 850-842-2400 or his mobile at 978-509-2941.*

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## Medicare Questions? We've Got Answers.

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Community

# The Gift of a Sound Personal Insurance Portfolio?



By JOE CAPERS,  
INSURANCE ZONE

In a recent edition we focused on the details of a sound Business Insurance Program. Similar

parallels can be established for your equally important Personal Insurance Program. Personal lines insurance is designed to offer protection for individuals and families rather than organizations and businesses. The most common types of personal insurance are property and casualty insurance which includes homeowners, condo, renters and auto insurance. The rates of insurance vary depending on geographic locations and the level of risk that an individual may have.

In our state of Florida, some types of personal lines insurance are required while others

are strongly recommended. All Florida residences must have auto insurance which covers drivers while commuting to work, running errands and for other personal reasons and while used in business pursuits. On the other hand, homeowners, condo unit owners and renters insurance protect against damage to residences and personal assets.

Ultimately, insurance is about safeguarding one's family from life's uncertainties – and life does indeed have uncertain and unexpected events. Personal insurance adds that extra layer of protection that can give you peace



of mind in today's world.

Below is a sampling of personal insurance coverage that are recommended for you and your family:

**Homeowners & Homes Under Renovation or Construction** – Protects your home the way it protects you by choosing the proper coverage that meets your needs.

**Condo Unit Owners** - Your condo association may have insurance, but your individual unit has its own coverage needs. Condo insurance protects your dwelling elements, personal property and liability.

**Renters Insurance** – Can be structured to cover more than just your personal property, and personal liability is just one example.

**Rental Property or Landlord Insurance** – Protects your property investment for you as a rental property owner.

**Auto Insurance** – Protection that gives peace of mind when on the road.

**Flood Insurance** – Homeowners does not cover flooding so flood insurance will protect against floods associated with hurricanes, tropical storms, heavy rains and other conditions that impact our area.

**Boat and Yacht Insurance** – Know that you, your guests and vessel are protected so you can enjoy your time on the water.

**Umbrella** – This high limit coverage goes above your personal and auto liability policies to protect you from unexpected and catastrophic events.

**Jewelry and Collections** – For those special items and valuables that your homeowners coverage will have severe limitations.

**Motorcycle and RV Insurance** – Provides liability protection for you and your machine.

**Home Office Liability** –

As more individuals are now working from home, make sure you have protection for this often-overlooked exposure.

**Life Insurance** – Whether term or permanent, life insurance can provide income, final expenses, transfer an inheritance and business continuation.

**Pet Insurance** – You know I would not leave off this vital protection to cover the health for our precious animals.

There are many choices in the marketplace when it comes to your personal insurance program – especially automobile and homeowner coverage. We recommend you work with an agent and agency that will take the time to get to know you, your family, and your insurance needs. One that can search the marketplace for the correct combination of coverage and price to meet the insurance requirements of you and your family.

You've worked hard to attain your assets and this is a great time of the year. Let a personal lines specialist provide you with the gift of a Personal Insurance Program that will protect you with sound insurance products.



*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](http://www.ins-zone.com) and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo and Umbrella Liability', or call 850.424.6979.*

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## Community

# Make a Difference with Guardian ad Litem

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

One of the greatest gifts you can give to a child is the knowledge they have someone on their side. Carita Smith, Volunteer Recruiter, for the Florida Guardian ad Litem, is on a mission to ensure that local children who find themselves displaced from their homes know there is someone they can still count on to advocate for their best interests. In our area, there should be 136 volunteers. There are currently only 43.

The Guardian ad Litem is made up of a three-pronged system that becomes part of a child's team when a judge rules they need to be sheltered, or removed from the home. One part of Guardian ad Litem is the Case Advocacy Manager, who maintains the level of care from the office and supports the volunteers to ensure they can advocate effectively. These managers are on staff along with the child's Best Interest Attorney to make sure the team is running smoothly. At the center of the trio, is the Volunteer Child Advocate. It is this volunteer

who visits the children to make sure their needs are being met. If they find the children are in need they report back to the Case Advocacy Manager and the attorney to see if services can be put in place. They are the thread that connects the child to the judge and all other agencies that work with the court. Their sole mission is to take care of the child. It is this Volunteer Child Advocate position that Carita is working hard to fill and it is mission-critical.

"We work alongside any agency that's in contact with that child," Carita said. "If the child is in foster care, we visit with them at least once a month, but our volunteers usually go more often. We talk to the child, make sure they're getting what they need, and ask how they feel. We want to make sure their innermost person is taken care of."

"We also talk with the foster parent to get a sense of how the child is behaving and what their day looks like," she continued. "If the child has interactions with their parents, we want to know how they responded to the



visitation so we can keep an eye out for any triggers. If they're visiting with a parent twice a week for 30 minutes to an hour, how's that child's behavior when they come back? There are a lot of variables that go into a visit like how the visits are maintained and observing how the child feels after these visits. What we observe then becomes information that we provide to the court."

Due to the shortage of volunteers, Case Managers often have to fill the additional role of the Child Advocate Volunteer, which is far from ideal. Carita shares the steps to becoming a CAV.

"There's a three-phase training process," she said. "The first phase is talking with me, submitting your application, and having your fingerprints taken at no cost to the volunteer. You must also pass a level two background screening because of the

confidentiality that is required and the places you're going to. You're part of the court system and officially taking care of the needs of a child on the state level. Have a clean background.

"Phase two is the classroom portion which is 30 hours, so you do get a lot of training before you get started. Volunteers can choose to do it all online or in two parts by doing the majority online and then coming to a one-day class from 9a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

"Phase three is the most important because it's when you go out and do the work," Carita said. "This is when you're visiting with a child, going to court, seeing how the parents react, and seeing how the judges behave. Just going into court can be scary but when you just observe and start building an understanding of what people are doing, then it becomes easier. You understand that you're just putting down on paper what you observed and passing it on to someone else. You understand your role in the process of helping these children."

So who would make the ideal volunteer?

"Someone who loves children," Carita said. "You have to want to see children get beyond traumatic situations. Children remember what's happened to them so you have to be patient. Be confident in your abilities so you can ask critical questions."

Carita stresses that once someone becomes a volunteer, they have plenty of support from the case manager and attorney on their team. In addition to their immediate team, there are also mentors who have been in the position for multiple years, and events are put together so volunteers can be together and make a connection.

As for community support, Carita asks that you contact her to speak about Guardian ad Litem to your churches, small groups, networking groups, businesses, classrooms, etc. She will talk to any group that can help grow the volunteer base.

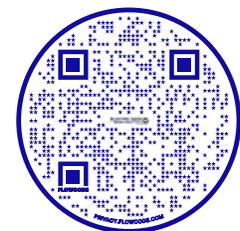
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# Is it Time to Park a New Sleigh Under Your Tree?

Why this holiday season may be an ideal time to buy that preowned vehicle you've been dreaming about

By WILL ESTELL

Whether you consider yourself a well versed auto aficionado, or someone who simply desires a dependable and presentable automobile to get around in, it's certainly no secret that both the new and pre-owned automobile market have been immensely inflated over the past two years. Some of this overvaluation has been due to issues related to the ongoing semiconductor chip shortage, while some – particularly in the used car segment – has been driven by a need for auto dealers with too little inventory to make similar profits while selling fewer cars. This isn't dissimilar to the perils of many other types of businesses in the past three years. However, this is changing, thankfully.

From 2020 to 2022 we quite literally saw used car prices skyrocket more than ever in automobile history, with the average

consumer price of a new vehicle in our country increasing by 6.3 percent from the beginning of 2021 to the beginning of 2022 alone. This, in turn, caused the retail price that most consumers were paying for used vehicles to escalate by 7.2 percent during that same one-year period, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's latest consumer price index.

All of this means many of us – from dealers to end consumers – have been paying prices that were above previous book value over the past two years. Remember, in simple terms, if the dealer had to buy it high, the dealer had to sell it high – and the truth is, for a while, cars, trucks and SUVs were all trading for well over what their book values could substantiate. There's no reason to feel bad about being one of those people if you did this yourself. However, I hope you like your car a lot, because



unless you paid for it or decide to toss a wad of money with it in a future trade, you're likely to be stuck with it until it's paid off, something that will most likely haunt the automobile industry by negatively impacting new car sales a few years down the road.

Jump ahead to the third quarter of 2022, and a lot has changed in the auto industry, and much of that is to your favor, thus, making it a better time to buy than over the past two years. Think of this: only a short year ago people were buying an

already depreciating asset, for up to 40 percent above its value, then lenders were actually financing those purchases, based on those inflated numbers. I personally think that's a recipe for disaster that we won't see the impact of for two to three years, when people attempting to trade in those vehicles find that they still owe 25 percent to 50 percent more than any dealer or private party would be willing to pay for it. But that's a discussion for an entirely different article, and one not quite as upbeat and positive as gifting yourself or your loved one with a new car this holiday season.

In the short term, those in-

flated sales prices of the past two years, combined with supply and demand issues, began to push the actual book values up, too – not to the amount the cars were being sold for, but some. This was because many valuation analysis tools such as NADA and KBB (National Auto Dealers Association, and Kelley Blue Book) are at least partially built upon the averages of current sales transactions, as reported by consumer reporting agencies and automobile dealers around the country. However, it is now a fact that prices have been coming down at the major auctions for close to six months as of this writing, and though it takes a while for the dealer pricing to catch up to the auction and wholesale trends (in terms of what they paid for their current inventory) we are now seeing the results of substantial-

*Continued on page 24*

## The Emerald Coast's Favorite Car Buying Service

We all need personal transportation, but most find the process of purchasing a vehicle to be a difficult, time-consuming experience. Emerald Coast Motor Cars Destin provides a car buying service that takes all the hassle away. Stan Hall and Devon Kiss provide a car buying service where customers tell them about their needs for a vehicle, and they search the market for the car, truck or SUV that precisely fits their customer's needs.



Stan began this unique type of car buying experience in 2012, and has had a major success with not only his local customer base, but also in filling customer's orders across the United States. Devon, Stan's associate, is a computer programmer and IT professional who can search for and locate vehicles from all over the United States based on each customer's individual requirements. Each vehicle purchased is graded on a five-point scale from zero to five, and only vehicles in the finest condition are chosen for Emerald Coast Motor Cars' customers.

With many years of experience in providing the highest quality cars delivered to their

customers, Stan and Devon work tirelessly to ensure that each customer's unique desires are fulfilled when a vehicle is purchased through Emerald Coast Motor Cars' buying service. The success of this service can be seen by looking through their pages of stellar reviews on their website at [ecmotorcars.com](http://ecmotorcars.com)! A photo of the customer at the time of purchase and the customer's review are listed. These reviews are always interesting, and they show all kinds of customers and the wide variety of the vehicles sold, each

uniquely fitting their customer's needs.

Over the years, Stan Hall has perfected the process of ensuring that both value and reliability are provided to customers by recommending that his customers purchase vehicles one to two years old, so that the initial depreciation of a new car purchase is realized before his sale, but with a remainder of the manufacturer's warranty

still going with the vehicle. Stan believes this provides a win-win scenario for his customers looking to purchase the newest vehicle possible, while providing the best value in the car buying experience. Fulfilling customer's vehicle orders is a top priority for Emerald Coast Motor Cars Destin. They also accept trades, purchase vehicles, and are always looking for vehicles to consign.

Stan Hall and Devon Kiss encourage everyone to check out their current inventory selection at [ecmotorcars.com](http://ecmotorcars.com). If you are looking for the perfect car, truck or SUV, call Emerald Coast Motor Cars today. You will appreciate the old-fashioned customer service and incredible deals! The easiest way to get started is to call them directly: Stan Hall, (850) 830-3083, or Devon Kiss, (901) 275-1847.



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# Do's and Don'ts for *Holiday* Decorating



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

Now that we've all recovered from our turkey hangover, it's

time to decorate for the holiday season! Decorations add lots of cheer to the chilly and sometimes rainy holiday season. Whether you're decorating for Christmas, Feliz Navidad, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, I'm sharing some of my favorite decorating tips and tricks with you. Let's get started.

Decorate every room in your home. Keep your decorations cohesive so they tell a story – your story. Choose colors and a theme or style that suits you!

Add festive throw pillows in the bedroom. You can even wrap garland or festive ribbon around the headboard and footboard of the beds. Kids love mini trees or light-up menorahs in the room. Add a small dish with greenery and a scented candle in the powder room for a cheery touch. In most cases I employ the adage of "less is more."

Hosting dinner? Holiday tables are a great way to let your personality shine. Select your



CHRISTMAS

If you're wrapping gifts, keep your theme in mind. Wrap gifts in paper that compliment the rest of your decorations. Big rolls of double-faced ribbon can be used on gifts, to hang door decorations, drape around your garland and hang ornaments, dreidels, piñatas or masks from your chandelier.

If you have little ones, try making an advent calendar. String mini stockings or little drawstring pouches through garland or wide ribbon and fill them with little surprises. Building anticipation is fun for everyone!

When it comes to decorating your front door, I'm going back to the "less is more" statement. Avoid overcrowding the entry of your home by using one prominent piece, like a big wreath. It's welcoming and classy.

Everyone in the neighborhood loves a house that's beautifully decorated for the holidays. Hanging lights on the house adds holiday cheer, but decide in advance how you'll hang them and gather all of your supplies before you begin this task. If it involves a ladder, have an assistant to hold it steady for you. Use light clips that attach to your gutters vs. a staple gun that can damage your wood and create other problems down the road. You could also accidentally staple through the wire and that could be a hair-raising experience. All jokes aside, safety comes first when tackling this holiday project.

Skipping the oversized inflatables will keep the exterior of your home looking neat and tidy. Inflatables are not eco-friendly, as they require a large amount of energy, but if you've got kiddos I get it. One inflatable strategically placed will be worth the smiles on their faces.

Keep the use of extension cords to a minimum in an effort to prevent a fire or trip hazard. Ensure anything you use to decorate outdoors is rated to withstand the moisture and temperatures.

Hope these tips were helpful! However you choose to decorate, make it uniquely yours. Coastal Design by Kim is happy to help give you holiday decorating ideas for your home. Call us today at (850) 904-6622.

Wishing you and yours a festive and safe holiday season! Cheers and happy 2023!

*[kim@coastaldesignbykim.com](mailto:kim@coastaldesignbykim.com)*



HANUKKAH TABLE SETTING



KWANZAA WREATH

favorite linens, mix and match your dishes for a bit of flavor. Combine china with your everyday wear and don't forget to add a floral arrangement or two. Keep them low so they don't compromise your conversations. Use unscented candles so they don't interfere with the aromas of all the delicious food you've prepared. Instead of place cards, use ornaments, dreidels, coins or mini-pinatas or masks at each table setting with your guests' names on them. These will be a great memento of the holiday too.

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# Okaloosa Schools Shine

Gov. Ron DeSantis made a surprise visit to Okaloosa County recently to announce the inaugural group of schools to receive Florida Purple Star recognition. The Purple Star designation recognizes schools that provide extra support for children of military families. Once the school names were released, it was apparent why Okaloosa County was chosen for the announcement. Thirty-five of the 114 schools receiving the recognition were from right here in Okaloosa County.

“Purple Star Schools have the tools and knowledgeable faculty needed to help children of military families succeed regardless of the obstacles they face,” said Governor DeSantis. According to [militarychild.org](http://militarychild.org), a child whose parents are in the military can “expect to move six to nine times from kindergarten through their high school graduation, with approximately 200,000 students transitioning to a new school in any given year.” To qualify for Purple Star status, a school must have a trained staff member who helps ease entry into the new academic environment, a student-led program to help create social connections, a military family webpage on the school website to inform parents, and hold school-wide military recognition events that encourage tolerance and inclusion.

The Okaloosa County School District is privileged to support the highest percentage of military students of any county in



the state of Florida. With that privilege comes a commitment to serve the students and families of those who serve our country. Superintendent Marcus Chambers said the district began tracking the Purple Star program when it was first proposed during the 2021 legislative session. “Our own Representative, Pat Maney, was key in bringing The Purple Star program to Florida, and we are excited to see our schools recognized for the great work they are doing to support our military children.”

Chambers continued, “Our schools have programs in place to make students comfortable and to make the transition from a school in another state or even another country less stressful. I could not be more proud of our teachers, staff, and administrators for earning this distinction. Their commitment and dedication to our military students, as well as all of our students, is making a difference. We are proud in Okaloosa to support our military students as their parents support and defend our nation!”

Congratulations on one or more of the schools in your district being designated by the Florida Department of Education as a Purple Star School of Distinction!

Antioch Elementary School, Baker School, Bluewater High School, Bob Sikes Elementary School, Choctawhatchee High School, Crestview High School, Davidson Middle School, Destin Elementary School, Destin Middle School, Edge Elementary School, Edwins Elementary School, Eglin Elementary School, Florosa Elementary School, Fort Walton Beach High School, Kenwood Elementary School, Laurel Hill Elementary School, Lewis School, Longwood Elementary School, Mary Esther Elementary School, Meigs Middle School, Niceville High School, Northwest Florida Ballet Academie, Northwood

Elementary School, Okaloosa School, Shoal River Middle School, Silver Sands School, Southside Primary School, Walker Elementary School and Wright Elementary School.

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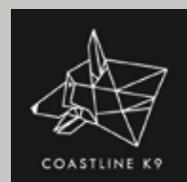
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Sports

# Raider Athletes Join FCSAA's All-Academic Team

Northwest Florida State College (NWFS) is pleased to announce that 16 Raider athletes have been named as members of the Florida College System Activities Association's (FCSAA) 2021-2022 All-Academic Team.

The FCSAA is a statewide non-profit corporation that regulates, coordinates, and promotes intercollegiate activities in

athletics, brain bowls, forensics, model united nations, music, student governments, student publications, and theatre.

This year, 1,161 students participating in FCSAA programs were recognized for maintaining a minimum 3.30 GPA throughout the 2021-2022 academic year.

"We are proud of our Raider

athletes for their commitment to excellence in everything they do," said NWFS President Dr. Devin Stephenson. "I look forward to seeing what they accomplish as they continue working toward their academic goals and hone their talents and skills this season."

Below are the current NWFS student-athletes who

achieved this honor:

Softball: Gracie Bellard, Brilee Broussard, Riley Gibson, Maycie Hardy, Cassidy Hood, Emma Langston, Julia Petty, Abigail Pippen, and Layla Thompson

Baseball: Samuel Wyatt Cas- toe, Will Cannon, Kelly Crump- ton, and Cade Easterbrook

Women's Basketball: Marissa

Gasaway and Zyniah Thomas  
Men's Basketball: Jaylon Mc- Daniel

For more information on Northwest Florida State College Athletics, please contact Ram- sey Ross, Northwest Florida State College Athletic Director, at (850) 729-5358 or [ramseyr@nwfs.edu](mailto:ramseyr@nwfs.edu).

## TIME TO PARK

*continued from page 21*

ly lower prices (which also affect real book values that are also trending downward from what they were for the same vehicles

six months or a year ago) at the retail level.

Over the last four months of 2022, we've seen wholesale pricing of almost all pre-owned cars drop considerably around the country. This means that con-

sumers should see those 10-15 percent reductions passed on, with retail pricing already showing signs of tremendously trending downward in major metro- politan markets where more people want more cars, along

with more dealerships need- ing to sell cars, often keeps the prices most competitive. This is exactly why this holiday season may be a much better time to negotiate that 'best price deal' than any time in the past two years would have been.

As of this October used vehi- cle prices were down 10.3 per- cent from a year ago, according to The Manheim Used Vehicle Index. The wholesale price of used luxury brands is getting hit the hardest and is down 13.5 percent from this same time last year. This is exactly why buying a three- to five-year old Audi, BMW or Mercedes – even at a good price – is often less ex- pensive than even buying a pre- owned Toyota, Honda or Gen- esis of the same year, class size and mileage. Preowned SUV prices are down 12.3 percent for the same period, and pick- up trucks have now dropped in price by almost 9 percent over the past 12 months.

All of this represents what I see as a definite bright light at the end of the proverbial car buying tunnel, if you're in the market to buy this holiday season or going into the new year. Having the knowledge of these industry pricing trends can positively affect your ability to

close your best deal possible on your next automobile purchase. Remember, car buying isn't like buying clothing, furniture or the food you eat. Almost every- thing is somewhat negotiable in the world of used automobiles. Whether you're buying a F250 King Ranch, a 911 GT3, or a 4Runner, do your homework. Know the real value of the ve- hicle you're considering buying. Check the prices for the same vehicle in other markets. And if you have a vehicle to trade, know what the NADA and KBB average dealer trade in is, and ask for that price for your trade. The only thing better than put- ting that perfect vehicle under your tree, is knowing you also gifted yourself with a smart buy while doing it.

*Will Estell is a writer, editor, producer and entrepreneur with more than 500 published features and numerous online articles in an array of genres. Over the past 25 years, Will has been instrumental in founding 12 new magazine titles, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others. Originally from the backwoods of rural Mississippi, Will is a father of three who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his wife, ABC 3 news anchor Laura Hussey Estell.*

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# 2022 Football Guide

**Football. Food. Fun. Fans.**  
**Let the Games Begin...**

## Destin's Best Places to Watch Your Favorite Teams!



By SCOTT MILLER

What do we do now during this down time fellow college football fans? The regular season is over, the conference champions have been crowned and the Bowl Games are a few weeks away.

We watch Pro football, of course! The networks certainly know how to keep us happy with Thursday Night Football,

Saturday pro games and the usual dose of Sunday afternoon games, Sunday Night Football and the icing on the cake—Monday Night Football. We still have plenty of action this month to keep us happy, in between Christmas shopping, holiday parties and spending quality time with our families. And the College Bowl games, playoff games and National Championship games are still yet to come!

Wondering where to watch? There are a lot of great places to enjoy right here in our own backyard – places full of big screen TVs and diehard fans where we can gather to cheer on our favorite teams and enjoy some really great food and drinks, too. Home field advantage goes a long way, especially here in Destin. So, here's a few of my favorite "home field

headquarters" to enjoy this holiday season!

### AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar



AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar loves football fans and boasts the one and only Jumbotron, on the Harbor in Destin. Be sure to come by and watch your favorite teams play all season long.

Serving up delicious daily specials, mouth watering drinks plus entertaining live music all month, make AJ's your game day destination and let the

games begin.

Check the Facebook page for info on live music & events.

116 Harbor Blvd.

### Austons on 98



Offering a raw bar and the best happy hour in town, Austons is the place to be and 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.

With big screen TVs all around, there's no bad seat in the house and with football season upon us there's no better place to be. Happy Hour Specials include 2 for 1 on All draft beer, well liquor and house wine Mon.-Fri from 11-6 and \$6 Off raw oysters Mon.-Fri 3-6. Game day is every Sat and Sun, with Football Bucket Specials, drink specials and \$3 pints of Auston's Lager and PBR. Auston's on 98 is open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and features its own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce." See full menu at [austonson98.com](http://austonson98.com).

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*Continued on next page*



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**DESTIN'S BEST**  
*continued from previous page*

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Craving a delicious burger or some tasty wings and an ice cold beer? But the game is on and you won't miss even a single play. FATBOYS has you covered. Fully staffed and ready to serve you, the obvious choice is easy to see. Game Day and FATBOYS go hand in hand. So, hustle down for some of the best, most delicious gameday football watching food around. Be sure to enjoy a tall glass of FATBOYS Lager, too. Oh, and bring the crew with you. There's always a great seat waiting for you at either of our two convenient locations, Destin and Miramar Beach.

Happy Hour Mon-Fri 3-6pm Half off Beer, (bottle, can, draft). Football Season Specials include Sat., Sun., Mon. (All day long) 1/2 off beer (bottle, can, draft). Daily Lunch Specials are

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**Landshark's Pizza**



Hungry? Thirsty? Maybe a little of both? Come in and visit Landshark's Pizza. Owners Brian and Sue Hassmann have created the locals' favorite pizza, buffalo wings and sports pub and bar that serves great pizza and awesome wings, plus many other scrumptious eats for folks of all ages. There's plenty of

seating for everyone and TVs galore, plus fun and games all week long. Football 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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**Tailfins Waterfront Grill**



Looking for a locals' favorite breakfast? Start your day off right with Tailfins Breakfast from 8-11 a.m., seven days a week. Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs, a seafood or Cajun omelet and even a kid's smiley pancake. Be sure to order up a round of mimosas and bloody marys. Watch Tailfins' sushi chef create right in front of your eyes. Enjoy some of your favorite food and drinks, includ-

ing sushi rolls and sake bombs, scrumptious early bird dinner specials Monday to Friday, 4-6 p.m. Happy hour from 4-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, featuring \$20 domestic bottle buckets, \$5 house wines and well drinks and \$5 Long Island iced teas. Live Music on the Docks all week long. Football fans, Tailfins is your go to destination featuring over 70 Big Screen TVs. Be sure to check out our new Video Wall upstairs, possibly the largest indoor TV on the harbor.

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# Pro Football Schedule



**Monday, Dec. 26**  
Chargers at Colts, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

**WEEK 17**  
**Thursday, Dec. 29**  
Cowboys at Titans, 7:20 p.m., Amazon  
**Sunday, Jan. 1**  
Cardinals at Falcons, Noon, Fox  
Steelers at Ravens, Noon, CBS

Bears at Lions, Noon, Fox  
Jaguars at Texans, Noon, CBS  
Broncos at Chiefs, Noon, CBS  
Dolphins at Patriots, Noon, CBS  
Colts at Giants, Noon, CBS  
Saints at Eagles, Noon, Fox  
Panthers at Buccaneers, Noon, Fox  
Browns at Commanders, Noon, Fox  
49ers at Raiders, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
Jets at Seahawks, 3:05 p.m., Fox

Vikings at Packers, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Rams at Chargers, 7:20 p.m., NBC  
**Monday, Jan. 2**  
Bills at Bengals, 7:30 p.m., ESPN/ABC



**WEEK 13**  
**Thursday, Dec. 1**  
Bills at Patriots, 7:15 p.m., Amazon

**Sunday, Dec. 4**  
Steelers at Falcons, Noon, CBS  
Broncos at Ravens, Noon, CBS  
Packers at Bears, Noon, Fox  
Jaguars at Lions, Noon, Fox  
Browns at Texans, Noon, CBS  
Jets at Vikings, Noon, CBS  
Commanders at Giants, Noon, Fox  
Titans at Eagles, Noon, Fox  
Seahawks at Rams, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
Dolphins at 49ers, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
Chiefs at Bengals, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Chargers at Raiders, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Colts at Cowboys, 7:20 p.m., NBC

**Monday, Dec. 5**  
Saints at Buccaneers, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

**WEEK 14**  
**Thurs., Dec. 8**  
Raiders at Rams, 7:15 p.m., Amazon

**Sunday, Dec. 11**  
Jets at Bills, Noon, CBS  
Browns at Bengals, Noon, CBS  
Texans at Cowboys, Noon, Fox  
Vikings at Lions, Noon, Fox  
Eagles at Giants, Noon, Fox  
Ravens at Steelers, Noon, CBS  
Jaguars at Titans, Noon, CBS  
Dolphins at Chargers, 3:05 p.m., CBS  
Buccaneers at 49ers, 3:25 p.m., Fox  
Panthers at Seahawks, 3:25 p.m., Fox  
Chiefs at Broncos, 7:20 p.m., NBC

**Monday, Dec. 12**  
Patriots at Cardinals, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

**WEEK 15**  
**Thursday, Dec. 15**  
49ers at Seahawks, 7:15 p.m., Amazon

**Saturday, Dec. 17 or Sunday, Dec. 18 (Pool games)**  
Dolphins at Bills, TBD, TBD  
Ravens at Browns, TBD, TBD  
Colts at Vikings, TBD, TBD  
Falcons at Saints, TBD, TBD  
Giants at Commanders, TBD, TBD

**Sunday, Dec. 18**  
Steelers at Panthers, Noon, CBS  
Eagles at Bears, Noon, Fox  
Chiefs at Texans, Noon, CBS  
Cowboys at Jaguars, Noon, Fox  
Lions at Jets, Noon, Fox  
Cardinals at Broncos, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
Titans at Chargers, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Bengals at Buccaneers, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Patriots at Raiders, 7:20 p.m., NBC

**Monday, Dec. 19**  
Rams at Packers, 7:15 p.m., ESPN/ABC

**WEEK 16**  
**Thursday, Dec. 22**  
Jaguars at Jets, 7:15 p.m., Amazon

**Saturday, Dec. 24**  
Falcons at Ravens, Noon, Fox  
Lions at Panthers, Noon, Fox  
Bills at Bears, Noon, CBS  
Saints at Browns, Noon, CBS  
Seahawks at Chiefs, Noon, Fox  
Giants at Vikings, Noon, Fox  
Bengals at Patriots, Noon, CBS  
Texans at Titans, Noon, CBS  
Commanders at 49ers, 3:05 p.m., CBS  
Eagles at Cowboys, 3:25 p.m., Fox  
Raiders at Steelers, 7:15 p.m., NFL Network  
**Sunday, Dec. 25**  
Packers at Dolphins, Noon, Fox  
Broncos at Rams, 3 p.m., CBS/Nickelodeon  
Buccaneers at Cardinals, 7:20 p.m., NBC

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## Welcome the New Year!

The **Village of Baytowne Wharf** will host **Baytowne Countdown**, Saturday, Dec. 31, 6 p.m.-1 a.m., with two breathtaking fireworks displays at 8 p.m. and midnight. Enjoy a family-friendly evening from 6-8 p.m. Dance the night away with live music from Bay Kings Band, 7 p.m.-1 a.m.

**Noon Year's Eve** is just for kids at **LuLu's Destin**. It's the seventh annual Noon Year's Eve celebration Tuesday, Dec. 31, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. with non-stop, free kid-friendly fun. There will be arts and crafts, inflatables, face painting, live music and

more. Kids can have their fun by counting down to Noon with kid-safe "fireworks" and a huge Beach Ball Drop. Visit [LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin](http://LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin) or call (850) 710-5858.

Ring in the New Year from 5 p.m. through midnight at **Harborwalk Village** with free live entertainment on the main stage, beginning at 7 p.m. with Shenanigans followed by The New Royals at 9:30 p.m. Then turn your eyes to the skies for a dazzling firework display over the Harbor and shout along as we countdown the Ball Drop, welcoming a New Year! 8 p.m.



Fireworks; Midnight Fireworks and Ball Drop!

Join **Seaside's New Years Eve celebration** in Central Square including arts & crafts, face painting, a live performance by Monsters of Yacht and fireworks! Enjoy arts & crafts/face painting in Central Square From 4-9 p.m. Monsters

of Yacht at the Amphitheater Stage from 5-9 p.m. Fireworks 9 p.m. at the Seaside Amphitheater.

We're looking forward to the **Okaloosa Island Boardwalk New Year's Eve Fireworks** at the end of the fishing pier at 8 p.m. Great places to watch are from anywhere along the Boardwalk areas including the pier, beach and the beach-facing restaurants and bars.

Ring in 2023 at **Hotel Effie's Rocking New Year's Eve Spectacular!** Enjoy an

evening full of dining, dancing and entertainment with family and friends at any one of Hotel Effie's renowned venues: Ovide, Ara and The Lobby Bar. Ovide's Dinner and Entertainment Package includes Ovide's exclusive 4-course dinner menu, access to all entertainment throughout the evening, complimentary valet parking, champagne upon arrival, and NYE party accessories. Two seating times: 5-7 p.m. \$250 per person and 8 p.m.-1 a.m. \$350 per person. Rooftop Access is \$100 per person. Book at <https://www.hoteleffie.com/new-years-eve-dinner-ovide>.

## Nana's Black Chocolate Coffee Cake for *Christmas!* From Venice Irene Cleckler Leath

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

For many, this time of year evokes childhood memories of holiday smells, tastes and favorite "eats." So, I want to offer one of my own—Nana's Chocolate Coffee Cake. Whenever I think of this cake, it reminds me of exciting holiday vacations with my Nana and Papa John in Rome, Ga. Nana always prepared this cake, a tradition at Thanksgiving and Christmas and it is, seem-

ingly, very different from any cake I've ever had.

One of the fondest memories surrounding this cake is my cousin, Leta (a year younger than me), and I sneaking down the stairs and into the kitchen during the night to snatch another piece! We gave Nana fits over this (and other things, too!). After many, many years, I decided to make it this Thanksgiving. Many of the smells and sweet memories rolled

back into my being and it was delightful. I want to pass this along to my children and grandchildren as well.

Keep in mind, this is an antique recipe with real old-fashioned ingredients—amateur cook tested with success; but, to my knowledge, not Southern Living tested. I use the exact amounts below. But, for example, you can add more confectioner's sugar for the icing, my favorite part, if

desired. It might be fun to double the icing recipe for more!

I hope you enjoy this delight as much as we did and still do. Merry Christmas!

### Cake:

8 tablespoons Cocoa  
½ cup Butter unsalted  
2 cups Granulated Sugar  
2 cups All-Purpose Flour  
1 ½ teaspoon Baking Soda  
1 cup Buttermilk



1 cup Boiling Water  
½ teaspoon Salt  
2 Eggs

Melt chocolate in boiling water. Add ½ cup of butter. Mix 2 cups of sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, 2 cups of flour and baking soda, and sift together. Beat chocolate mixture and flour mixture together. Add milk and beat. Lastly, add the eggs, beating without separating.

Bake for 25 minutes at 375°. (I use two round cake pans, but you could make a sheet cake, too.)

### Icing:

3 cups Confectioner's Sugar  
½ cup Unsalted Softened Butter  
2 teaspoons Vanilla  
2 tablespoons strong brewed or instant Hot Coffee

Cream butter and sugar together. Add vanilla and coffee.



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**Thursdays:** 4pm Shane Curle  
8pm Austin Jennings

**Fridays:** 4pm Jason Findley  
8pm Airavata

**Saturdays:** 12pm Kelly Byrd  
4pm TBD  
8pm Gunner

**Sundays:** 12pm Kelly Byrd  
4pm TBD  
8pm TBD

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[www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com](http://www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com)



## Boathouse Oyster Bar

Oysters, Live Music and a Local's Vibe... Destin's best kept secret – the Boathouse is where the locals go, with live music every night. Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked, just the way you like 'em. The first Friday of each month The Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on FaceBook for updates. (850) 837-3645

288-B Harbor Blvd., Destin  
Boathouseoysterbardestin.com

## Café Destin

Looking for dining the entire family can enjoy? Looking for a place to work with free WiFi while enjoying your cup of coffee? For breakfast and lunch, Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples, such as pancakes, waffles with Nutella, omelets, eggs benedict, biscuits and gravy and more. For a lighter take, it also has 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 are diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas. Check out the special kids menu, too. Indoor and outdoor seating on our large covered patio are both available. You can also book after-hours for private events or special occasions. Open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week from 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

(850) 424-6777  
985 US-98 E, Destin  
cafedestin.com

## Oasis

A heartbreaking fire a few months ago temporarily halted in-restaurant dining. So, until the Oasis restaurant can reopen, Chef Divaldo and Chef Amy offer private dinners, bringing the Oasis experience to you. Choose from their sample menus or they'll create a custom menu for you. Be it a romantic evening, a birthday celebration or a family get together, Oasis will offer you a unique way to enjoy a meal. On the day of the dinner, Chef will buy the ingredients, cook them at your house, serve the meal and leave everything spotless. Dinners typically include anywhere from three to five 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." Contact Amy, (850) 401-9149, to arrange your dinner party.

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## Ovide at Hotel Effie

An elegant, culinary adventure led by acclaimed Georgia chef Hugh Acheson, Ovide brings together classic Gulf Coast flavors and impeccable classic French technique. Every dish is fueled by a passion for sustainability and seasonality that gives each bite incredible flavor unlike anything you've tasted before. Multiple James Beard Award-winning chef Acheson is owner of several acclaimed restaurants and is a Top Chef Masters competitor, Top Chef judge and celebrated cookbook author.

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4-course dinner menu, access to all entertainment throughout the evening, complimentary valet parking, champagne upon arrival, and NYE party accessories. Two seating times: 5-7 p.m. \$250 per person and 8 p.m.-1 a.m. \$350 per person. Rooftop Access is \$100 per person. Book at <https://www.hoteleffie.com/new-years-eve-dinner-ovide>.

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## The Melting Pot Destin

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Continued on next page



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## There's Nothing Like Pecan Jacks for the *Holidays!*

BY HEATHER BENNETT

Tim and Ronnie Wyatt, who were high school sweethearts, also share a love for sweets. When their printing business started to slow during the economic downturn, they turned towards pralines to help supplement their income. Having made the delicious, sugary treats for years for family and friends, they decided other people might enjoy them and want to purchase them. So, they started selling their homemade pralines

around their home State of Virginia. "We sold out of our Caribbean Rum in three hours," recalled Ronnie. Needless to say, the pralines were a big hit, and the Wyatt's began the transition from operating a printing business to Pecan Jacks.

Tim and Ronnie spent the next two years selling their pralines at wine and food festivals throughout Virginia. In 2012, they decided to try a brick and mortar location, a holiday store in a Richland mall. They signed

a two-month lease and played it by ear. "We did so well and had so much fun, we ended up staying five years," said Ronnie. Then, they opened a second Pecan Jacks location in Richmond in the Omni hotel.

But what makes them so good? "Tim and I have a love of flavor and a love of taste," said Ronnie. Their pralines and brittles are made with various flavor profiles. The pralines come in flavors such as Traditional, Caribbean Rum, Bourbon and



Sweet Heat, while the brittles embody Pistachio, Cashew, Bayou Pecan and Picante. All the recipes are homemade.

The Wyatts vacationed for years in the area, dreamed of moving here, and so decided to bring Pecan Jacks to the beach. They closed their original location in the mall, and opened a Pecan Jacks location on 30A across from Ed Waline Beach. And now, after a few years, they've opened a new Pecan Jack's in Destin!

Tim and Ronnie serve more than 40 flavors of homemade ice cream they've created at both Pecan Jack's area locations. "We are an authentic operating candy and ice cream store where we make the candy and ice cream right there. We package it and have gorgeous gifts for the holidays," said Ronnie. "We're not just an ice cream store."

If you are looking for a something to bring to Christmas dinner, a holiday party, or a gift to send to family and friends, you can stop by Pecan Jacks and order filled gift box collections full of their amazing, handmade candies, brittle, toffee, milk-chocolate cashews, gourmet chocolate pecans, dark chocolate espresso and much more. "What's better than locally crafted fresh candy?" Ronnie asked. The store is stocked

with corporate gifting and holiday boxes, too, where they can package and ship directly from the store. We're all about presentation and delicious sweets," Ronnie said. Pecan Jacks has holiday ice cream flavors, too, such as Peppermint Bark and a Cherry Cordial with Amaretto for the adults.

As our area is a melting pot of people from different regions, I asked Ronnie, is it pronounced PRAW-leen or PRAY-leen? "There's no right or wrong way," he said. "No matter how it's pronounced, it's a delicious piece of candy that everybody should try."

You can check out Pecan Jacks at 4368 W County Hwy. 30A across from Ed Waline Beach, or the new Destin location at 535 Harbor Blvd. (98 West) in Destin (850-427-3080). Hours Noon to 9 p.m. daily. Visit the website at [www.pecan-jacks.com](http://www.pecan-jacks.com). But I suggest a visit to sample the candy and ice cream as soon as possible! You can find Theo the Turtle there, too!

Speaking of Theo the Turtle—Both Pecan Jack's locations are stocked with great Theo-themed gifts, including the lovable Theo Plush, Christmas Ornaments and the new "Adventures of Theo" children's book, all attractively priced for the holidays!

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### DESTIN DINING

*continued from previous page*

trée. For dessert, choose a warm fondue bowl of fresh melted chocolate of your choice.

Melting Pot is also helping its friends over at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to help treat and defeat childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. From now through Dec. 31, visit any Melting Pot restaurant and donate \$10 and receive a Donate

& Dine card valid for \$20 off a future purchase of \$50 or more. Valid 1/2-8/31/2023. Melting Pot will donate \$10 per Donate & Dine card to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. For more information, visit <https://www.meltingpot.com/donate-anddine.aspx>.

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# Destin's Annual Boat Parade Lights Up the Harbor!

## Holiday on the Harbor Boat Parade begins at 6 p.m., Sun., Dec. 11

By LORI LEATH SMITH

Once each year, Destin boat owners make the holidays sparkle and brightly glow by adorning their vessels, any size, with as many lights and decorations as possible; then cruising in with true Destin spirit, all in a gleaming row, through the historic Destin Harbor. To me, this is one Destin tradition that gets me into the holiday spirit!

Now in its 36th year, participating boats light up the night on the Harbor where the brightest, most creative ones win and a few lucky captains gain bragging rights to the most decked out boat in the area with their blinking lights, animated characters and other holiday fare for this December Destin delight. Sponsored by the Destin Fishing and History Museum, thousands of excited fans gather to watch boats of all shapes and sizes from the Harbor's docks, businesses and boardwalk—glittering, bright powerboats, party boats, pontoon boats, sail boats and yachts—parade by as costumed revelers join in the mix. Boat crews dress in theme costumes and entertain using all things that assault the senses from a visual and sound standpoint.

Museum Executive Director Kathy Marler Blue says there can be as many as 30 boats competing in the eight boat categories. Cited by Coastal Liv-

ing as one of the Best Holiday Boat Parades in America, the first boat parade was started in 1986 by the first museum which was the "Destin Fishing Museum" and was located in the old "Jitney Jungle" building (now where the McGuire's complex and businesses are) as a way to give back to the community for all the support shown to the museum. That first museum was started in 1985 and operated until 1996 when the property was sold. Many of the charter boat wives that helped start that first museum started the boat parade and it continued through time. In 2003, the community came together again and started a new museum, The Destin History & Fishing Museum, which was opened to the public Oct. 1, 2005, and the group continued the boat parade. Proceeds benefit the Destin History and Fishing Museum.

This year's Holiday on the Harbor Boat Parade begins at 6 p.m., Sun., Dec. 11 at Boshamp's. Boats will start lining up in the Harbor from 5 - 5:30 p.m. then make their way from the east side of the Destin Harbor to the west side (Harborwalk Village/Emerald Grande) ending near the Destin Bridge and East Pass area. View the boat parade anywhere from Boshamps Seafood and Oyster House along the Boardwalk to Harborwalk Village



PHOTOS BY AIR LAND SEA PRODUCTIONS



where it ends as well as the Destin Bridge and Norriego Point. Many restaurants in between and along the Destin Harbor are great places to watch including Tailfins from the 2nd and 3rd floor, AJ's from the upstairs area, the Boathouse, both levels of Harry T's and Brotula's outside seating.

Judges rate each boat on its originality, lights, appearance and special effects with awards in 10 categories. Additional awards include best overall boat entry City of Destin award for the boat that best showcases the

Harbor heritage.

Visit [destinhistoryandfishing-museum.org](http://destinhistoryandfishing-museum.org) for more information. Special thanks to the Destin Coast Guard Station, City of Destin, Destin Fire Control District, HarborWalk Village Staff, the team from HarborWalk Village, Land, Air, Sea Productions and judges for helping to make the parade a wonderful Destin holiday tradition. Immediately following the parade is a Fireworks show over the Destin Harbor.

That same day at Harborwalk Village, visit Santa during

Holiday on the Harbor from 1 - 4 p.m. and the Mistletoe Market from 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. featuring vendor tents, gift wrapping, festive drink samples, and a performance by the Northwest Florida Ballet Academy.

To register your boat, (\$25 per boat), call 850.837.6611, email [kathydestinhistory@gmail.com](mailto:kathydestinhistory@gmail.com) or stop by the Destin History and Fishing Museum, 108 Stahlman Ave., Tues. - Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

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## Wellness



By LISA TURPIN,  
HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

Hard to believe 2022 is coming to an end. But, “(musical notes?) It’s - THE - most - wonderful time of the year (musical notes?) There’ll be parties for hosting, marshmallows for toasting... and...be of good cheer... (musical notes?) It’s the most WONDERFUL time of the year...” This means a very good possibility for weight gain and unhealthy habits. Sorry for the negative spin.

**Move:** But, the good news is you don’t have to throw in the towel. If you add more cheer, get in high gear, you can be active and burn calories into the New Year! Decide and commit to movement of any kind. Burning off calories will make you feel less guilt, but will help with your mood, energy, and stamina also to get through the parties and shopping and anything your family or friends throw your way.

**Hydrate:** As we enjoy more “cheer,” we also have a potential

to become dehydrated. Drinking water will make you feel less hungry and content, so a glass before you head to the cocktail dinner will help, and can prevent a hangover. It’s never a good idea to withhold yourself from enjoying Christmas; just be smart. When you are able, drink water and eat veggies and lean meat to counterbalance the negative effects of the holiday. Focus on the higher percentage of your intake from healthy food.

**Get moving,** preferably daily, but at least two to three days a week. Our area has plenty of choices to be active. If outside activities become too chilly, pick a gym (join me @ Destin Health and Fitness), small group or individual personal training. If you want to stay home, here are eight in-home bodyweight exercises you can do whenever you have time. (3 sets/20 reps) It’s actually easy to be active; you just have to decide to. Toodle-oo 2022.

**Wide Squats:** Knees and toes turned out, lower down sitting back with weight in the heels, keeping your shoulders back, head and chest up. When coming back up engage the glutes for extra benefit.

**Push-ups:** If you can’t perform a full pushup on your hands and toes, then put your knees down and see if you can get your

chest all the way to the floor. You can also do them at the kitchen counter.

**Lunges:** Either walking (moving across the room) or stationary (staying in one position and lowering down and up).

**Tricep Dips:** Find a coffee table or sturdy chair, facing out, sit with your hands on each side of your hips, slide your hips off the table, using your arms, lower your body down and up, bending elbows to about 90 degree angle.

**Prone Hyperextensions with Back Fly:** Lying face down, arms making a T, lift only upper body off the floor while flying your arms back, pinching your shoulder blades together. Exhale as you lift.

**Double Leg Lifts:** (for abs) Lie on your back with your hands under your glutes so that it tilts your hips and helps anchor your lower back. Bend your knees to your chest, then straighten legs pointing your toes to the ceiling. Lower your legs about 45° and back up.

**Plank Series:** 1) Windmills: start in regular plank and open to side plank and switch to the other side plank and alternate side to side. 2) Elbow Plank to Pike: (i.e. yoga dolphin) from an elbow plank, push hips up as high as you can. 3) Plank hold: hands or elbows – hold for as long as you

can or set a timer.

**Hip Bridges:** Lying on back knees bent feet flat on the floor, lift your hips off the floor as high as you can and lower back down slowly, barely brushing the floor between reps.

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

## Women’s Retreat!

Sometimes we just need a moment—a time to rest—a time to refill your cup—or a time just to laugh and connect with other like-minded women.

New Life Church Pastor Holly and I, along with our other dynamic retreat speaker, Valerie Peterson, and the Iron Sisters Leadership Team are excited to invite you to the First Annual Women’s Retreat on Jan. 12-14, 2023.

The Gulf Front luxury hotel accommodations at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Ala., are second to none.

It’s time to get RESTORED, REFRESHED and RENEWED for the new year and new season that’s coming in your life. Psalm 23 says, “He renews, restores, refreshes my soul. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.” We want to make sure we are on the right path in 2023! We come together and open up God’s Word. We focus on His Glory and we worship together corporately! God wants to meet you right where you are!

Please come with a heart of expectation and join us for the weekend to sit in his presence and receive and be gloriously refreshed?

Of course, a women’s retreat would not be complete without some wonderful food to have conversations over. In fact, the first night, there will be a scrumptious fillet mignon steak dinner or chicken. To top it off, there is a specialty coffee shop right in the hotel lobby!

This retreat is extremely affordable at \$199 per person—double occupancy and includes registration, a water view hotel room, four meals, three dynamic speakers and a whole lot of fun getting to know some of the sharpest Iron Sisters you’ll ever meet!

Register today and invite a friend, family member or co-worker who could use some encouragement for the new year! Visit: [www.newlifechurch.com/events](http://www.newlifechurch.com/events) and fill out a brief registration form.

We look forward to having you join us at the RESTORED, REFRESHED and RENEWED Iron Sisters Women’s Retreat!

Love, Pastor Dee

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By RICHARD CHERN M.D.

The holidays are here and these are the best times of the year. At least that's what we are led to believe. In fact, the holidays can be very stressful for people. Even though most people enjoy the holidays, nearly forty percent of people report increased stress and anxiety during

these times. This often leads to substance abuse, relapse, or other worsening medical conditions.

In preparation for these potential stressful times, I'd like to tell you about some of the not so commonly discussed effects of hormone replacement. Many of our patients initially complain of physical exhaustion, generalized aches and pains, weight gain, lack of sleep or low libido. I honestly don't think even one patient has come to the clinic specifically complaining about depression or anxiety. This is not to say they don't have these symptoms, but it is rarely the reason they seek us for treatment.

What many of our patients don't realize is that optimizing hormones can reduce or eliminate depression and anxiety. I ask every patient who gets treated, "What effects do you see that you didn't expect?" Many patients talk about the overall reduction in joint or arthritis pain, some talk about the increased desire for physical activity but I think the most common comment is the huge reduction in stress levels and positive effects on mood.

I believe that the reduction in stress levels and improvement in mood are probably the most important benefit of hormone opti-

mization. That huge weight of problems you must pick up and carry every day is nowhere near as heavy. And you stop viewing stressors as problems to deal with but more like challenges to overcome. Your outlook changes from just trying to survive the day to waking up feeling rested and ready to attack the day.

So, if you are dreading the holidays then this is a sure sign that you need to at least get your hormone levels looked at and let us review the results with you. Remember, normal levels don't necessarily represent optimal health. In order to get optimal benefits and optimal health you

will need optimal levels.

*Dr Richard Chern, MD provides hormone therapy to men and women who travel from across the globe to be treated here in Miramar Beach. He is on staff at BioTE Medical as an instructor to teach hormone therapy to new providers including providers right here in our local area. Dr Richard Chern treats many of the providers in the community and might even be treating your doctor. Dr Richard Chern, MD is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country right here in Miramar Beach. Call Dr Richard Chern, MD today at 850-837-1271 for an appointment.*

## CarePatrol Helps Find the Right Assisted Living Facility – Free

By KENNETH BOOKS

Transitioning to an assisted living facility can be traumatic, an onerous chore that no one really wants to undertake. It can be expensive, time-consuming and, sometimes, dangerous.

But where to turn for advice, help and protection?

"We help steer our clients to resources to help pay for assisted living," said Cynthia Gilley, 57, a Senior Care Consultant with CarePatrol, an organization with some 150 outlets around the country, serving more than 20,000 communities. It was founded in 1993 by a social worker who observed the personal trauma experienced by a family whose loved one had been placed in the wrong type of facility. "I've been in the field caring for people pretty much most of my career," she said.

She has spent 35 years in caring for people, mainly older adults and those with cognitive difficulties, last two of which were spent working for CarePatrol.

Gilley's compassion is home-grown. Her father suffered with Alzheimer's Disease for 13 years before dying, and caring for him was an ordeal for all concerned.

CarePatrol not only finds financing for those destined for assisted living, it helps find facilities, as well as home health care, for its clients. And the service is completely free for the client. "We have contacts within the community which pay for the service," the Fort Walton Beach native said. "We've contracted with probably 95 percent of the communities. They see this as a benefit to them."

Gilley said she "tours clients around like a Realtor. We

evaluate a facility's violations, which can include lack of maintenance, state regulation violations, insufficient staff, medical errors, abuse and neglect."

Among the criteria Gilley examines in order to serve her clients are location ("They want to be close to family"), finances and the needs of the client. Not all facilities can handle certain medical issues, she said. And, if a client wishes to remain in

his home, she finds resources to provide whatever help he needs to retain a reasonable quality of life.

"The hardest thing is trying to find affordable memory care," she said. "There's a huge lack in that area."

Gilley has a passion for her work and her company. "I can't think of anything I don't like," she said. "My boss is great, my co-workers are wonderful. They

share a common passion with me. There's a cohesiveness."

The most interesting aspect of her job, Gilley said, is "being able to place Alzheimer's clients. Alzheimer's is my passion because of my father having it. I know how hard it is on the families."

To reach CarePatrol, call (850) 898-1401 or email [cgilley@carepatrol.com](mailto:cgilley@carepatrol.com).

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Wellness

# Self-Care Corner: Your Best for Christmas to Give or Get!



BY KRISY WHITELEY ANDERSON

Don't miss out on the opportunity to not only look and feel great, but help someone on your

gift list FEEL amazing, pampered and healthy, too!

Give the gift of brighter, cleaner, glowing holiday skin with the new Ultimate Skin Refiner!

By now, I hope you've experienced the Ultimate Skin Refiner H2O Facial Treatment. After only three treatments, pores are minimized and deeply cleansed, skin tone and texture are refined while potent antioxidants and anti-aging benefits are infused! The Ultimate Skin Refiner uses a four-step water facial cleanse 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.

Ultimate Skin Refiner H2O Facial Treatment, \$125 per session. Holiday special: Purchase a package of six Ultimate Skin Refiner Sessions for \$594.

Maybe you want to give someone a deluxe manicure or pedicure. The manicure includes shaping and buffing of nails, cuticle grooming, massage with hydrating oils, hydrating hand mask with hot towels, finished with polish of your choice.

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

Or why not benefit a special someone with a customized massage tailored to their needs?

Purchase a gift certificate for these and any other services or schedule an appointment. Call Krisy at Beverly Hills Day Spa at (850) 654-8544. Visit [beverlyhillsdayspa.com](http://beverlyhillsdayspa.com).

## Enjoying This *Holiday* Season



BY KAY LEAMAN, HEALTH ARCHITECT

We all know that the word 'healthy' gets rescheduled to Jan. 1 during this season. We're

not ready to relinquish our favorite recipes for a healthier option. My recommendation in the arena of food and sweets during this season: Be present and aware of how much you eat and savor every bite.

Now, let's take a different look at having a healthy holiday season. Health does not only consist of physical sustenance. It also includes our emotional state, and the holiday season tends to run our feelings and emotions through the obstacle course.

In my research for this article I discovered that I have been liv-

ing with sadness and the physical effects are surfacing. Joy, anxiety, stress, sadness, loneliness, happiness, frustration, apprehension, etc., can all be experienced during the holidays. Whatever you experience during this special season of hope and giving, being mindful of our emotional state can improve our health and our holiday season.

Sadness can involve feelings of despair, loss, anger, sorrow or

defeat. It can make us outspoken and highly sensitive to any situation. The negative effects on overall health can include



constipation, diarrhea, chest pain, dry mouth, back pain, fatigue, headache, HBP or heart palpitations. It can also affect our appetite, sex drive, and lead to anxiety.

JOY on the other hand promotes a healthier lifestyle, boosts the immune system, fights stress

and pain and supports longevity. Joy releases serotonin and dopamine in the brain (two types of neurotransmitters and heavily associated with happiness), helps us to solve problems, think more clearly and aids in fighting disease.

Laughing can bring on joy. It decreases pain, improves the heart and lungs and helps muscles relax. So, when your feelings and emotions begin to go a bit wacky, stop and take time to write down what you are grateful for. And if it's the "other person" who's experiencing these emotions, take time to remember why you love and care about them.

A few things I am grateful for: the sunshine on my face, a comfy bed, ocean waves and the privilege I have for being able to share with all of you each month information that can help you live a healthier and grateful life.

Have a fabulous Christmas and New Year. Our community is better because you're here. To Happiness and Health

~ Kay Leaman, Health Architect, [succeed.hdhl@gmail.com](mailto:succeed.hdhl@gmail.com)

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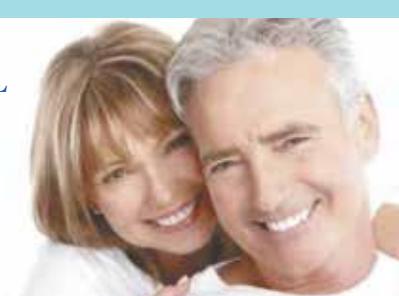
- Are you embarrassed about smiling in front of people?
- Do you ever put your hand up to cover your smile?
- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
- When you look through magazines, do you envy the models' smiles?
- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little 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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# 2023: The Year of Intention



BY TODD CRAIG,  
JOURNEY BRAVELY

As we come to the end of one year and the beginning of another, quotes from two of pop-culture's great philosophers come to mind. Yogi Berra famously said, "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up somewhere else." The other comes from the great fictional mind of Ferris Bueller who said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Our lives do move fast and it is easy to move from one day to another and one year to another passively watching the calendar days disappear. But, what if 2023 could look different for you? What might it look like to live the next 365 days with intention? The end of a year offers an opportunity for reflection on growth and lessons learned. And, the beginning of a new year invites us to look ahead, to take next steps with intentionality and create our best year yet.

Here are some questions to help guide you as you reflect on the last year and launch into the next year along with some instructions on how to best use them.

**Create space** – Set aside at least a couple of hours of undistracted time to work through these questions. Put the phone away!

**Write it down** – Get honest and vulnerable with yourself as you answer the questions. And, write them down so you can refer back to them throughout the year and review them at the end

of next year (I save mine on my desktop to review from time to time).

**Share it** – Share your responses with one or two trusted people. Sharing your intentions with others helps solidify them internally and increases the likelihood of follow-through.

**Live from it** – Use the responses to these questions as a daily compass directing your next steps.

## The Past Year

What did you accomplish personally and professionally that you feel really good about?

What challenges, struggles and fears did you have to work through?

What did you hope to accomplish or change but weren't able to? What kept you from doing so?

How are you different from 12 months ago? What did you learn? How did you grow?

How did you make a positive difference in the world around you?

What and who brought you the most joy?

What and who were the greatest stressors?

What did you tolerate this year?

What are you thankful for from the past year?

What are your top three insights?

## The Present

Life is made up of multiple domains. Take time to check in with yourself by rating each of the following areas on a scale of 1-10:

**Personal** – How do you feel about yourself?

**Physical** – How are you taking care of your body (diet, exercise, rest, etc.)?

**Financial** – How is your financial situation (income, budget, spending, savings, giving, etc.)?



**Spiritual** – How satisfied are you with the way faith is integrated into your life?

**Vocational** – How do you feel about your work/career?

**Family** – How are you doing as a partner and/or parent?

**Friends** – How do you feel about your social relationships?

**Fun** – How well are you creating time for enjoyment and recreation?

What two or three areas of life do you most want to improve in the next year? What steps will you take to make those improvements?

## The Upcoming Year

If it were two years from now and you were living your best life, how would you know?

If it were two years from now and you weren't living your best life, what got in the way?

Who do you want to be by the end of the year? In what areas would you like to grow?

What two to three things if

completed would generate feelings of pride and fulfillment at the end of the year?

What is one thing that if you accomplished it next year would make all your other goals easier or unnecessary?

What do you want to start in the next year?

What do you want to stop in

the next year?

How will you make a positive difference in the world around you next year?

If this next year was a chapter in a book, what would you title it?

As you create space and reflect on these questions, I hope you have much to celebrate and be thankful for in 2022 even if it was a challenging year. And, I hope you are filled with the excitement of possibility as you look ahead to 2023! For support along your journey, connect with us at [www.journeybravely.com](http://www.journeybravely.com).



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**Pets**

# Bring Back the Praise!

BY STEVE KOTOWSKA, SENIOR TRAINER, WHAT'S UP DOG?

You don't have to teach a dog to be a dog. You must instead allow a dog to be a dog; a dog that lives in a human world, so to speak, when we take it on as our companion. As a dog owner, you should be accepting of the fact that you must meet its innate needs. This is achieved through satisfying your dog's drives for certain things like hunting, retrieving, chasing and playing, among others. It is imperative to have good communication, set boundaries, and show fair leadership. Dogs like leadership, believe it or not. As a pack animal, it is instilled deep in their psyche to follow the leader – not



to BE the leader. You don't have to attempt to be an alpha dog in

human skin. Likewise, you cannot treat your dog like a human. There are enough examples of why this is wrong they could fill a page by themselves. You just need to be a good human leader for them to follow your lead, a zookeeper of sorts.

Communication is a multi-faceted and oftentimes highly challenging piece of the puzzle. My experience spans decades in the dog world, and I have very rarely seen a forced

relationship work with a dog. If a dog does not want to do something, it won't do it until convinced there is some benefit in doing it. The touchy part of that is finding the thing the dog will see as a benefit, then not overdoing the benefit so the dog only elicits a behavior for a motivator. The motivator typically will be a treat or toy and we are neither going to have those things constantly available nor should we need to. When we

fall into this trap, it moves the relationship to one based solely on bribery. While this might work for the short term and has value for conditioning, the bribery mechanism can lose value with many dogs and create frustration for humans. The force mechanism typically loses value in its absence, often testing a dog's resolve to avoid doing the wrong thing so it can satisfy its own desires.

Instead of force or bribery, we must teach dogs that our praise is enough, that their actions have value to us, that they make us happy. In turn, they are happy with our happiness and resounding praise of them. I challenge people to remember the first time they laid eyes on their new dog or cute little puppy. Muster up the courage to praise it with the same enthusiasm you did back then, before it started doing bad things, before its drives really began to show themselves to you and before its impulse to act on those drives became uncontrollable. Praise your dog for lying still and doing absolutely nothing. Praise your dog for making eye contact with you. Praise your dog for the little things and they will seek your praise for good behavior. Set boundaries and be fair!

Savvy Leigh

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# The Mysterious Lure of Travel



BY JODELL HAVERFIELD,  
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

One hundred years ago in January, a young writer from England embarked on a 10-month luxury voyage around the world with her husband. She was 31 years old. Her first novel had been published just two years earlier. On her trip she would surf in Hawaii, cruise the Zambezi River, and ride the train through Australia's Dandenong Ranges. These experiences would find their way into her later works.

Throughout her novels, foreign destinations became more than just a backdrop – they almost became the characters in her books. She traveled many times on the thrilling train that inspired one of her most famous novels, "Murder on the Orient Express."

By now you know I am referring to the author Agatha Christie. Whether it was a suite at Brown's Hotel, a luxury ship or train, her travels were a huge influence on her writing. She was very courageous in her youth as she traveled alone to Syria and Iraq, where she met her second husband and later assisted him in his archaeological digs. "Death on the Nile" was published four years after they cruised the Nile River. Many claim their 1958 trip to Barbados was the setting and inspiration for Agatha's novel "A

Caribbean Mystery."

By the time Agatha Christie reached the height of her fame, she was an older woman, but it all started with the adventures of her youth. When she first went to Baghdad, she was on her own. She got on a train in London and stopped off in Istanbul. Later, with her first husband and then her second husband, she would travel the whole world. While for most of us our travels won't make us famous, but they will make us happier.

There is something in our psychological well being about the travel experience. Growing evidence shows that travel is good for body and mind and taking a vacation is more than just a fun diversion from the grind of daily life. Psychologists call it the Easterlin paradox. Travel literally rewires the brain; it reduces depression and just the anticipation of a vacation makes you happier. Perhaps this explains why after the pandemic and mandates, travel is one of the busiest and highest grossing industries. Millennials value experiences over stuff, and science says they might be onto something.

### Cruising the Holiday High Seas

A few years ago, my husband and I had the opportunity to host several couples on a Crystal Cruise during the Christmas season. I wasn't really thrilled about cruising during the busy holidays, even though Crystal is a luxury cruise line and a favorite of many of my clients. "What, Me? Not excited about going on a cruise!?" I know you don't believe me, but it's true. We had never sailed at Christmas, and I expected to be eager to get home to my long list of things to do. However, we



soon discovered that even with our cruise experience, we seriously underestimated a Crystal Christmas. Soon we became what is known as "Crystalized!" Their 6-Star personalized service and sophisticated atmosphere have long been a favorite of cruise enthusiasts. Crystal Cruises is the world's most awarded cruise line. Spending time on a Christmas ship transports guests to a winter wonderland and truly magical world. Since that Christmas cruise, Dave and I have sailed the Holiday High Seas a few more times, especially with our grandchildren, sharing with them the magic of a Christmas cruise. Every cruise line from family to luxury celebrates Christmas so there's a holiday cruise for every budget. A few of my clients even wrap up a cruise ship, plane or train as a gift under the tree.

### Very Special Cruises

Through the years, I have had the pleasure of helping my clients plan trips as gifts and surprise trips for other special occasions like anniversaries, birthdays, graduations, reunions, retirements, honeymoons and more. I have even helped two clients plan bucket list trips for their terminally ill spouses and one terminally ill client asked me to help him plan his dream trip, to take his family on an Alaska cruise before he passed. I personally witnessed the joy and comfort these trips brought to my clients and their families. The family memories will last forever. During the pandemic, the en-

tire world lost the right to travel. Now that all the mandates have been lifted and travel is back to normal, think about planning a trip in 2023 or 2024. Make memories with those you love! This week, our team will head for Israel to see where Christ was born and walk where he walked in preparation for our November 2023 tour to the Holy Land. Those who did the 2022 tour absolutely loved it.

I wish all my readers a very Merry Christmas!

~JoDell, CEO and Luxury Travel Advisor at Have Travel Memories Vacations

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Environment



# Save Money, Increase Comfort All Year

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

By CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Welcome 2023! A recent survey of 531 U.S. adults showed the top resolutions are: exercise more, eat healthier and

save money. Looking back 20 years, CNN's poll showed the top resolutions were: get out of debt, lose weight and develop a healthy habit (quit smoking). It's not surprising that the top

resolutions are similar year after year, because they all have great intentions and actually go hand and hand.

Let's look at eating healthier and exercising. Eating healthy can mean cooking more at home, which saves money. Eating healthy also could cause fewer medications or doctor visits, which saves money. The same with exercising – developing a

good exercise plan will make you healthier and could cause fewer medications or doctor visits, saving you money. My grandmother once said, it's better to spend money at the grocery store on healthy foods than for doctor's visits.

Another way to save money, which is always on the top of my mind and typically not on most, is to increase efficiency and tighten the envelope of our homes. Tightening the envelope is not a phrase from Tom Wolfe's novel "The Right Stuff," but a term used to describe a system. The building envelope is the physical barrier between the exterior and interior environments

enclosing a structure (your home). Generally, the building envelope consists of a series of components and systems like a roof, walls, windows and a foundation. These systems protect the interior from the effects of the environment, such as precipitation, wind, temperature, humidity and ultraviolet radiation. One function of the building envelope is to control these effects between the interior and exterior of the building. When there is missing or compacted insulation or unsealed windows, doors and attic penetrations, your building envelope is compromised and wasting energy and comfort.

If your home is older than 15 years, you most likely don't have enough insulation to meet today's guidelines. Prior insulation code for this area was R-19 (roughly 6.5 inches of insulation); now the new code is R-30 (roughly 10.5 inches of insulation). That's a 61 percent increase. Why the increase? Because we know that R-19 insulation has trouble keeping our homes comfortable and the only solution was to add more insulation. We recommend R-38 (14.5 inches of insulation). More states are requiring the use of reflective radiant barrier insulation installed on the inside of the attic roof lining. Reflective radiant barriers reflect 97 percent of radiant heat in your attic, lowering the attic temperature by 40 to 50 degrees in the summer, allowing your insulation and ductwork to perform better, saving you money and increasing your comfort. It's all about tightening the envelope to increase efficiency and comfort. If one of your resolutions is to save money this year, schedule an inspection to know exactly where your home could improve its envelope.

May success knock on your door, all your joys multiply and you and your loved ones stay healthy. Happy 2023!

*Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions (ECES), a Smile Provider Company. They provide smiles to their customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com).*

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# NOW is the Time for Inspections



BY MARK WICHERN, IICRC WRT & ASD INSTRUCTOR

This is the time of year to have your house or business inspected for water damage, and tested for mold and mold projects before the busy season starts again.

If there are any issues or when issues arise, high-temperature drying methods could be the way to go, saving you thousands of dollars, costly repairs and time out of your home.

Much more cost effective, with high temperature drying methods, it only takes a few days to get in and out of the house, condo unit, etc. usually without tearing anything out. Hardwood floors can also be dried, which saves thousands and thousands of dollars, and is normally done in about a week.

In the water damage restoration industry, anything over 90° ambient conditions is considered high-temperature drying. High temperature dehumidifiers mean that they work in temperatures up to 120°, compared to standard refrigerant dehumidification, which becomes very inefficient above 85°.

Why is high temperature drying important? Every 18 to 20° that we can increase the temperature of the materials that we are drying, we are able to double the rate of evaporation. In other words, we can dry twice as fast with high temperature drying. This also comes with years of experience, trained employees and investing in the right equipment.

The added benefit of high-temp drying is the fact we can dry deeper into materials. Let me explain: hot moves to cold, which increases the vapor pressure in materials as the temperature increases. It is a must to use dehumidifiers that work in higher temperatures, when doubling the materials vapor pressure.

If standard dehumidifiers are used then the temperature of the material must remain low, (less than 85 degrees) slowing the entire evaporation process and most likely demolition will be required to remove the wet materials.

sizes and shapes. The three most popular are the Axial, Centrifugal and the Radial air movers.

The air movers' job is to help evaporate moisture into the air for the dehumidifiers to remove and to reheat the material from the evaporative cooling.

During testing at our IICRC Training facility, we discovered that at 3000 CFM and at over 1400 FPM, the Phoenix Focus delivers the fastest air and evaporation of all the air movers. This is our air mover of choice!



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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.

**Have Questions about Property Damage or Insurance Policies?**  
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 You could have it answered in one our columns.

Many of the new air movers are the radial, which are cheaper to purchase and easier for the restoration company to haul and set up. The tradeoff is a dramatic loss in air flow, which results in longer drying times, higher risk of mold growth and larger rental bills for the customer.

While high temperature drying is a preferred method in many cases, most companies

do not invest into high temperature dehumidifiers. We can help. Email or call 24-7 to receive a brochure or schedule an appointment and receive a free moisture meter. (850) 835-5677; veritasrestoration.com; lauraw@veritasrestoration.com




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## Insights for Investors



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

As one year closes out and another one begins, we have

some thoughts for our clients on things to review and consider.

### First: Know What you Own

We suggest it is a good idea to review your assets, stocks, bonds, cash, real estate, business interests and family interests, among others.

### Second: Know Where you Own It

It is a good idea to conduct an inventory of all your assets and where they are held.

### Third: Know How You Own It

Is the account taxable or tax deferred? Is it a retirement asset

(401k, IRA, pension or other retirement asset)?

Also, do all your assets have a beneficiary?

Many people want their families to avoid the probate process if possible. Having a beneficiary on as many assets as possible is a common practice. Some might find that using a living or revocable trust is an effective way to ensure that assets pass directly and avoid probate. Single people, be they widows or widowers, might want to review how their home is titled and to give some thought to how that asset will pass upon their death.

Next, we suggest you think about what your estate plan is. Whether you have a formal plan or not, you do have an estate plan. Formalizing it might make sense:

Chief among these is to have a will. It usually makes sense to at the very least have a will. It is often a good idea to also have a power of attorney in place (we suggest a durable power of attorney, which takes effect if you are physically or mentally incapacitated. Note, those cease at passing). Also, an advanced medical directive for family, friends and loved ones to carry out your wishes if necessary. That would include things such as a do not resuscitate order for your caretakers.

Next, what is your long-term care plan?

Whether formalized or not, everyone has a long-term care plan. Will it be workable for you and your family is the question. Long-term care can come in the form of insurance (be it a term policy for pay as you go, or the increasingly popular asset based long term care insurance). Many people want to be able to rely upon family so it is a good idea to perhaps formalize that and to learn what support and benefits might be available to them (for example, some states are allowing family members to apply for payment, through Medicaid, for providing in-home care for a family member). Most people will need some form of long-term care and the need grows for most people in their last two or three years of life.

Also consider if you have a permanent source of income at retirement

It is a good practice to go to ssa.gov and get updated on what your Social Security benefits are scheduled to be. Also, do you have a pension (most estimates are that fewer than 15 percent of private sector workers have these anymore)? Perhaps you have deferred annuities that can pay you and or a beneficiary income for a lifetime.

Do you have a protected or conservative source of cash on which to draw for emergencies and opportunities?

Is that cash in the bank, a money market mutual fund, or CDs? For some it might be cash value life insurance which we feel is best left as a strategic



reserve particularly if you are taking an income stream from your investments. That way you can shield yourself from the effects of the sequence of returns (which means you are taking more of your principal in down years and might run out of that source sooner than expected). We feel most retirees, or those needing a consistent source of income should not ever tap into principal.

It is considered a good practice to review and perhaps update all things as they pertain to your wealth and your health periodically or at the very least to go through this exercise on a yearly basis. Here at The First Wealth Management, we look forward to helping you review and discuss and perhaps help you find solutions.

*Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James. Main office located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451, with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City; 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.*

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## 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.

Call us to schedule a meeting anytime to receive the objective insight you need to make important decisions surrounding your wealth.



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# The Road to Redemption: Children in Crisis and The Children's Neighborhood

By VICTORIA OSTROSKY

When she heard the authoritative knock on her front door, she quickly ran to her baby brother and grabbed his hand. Her eyes were great pools of fear and, with a trembling voice, she begged to not be separated from her little brother. Their home, such as it was, was home no longer, and she didn't know what would happen next.

The vision for Children in Crisis, a non-profit 501(c)(3), began in 2002 in a living room of concerned citizens who worked in school systems and foster care. They were concerned about how many times children, removed from their abusive and unsafe homes, were shuffled from one foster home to another because of the severe shortage of foster parents. More often than not, siblings were separated, further traumatizing the children. This core group wanted a better way to meet the needs of these vulnerable children, with a vision of opening a foster care neighborhood.

Children in Crisis and their Children's Neighborhood is now a reality, sitting on 20 acres of beautiful land in Fort Walton Beach, through a charity land lease by Northwest Florida State College. They serve Circuit 1, comprising the counties of Walton, Okaloosa, Escambia, and Santa Rosa. On this land, Children in Crisis has an emergency shelter for children removed from abusive environments on short notice, where they can stay temporarily. Then there are five family-style foster homes where foster parents live on site, and eight studio apartments for young adults who have aged out of foster care but aren't ready to be on their own yet.

Children in Crisis' mission is to keep brothers and sisters together. They've worked diligently to obtain the funding to build the neighborhood and have placed foster parents in each home to watch over and care for children, keeping brothers and sisters together, greatly mitigating the need to move them from one home to another; thereby giving them a better chance to heal and grow strong.

Every adult who works at The Children's Neighborhood



lets the children know they are in a safe environment. Many of the kids that are removed from homes arrive with only a Walmart bag of a few items. Many don't even know how to use a shower. And because many have lived not knowing when they would eat again, hide food in their rooms. These are just some of the behaviors these abused children need help with overcoming.

Children in Crisis has seen lives transformed and children

able to trust adults again and flourish at school because of the unique setting at The Children's Neighborhood.

Their greatest need right now are foster parents. They have two empty homes waiting to accept and house children, but no foster parents to receive them. Fostering is a calling, and though it's not an easy job, God equips those who are prepared to do the work.

The Bible doesn't directly instruct us to be foster par-



ents, but it does speak of taking care of the fatherless and the widow and loving each other sacrificially. We are told to take in strangers and be like the Good Samaritan who stopped and got involved, giving his time and money to care for another.

Who is our neighbor? The person in need who God puts in front of us.

To get involved, please check out [www.childrenincrisisfl.org](http://www.childrenincrisisfl.org). You can fill out their application online, or call 850-864-4242, come visit the neighborhood, and find a way to be part of rescuing children in great need right in your backyard.

You can hear the entire story about Children in Crisis and listen to many other incredible interviews on the weekly Road to Redemption radio show and podcast at [www.roadtoredemptionpodcast.com](http://www.roadtoredemptionpodcast.com)

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BY SEAN DIETRICH

Christmas Eve night. The mountains of North Carolina were giant silhouettes in the darkness. Sheriff Andy Taylor sat on the bench outside the courthouse, watching the stars.

It had been a hard year. Maybe the hardest of his career. The sheriff was downhearted, which didn't happen often. But then, sheriffs have feelings too.

When it started to snow, Taylor shoved his hands deep into his coat pockets and slipped into a trance. Christmas morning was only a few hours away, and he wanted to feel cheerful, but he couldn't seem to make it happen.

His deputy joined him on the bench. The scrawny, high-strung lawman had just finished doing his nightly rounds, shining a flashlight into storefront windows; checking doorknobs. All quiet in Mayberry.

"Whatcha doing, Ange?"

said his deputy. "Why the long face?"

Taylor flashed a fake smile. "I'm just looking at stars."

The deputy was obviously concerned, but Taylor hardly noticed. He was too busy thinking about all he'd seen during his years serving this sleepy hamlet. He'd seen it all. Or just about.

He'd once seen the town drunk ride a cow down mainstreet. He'd seen a local goat eat dynamite. He'd jailed bank robbers, swindlers, chicken thieves, speeders, escaped convicts, moonshiners, and Danny Thomas.

Life was moving too fast. The world had gone from AM radios to color TVs. He'd watched the tailfins on Chevys and Fords get taller each year. He'd seen skirts get shorter, hairstyles get shaggier, music get louder, and people get meaner. Airplanes gave way to rocketships. A man hit a golf ball on the moon. Divorce was becoming more fashionable than blue jeans.

But this year...

This year was a humdinger. It was worse than the rest. This was the year the world fell apart. People in town were more frightened and skittish than ever before. And sometimes it seemed like nothing in Mayber-

## Sean of the South



ry was going right.

Taylor looked at the night-cape and tried to figure out which constellations he was looking at. But he was never very good with astronomy. A single star hung in the distance over the nearby backwater of Mount Pilot.

"You see that star?" said Taylor to his deputy.

"Which star?"

"That one."

"Yeah. I see it."

"You reckon that's how the Bethlehem star looked?"

"Bethlehem? Are you sure you're okay? You worry me."

The sheriff never took his eyes from the sky. "What do you think it was like, Barney? Bethlehem and everything?"

The deputy seemed to be thinking about this. The sheriff could hear the cogs in his friend's head.

His deputy said, "Well, I think it woulda been darn crowded in that stable, for one thing. All them goat herders and wise guys."

"Men. You mean wise men."

"Correct. Males. No ladies were present."

The sheriff paused. "No

women? It was a childbirth."

"Well, except for Mary. She stopped in for a little bit."

Good old Barney.

The deputy went on, "I, for one, think it woulda been pretty dang exciting to see the Three Kings bearing their gifts, the gold, the silver, and the bronze."

"You mean the frankincense and myrrh."

"Exactly."

"Do you even know what myrrh is, Barn?"

"Do I? What do you take me for? What I know is that it was quite an important night. There were angels in the sky, and cherubs proclaiming, 'Peace on earth! Goodwill to men! Glory on the eggshells day-oh!'"

"Eggshells?"

"It's French. Read the book, Ange."

The sheriff and the deputy fell silent. They watched their tiny hometown do what it did best. Which was nothing at all. Wreaths adorned each window. Shopfronts featured twinkling lights. The snow was picking up tempo.

Sheriff Taylor asked his deputy, "You think we'll get through this year, Barney? It's been a difficult one."

It was a serious question indeed. And it hung between them for a while. Even the sheriff could feel the weight within his own voice. There was doubt in it.

"Yes, I do," said his deputy. "I know we're gonna get through it. In fact, I'm certain."

"What makes you so sure?"

"What makes me sure?" The deputy raised his voice. "Because, Andy. I just know it."

"But how? How do you know?"

His deputy looked away like he was blowing a fuse. "You beat everything, you know that?"

Because I know, Ange. I just do. You wanna know how I know?"

"Yes."

"You really wanna know?"

He nodded.

"Well, then I'll tell you. I know because this morning I drove to pick up Miss Emma Brand from her hospital check-up. And do you know what I saw when I walked into the hospital?"

Taylor shook his head.

"Babies, Ange. I passed the maternity ward and saw all kinds of babies. Lots. The nurse even let me hold a few. They spit up on me and everything."

"Is that right?"

"It was beautiful. And last week, when I directed traffic for the school crossing, do you know what every boy and girl did when they passed me? They said 'Merry Christmas, Barney,' and gave me handmade Christmas cards."

"They didn't."

"Every last one. I got forty-three cards. It's enough to make a grown man go all to pieces."

The sheriff looked at his shoes. The somber silence made his deputy uncomfortable.

"Andy..." The deputy's voice was breaking now. "You can't be sad. Cheer up, pal. You're the heart of this town. You're my best friend. I need you. If we lose you, we've lost everything. C'est la vie, man! E pluribus unum! Status quo! Non sequitur! Et cetera, defacto!"

"Huh?"

"It's Latin, it means 'tit for tat,' and qué será será, and livin' la vida loca."

Taylor was laughing now. "What are you talking about?"

"It means we're gonna get through this, Ange. One day we won't even remember this horrible year, and it'll be like old times."

Then the skinny deputy threw his arms around his old pal in an embrace and slapped the sheriff's back so hard it stung. Taylor could hear his deputy sniffing in his ear. The sheriff smiled, then squeezed his oldest friend in earnest.

And somehow Andy Taylor knew that no matter what happens in this raggedy world, a person can face anything if they have a friend.

Anything.



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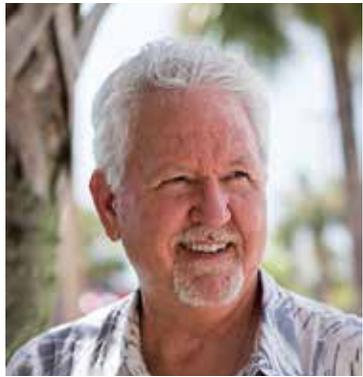
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BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn. Luke 2:6, NIV

I saw him, the object of the Father's affections, in a vision. I recognized him as the captain of angel armies, the glory of Heaven. He is the Light of very Light, God of very God, clothed with power, might and dominion. Innumerable legions of angelic creatures sang his praises and marched at his command. Suddenly, without warning, the Son stood from his throne and strode toward the exit gates of Heaven.

The Son descended from his

throne, flinging off his mantle of omnipotence as multitudes of angels gasped. Then he marched toward the gates discharging his infinite knowledge. Finally, as he opened the gates to leave, he poured out his omnipresence. Jesus abandoned heaven's glory to be born a vulnerable babe, trading his divine prerogatives for diapers. For the first time in eternity, Heaven was empty of the presence of the Son of God.

"Whoosh! What was that?" the angels cried as the Breath of Heaven blew out the door. He left Heaven and poured himself into a tiny human body far away on the dark planet. Did the music suddenly stop? Were the heavenly hosts perplexed when the object of their eternal affection was absent? When the Singer of the eternal Song departed, did heaven go silent?

Heaven rejoiced in the radiance of God's glory for eon upon eon. The love dance transpiring between the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Spirit twirled in rhythm from time immortal. The friction from their constant expression of love toward one another created such a warm glow the universe basked in its light. But then, the Son departed.

How did God feel the day Jesus left Heaven to pour himself into a human body? Visualize the moment the Trinity's love party stopped. Did God grow lonely for his Son? Did he mourn his loss? Did the Father long for the fellowship they once had? Did God suffer the empty nest syndrome?

Yes, God knew the end of the story. He knew his Son would return in victory. But that does not change the loss he must have felt. God the Father sacrificed the immediate presence of Christ to send his Son to earth. Love presents itself in sacrifice and no one's sacrifice was greater than the Father God's.

Jesus intentionally left heav-

# A Pastor's Ponderings: The Day Heaven Went Silent



able babe. Beyond that, he also emptied Himself of the heavenly fellowship and glory that he shared with the Father and the Spirit.

It is hard for us to fathom the price the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit paid to enable Christ to be born among us. They endured this pain to redeem us from every kindred, tongue, and tribe. God loves us so much that he allowed this great sacrifice to bring you and me into his family. Heaven lost the glory of the Son for a seaSon that we might receive the glory of the Son for eternity.

Dave Holland pastored churches for thirty-eight years before retiring in Destin, Florida. His book, "Christmas Jesus" is now available at Amazon.com for \$7.99. You can get a copy of his books from his Website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidoHolland54@gmail.com.

en to become human. Paul describes the heavy price Jesus paid to become one of us:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:5-7.

What did Jesus willingly give up becoming that child in the manger? Christ emptied himself of his divine privileges of all-power, all-knowing, and all-presence to become a vulner-

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Arts & Music

# ECTC: Christmas Time is Here

By NATHANAEL FISHER

*“Christmas time is here. Happiness and cheer. Fun for all that children call their favorite time of year.”*

It doesn't matter if I am in the car, in a store, or walking down the street at Grand Boulevard listening to their outdoor music...this song makes me stop and feel the holiday season. Back in 1994, as an intern at Jupiter Theatre, I was in a production of A Charlie Brown Christmas in Jupiter, Florida. We sang this song as part of the production. I played Linus with those famous lines of, “Lights please! And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.” One of my favorite parts of the play was when Snoopy and I were choreographed to “skate” across the stage as if suddenly the stage was ice and we had skates on. One of the other interns that played Charlie Brown and I became friends through the process. I'd always loved the cartoon A Charlie Brown Christmas, but from that wonderful song to “skating” across the stage to playing Linus to becoming friends with the guy



playing Charlie Brown... all of these are such fond memories. We are so thrilled to be bringing this classic show live on stage at Emerald Coast Theatre Company, and our high school program (Jr. Company) students are doing

such a wonderful job with this play. You are guaranteed to feel ALL the happiness and cheer.

Our professional holiday production is The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: the Musical. This is directly taken from the holiday novel that was written in the 1970s by Barbara Robinson. This musical adaptation of the book originated at the Charlotte Children's Theatre in 2016. One of the things I am most excited about this production is that it is a collaboration between ECTC's growing educational program and our professional company. With songs like “Our Perfect Little Town” contrasted with “Die Herod Die,” this musical is full of fun comedic moments and finishes with all the heart and warmth we all want for the holiday season. Many of the children in this production will be making their professional debut. We always get really excited about milestones here at ECTC. Anna and I sometimes talk about how we get to see our community's children grow up. You can be a part of that too while enjoying a night of exceptional professional theatre.

If you have or know a child that would be interested in taking a theatre class or having a part in our spring educational program productions check out our website for a full list of classes and programs: [emeraldcoasttheatre.org/youthclasses](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org/youthclasses)

Another offering this holiday season is our Christmas Cabaret. Vincent Pelligrino will be hosting again this year and if you want to see a musical theatre guy living his best life, then this holiday cabaret is a must. We have a talented cast of singers to perform some classic holiday songs you will definitely know and others you may not. Vincent pulls it all together with some jokes and a song or two himself. It's more fun than a stocking full of puppies.

Finally, since this is the giving season, we thought it would be nice to share that we helped 38 children through our scholarship program this past fall. This means that these families were helped with anything from a \$200 to \$600 scholarship towards educational theatre class tuition. Our goal is to make sure that anyone who wants to can

participate, and that cost does not prevent any child from experiencing the joy of theatre. This holiday season, if you can make a contribution to help a child out, please go to our website and donate to the scholarship fund. You can also call the box office for ways to sponsor, donate, or volunteer.

We hope you'll let us usher in the holiday season with you and yours. We happen to love Christmas around here... and we love our community. As Charlie Brown and his friends would say, “Christmas time is here, families drawing near, oh that we could always see such spirit through the year.”

*Happy Holidays,  
Nathanael Fisher, Producing Artistic Director and CoFounder*

### A Charlie Brown Christmas

*By Charles M. Schulz, Adapted by Eric Schaeffer with special arrangement by Arthur Whitelaw and Ruby Persson*

December 2-10: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. & Sunday, December 4 at 2:30 p.m.

*Continued on next page*

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### ECTC

continued from previous page

Discover the true meaning of Christmas with Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the rest of the Peanuts Gang in this classic adaptation of "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Presented by ECTC's talented Junior Company teen players.



### The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical

Book and Lyrics by Jahna Beecham, Music and Lyrics by Malcom Hillgartner, Based on the play by Barbara Robinson, Orchestrations and vocal arrangements by Deborah Wicks LaPuma

December 8 - 18: Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 14 at 2:30 p.m.

The Herdmans are the worst kids in the history of the world—

so when they crash Sunday school and demand parts in the Christmas pageant, the whole town panics. There's not supposed to be biting or cigar-smoking in Bethlehem and soon everyone is calling for reluctant director Grace Bradley to cancel the whole thing. It's now up to the Bradleys to help the community see the Herdman kids

through new eyes in this buoyant musical adaptation of the funny and touching holiday classic.

### Christmas Cabaret at the Boulevard

Wednesday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 17 at 2:30 p.m.

Mix, mingle and enjoy live musical selections performed by

our talented actors. Enjoy classic holiday songs and join in some carols as well. Like a mug of hot cocoa, this limited-run event will warm your heart and get you in the holiday spirit!

For more information or to purchase tickets go to [emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org) or call 850-684-0323.

## 30A Songwriters Festival

For 13 years, the 30A Songwriters Festival has attracted thousands of dedicated live music fans from around the country to hear original songwriters spanning many genres of music perform their songs. The beach resort towns along Highway 30A in Santa Rosa Beach feature 30 venues presenting more than 200 songwriters and 300-plus solo, band and in-the-round performances throughout the weekend.

Grand Boulevard's Town Center main stage will host headline performances by Lyle Lovett, Gin Blossoms, Rickie Lee Jones, Steve Earle, Yola and Morgan Wade Jan. 13-16.

The festival welcomes for the first time to 30A Amy Grant, Tom Rush, Brian Vander Ark (The Verve Pipe), The Black Opry Revue, Beth Nielsen Chapman and John Craigie.

Returning to perform two shows each throughout the weekend are songwriting legends John Paul White (The Civil Wars), Shawn Mullins, Kathleen Edwards, Tinsley

Ellis, Darrell Scott, Adia Victoria, Chuck Prophet, Livingston Taylor, Abe Partridge, Lilly Hiatt, John Fullbright, Sarah Lee Guthrie, Paul Thorn and James McMurtry.

View the lineup of confirmed artists at [30asongwritersfestival.com](http://30asongwritersfestival.com). An additional 100-plus artists will be announced over the next few weeks – stay tuned! Listen to the Top 50 on Spotify at 2023 30a Songwriter's PLAYLIST.

Festival Weekend Passes are available at [www.30asongwritersfestival.com](http://www.30asongwritersfestival.com). VIP tickets that include premium seating on the lawn at Grand Boulevard for the headline shows on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, along with access to the VIP tent serving complimentary food, beer, wine and cocktails are also available. For a full description of each ticket package including VIP mainstage and transportation packages for groups of 2 up to 12, visit [www.30asongwritersfestival.com](http://www.30asongwritersfestival.com).



Tickets or info, call 850.684.0323 or VISIT [EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG](http://EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG)

## studio6twenty5 Classes

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11-11:30 a.m.: Pre Primary A  
11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.: Pre Primary B

1-2:30 p.m.: Adult Ballet

### Wednesdays

12:30-1 p.m.: Pre Primary A  
1:15-1:45 p.m.: Pre Primary B

### Fridays

9-10 a.m.: Adult Barre +

### Saturdays

9:30-10 a.m.: Pre Primary A  
10:10-10:40 a.m.: Pre Primary B  
10:50-11:30 a.m.: Pre Primary C  
11:40-12:30 p.m.: Primary A  
12:45-1:45 p.m.: Primary B

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](http://studio6twenty5.com). Email any questions to [rachel@studio6twenty5.com](mailto:rachel@studio6twenty5.com). [studio6twenty5.com](http://studio6twenty5.com), 625 Harbor Blvd. (upstairs).



Pre Primary A Ballet: ages 2-3  
Pre Primary B Ballet: ages 3-4  
Pre Primary C Ballet: ages 4-5  
Primary A Ballet: ages 5-7  
Primary B Ballet: ages 6-8  
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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](http://studio6twenty5.com) for more information.  
Located at 625 Harbor Blvd. Destin-upstairs



# Ask Destinites: Finding Happiness



By PATRICIA LEE, DESTINITES

The holidays mean many different things to many different people. It's not always a happy time of year. However, no matter who you are or what all has happened over the past year, you can find at least one thing for which to be happy. I would like to share with you some of the responses by our locals in our Destinites Facebook group. As for me, I am happy that the good Lord worked it out so that I

may be the one to help take care of my Daddy who is in the last stages of Alzheimer's disease. I am blessed and honored to take care of this incredible man who raised and took care of me for many years.

Here are some responses from our locals:

1. "Thankful for OCSO and our local EMT's for protecting our lives and always being where needed."

2. "Thankful to have not lost my oldest son earlier this year from sepsis. Didn't know if he would be here to celebrate. Still struggling but not like he was to survive."

3. "I'm Thankful we made the move here almost two years ago to Beautiful Destin. Thankful there are gifts even in our difficult times...My father-in-law passed away from Alzheimer's a few years back. Family really came together for him, showed him dignity and love, and love



and respect for each other. Thoughts and prayers with you and your family. Reach out if you need someone to talk to."

4. "I am so grateful that my chronically ill husband has been feeling well enough to get out and about for the last couple of months."

5. "I am thankful my husband survived three strokes in Dec. 2021. Still recovering but grateful to be alive. Moved to Destin to be with family and not be alone in this journey of healing."

6. "I'm thankful that my wife was able to recovery from breast cancer and today is cancer free!

Praise the Lord!"

7. "I am truly grateful that my family and I were able to make a change and live with you Destinites!"

8. "I'm thankful for the Gardiner scholarship! It has made it possible for our special needs twins to go to the perfect school for them (South Walton Academy) and has literally changed our lives!"

9. "I am thankful for the Angels, you being one Patricia Lee, on earth the Lord sends my way to encourage me to persevere in this life through their own testimonies."

10. "I am thankful to be alive to read all of these!"

Just reading some of those comments makes me ashamed to ever complain about anything. Remember, happiness is a choice. One of the best ways to make yourself happy when you are down is to help others.

I am nothing if I am not helping someone else in some way, form or fashion. We should all be focused on encouraging each other, building each other up and being supportive. Go out there and be that for someone today!

Happy Holidays to all! If you live in the Destin or close surrounding area, I invite you to join our local's group at Facebook.com/groups/Destinites with 7,000-plus members. It is an active, friendly, and welcoming community place, no drama zone. We are there to help each other, discover community happenings, make new friends and have a laugh or two. Anyone may sign up for our monthly newsletter at Destinites.com. Also, local businesses listed in our website local directory may advertise in our locals Facebook group.

Author: Patricia Lee, Owner, Destinites.com, Destinites, Inc. & TM, Facebook.com/groups/Destinites Est: Oct 2018

VISIT [MYDESTINLIFE.COM](http://MYDESTINLIFE.COM) TO READ THIS ISSUE ONLINE



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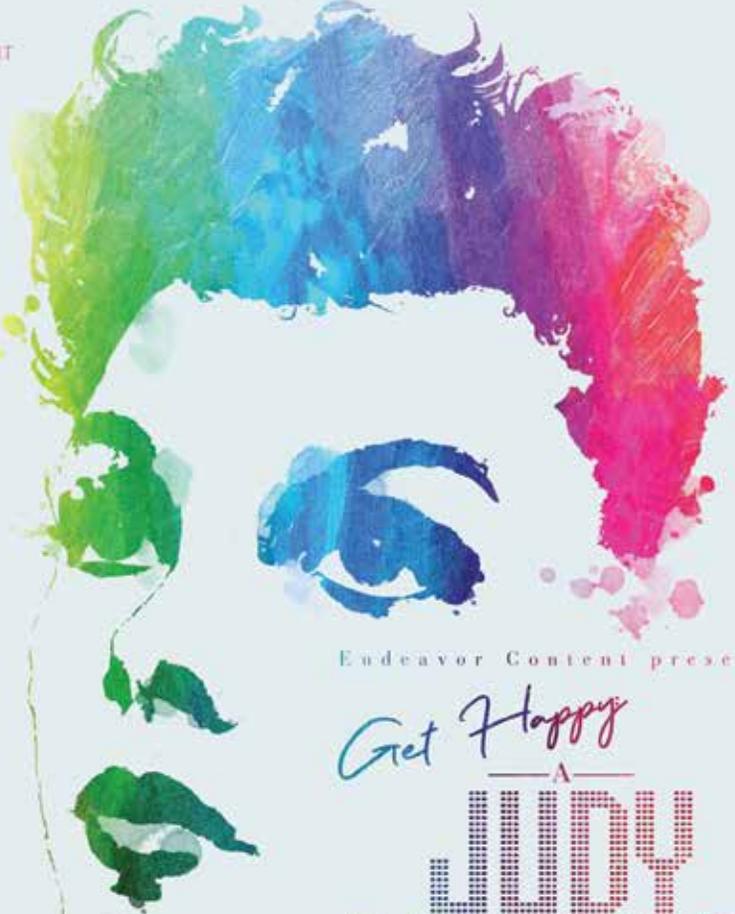
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