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# DESTIN Life

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## Local Athletes Recognized for Academic and Athletic Success

BY DOUG STAUFFER

The All Sports Association (ASA) recently celebrated its 54th Annual All Sports Association Banquet at the Emerald Coast Convention Center. The auction raised a record-setting \$138,500, amassing an impressive \$319,000 for the year. That support concluded on the fourth Friday in February by recognizing a Who's Who of talented, successful, academically-minded, philanthropic athletes ranging from prep to college to amateur and pro. The banquet serves as one of the year's premier social gatherings, with a Who's-Who from the Emerald Coast in attendance.

Since 1970, the ASA has supported and honored the "Best of the Best" High School, Collegiate, Amateur, Professional, and Special Olympic athletes. The organization also recognizes individuals fostering youth activities in Northwest Florida.

The ASA, composed of



Chi Anchors Medina, Taylor Haugen Trophy Winner



Blake Garland, Male Scholastic Award Winner

dues-paying volunteers, donate their time to raise money for non-profit organizations emphasizing local youth sports programs. These men, clad in their trademark blue blazers, raise awareness and support for area athletes year-round. Gary McCoy serves as this year's All Sports president.

This year's main benefactors included The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, the Eleanor Johnson Youth Center, the Okaloosa County Special Olympics, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Northwest Florida State College.

### This year's individual award winners:

The Male Collegiate Award winner is Dalton Simpler, the former All-American national champion offensive lineman from Freeport High School who's the first in his family to graduate from college.

The Female Collegiate Award winner and Niceville High School Alum Lauren Miller, who played golf at Mississippi State and SMU, earned three degrees in five years. She is looking forward to the LPGA.

Blake Garland, the Male Scholastic Award winner, is a three-sport standout graduating Summa Cum Laude and headed to Spring Hill College to play baseball.

The Female Scholastic Award winner, Caitlin Staudt, a three-sport captain who started an elementary program centered around "26

**ATHLETES**  
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## Easter Reflections: It's Friday Now, But Sunday's Coming!

BY REV. GUEARY CLENDENNING

There is a prophecy in the Old Testament of the Bible concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is found in Isaiah 52: 13-15 in the New Living Translation: "See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted. But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a

**EASTER**  
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## ATHLETES

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acts of kindness” and whose life centers around the mantra: “You get out what you put in.”

The Taylor Haugen Trophy winner Chi Medina, the first-ever Choctaw recipient, is a two-sport athlete who competes in track and cross country. Medina volunteers with the elderly and her church. She is a straight-A student and works as a school photographer.

Conner Snitko was chosen as the Special Olympics Award winner. He is a 29-year-old who plays 11 sports. He has the most infectious personality, with the medals reflecting his drive to be best at everything.

Byron Cotton was selected as the Amateur Award winner. He was a graduate of Choctaw



who left tennis for a couple of decades before picking up the racket and achieving the top 50 national ranks nationally in doubles. He also works as a local attorney.

Michael Carter, a star running back at Navarre High School before going to UNC, now plays for the New York Jets. At 5-feet 8 inches and 200

pounds, he packs a punch in that small frame. He “preached” about striving for greatness, saying, “Slow motion is better than no motion.”

Wuerffel Trophy winner Dillan Gibbons, an FSU grad who started the non-profit “Big Man Big Heart,” is now gearing up for the NFL draft. Like his father and grandfather, Gibbons



keeps a poem called “The Individual” in his pocket to give him perspective and guidance. He was a gentle giant off the field. The Wuerffel Trophy exists to honor college football players who serve others, celebrate their positive impact on society, and inspire greater service worldwide.

The keynote speaker, Chad

Hennings, delayed his NFL dreams, because he had committed to being a fighter pilot in the Air Force. His NFL career began as a 26-year-old NFL rookie. He went on to win three Super Bowls in four years and played nine years in the NFL before retiring. Chad is one of the best inspirational speakers of our day.



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### Editor & Publisher

Lori Leath Smith  
Lori@LifeMediagr.com

### Director, Advertising Sales

Scott Miller  
Scott@LifeMediagr.com

### Editor

Kenneth Books

### Production & Layout

Kim Harper

### Contributing Writers

Will Estell  
Gueary Clendenning  
Doug Stauffer  
Michelle Ruschman

### To Advertise

850.688.9886

**To submit events:** Cali Hlavac  
cali.hlavac@gmail.com

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## EASTER

*continued from page 1*

man. Yet He will startle [b] many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about...”

Seven hundred years later, on a Friday, the Roman soldiers beat Him (the Son of God) with their fists until His face was horribly swollen and His eyes were nearly shut. They stripped Him of His clothes and whipped hIm with a rock-laced leather whip. His back was ripped open, his skin was shredded, exposing his internal organs. They crowned Him with a bed of thorns, put a reed in His hand, and clothed Him in a scarlet robe, spit on Him and mocked Him as the King of the Jews. They led Him in a procession outside of the city gate of Jerusalem to a place called Golgotha (Translation: A Hill Called the Skull).

And there they crucified Him, nailing His hands and



feet to a wooden cross. The soldiers then gambled for His robe. The religious leaders mockingly shouted, “He saved others but can not save himself.” At around 3pm on that Friday, Jesus cried out “It is finished!” Finally, they laid Him in a borrowed tomb, and sealed it with the Governor’s seal. A group of soldiers were stationed around the tomb to prevent anyone from stealing the body. The events of His death all occurred on Friday-Only Jesus knew Sunday was coming!

“But very early on Sunday morning the women came to the tomb. They found the stone covering the entrance rolled to the side. They went into the tomb but couldn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sudden-

ly, two men appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. The women were terrified. Then the men said, “why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive?, He isn’t here. He has risen from the dead. Don’t you remember what He told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, that He would be crucified, and that He would rise again the third day.” (Luke 24:1-7)

Friday has past and Sunday has come, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah!

For the past two thousand years, millions of people have believed the accounts of Christ as revealed in the scriptures, and as a result their lives have been changed. The message is simple; “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, (to die on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins against God) so that everyone who believes in Him, will not perish but receive Eternal Life....For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord

and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.” (John 3:16, Romans 10:9).

Saved means to be forgiven of our sins; placed into the family of God to receive a new life of peace and purpose and to have the assurance of life after death with God forever!

I encourage you, if you have not received God’s gift provided by His Son, that you pray to Christ today! For anyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved (Romans 10:13). That’s God’s promise; believe and receive.

Finally, these past few weeks we have experienced our own “Friday.” All of the things we have relied on have been shaken or removed. I don’t know what the future holds but I do know who holds my hand. Regardless of the outcome, because of Christ, Sunday’s coming!

*Gueary Clendenning is a retired Assembly of God pastor, having served as Senior pastor of the Valparaiso Assembly.*

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 Community

# The Velcro Pygmies Reach and Teach

## Impact Our Students From Stages to Schools

By WILL ESTELL

If you've experienced The Velcro Pygmies live, then they need no introduction. They've performed for years locally at Tailfins, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Concerts in the Village, Club L.A. and recently at Seaside School's Taste of the Race. If you're a fan of 80s and 90s rock, and moreover, the showmanship that goes along with it, you're probably going to become a Pygmies fan around the third or fourth song of your first show. The world-famous Velcro Pygmies specialize in taking their fans on a journey to a place and space in time when hair was big, pants were tight, screaming was singing, and in the illustrious words of KISS's Gene Simmons, "If it's too loud. You're too old" rang true.

The Pygmies formed in Louisville, Ky., in the 90s, playing night clubs, college campuses and frat parties, primarily across the Southeast. The band — whose four members consist of founder and frontman, Cameron Flener, guitarist, Chase West, bassist, Max War, and drummer, Chris Eddins — reside across two states, but tour together for three to five shows each week. They've managed to not only maintain a strong fan base, especially here in Destin, but also to drastically build upon it over the decades.

Whether you go to a Velcro



Pygmies show here in Destin, Auburn or Tuscaloosa, Ala., Atlanta, Houston or Cleveland, you will see a crowd made up of 35 to 50 somethings who became fans in their own college days, as well as 19 and 25 year old fans that have more recently started following the Pygmies and their brand of big hair, glitter bombs and long guitar solos. Somehow, they've managed to capture that almost magical magnetism that entices and entertains beyond any particular barriers. That, in a nutshell, is what makes Reach and Teach work too.

### Giving Back Through Reach & Teach

In an effort to follow a passion of positively impacting future generations, five years ago



Cameron Flener (affectionately referred to as Cam by his friends and Pygmy fans) made the leap from the clubs to the classrooms, in a remarkable endeavor called Reach and Teach.

Reach and Teach is a unique program. The free program is facilitated through individual school systems and is built upon a nine-week curriculum, whereby students are given the opportunity to orchestrate, plan and execute a concert that takes place at their school. The Reach and Teach program is the brainchild of April Clark, a high school business teacher in Alabama, who originated the concept. The forward-thinking teacher was in the beginning stages of facilitating her vision of such an opportunity for students, and teamed with Pygmies



founder, Flener, after the singer related to Clark how impressed he was with the program she was working on, and how much he would like to be a part of it full time.

I sat down with Cam, over lunch, to talk a little more about this program firsthand. Though Flener has made a living through rock music, he is as much an entrepreneur and great thinker as a great performer. He's extremely well spoken, intuitive and insightful, and as such was quick to point out that Reach and Teach isn't about rock and roll music as much as it is about truly giving something back, creating a legacy of sorts and being involved in something that is much larger than himself or his band.

"We're not creating rock

promoters, we are helping to create good, productive human beings," he said. "The vision that April and I have created for Reach and Teach is to take this program all over the entire country. We want to help these students in realizing what the utilization of real-world life skills are about. These are soft skills we are teaching. The things that we all need to know: How to budget, how to present or pitch potential sponsors, how to sell their vision to others. Reach and Teach is about empowering these young people to believe in themselves and their abilities to make things happen."

Clark explained it this way: "A rock concert provides the perfect vehicle for condensing all the aspects of operating a business into a limited time frame. Students learn about budgeting, marketing, public relations, web design, audio visual, logistics, and, most importantly, are able to analyze the results of their event once it's over."

Cam went on to say, "Reach and Teach students are hands-on in doing everything from deciding on the venue (normally on the school grounds, and during regular school hours) to helping the band set up and tear down the stage. They truly learn what it takes to plan an event from concept to fruition, including how to make money for their school or school related fundraiser along the way. All with something that excites and interests them."

As a magazine editor and writer, I first became familiar with Reach and Teach during

*Continued on next page*

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

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# 11th Annual Paddle at the Park: New Location and Date

The 11th Annual Paddle at the Park, sponsored by HCA Florida Destin Emergency, is moving its location and date. This standup paddle board race will take place in the Gulf of Mexico behind **The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island on Saturday, May 6**. It features 1- and 3-mile recreational races, a 6-mile elite race and a kids' fun out-and-back paddle, to be followed by awards. Kayaks and inflatables are welcome too. Registration is now open on Paddleguru.com.

### Race Start Times

9 a.m. - 3/6-mile races start  
10:15 a.m. - 1-mile race starts  
10:45 a.m. - kids' fun race (for ages 12 & under only) starts

### Awards

Awards will be presented directly following the last race to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place overall winners, as well as the



1st place winner for 50+ in the following categories:

1-Mile Beginner - Men's, Women's, Men's Inflatable, Women's Inflatable

3-Mile Recreational - Men's Displacement, Women's Displacement, Men's Surfstyle, Women's Surfstyle, Men's Kayak, Women's Kayak

6-Mile Elite - Men's Elite, Women's Elite

The names of the top male and top female in the 6-Mile Race will be placed on the Des-

tin SUP Cup. The overall top male and female in the 1-Mile, 3-Mile, and 6-Mile races will also win some awesome BOTE lifestyle products! The top boy and girl in the Kids Fun Paddle will win a BOTE Youth t-shirt and hat.

### Registration

Registration is now open on Paddleguru.com.

### Racer Welcome Party

Join us at Al's Beach Club from 4 - 6 p.m., on Friday, May 5, for live entertainment! Pack-

ets will be available for pickup at the nearby Daiquiri Bar. Explore the race venue and catch up with racers old and new. Racers who pick up here will receive a drink ticket for Al's Beach Club.

### Race Packet Pickup

Packets are available for pickup at the Destin Chamber, located at 4484 Legendary Drive, Suite A, in Destin, on Friday, May 5, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. They may be picked up at the Racer Welcome Party and on the day of the race beginning

at 7 a.m., at The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island.

Follow Facebook.com/PaddleAtThePark for event details.

Thank you to our race partners BOTE and The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island; title sponsor HCA Florida Destin Emergency; platinum sponsors Destin - Fort Walton Beach and Peaden Air Conditioning, Plumbing and Electrical; silver sponsors Eglin Federal Credit Union and Vacasa; accommodations sponsors The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach and SummerPlace Inn; bronze sponsor StretchLab Destin; media sponsors Destin Life and McCain's Creations Photography; and beverage sponsors Buffalo Rock and Destin Brewery!

### Sponsorships

Want to sponsor? Email bryana@DestinChamber.com.

## VELCRO PYGMIES

*continued from previous page*

its infancy, around 2018. Since then I have had the opportunity to hear from educators, school administrators, and parents about the merits of this remarkable free program which has now impacted students in over 20 states. And now it's coming to our area. The program will be presented during the 2023 and 2024 school years at a growing number of high schools in Northwest Florida. Because of its popularity, Reach and Teach has quickly become sustained by sponsorship monies from a growing number of companies who want to insure Reach and Teach continues to be free for the schools and students who benefit from it.

Some of the stories are remarkable in their positive impacts and life-changing alterations—students discovered and honed their skills as photographers, sound engineers and sponsorship salespeople. Some even became musicians, writers and singers after taking part in Reach and Teach through their own high school.

Beyond the life skills the students learn from the program, Cam said, "Our program provides institutions a new and exciting opportunity for fundraising, or as we call it 'FUN raising.' Because the program

is provided free of charge to qualifying institutions, it allows many school systems to raise a significantly greater amount of money than your average run-of-the-mill, plastic spirit cups, cookie dough or discount cards fundraiser could ever accomplish. As a result, schools are encouraged to sell tickets to the event and even allow outside guests to attend the subsequent performance. We don't ask for money. Reach and Teach simply asks that we are able to present our sponsorship portfolio to the students during the period the program is running."

This works out well for companies like Rock 'n Roll Sushi, Buc-ee's, Chord Buddy, OWA and other sponsors who feel strongly about using their successes to give back and help make this program possible for the thousands of students that are benefitting from this generosity and remarkable effort. The students win. The schools win. The sponsors win. Even the local community and concert attendees win. Everyone involved leaves every show, at every school just a little better than they were before those nine weeks leading to the culmination of that big show.

The Velcro Pygmies certainly rock. However, Reach and Teach isn't as much about music as it is about preparing the future leaders of our great coun-

try for a much larger and more important stage: Adulthood.

Find The Velcro Pygmies on Facebook or IG. To learn more about Reach and Teach, visit ReachandTeach.rocks and follow on Facebook at ReachandTeach.

*Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, occasional actor, and coast-*

*al real estate professional with more than 600 published magazine features in an array of genres. Over the past 25 years, he has been instrumental in shepherding 12 new magazines from concept to fruition, 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,*

*WEAR ABC 3 news anchor, Laura Hussey. Will is a regular contributor to Life Media's publications, as well as many other magazines, papers, and websites. He also happens to be a Velcro Pygmies fan, himself, and has even been known to join them on stage for a song or two.*



**Paddle at the Park**  
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Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! APRIL 2023

..... 5 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
..... 6 .....
NFSO's Ellis Island: A Dream of America | 7:30pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville
Under The Sea Family Event | 5pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Fly Guy Thursday | 6:30pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Stokes Magic Comedy Show | 8pm & 9pm | Harborwalk Theatre
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 7 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Locals on the Harbor Free Beer Fundraiser | 5pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 8 .....
Farmers Market | 8:30am | FWB Landing
Famers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Women's Climbing Circle | 9am | Rock Out Climbing
City of Destin Easter Egg Hunt | 9am | Morgan's Sports Center
Pups & Pints | 11am | Buffalo Wings & Rings
Easter Egg Dash | 1pm | LuLu's Destin
Easter Eggstravaganza | 3pm | Destiny Worship Center
Dog Harmony Doggie EGG-stravaganza | 5:30pm | Fort Walton Beach
SOF Missions Destin Gala | 6pm | Henderson Beach Resort
Rock the Docks | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Full Moon Party | 10pm | The Island Resort
..... 9 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Easter Egg Hunt & Brunch | 9:30am | The Island Resort

Easter Egg Dash | 1pm | LuLu's Destin
Visit the Easter Bunny | 2pm | Harborwalk Village
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Chakra Sound Bath | 5pm | Prana Maudra Center
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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 11 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 7:30pm | Als Beach Club
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Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
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ECBGFC Meeting | 5:30pm | Harbor Docks
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Trivia | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Stokes Magic Comedy Show | 8pm & 9pm | Harborwalk Theatre
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
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Yoga on the Green | 10am | The Island Resort
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Sandestin Wine Festival Tasting | 5pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Drive in Laser Light Show | 8pm, 9:30pm, 10:30pm | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds
Famers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Hurlburt Field Open House | 9am-2pm
CALM Fundraiser | 5pm | Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Niceville
Emerald Coast Crime Stoppers Crawfish Boil | 11am | Uptown Station
Military Family Appreciation Day | 11am | Fort Walton Beach Landing
Sandestin Wine Festival | 1pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort

Drive in Laser Light Show | 8pm, 9:30pm, 10:30pm | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds
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Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Farmers Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Chakra Sound Bath | 5pm | Prana Maudra Center
Drive in Laser Light Show | 8pm, 9:30pm, 10:30pm | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds
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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
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Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
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Moon Crush Concert Series | Seascape Resort
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village Destin
Capt. Davy: Music & Magic | 5pm | The Island Resort
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Planetarium Night | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Trivia | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Stokes Magic Comedy Show | 8pm & 9pm | Harborwalk Theatre
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
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Moon Crush Concert Series | Seascape Resort
Cobia Tournament | Boshamps Oyster Bar
Musical Echoes Festival | 9am | FWB Landing
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
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Moon Crush Concert Series | Seascape Resort

Cobia Tournament | Boshamps Oyster Bar
Gulf Islands National Seashore Fee Free Day | 5am | Gulf Islands National Seashore
Farmers Market | 8:30am | FWB Landing
Beach Clean Up | 8:45am | East Pass Marina
Musical Echoes Festival | 9am | FWB Landing
Famers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Rotary Charity Fire Truck Pull | 10am | 3rd Planet Brewing
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
..... 23 .....
Annual Spring Clean Up Dive | 6am | Okaloosa Island Pier
Cobia Tournament | Boshamps Oyster Bar
Moon Crush Concert Series | Seascape Resort
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Musical Echoes Festival | 9am | FWB Landing
Pigs on the Beach | 12pm | Nick's Seafood
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Chakra Sound Bath | 5pm | Prana Maudra Center
..... 24 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 25 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
..... 26 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
..... 27 .....
South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin
Capt. Davy: Music & Magic | 5pm | The Island Resort
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Air Guitar Competition | 6pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Taylor Haugen Foundation Wine Dinner | 6:30pm | Heritage Room at One20 Niceville
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village Destin
Madagascar: The Musical | 7:30pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville

Stokes Magic Comedy Show | 8pm & 9pm | Harborwalk Theatre
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 28 .....
South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin
Ding-A-Ling Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Fly Fishing Film Tour | Shoreline Church
Pickleball Smash for Okaloosa Schools | Mooney Pickleball Courts FWB
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 29 .....
South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin
Fly Fishing Film Tour | Shoreline Church
Pickleball Smash for Okaloosa Schools | Mooney Pickleball Courts FWB
Shootout for One Hopeful Place | Shotgun start 9am | Regatta Bay Golf Club Destin
Famers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
ECCCF 9th Annual Crawfish Boil | 3pm | Cabana Café
Ding-A-Ling Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Emerald Coast Exotic Car Show | 4:30pm | Palms of Destin
Beethoven v. Coldplay: Merging of Musical Giants | 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Convention Center
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
..... 30 .....
Fly Fishing Film Tour | Shoreline Church
Pickleball Smash for Okaloosa Schools | Mooney Pickleball Courts FWB
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Craftathon Beer Fest | 11am | FWB Landing
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Ding-A-Ling Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Chakra Sound Bath | 5pm | Prana Maudra Center



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# Tip a Glass at the 36th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival

Thursday, April 13th – Sunday, April 16th | Friday 5-8 p.m. and Saturday 1-4 p.m. | The Village of Baytowne Wharf

Grab your friends and get ready to uncork some wine and fun in the sun in April at The Sandestin Wine Festival! Celebrating 36 years of being the best, the Sandestin Wine Festival is one of the most established and continuously running coastal wine festivals in the region as evidenced by its continued success; thousands know there's no substitute for this coveted four-day event that takes place in the charming setting of The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin.



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

and price ranges. Wine aficionados enjoy meeting winemakers, asking detailed questions and acquiring hard to get selections. Everyone gets to enjoy the live music, interactive experiences at the Culinary tents, and shops and dining of the Village of Baytowne Wharf.

The main events, the **Grand Wine Tastings**, Friday, April 14th, 5-8 p.m., and Saturday, April 15th, 1-4 p.m., showcase more than 500 domestic and international wines throughout the weekend. You'll enjoy the opportunity to talk to vineyard owners and wine makers about their favorite appellations in all varieties, styles and price ranges, and perhaps try something new. Treat yourself, family and friends to a gourmet experience courtesy of some of the best chefs on the Emerald Coast from your favorite local restaurants who pair delectable bite-sized appetizers with their current glass selections—the Savor South Walton experience! A festival favorite, the Bubbly & Boozy tent, returns to the Grand Sandestin Lawn, featuring bubbles and specialty liquors. Local and regional music also set the vibe for fun days of discovery.

Featured event sponsored by Spa Lilianna at Hotel Effe—**Seas The Day:** Rejuvenate your body and mind with a special beachside yoga session complemented by the peaceful waves of the gulf and followed by mimosas to get in the spirit for a day of discovery at the Grand Tasting.



## Easter Explosion! Saturday, April 8, Noon-3 p.m.

Bounce on over to a day filled with face-painting, arts and crafts and more. And, don't forget to get your picture taken with the Easter Bunny!

Free to attend!

## Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, April 20, 5-7 p.m.

Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf for an evening full of free champagne and shopping during Bubbly Baytowne. Sip and Shop through the village streets and stop in various retail merchants as you enjoy a selection of premium champagnes.

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

## The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf

Come shop with local farmers, bakers, local fresh seafood and gourmet, beef, local honey, fresh pressed juices and much more all year long, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

## SAVE THE DATE! Tequila & Taco Fest Friday, May 12, 6-9 p.m. Sat., May 13 | 1-4 p.m. Sun., May 14 | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tequila and Tacos Anyone?



with a first-place prize of \$2,500 – and you will have a say in the People's Choice Award! Sample many types of Tequilas and Margaritas from Blancos, Reposados, Anjeios and even Mezcal while indulging in some of the area's best tacos. For tickets: [www.efestevents.com](http://www.efestevents.com)

Don't forget to tune in to **Beach TV** to watch all that's going on in The Village of Baytowne Wharf LIVE—each day all year long!

This May, the Village of Baytowne Wharf will come alive with local restaurants and food trucks competing for the Best Taco on The Emerald Coast

## So Much Fun in Spring at Baytowne Wharf!

## April Wednesday Night Concerts - Tribute Series Wednesdays, April 5-26, 7-9 p.m.

This concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Concerts are held on the Events Plaza Stage each Wednesday.

April 5: Satisfaction/The International Rolling Stones Tribute Show

April 12: The Eagles Project

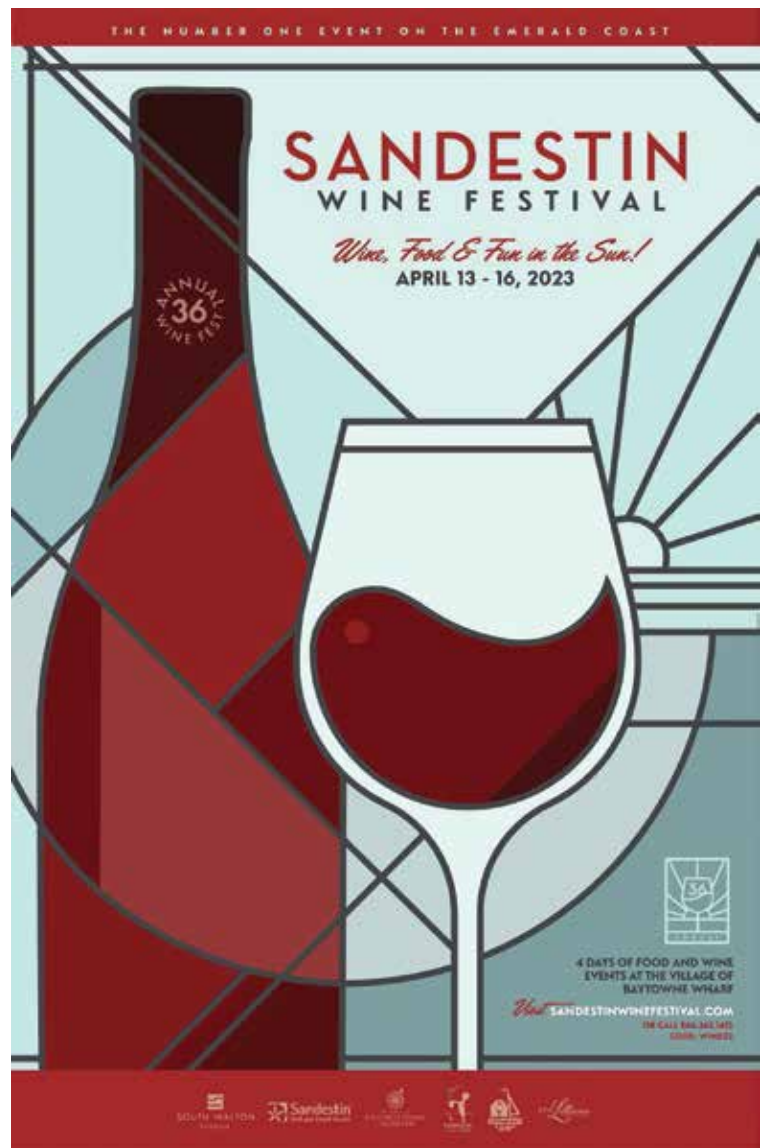
April 19: Captain Fantastic-

Elton John Tribute Show

April 26: Departure- Tribute to Journey

FREE to attend.

Wine novices are able to learn more about wines and sample from a comprehensive selection in all varieties, styles





# Around Town

In March, **Destin Middle School** celebrated its new tennis courts with a ribbon cutting. Just after the ribbon was cut, the **DMS Tennis Team** took to the courts for the first ever true home tennis game. “Our school community would like to thank Superintendent Marcus Chambers, the Okaloosa County School District, former DMS Principal Grant Meyer, Coaches Brett Chipser and Allison Frankfurt, and Brett Driver for helping make our vision a reality,” said DMS Principal Dr. Belinda Small. For more information, call (850) 833-7655 or visit <https://www2.okaloosaschools.com/o/destinms>.

The **Junior League of the Emerald Coast** hosted its ninth annual **Touch-A-Truck** event at the Destin Commons in March. Accompanied by their guardians, an estimated six hundred children from all over the Emerald Coast gathered for a unique, hands-on opportunity to experience emergency responder vehicles, construction equipment, city service vehicles and more.

The event raised more than \$4,000 for the Child Clothing Project, the Junior League of the Emerald Coast’s main focus

when it comes to fundraising throughout the year. Every fall, they provide brand-new clothing for over 400 children from Okaloosa and Walton County elementary schools. Their signature community project takes place over a two-day period and is made possible with the help of the ladies of the Junior League of the Emerald Coast, volunteers from our community, and donors like you.

The Junior League of the Emerald Coast would like to thank its event sponsors South Walton Chick-fil-A and Publix and the Destin Fire Department, Waste Management, CW Roberts Contracting, Bomb Squad, FedEx, Nichols Concrete, Island Time Mobile Detailing LLC, Brundage-Bone, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Department, 96 LRS/LGRF, Healthy Okaloosa, and Joseph Cannella for their participation in the event.”

The **5th Annual Mac & Cheese Festival** held Sunday, March 5, at Destin Commons raised \$63,000 and welcomed roughly 1,600 attendees throughout the day. Proceeds benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, a local



The Mac & Cheese Festival People’s Choice award went to Jackacuda’s Seafood & Sushi.

non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence through its programs focused on academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. Award winners were:

**Judge’s Choice:** Boathouse Oyster Bar

**People’s Choice:** Jackacuda’s Seafood & Sushi

**Kid’s Choice:** Sauce Boss Burger Co.

**LiveOak Fiber** held a ribbon cutting in February with the Niceville Valparaiso, Destin and Greater Fort Walton Beach chambers of commerce. LiveOak Fiber is a new Internet Service Provider headquartered in Brunswick, Ga., with offices extending west to Niceville.

It offers fast Internet speeds, world-class customer service, accessibility and localization. Its application allows you to control all your devices. No contracts are required, and there is no data cap. Find out more at [liveoakfiber.com](http://liveoakfiber.com) or call (850) 635-6755.

### Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation’s

(DCWAF) 2nd Annual Galentine’s Day Fundraiser raised a record-breaking \$92,500 for young women in need in Northwest Florida, \$30,000 more than last year’s inaugural event. The event brought influential women in the community together to support one another while raising money for programs designed to empower young girls through the foundation’s 16 partner children’s charities. All individuals and businesses affiliated with the production of the event are female owned and operated. The funds raised will benefit the following charity’s initiatives: Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, Point Washington Medical Clinic, Shelter House of Northwest Florida and Youth Village.

The **4th Annual Shrimp & Grits Festival** held in February at Brotula’s Seafood House & Steamer raised a record-breaking \$50,000 for The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast and welcomed more than 1,500 attendees in support of all local club kids. Ticket holders experienced classic southern dishes, great drinks, and live music from Epic & Elegant Entertainment. Local restaurants and chefs competed on the Destin Harbor for the best Shrimp & Grits on the Emerald Coast. Award winners are as follows:

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

**People’s Choice (2nd Place):** Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast

**People’s Choice (3rd Place):** Knife’s Edge Private Chef and Catering

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

**Most Creative (Judges Award):** Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast

**Best Grits (Judge’s Award):** Brotula’s Seafood House & Steamer

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## Trends & Treasures!



### The BEST Gifts for MOM! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

The best mothers deserve the best Mother's Day gifts. Give her the best with a personalized gift from Frill Seekers Gifts! When it's personalized, it lets mom know you've put some thought into the gift and were intentional. Your mom will appreciate a gift with her name or monogram for years to come, maybe handing it down to the next generation! Frill Seekers Gifts has Mother's Day gift ideas for every kind of mom out there – moms-to-be and new moms, seasoned great-grandmas and stepmoms. For mommas with a green thumb or for those that love having fresh flowers in her home, the porcelain flower arranger is an ideal gift. This container comes with top openings to slide the flowers into, making arranging flowers effortless. The piece features your momma's initials front and center in the color of your choice. If your mother is stylish and into all the latest fashion trends, Floral Paradise earrings make an elegant fashion statement. They are both lightweight and stunning with exquisite details in gold and pearl. The Peygotti two-letter monogram pendant is always a favorite with fashionistas. To keep her beautiful keepsakes in, she'll love the personal monogrammed Porcelain Juliette Keepsake Hinged Box, pictured here. "Cooking up fun" is what many grandmas and moms are known for. Give an engraved wooden serving board, marble lazy Susan or a monogrammed apron. Complimentary signature gift wrap and shipping for any occasion. Start shopping now: [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com) or visit the store M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m. or Saturdays from 10 a.m. -2 p.m.

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### April is the Time to Feel Purely Pampered Pure & Couture Salon

Have you been in the chair recently? If you haven't, you should.

"The stylists are amazing!" say Pure & Couture customers – women with gorgeous hair! Want to brighten up for spring? Let Pure & Couture pamper you. These famed stylists are experts in prettied-up ponytails, beautiful braids or an enhanced look with hair extensions to add volume and length for that important day, celebration or holiday. Pampering customers who become friends, making them look beautiful and feel confident on any special day is the team's passion. Pure & Couture works with you, offering beauty services for weddings, special events, consultations and trial sessions, including airbrush makeup, blowouts, lash extensions, spray tanning and hair extensions. Color specialists freshen up your look! Everything from cuts and colors, blow outs, trims, highlights, all over color, root touch up and corrective color, the team can make it happen. Even owner Adrienne Brackett likes to be pampered with fresh color and extensions. Set up a consultation today—time to finally have full, shiny and healthy spring hair you love! From being greeted with a beverage to a scalp massage during your shampoo, Pure & Couture will try to make your experience the best. And when you walk out of the salon, your hair will say it all. Purely spring! Purely beautiful! Offering curbside pick-ups and online ordering, too.

Now open – second location: Pure Collective Salon, 600 Grand Blvd., Suite 102.

(850) 424-3935 | [facebook.com/PureandCouture](https://facebook.com/PureandCouture)  
[pureandcouture.com](http://pureandcouture.com)



### 30A Mansion For Sale Be On The Coast™ Real Estate Group

Imagine waking up to the sounds of waves crashing on the beach, the salt air fills the room as you open the doors to your beachfront balcony and listen to the gulls flying by in the distance. That's the type of morning you could have on 30A, every day, at the Emerald View on 30A, now on the market and available for purchase.

When you own a home like this luxurious three-story Gulf front, six-bedroom home, you can soak up the sun at sunrise and toast a day well spent at sunset. Towering over the Gulf of Mexico with breathtaking beach views from each of the home's three levels, this home's design is spacious, with an open floor plan for relaxing and entertaining, whether it's extended family for summer vacations, dinner parties with friends or sunset watch parties. A separate carriage house offers additional sleeping quarters with stunning west facing beach views.

Beachfront homes are the most sought after property type along 30A and they sell fast. "Families are looking for multi-generational beach homes – places where the owner can bring their grown children and grandchildren and all stay under one roof, enjoy the beach and make memories day after day," says Realtor Brian K. LoCicero, founder of the Be on the Coast Real Estate Team at Keller Williams. Brian's new 30A listing pictured above, MLS #917390, is being sold furnished.

To schedule a showing or for the full listing, call (850) 739-3800 or view 30A homes for sale now at [BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com).



### Rejuvenate For Spring. CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center

What better way to celebrate the newness of the season than rejuvenating damaged cells? Red Light Therapy, a.k.a. Photobiomodulation (PBM), is changing the health game, due to its ability to renew your body at the cellular level, rejuvenating damaged cells from the inside out. Red Light Therapy aids healing both on the surface and at the cellular level. The Mito Red Light Therapy system offers three wavelengths of light that offer full-body exposure. CRYO850's Near Infrared Lighting boosts ATP (energy) and balances hormones.

With many drug-free services in addition to beneficial Cryotherapy, take advantage of the Wellness Circuit – access to six therapies including: Infrared Sauna, Red Light Therapy, Whole Body Cryotherapy, Localized Spot Treatment Cryo, Vibration Plates and Compression Therapy. Membership offers access to the Circuit on a consistent basis. Visitors and first-time guests can enjoy the same services via a day, week or two-week pass. Beyond the Circuit, Pagani Muscle Recovery Therapy is a favorite for sore and strained muscles. Alternating hot and cold application creates the same healing as hours with heat and cold packs. For additional pain management and relief, the all-new Cocoon Fitness POD takes recovery to a higher level with combined heat, light and full body vibration. Visit CRYO850 and make spring a time to focus on your wellness. Pre-register online at [www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com).

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[www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com)



### One-of-a-Kind Exquisite Designs For the Season Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

Let's design something for you this spring and Mother's Day! With so much colorful variety like the colors of spring, your only challenge is choosing. Whether you're shopping for a special gift to honor your Mom for Mother's Day or an engagement ring, Beyond Measure is here for you.

Stop by the shop and try to decide which shape suits you best. Owner Ashleigh Woolly carries one-of-a-kind pieces with coastal colors perfect for Destin such as earrings with amazonite and diamonds, a matching necklace or diamond "dog tag" charm necklace.

Specializing in diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry pieces, the Beyond Measure Jewelers' showroom, in its new location at City Market, is full of diamond and gemstone bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. Ashleigh is passionate about exquisite and custom-designed jewelry and selling it—especially engagement rings, wedding bands and working with couples, because "it is truly special to help people celebrate one of the biggest moments of their lives." You can trust your custom project to Beyond Measure. "I am grateful beyond measure," said Ashleigh. No matter what your taste, plan to be amazed. At Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting—when only the best will do!

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-Lady Bird Johnson*

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# Around Town Events

The City of **Destin's annual Easter Egg Hunt** will be held on Saturday, April 8 at the Morgan Sports Center at 9 a.m. The Easter Egg Hunt is for youth ages 12 and under, with a special egg hunting zone for crawlers and toddlers and a special visit from the Easter Bunny.



For more information, contact the City of Destin Recreation Department at 850-654-5184 or [recreation@cityofdestin.com](mailto:recreation@cityofdestin.com). Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this event are requested to notify the recreation staff at least 48 hours in advance.

## The Easter Egg Dash is back at LuLu's in Destin on Easter Sunday

Hop on over to see the tropically clad Easter Bunny and go on a fun, festive, free and fast Easter Egg Dash. Easter eggs and Egg-citing "golden eggs" with special prizes will be scattered around. The Easter Bunny will be visiting LuLu's to help boys and girls hunt for eggs on

the sandy beach overlooking the Choctawhatchee Bay on Easter Sunday, April 9, and to visit with the kids. The Easter Egg Dash will start promptly at 2 p.m. Kids will be divided by age groups for safe fun for all including photo op memories with the Easter Bunny from 1 to 3 p.m. Visit [www.lulusfunfoodmusic.com](http://www.lulusfunfoodmusic.com).

## Join your friends at Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village

in Destin for one part celebration of vintage music and culture, one part Saturday Night Live for singers. The Post Modern Jukebox show on April 20th, 7 p.m., will be an unforgettable trip back in time sure to make Pop Music History in Destin. This isn't just a concert; this is

a must-not-miss music experience!

Then on April 27, 7 p.m., get ready to get on your feet and sway to the beat. Hailing from Mobile, Alabama, Roman Street Party Band delivers a lyrical amalgamation of acoustic guitar, classical, gypsy, contemporary jazz, Latin, and nuevo flamenco sounds. There is a reason this mesmerizing music group is a proven local favorite!

For tickets or to join the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, visit [mkaf.org](http://mkaf.org).

## Join Military Family Appreciation Day

to honor local service members and their families Saturday, April 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Landing in downtown Fort Walton Beach, 139 SE Brooks Street. Military Family Appreciation Day is a community event that aims to honor the brave service and sacrifices made by military families and veterans in our area. The event will feature live entertainment on the Eglin Federal Credit Union Stage, a free children's

play area and veteran service organizations, including the USO, Healing Paws for Warriors, Food For Vets, and Homes for Heroes. Attendees will enjoy complimentary on-site lunch from Sonny's BBQ, sponsored by Step One Automotive Group and Forever Warriors. Business sponsorship opportunities include Presenting Sponsor, Kids Play Zone Sponsor, Participating Vendor Spots, premier giveaway sponsors and volunteers to serve lunch. For more information or to become a sponsor or volunteer, contact the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce at (850) 244-8191 or [www.fwbchamber.org](http://www.fwbchamber.org).

## Rotary & Local Groups Team Up for Charity Truck Pull

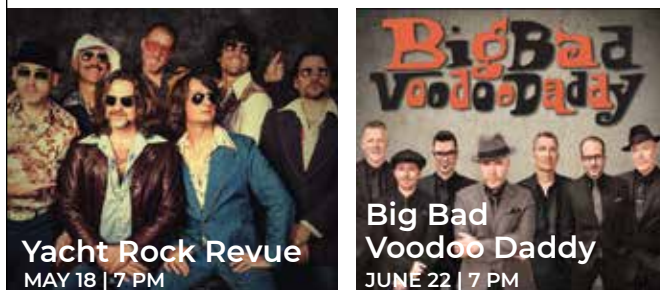
Multiple community organizations are teaming up again to complete fundraising which will benefit The Twin Cities Pavilion and Crestview Manor. The event will be hosted by 3rd Planet Brewing Saturday, April 22. It will begin

with team check-in at 11 a.m. Competition begins at noon. There will be two food trucks, an ice cream truck, face-painting for children, raffles, a silent auction and music. Last year sixteen ten-person teams participated. Register your team online: <https://form.jotform.com/230266457148055>. Questions: Contact Bob Hoffman at (850) 428-3261

On April 29 at 7:30 p.m., **Beethoven V. Coldplay** will transform the Eroica into an oratorio, weaving the melodies and lyrics of Coldplay into the original Beethoven, and pairing them together based on content and context. It is the alternate Eroica Beethoven may have created had he known the music of Coldplay at the time. Many of Coldplay's most well-known songs are interpolated, including Yellow, Viva La Vida, Clocks and The Scientist. Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, Okaloosa Island. Visit [SinfoniaGulfCoast.org](http://SinfoniaGulfCoast.org) for tickets and info.



**Post Modern Jukebox**  
APRIL 20 | 7 PM



**Yacht Rock Revue**  
MAY 18 | 7 PM



**Big Bad Voodoo Daddy**  
JUNE 22 | 7 PM



**Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James**  
MAY 25 | 7 PM



### THURSDAY NIGHTS | APRIL 20 - JUNE 22

Annual Thursday evening concert live music series featuring family-friendly premier musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae and disco to modern pop.

April 20 | Post Modern Jukebox

April 27 | Roman Street Party Band

May 4 | Ozomatli

May 11 | Lucky Chops

May 18 | Yacht Rock Revue

May 25 | Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James

June 1 | Gotta Groove Band

June 8 | Adam Ezra Group

June 15 | Journeyman: A Tribute to Eric Clapton

June 22 | Big Bad Voodoo Daddy



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# Coppélia, A Ballet in Three Acts

Director: Rachel Prescott | Assistant Director: Shaye Smith

*“Just as Giselle is ballet’s great tragedy, so Coppélia is its great comedy.”*  
- George Balanchine on the importance of Coppélia

Our story takes place in a small village of Galicia, a province of Austria-Hungary, with today’s map finding Galicia in western Ukraine and southeastern Poland. The “color” of the region can be seen in the brilliant colors, heavy embroidery and elaborate trimmings of the costumes. It can also be heard in the rich nationalistic melodies and complex folk dances of the composer. This was the first use of the Hungarian czardas to be performed in a ballet, which is a very complex national dance; both the czardas and mazurka dances in Coppélia were the culmination of the region’s folk dances.

At the age of 33, Delibes was commissioned by the Paris Opera to write his two, large-scale ballets, Coppélia and Sylvia. Coppélia is based on a story

by E. T. A. Hoffmann – the same tale that sparked Offenbach’s brilliant “Doll Act” in his opera, The Tales of Hoffmann.

Premiering on May 25, 1870, at the Theatre Impérial de l’Opera in Paris, this story is a delightful tale of fantasy with a happily-ever-after ending for Swanhilda, a young village girl who becomes fascinated by the eccentric Dr. Coppélius and his unresponsive “daughter,” Coppélia.

Studio6twenty5’s productions of Coppélia feature more than 50 students in our Children’s Program, ages 2-8. Our Adult/Open Program dancers are also featured throughout the ballet.

Tickets can be purchased online at [studio6twenty5.com](http://studio6twenty5.com).

## Act I A village Square in Galicia

The curtain rises on the village and a lovely young girl,



Coppélia, is seen sitting on a balcony reading a book as Swanilda enters. Swanilda looks up at the girl, tries to attract her attention, but receives no reply.

The villagers are preparing for the Harvest Festival. The official party, led by the Town Bürgermeister. The celebration is momentarily interrupted by Dr. Coppélius, whose mysterious “daughter” causes a quarrel of confusion. The villagers disperse to await the Harvest

Festival the following morning, where the Hours of the Day are to be celebrated. Meanwhile, Swanilda and her friends sneak away to investigate the strange house of Dr. Coppélius.

## Act II Inside Dr. Coppélius’ house and workshop - that evening

The curtain rises on the dimly-lit interior of Dr. Coppélius’ shop — a room full of life-like, life-size dolls. One of Swanilda’s Friends pokes her head behind a curtain to discover Coppélia. Another friend finds Japanese Dolls, another finds French Dolls and an Arabian Doll, while other friends find Spanish and Scottish Dolls, all of whom dance until its clockwork runs down. The amazed young intruders then wind up all the dolls again, who dance as the friends watch, enchanted. Suddenly, a furious Dr. Coppélius enters and all of the

culprits flee, except for Swanilda and one of her friends, who runs into the alcove where Coppélia is kept. Coppélius is fooled by Swanilda and thinks his mechanical doll has come to life. When Swanhilda reveals she has changed places with the doll, Dr. Coppélius is left broken-hearted.

## Act III Outside the church - the next morning

The day of the celebration has arrived. The gathered villagers begin to celebrate the Harvest Festival. Dr. Coppélius storms in, accusing Swanhilda of destroying his life’s work. Realizing the justness of his claim, she offers him money, but instead the Bürgermeister gives Dr. Coppélius a bag of gold and sends him off. The Harvest Festival continues as the villagers celebrate the hours of the day. The townspeople dance into the night.

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Community



Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

# From the City of Destin

It's time for more "reel" talk where I ask the City of Destin's Mayor, Bobby Wagner, the questions I'm emailed, and sometimes it's topics I'm simply curious about myself. As your Public Information Manager, I promise, if he tries to dodge a question, I'll reel him in and get you an answer. Email me at tyoung@cityofdestin.com if you'd like to submit a question regarding City happenings in the World's Luckiest Fishing Village.

~Tamara Leigh Young, PhD

**Q:** The Tarpon Beach Park expansion is an incredible collaboration between The Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners, Trust for Public Land and our City. Our goal is to have construction completed by spring 2024 on facilities, but many people are already enjoying the new public beach. Residents have raved about the extra Gulf view and beach space, but they're worried about whether the vendors will take over. Can you address that?

**A:** Tarpon Beach is a real success story. To me, the biggest win is that this 300-plus-feet of beach is now owned and controlled by the public. If there is one thing I have learned from our Crystal Beach Residents, it is that we need relief from commercial beach chairs blocking the beach. By law, there can be NO commercial activity at this park and that includes beach chair rentals.

**Q:** The demolition of buildings at Tarpon was amazing to watch, but it's also a reminder that progress isn't always pretty, and it takes time. We've received a number of concerns regarding the fencing that's up right now at places such as Norriego Point Park. Do you feel this progress is counterintuitive to natural beauty?

**A:** Norriego Point for me, and so many other residents, is a special place to visit by foot and/or by boat. I have watched hundreds of sunrises at this location to start my day as well as used it as part of my running route. As many people have probably noticed by now, the area is taking a new shape. The sad reality is that not all of this area is public land, but some is private property that had plans approved way before my time, and has just sat dormant for decades. It's heartbreaking for me



People are already enjoying the new public beach at Tarpon Beach.

to see it under construction, and I empathize with others, but the reality is it was never our land and we got used to it until the owners were ready to use it. So, to answer the question, I feel that progress doesn't have to be counterintuitive to natural beauty. Progress can be made by working with nature, which can help preserve and even enhance natural beauty. It's all about

balance. Right now, there's construction of a public road that will serve both the City's public park and the future adjacent private development. There are also plans to combat erosion in a natural way by building and utilizing living shorelines. The positive part is that it's going to provide a lot more public parking, easier access to the water without damaging the dunes,

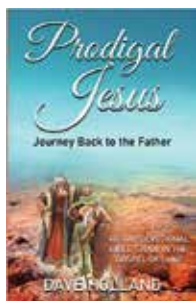
and there will finally be some much-needed restrooms in that area. Moving forward, I'm hoping that we can move toward a future where progress and natural beauty can coexist.

**Q:** And the Norriego Point Project isn't costing Destin residents money, correct?

**A:** That's correct. The Norriego Point Project is a Restoration Project funded with Natural Resource Damage Assessment Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill funds provided by BP, so it's little to no cost to the City. There might be some minimal cost of necessary permits, but that would be it. We're keeping a residents-first mentality as much as possible with all projects!

## Local Author Bookshelf: Jesus a Prodigal Son?

We think of the prodigal son from Christ's famous story in Luke 15 as someone who selfishly took his share of his father's inheritance before the man was even dead. Then he took that wealth and wasted it on drunken parties and prostitutes. How could we compare Jesus to him?



Dave Holland, award-winning author and minister, just released his new book, "Prodigal Jesus: Journey Back to the Father," on March 20, making this very comparison. He writes:

Look how Christ resembles the prodigal son. Surrounded by indescribable glory in a massive home called heaven, Jesus departs, taking his inheritance of grace and mercy with him. The Son left his wealthy Father

seeking a far away place where depravity ruled.

Christ spent his time with sinners such as

drunkards, prostitutes, and tax collectors. Crucified a criminal, he bore the sins of the human race and carried them into the depths of the grave and hell itself. Jesus then turned toward home, where his Father longed for his return. Finally, Christ laid his blood on the altar, asking forgiveness for all who have sinned.

Continued on page 19

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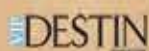
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 Community

# Destin Rotarians at Work Locally and Abroad

In 2018, Destin Rotarian Zhalman Harris teamed with a local nurse practitioner who shared his passion for helping underprivileged orphans in Liberia. Amazingly, they were introduced by a mutual friend and within four weeks were in Liberia, West Africa, with 250 lbs. of clothing, flip flops, vitamins and toys. At that time, they adopted an orphanage with 60 kids and were determined to change their lives for the better by improving their living conditions and their health.

Many children, ages 4-17, were orphaned in Liberia during the Ebola virus epidemic from 2014-15. One of the results of

the 14-year civil war that ravaged the country and the more recent Ebola virus epidemic was that approximately 40% of primary school students ended up being three years older than the appropriate age for their grade. In addition, clean water and lack of functioning bathroom facilities further impacted the quality of early education for children in Liberia.

Eventually Zhalman founded Aletha's Legacy, a 501(c)3 non-profit, to focus on his commitment to meeting the educational needs of Liberia's orphaned children and honor his mother, Aletha, who lost her life and their home during the 14-

year civil war that ravaged their country in West Africa.

Now ongoing through mission trips, Aletha's Legacy continues to improve these underprivileged children's lives in his home country. Humanitarian and financial support is mostly funded with the support of our communities, area businesses and, of course, the Rotary Club of Destin.

On his most recent trip, Zhalman was able to deliver much-needed medicine to a remote village in western Liberia. The Rotary Club of Destin gave \$500 for this critical care. Destin Rotarian Jim Brechin also donated \$15,000 to purchase a



Destin Rotarians helped fund and support the new Abedu-Bentsi School in Logan Town, Monrovia. Rotary Club of Destin President Marcia Hull was also able to travel with Zhalman Harris a few months ago to help.

van for Aletha's legacy.

And more good news—in the past few months, the Abedu-Bentsi School in Logan Town, Monrovia, has been completed! Destin Rotarians sponsored a classroom in the recently completed educational facility. The new school building includes 10 classrooms, a mess hall, a kitchen, boys' and girls' bathrooms, a library, a science lab and a computer lab. A new fence and steel gate were also installed for the children's safety.



Zhalman said the school has grown at a rapid pace with many more students. A new project is now in the works to build a new wing to the school, as students

are overflowing into the current dilapidated, old building. With ongoing support from the Rotary Club of Destin, businesses and our communities, we have no doubt this, too, will be accomplished.



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BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Should investing be about fear or should it be about optimism? And which is the greater motivator of behavior and action? We have often heard that perception without any confirmation indeed becomes reality. Investors are bombarded almost daily with messages of fear. As a result some may give up hope at the worst possible time and change their course of action or their plan. We are reminded of the coach and his or her team sticking to their game plan even if they are down early on in the game. What if however it is not early in the game, rather its midway or towards the end? We think, once an investor reviews objective, risk tolerance and time frame, then they compare that with their current strategy and make changes as needed or wanted.

Investors can become overly worried when one talking head after another speaks about capitulation and that things will go from bad to worse. We think it fair to point out that often the talking head may be the type of professional investor, a hedge fund manager for example, that often can profit in up and down markets and that it is the very volatility they speak to that creates opportunity (with extraordinary risk) for them.

We believe that the individual investor should focus on the greater picture, the entire game, not just a particular slice of it. We look at the long-term returns and see that stocks are one of the higher returning investments, over time. Over time.

Diversification is critical as well. Bonds can play a part in diversifying a portfolio or perhaps generating income. It is challenging for many to find a timing strategy that outperforms a well thought out buy, hold and adjust as needed strategy.

Many in the media speak of anything but optimism. Some

might easily draw the conclusion that it is over and that it is reconciliation time with the financial history of this nation. We don't understand how you can explain away that there is an entire generation (much greater in size) that is following the baby boomers. They are growing their careers, their family, and their lives and consuming. That might help explain why despite 9 straight interest rate hikes that there is still a housing shortage. And there is a worker shortage. Demand is growing or is resilient. Affluence and standard of living have never been greater. Innovation and competitiveness continue to fuel the engine for America and the world.

If a more optimistic, long-term view makes sense, we think investors can build toward and achieve their goals.

As investors contemplate their needs and objectives, we add that we believe that a portfolio should be diversified by security selection as well as asset class and that time frame, risk tolerance, tax status and ultimate objective should be the guiding light in a well-balanced portfolio.

There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk, and unique tax consequences. Investments in municipal securities may not be appropriate for all investors, particularly those who do not stand to benefit from the tax status of the investment. Municipal bond interest is not subject to federal income tax but may be subject to AMT, state or local taxes. U.S. government bonds and Treasuries are guaranteed by the U.S. government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. CDs are insured by the FDIC and offer a fixed rate of return, whereas the return and principal value of investment securities fluctuate with changes in market conditions. An investment in a money market fund is neither insured nor guaranteed by the FDIC or any other government agency. Although the fund seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1.00 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the fund. A fixed annuity is a long-term,

tax-deferred insurance contract designed for retirement. Fixed annuities have limitations. If you decide to take your money out early, you may face fees called surrender charges. Plus, if you're not yet 59½, you may also have to pay an additional 10% tax penalty on top of ordinary income taxes. You should also know that a fixed annuity contains guarantees and protections that are subject to the issuing insurance company's ability to pay for them. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market. Inclusion of this index is for illustrative purposes only. Keep in mind

that individuals cannot invest directly in any index, and index performance does not include transactions costs or other fees, which will affect actual investment performance. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected. Diversification and asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Holding investments for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome.

*Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management/ Raymond James. Main office located at The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see*

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Community

# I Think I'm Just Going to Sell My House Myself. WHAT?!



BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR

For Sale By Owner (FSBO)— Sounds great, doesn't it? It's gotta be easy; you've watched enough home shows on TV; anyone can do it. PLUS you'll save a bunch of money by not paying that real estate commission, right? What's that they say, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?" Before you step over a dollar to save a dime, consider the statistics:

**1) Only 2% of home sales are done without a real es-**

**tate agent**, which means as a FSBO, you're missing out on 98% of potential buyers. And, you do want as many qualified buyers as possible to see your home, correct? Most Buyers use a real estate agent (98%). Why? For many reasons: it costs them nothing; they get more access to available properties; and they get an expert to assist them in navigating through the entire buying process.

**2) Investor buyers LOVE FSBOs.** Why? Because they believe they can negotiate the price down.

**3) The most difficult tasks for FSBO sellers are the following:**

- Pricing the property correctly.
- Understanding the legalities of all the paperwork.
- Selling within the time they want to sell.
- Knowing how to stage and prepare the home for sale.
- Having enough time to de-

vote to all aspects of the sale.

- Having the means to maximize exposure of the home via multiple marketing platforms.
- Negotiating the best possible price. It's difficult being objective on your own home.

Most non-real estate folks sell 1-3 homes in a lifetime; a professional real estate agent sells hundreds of homes and it's their job to know the market, the contracts and addendums, and be strong in the negotiating process on their sellers' behalf.

A strong agent will put more money in your pocket! People who use a real estate agent to sell their home net an average of 25% more than if they had not used an agent. WOW! Do you really want to do all the work AND make less money on the sale?

**Other things to consider:**

- How do you qualify the strangers you let into your home?



- Safety, who will be there with you when you let them in?
- Not losing that buyer, will you be available when the buyer wants to see the home?

Important question to ask yourself: Would you do your own dental work or perform heart surgery on yourself? Selling your home is the same! Wouldn't it be better to hire an expert who will protect you, do it right and save you money? Before you decide to DIY, call me, Gail Pelto, at 850.374.0454 or send me an email: gail.pelto@kw.com.

*Gail Pelto is a full-time real estate professional with Keller Williams. She is also a Board Member with the Rotary Club of Destin as well as the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and is currently co-chair of the Education Committee of Emerald Coast Networking. For information about real estate or if you are a local business professional and would like to learn more about networking, please call her at 850.374.0454 or email to gail.pelto@kw.com. On Facebook, Destin Agent Gail - Emerald Coast Realtor.*

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# Part 1: Pre Owned Sports Cars Under \$50,000 That Make Great Daily Drivers

BY WILL ESTELL

If you consider yourself an automobile connoisseur of any depth, it's almost certain you could probably guess the cars that would make up a list of this title, simply based on common knowledge of what is and isn't a real sports car and what does and doesn't make economic sense for the average person to daily drive.

You wouldn't, for example, populate a sports car list such as this with the likes of modern-day Camaros, Mustangs, BMW 4 series coupes or Audi A5 Cabriolets—though all of those are great vehicles in their own right, and some I've even owned and appreciate. However, those all fall into the GT (Grand Touring) category, and even with brute power and only two doors, they aren't really sports cars.

At the other end of the spectrum, as much as I can appreciate the more exotic makes, you can't include anything made by Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Lotus or a host of other makes on this list. Mostly because even as true sports cars they can't be had for the \$50,000 ceiling here, and even if they could I couldn't—with

good conscious— suggest anyone try to daily drive anything that has \$25,000, 15,000-mile service requirements or (insert used \$30,000 Maserati's here) has a high probability of developing a new problem on the roundtrip to Fresh Market or Starbucks.

In Part 1, we take a look at three tried and true sports cars that are both priced accordingly and have a reliability record that leads to the makings of a great daily driver that won't break the bank or live at the shop.

**Chevrolet Corvette**  
Since its introduction in 1953, the Corvette has been known as America's sequential sports car. For the purpose of this list we'll talk about the C7 iteration of the Corvette, which ran from 2014 to 2019, first rolling off the Bowling Green assembly line in September of 2013. The C7 (for 7th generation) boasts a sports car chassis, a drivetrain that provides supercar performance, and offers a standard of reliability that allows for it to be driven daily, with very basic routine maintenance.

The C7 came standard with a 6.2-liter V8 and either a 7-speed manual, or 6 (2014) then 8-speed automatic trans-



mission. At just 3,347 lbs., the C7 has a great power to weight ratio that trumps many way more expensive, and less reliable, sports cars, while still being relatively easy to find for under our \$50,000 limit here—usually with relatively low miles too, as many original owners didn't buy them as their only car.

**Porsche Boxster and Cayman**  
Those who know sports cars are well aware of what you get with most any of the sportier ventures from Porsche. Sure, they're not a bargain to buy new, and the maintenance cost can be quite extravagant for some of the more problematic years. However, a Boxster or Cayman handles like a dream, drives like a sports car should, and, if you buy the right car, can give years of dependable daily service.

Having owned several vintage Porsches from 70's and 80's Targa's to four 914's, to a

924S and 944S, I'm more of a fan of the classic, air-cooled cars. However, for this list we're going to be going a little newer—and more affordable—than those classic 911's and 914's. I believe

the third generation (981) of the Boxster/Cayman twins (the Boxster a drop top, the Cayman a fixed roof), gives the most bang for the buck for everyday driving in a Porsche that can be had under our \$50,000 price range.

The 981 version was available new from 2012-2016 and features the then newly improved 2.7 liter flat 6, with your choice of the 6-speed manual, or Porsche's 7-speed PDK automatic. The hotter S variant carries a 3.4-liter powerplant. There were other hot editions, too, including a GTS derivative, but those are likely to still be outside our price ceiling given here.

The 981 cars brought new 911 derived styling, a 40% more rigid chassis, and the same great handling and precision that we've all come to expect from mid-engine engineering and weight distribution. These cars

are relatively dependable and can rack up past 150,000 miles easily when maintained correctly. There is a downside though, as most any in-depth engine repair (more than oil changes, basically) that any Boxster or Cayman could ever need, requires actually dropping the engine from the bottom side in order to access for repairs. This means you want to buy a really good, mechanically sound car that's been driven and maintained.

Come back next month for Part 2 as we look at five more great sports cars under \$50,000 to drive daily.

*Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, occasional actor, and coastal real estate professional with over 600 published magazine features in an array of genres. Over the past 25 years Will has been instrumental in founding 12 new magazines from concept to fruition, while also serving as editor 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. Will is a regular contributor to Life Media's publications, and in his free time likes to play with cars—real ones.*

## BOOK SHELF

*continued from page 14*

Ultimately, Prodigal Son Jesus became what he would be—the son who came home to his Father's house. The Son of God displayed the great love he has for us by his presence with us. Christ came to our faraway country and lived under the influence of our evil domain to lead us back to the Father.

Pastor Dave shares 40 daily Bible study devotions to inspire his readers. Based on the Gos-

pel of Luke, his book is squarely grounded in the word of God. His stories and applications make the book practical for modern life. Concluding each devotion with a brief prayer, the reader faces the day with fresh faith.

You can purchase this new book at Amazon.com or on the website DaveHolland.Org. You can contact pastor Dave at davidvholland54@gmail.com, or on his Facebook page, Dave Holland, author. He is available to speak at churches and conferences.

Holland lives to help people become more like Jesus. His life's mission is to love God and love people. He has been serving God for more than 50 years and finds that Jesus is the sole foundation of Christian living.

Dave has pastored churches for 38 years and learned that the church and Jesus are not the same. He planted a thriving church in Brockton, Mass., starting with 16 people. The church grew and launched seven other congregations in New England. He also led a church

in Uxbridge, Mass., and pastored in Nebraska and Colorado. He and his wife, Jonie, have retired in Destin.

Dave graduated from Life Pacific College in 1979 and was ordained in 1981. While pastoring in New England, he earned his Master of Arts from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1997. "God spoke to me the first day I attended classes: 'Education tends to pride. Study hard but don't let it go to your head,'" he

said. He also graduated with a Master of Arts in English from Grand Canyon University in 2019.

Dave studied the gospel of Luke for more than 12 years while writing the Daily Jesus Series. Christmas Jesus is the first installment, followed by Every Day Jesus, covering the first four chapters of Luke. Extraordinary Jesus looks at Luke 5-9 and Prodigal Jesus brings us through chapter 15 of Luke.



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# Closed Test Areas and Beach Access

BY BRIG. GEN. JEFF GERAGHTY,  
96TH TEST WING COMMANDER

Since returning here and taking command of the 96th Test Wing in June, I'm reminded of just how special this area is and how fortunate we are to live and work in such a military-friendly community.

With 464,000 acres of land ranges, Eglin spans three counties and is one of 13 major range and test facility bases in the Department of Defense.

The test areas within our borders provide a center of development, testing and deployment of lethal air power to support essential Department of Defense missions. Many of these areas also provide refuge for a wide range of natural communities and 106 rare and endangered plant and animal species, as well as a wealth of Cultural Resources dating back thousands of years.

We are host to many hazardous activities that include training missions conducted by Air Force Special Operations Command, the U.S. Army's 6th Ranger Training Battalion and 7th Special Forces Group, as well as operators from every branch of service.

These activities are mainly restricted to the Closed Test Areas and occur daily on Eglin's reservation.

Over time, our Closed Test Areas on Santa Rosa Island that stretch west of the El Matador Condominiums all the way to Navarre Beach, have become an easy target for trespassers who want to take advantage of the secluded charm of Eglin's closed beaches.

Despite the abundance of warning signs in place instructing beachgoers to stay out of Air Force Closed Areas, we are



The East Pass Beach Area, the West Pass Beach and parking areas on the west end of Marler Bridge in Destin are closed to all forms of public access. (U.S. Air Force photo/Iika Cole)

seeing an unacceptable level of trespassers ignoring the signage and causing mission impacts and damaging fragile habitat critical to many species.

Due to unauthorized activities, and to preserve and protect this national asset on the Eglin reservation, our team has

installed barriers and additional signage on the east and west sides of Eglin's Santa Rosa Island Closed Areas to further discourage trespassing.

Additionally, our security forces will increase patrols in these areas and will begin issuing trespass citations to those who continue to violate our Closed Test Areas.

Further, our security forces, with assistance from local and state law enforcement, will also monitor the Santa Rosa Sound and cite individuals/boaters who are beaching and trespassing on the north side of the island.

As a good neighbor, Eglin maintains four other public beach access points on the island – Eglin Beach Club (for DoD card holders), the Matterhorn, Princess Beach and the old Airman's Beach Club. Each of these areas is available to beachgoers with a free permit - See <https://eglin.isportsman.net/Beaches.aspx>.

We will continue to search for appropriate solutions to improve safety and eliminate unauthorized trespassing on federal property. As we determine these solutions, we will communicate them with the community to avoid any confusion in the future.

I appreciate your cooperation ensuring the safety of our community while protecting the vital national security missions we execute on Eglin Air Force Base and the Eglin reservation.

# Gala to Combat Veteran Suicide

SOF Missions, a leading non-profit that helps past and present military members suffering from the visible and invisible scars of war, will hold its 7th Annual SOF Missions Destin Gala April 8 at the Henderson Beach Resort.

With a mission of empowering warriors to find purpose and resiliency, the SOF Missions team works hard to reduce and combat suicide among our nation's heroes.

To date, SOF Missions has

provided more than \$5 million in care to more than 2,500 warriors.

"We are making a difference with your help," said Dr. Damon Friedman, founder and president of SOFM. "Unfortunately, there are about 20 veteran suicides a day and that is catastrophic. For someone to take his own life when help is here just breaks our hearts."

All proceeds from the gala will go directly to past and present military members all over

the country dealing with mental and physical injuries. The funds raised allow a national network of professionals, through Be Resilient Clinics, to offer collaborative, clinical and coordinated care plans for our Nation's heroes in need at no charge.

The evening will be filled with inspiring stories of bravery and redemption from our warriors who have found healing. Enjoy a delicious sit-down dinner, live entertainment as well as a silent and live auction. Key-



note speaker will be retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Tickets are \$100 per person. Info: <https://sofmissions.org/gala/>. Attire: black and white

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

For more information about the SOF Missions Destin Gala, call Kristi Beckman at (850) 503-5201 or email at [kristi@sofmissions.org](mailto:kristi@sofmissions.org).

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# The Vietnam POWs 50 Years Later Home Sweet Home

BY DOUG STAUFFER

The “Welcome Home” ceremony at the Air Force Armament Museum honored those who were captured in the Vietnam War and returned home 50 years ago. The date was March 4, 1973, when the North Vietnamese released nearly 600 U.S. POWs from their prisons.

On Feb. 12, 1973, the first of 591 U.S. prisoners began the trip home, with more flights returning until late March. The festivities hosted a reception and program to honor the POWs now calling Okaloosa County home. The honored include:

- Brig. Gen. George “Bud” Day, USAF, Ret.
- Col. Keith Hall, USAF, Ret.
- Col. Howard Hill, USAF, Ret.
- Col. Ed Hubbard, USAF, Ret.
- Col. Ron Webb, USAF, Ret.
- Lt. Col. Dave Gray, USAF, Ret.

“We hope this brings a feeling of strong patriotism and respect for what these men endured in those days,” said Tricia Flaherty, Director of Operations at the Air Force Armament Museum. The words “You are not forgotten” are a constant

reminder that we should always remember the sacrifices of these veterans who paid so dearly in defense of freedom and our nation.

The United States fought in the Vietnam War for 10 years, from 1965 to the fall of Saigon in 1975. On Jan. 27, 1973, the U.S. signed the withdrawal agreement of American troops from South Vietnam. The agreement included the negotiated release of the nearly 600 prisoners of war held by North Vietnam in various prisons and camps, including the infamous Hỏa Lò prison in Hanoi, dubbed by many as the “Hanoi Hilton.”

Hundreds of American POWs, primarily Air Force airmen, endured months of isolation and squalid conditions at Hỏa Lò. From the beginning, U.S. POWs at Hỏa Lò endured miserable, unsanitary conditions, including meager food rations and the ever-present threat of starvation. The captors subjected American prisoners of war to extreme torture and malnutrition. Although North Vietnam signed the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, which demanded “decent and

humane treatment” of prisoners of war, they employed severe torture methods, including sleep deprivation, malnutrition, beatings, hanging by ropes, locking in irons, and prolonged solitary confinement.

POWs were repeatedly interrogated and tortured at the hands of their captors and suffered enormous levels of physical and mental abuse. The North Vietnamese guards strictly enforced no communication within the prison, but POWs found ways to commu-

nicate, including a tap code that could be heard through walls from one cell to another and a “Deaf Mute” code of hand signals, used when guards were not looking. Despite this limited communication, prisoners developed a code within their ranks to look out for and protect each other.

The deal would come to be known as Operation Homecoming and began with three C-141 transports landing in Hanoi on Feb. 12, 1973, to bring the first released prisoners

home. From Feb. 12 to April 4, 54 flights took place, returning 591 POWs home.

Many of the flagpoles in America fly the POW/MIA flag with the American flag. The POW/MIA symbol has flown since 1973 to honor those who suffered through years of captivity and torture and those who never came home. Almost every day Okaloosa County residents can find something going on that shows appreciation for the military, and especially our POWs and MIAs.

## A Superior Air Conditioning To Host Vet Lunch in April

You’re invited to the next Veteran’s and First Responder’s Lunch for Okaloosa/Walton county at Faith Assembly Christian Church (aka “The Rock ‘n Roll Church”) in Miramar Beach on April 11 at Noon.

A new HVAC system will be given away, and you can learn about opportunities to get involved, or, if you are a veteran or first responder, how you can apply to win a new HVAC system.

Are you interested in getting

involved and becoming a sponsor? Cost is \$150 per lunch and sponsor benefits include setting up a table, booth, tent or display at the event that you provide; opportunity to distribute your marketing materials and swag; having your company’s logo included on all print material that promote the event (such as rack cards and poster); and addressing the crowd at the mic for a brief description of the service you provide. Lunch is included for you and a guest. 100% of sponsor dollars cover

the costs of the event. To sponsor, or for any questions regarding sponsorship, contact Jimmy Dallas for Walton/Okaloosa events at (850) 896-2955.

Not able to sponsor? No problem! You can still contribute by bringing a smile, a gift basket, coupons, etc. as raffle prizes for guests. Come join us – and help get the word out to local Veterans and First Responders – so we can all thank the men and women who keep us safe in our communities and our country.

Join us for a spectacular evening as we join forces to end SUICIDE and PTSD among our Nations Heroes.



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# Education News

The Florida College System announced that **10 Northwest Florida State College students are members of the 2023 All-Florida Academic Team** – Yvonne Anderson, Ashley Andrews, Sean Arbuckle, Jackson Brazill, Gwendolyn Law, Lillian Nguyen, Jazlyn Polanco, Allyson Singer, Danielle Tomlin and Christopher York. The students were selected by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society and will be recognized at an awards ceremony March 31 in Orlando.

Students are nominated to the All-Florida Academic Team competition by their respective

colleges in recognition of their academic achievement, leadership and service to the community. “Our Phi Theta Kappa students have earned this recognition with their exemplary service, leadership, and academic achievements,” said NWFSC President Dr. Devin Stephenson.

For more information on the Sigma Mu chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at NWFSC, contact Selin Apak at ptk@nwfsc.edu.

Jason Belcher, Chair of the OCSD Citizens Oversight Committee, addressed the School Board in February with

a progress report of **Half Cent Sales Tax** spending and projects. Large projects currently in progress include: classroom additions being built at Crestview (8 classrooms), Elliott Point (8 classrooms), Laurel Hill (4 classrooms) and Silver Sands (4 classrooms); land for cafeteriums is being prepared and construction will begin soon at Edwins, Bob Sikes, Plew, Shalimar, Wright and Ruckel; and multipurpose buildings are under construction at Baker, Choctaw, Crestview, Fort Walton Beach and Niceville.

Join the Spring **Pickle-**

**ball Smash for Okaloosa Schools** April 28-30 at the Mooney Tennis and Pickleball Courts at 713 Country Club Ave. in Fort Walton Beach. Funds raised will support the Okaloosa Public School Foundation’s Take Stock in Children scholarship program, which currently provides two-year college scholarships and one-on-one mentoring for sixty (60) academically deserving high school students from low-income families, as well as support the teacher grant program and promote overall student success through other initiatives. The Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit orga-

nization whose sole purpose is to support and extend educational opportunities for all students within Okaloosa County. The **Take Stock in Children** scholarship program is one of the ways that is done. The funds raised for the program are matched dollar for dollar by the Florida Prepaid Scholarship Program, doubling the impact of any local contribution. There is an ambitious goal to increase the number of scholarship recipients to 100 students over the next five years. For more information, contact Debbie Tate at TateD@Okaloosaschools.com or call 850.833.5856.

## Eagle Scout's Team Creates Flag Retirement Boxes

Ethan Bradley, a senior at Destin High School, has produced for his Boy Scout Eagle Scout Project three U.S. Flag Retirement Boxes, one for each of the Destin High, Middle and Elementary schools.

He and his fellow Boy Scouts of Troop 544 made the boxes under his supervision. The

boxes are to be placed at each school for the collection of retiring old and worn U.S. flags from the community, so they may be respectfully collected and subsequently retired in an appropriate ceremony.

These boxes will be emptied by arrangement with the Scoutmaster, Boy Scout troop 544 in



Fort Walton Beach, or by the American Legion Post in Destin.





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# OCSD Launches Anti-Vaping Campaign

FROM SUPERINTENDENT  
MARCUS CHAMBERS

The U.S. Surgeon General declared youth vaping a national epidemic in 2018. During the 2021-2022 school year, the number of reported vaping incidents in Florida schools nearly doubled from the previous year. In Okaloosa County, where the majority of our students make good choices every day, we are not immune to this crisis, as we have seen a spike in the number of students possessing, distributing and/or using electronic cigarettes on our campuses.

Our students' health and safety are my No. 1 priority. I appreciate your active involvement not only in your student's academic success but also in their health. When a student makes the decision to vape at school, both are affected.

My hope is that through the launch of this district anti-vaping campaign, we can all do a better job identifying the signs of vaping among students, know and share information on the negative health effects with our students, and be very clear about the discipline consequences involved with vaping.

I am very grateful if your child has made the decision to not vape, and we will do everything we can to reinforce that wise choice each and every day. For those who are vaping, we will work with parents to provide educational resources and contacts for community agencies that may be able to provide assistance.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one out of every 10 middle and high school students uses electronic vaping products. Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapor produced by an electronic vaporizer or electronic cigarette, which heats a liquid to generate an aerosol. The aerosol can contain harmful chemicals and particles that are inhaled deep into

the lungs. Common additives used in these devices, depending on brand and type, may include nicotine, caffeine, cannabinoids (such as marijuana) and potentially other illicit drugs. Nicotine is highly addictive and exposure may harm the parts of the adolescent brain that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Research has also shown that electronic cigarettes have resulted in a dramatic increase in marijuana use by students in the form of THC oil, which can be vaped.

School administrators often find that parents may not recognize the signs of vaping or the devices themselves. The liquids that are vaporized come in many different flavors and sometimes smell fruity, which may appeal to children. The devices come in different shapes and sizes. Some common styles we see resemble a thick pen, a stylus for an iPad or a USB flash drive. Some devices are disposable, while others require a refill cartridge. Because of their small size, they can easily be hidden on a person or blend in with a normal backpack or

pencil case.

The use and possession of all tobacco and/or intoxicating products is illegal for those under 21. Students are not permitted to use, possess, or distribute tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, or their components (including lighters) while on school property. In an effort to deter students from vaping on campus, vape sensors are being installed in school restrooms. If a student is found to be using, possessing or distributing any tobacco or smoking device, the student will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in School Board Policy, ranging from the Student Training Program (STP) to expulsion, depending on the content of the smoking device. The goal of this campaign is not to be punitive, but to educate our students on the dangers of vaping and encourage them to make choices that have a positive impact on both their health and education.

Note: Superintendent Marcus Chambers kicked off the Okaloosa County School District's Anti-Vape Campaign alongside



accounts and Website in February. In the video, Chambers and Aden express their intent with this campaign is to help students make the right choices and deter them from vaping while educating families about the consequences of vaping on school property as outlined in Okaloosa County School Board Policy. The video can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/R7vKeAjcNIY>.

Sheriff Aden in a video message on the District's Social Media



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# Does Your Fifth Wall Make a Statement?



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

When decorating or remodeling your home, don't forget

about the fifth wall – also known as the “ceiling.” The ceiling is a key component in any room, and if you ignore it you're missing out on a golden opportunity to create a little drama to this wide-open space. When I see a plain white ceiling, I see an opportunity to make a statement.

Painting and decorating the ceiling isn't new. Think of the ceilings in the Sistine Chapel or the Pompeian Baths. Structural elements such as exposed

beams, heavy arches, sunken panels and carved rosettes are ceiling elements that were heavily used in the Renaissance period. The Baroque periods brought an ornate style to the ceiling with heavy bas-reliefs and garlands.

About 200 years ago, southerners painted their porch ceilings a light sky blue and we're still implementing that tradition today. When I was young, my Granny said it was to prevent



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the wasps from making a nest. Others say it wards off evil spirits. Whatever the reason, sky blue porch ceilings are pretty to look at, especially when you go the extra mile and have airy clouds painted on them.

We've seen a recent resurgence in painting and wallpapering our ceilings, yet board and batten, wood elements and molding features have quickly risen to the forefront too. Below are a number of ways you can add depth and create eye candy on your ceiling.

Paint a striking color on the ceiling. You can add a bold splash of color to brighten the room or use black to create a moody vibe. If you're afraid of a bright or moody color, consider using the same color of your room – just lighter with a ratio of 80 percent white to 20 percent color. This can help make your ceiling feel higher and your space a little larger.

If you can't bring yourself to skip the 50 shades of white, consider using Textured paint on your ceiling. Adding texture helps to mask any imperfections and can add dimension and interest to a large room. We'll talk about another texture option with wallpaper below.

Molding, Board and Batten and Wood features are all classic, timeless choices for your ceiling.

From curvy design moldings, to tongue and groove, shiplap and my favorite board and batten, they're all creative ways to bring an attractive, high-end look to your room.

Ceiling Medallions create a mood and bring character to your room. It's a classic choice with a beautiful chandelier installed in the center of it. Medallions can be made of wood, metal or plastic composite and come in a variety of shapes and styles. They're no longer looked at as a traditional decor.

Adding Wallpaper to your ceiling is a confident move that adds color, pattern and texture to your space. Bold florals, metallic prints, vertical stripes and grasscloth papers can add contrast and interest to your ceiling. The unexpected pop can make a big impact on your foyer, dining room, living room or powder room. A serene color and pattern is great for the bedroom and it'll give you something beautiful to look at when you open your eyes in the morning.

Your space can go from average to stunning with a creative ceiling. It's all about balance and Coastal Design by Kim is here to help you with all of your interior design needs. Contact us today at (850) 904-6622 or via email at [kim@coastaldesignbykim.com](mailto:kim@coastaldesignbykim.com).



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Check the Facebook page for March live music and events.

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ajsgoat.com

## 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 for any season's sports. Happy Hour Specials from Monday-Friday, 2pm - 5pm, \$2 Off all bar drinks and Monday-Friday from 3pm - 5pm \$3 off dozen raw oysters. Bucket Specials All day Every day. Auston's on 98 is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and features its own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce." See full menu at austonson98.com.

(850) 842-3200  
125 Poinciana Blvd.,  
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Austonson98.com

## Boathouse Oyster Bar

Oysters, live music and a local's vibe, 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 writ-

ten 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

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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, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

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## Melting Pot Destin

Fondue into spring at locally-owned The Melting Pot Destin. Enjoy several fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées, salads and unforgettable desserts. Slow down and talk while you "play" with your four-course choice of six classic cheese dish appetizers, unmelt-

ed in a hot, six-inch melting pot and choice of salads. Cook your main entrée. For dessert, choose a warm fondue bowl of fresh melted chocolate of your choice. There's also "fast fondues" and one-course fondues with cheese, salad, entrée or chocolate.

Celebrate Easter this year at Melting Pot! Delicious spring features for you and the whole family to try, like the Apricot Chèvre Cheese Fondue and the White Chambord Swirl Chocolate Fondue!

Prom Special: Treat your date to an extra special meal on an extra special night! Join us at Melting Pot for a set three-course fondue dinner before prom and we'll include soft drink, tax, and tip to keep things simple. The

*Continued on next page*



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**DESTIN DINING***continued from previous page*

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A heartbreaking fire last year has 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 offers 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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# 30AEats.com Recipe of the Month: **Red Rice**

Cast-iron pots and pans have a long-standing tradition in American cookery, and Lodge Cast Iron has stood the test of time. I completed a project with this great company for The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook-Cooking from Coast to Coast, that includes two of my recipes.

Chef Steven Satterfield made this recipe for Red Rice using Carolina Gold, an heirloom variety of long-grain rice that is

hand-harvested by its producer Anson Mills. Sautéing the rice in fat for a good five minutes helps to infuse flavor into the individual grains. Lastly, no peeking while the rice is cooking — the covered cast-iron pot is key to the development of the crust on the bottom.”

You can order Carolina Gold Rice from Anson Mills here, or give this dish a whirl using your favorite paella rice.

## Red Rice

*featured in The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook*

*Serves: 6*

### Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons bacon drippings
- 5 tablespoons butter
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 cup diced celery (inner leaves included)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon kosher salt (or more to taste)
- 2 cups canned organic whole plum tomatoes (undrained and chopped)
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons pepper vinegar or cider vinegar (if you use cider vinegar, add a pinch of red pepper flakes)
- 1 1/4 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 dried chiles de arbol, chopped



- (or a pinch of red pepper flakes)
- 2 cups long-grain rice, such as Carolina Gold
- 3/4 pound andouille or chorizo sausage, grilled and sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1 1/2 pounds shrimp (peeled, deveined, and cut into bite-sized pieces)

### Instructions:

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons bacon drippings and 2 tablespoons butter. Add the onion, celery, garlic, and 1 tablespoon salt. Cook, stirring often, until the onion and garlic are tender. Add the tomatoes, chicken stock, vinegar, 1 tablespoon salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper, along with the thyme, bay leaves, and chiles. Simmer 15 to 20 minutes, tasting for seasoning.

In a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat, add remaining 2 tablespoons bacon drippings and 2 tablespoons butter and cook until foamy. Add the rice and cook, stirring frequently, until it is opaque (about 5 minutes). This step is very important to the final flavor of the dish, so don't skimp on the time — but also don't let the rice burn.

Add 4 cups of the tomato mixture to the rice. Stir and cover. Set a timer and cook the rice for 25 minutes over very

low heat. Do not lift the lid. After 25 minutes, turn off the heat and let the rice stand for 5 more minutes. Again, do not lift the lid. While the rice cooks, add the sausage to the remaining tomato mixture in the pan. Cover and keep warm over very low heat.

While the rice stands, in a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon butter until foamy. Add the shrimp, stirring just until cooked through. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Combine the shrimp to the sau-

sage and tomato mixture. Stir well.

Pour the shrimp and sausage mixture over the rice. Remove and discard bay leaves. Without breaking the grains, gently fluff the rice. Serve immediately.

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Dining

# 11th Annual Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash

The Rotary Club of Destin will host its Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash Charity Fundraiser at The Towne Centre at Seascapes with co-host, Mezcal Mexican Grill on Friday, May 19 from 5:30 until 9 p.m.

This fundraiser is designed to help further education and help eradicate hunger by supporting the Destin Rotary Club Scholarship Fund and local nonprofit organizations such as Food For Thought, Harvest House, Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast, Food For Thought, Harvest House and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation. Since 1979, The Rotary Club of Destin has served our community through charitable, educational and humanitarian projects.

The Rotary Club of Destin is known for serving up the

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

Suitable for families of all ages and open to the public, Destin Rotary volunteers will

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

Tickets are \$40 per person for a large flat of crawfish and fixings, \$50 for All-You-Can-Eat crawfish and fixings, and \$15 for children or a non-crawfish meal; kids age three and under are free. Each ticket includes one free drink (beer, margarita, soda or water). Tickets can be purchased online at eventbrite.com, Lori@LifeMediaGrp.com, Rotary Club of Destin Facebook page or from any Destin Rotarian.

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scape is located at 80 Seascapes Drive, Miramar Beach (one mile west of Silver Sands Premium Outlets).

Would you like to become a sponsor? Sponsor benefits include reserved seating, dedicated food servers (no waiting in the food line!) and free drink tickets. Email dmoniz@handfirm.com if interested.

The Rotary Club of Destin represents more than 60 business women and men who are committed to “Service Above

Self” and whose mission is to positively change lives through service...across the street and around the world with emphasis on eradicating hunger and supporting education in our community and internationally. The Rotary Club of Destin meets every Tuesday at 7:15 a.m. at Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club. The Rotary Club of Destin “Sunset Club” meets on Wednesdays at 5:30 at 790 Restaurant.

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Limited sponsorship opportunities are now available, email [jessica@proffittpr.com](mailto:jessica@proffittpr.com) to learn more.



# City Food Hall Offers Eclectic Dining Mix

City Food Hall Destin is now officially open at Destin Commons. Showcasing emerging and established local chefs from more than 10 specialty restaurant concepts, City Food Hall is a 14,000-square-foot gathering place offering international cuisine, craft beer and cocktails, state-of-the-art entertainment, and more.

Located next to Foot Locker near Uncle Buck's, City Food Hall will become Destin's top culinary and nightlife destination. Locals and visitors can enjoy an expansive 32 seat indoor bar, HDTVs, plenty of seating, and two state-of-the-art Topgolf Swing Suites with multi-sport

er; Nanbu Too, owned and operated by Chef Nikhil Abuvala. Nanbu (translated to "southern" in Japanese) offers Japanese cuisine with Southern Flair; Tuk Tuk Thai, bringing authentic Thai street food to Destin with ambitious dishes, bold flavors, mixed with hand-blended seasonings showcased by a military veteran-owned team; Birdie's Nourished Kitchen by Chef Katie Dixon, offering a range of power foods from acai bowls and salads to healthy takes on traditional, southern fare; Macho Taco, Mexican inspired soul food that is simple, yet elegant, rustic, yet refined, creative, yet controlled; Poke Loa, A New

Jamdung, island cuisine with a "down-home" feel, from traditional Jamaican Beef Patties to unique takes on Caribbean favorites such as jerk chicken and braised oxtail; and Zaitoun, bringing traditional Middle Eastern dishes to Destin.

City Food Hall is open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The venue and Swing Suites are now available for special event bookings including birthdays, happy hours, holiday parties, bache-

lor/bachelorette events, corporate retreats and more.

For more information, visit [www.cityfoodhall.com](http://www.cityfoodhall.com) and follow City Food Hall Destin or Destin Commons on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



games and Full Swing golf simulator technology.

The 10 restaurant concepts within Destin City Food Hall features unique cuisine from around the world including: PB&J Bakery and Café, with bold, unique dishes and nostalgic classics created by husband and wife duo Phillip & Jess Bau-

Orleans-based restaurant that was the first poke restaurant in Louisiana. Poke Loa's fish is delivered fresh daily, and fish, toppings, and vegetables are chopped and prepared in-house; Pluma Chicken Co., makes 25-hour brined fried chicken that is perennially listed on 'best of' from top publications; Likkle



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Off the Hook

# Destin High School Class Builds Anglers

BY KENNETH BOOKS

Destin isn't known as the World's Luckiest Fishing Village for nothing, and more than 50 students at Destin High School have taken that nickname to heart.

The Destin High Fishing Class not only is teaching teens the ins and outs of being a successful – and often professional – angler, it's a showcase class that has drawn interest from other areas in Florida.

"We've had real success," said class instructor Capt. Mike Parker, who has run charter boats for three decades. "I followed the construction of the high school. Then I went to the school board and asked if such a class was possible."

From there, Parker had to contact the state for permission. It was granted and the class was off and sailing.

The students' reasons for taking the career elective course vary.

"I like to fish," said sophomore Ana Vizcarrondo, who Parker said ties some of the best knots in the class. "I use it when I go fishing with my dad. The class definitely opened up a lot of opportunities."

Those opportunities may extend much farther than Destin, Parker said. The state director



of curriculum has asked him to write a proposal to get the fishing class into more Florida schools.

For Ana, the goal is to fish for fun with her father. Her crowning achievement was that of landing a 35-pound snapper. "It made good tacos," she said.

But for junior Benjamin Otto, the class is a pathway to a career.

"It teaches you to get out of class and go to work," Otto said. "It's our version of an ag elective."

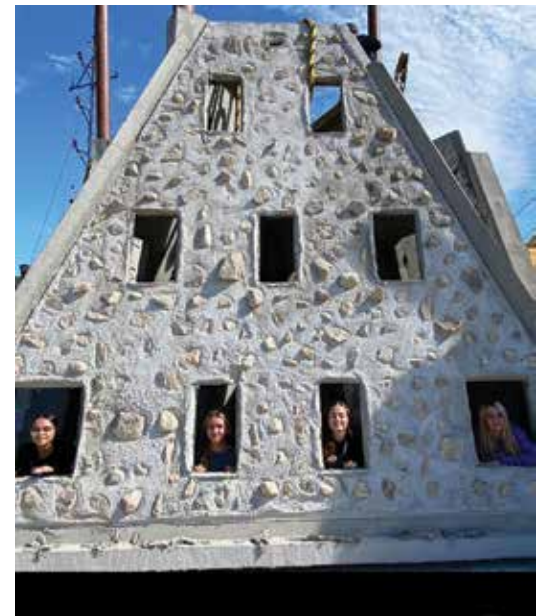
Otto said he hopes to make a

living on the water and, in fact, may have a job lined up already. But it's not all fun and games.

The toughest part of the fishing class, Otto said, is "tests. Flags and what they mean. CPR. Also, weather and knots."

Selflessness is part of the deal with the class as well. It set up a sea school scholarship fund and recently raised \$10,000 to construct 10 reefs in the Gulf of Mexico, selling nautical items, including a vacation stay donated by Ocean Reef.

The reef project was a response to a challenge issued by Okaloosa County Coastal Resource Manager Alex Fogg, who promised to add \$10,000 to the fund if the youngsters raised \$10,000 of their own. They did and he did. The reefs will be deployed by the beginning of summer.



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# Turtle Nesting Season Underway

## Nesting season arrives on our coasts for sea turtles and waterbirds

Nesting season has started for both sea turtles and waterbirds in the Sunshine State. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) reminds people they can help protect vulnerable nesting sea turtles and waterbirds this spring and summer while visiting Florida's coastal habitats.

Because our state's shorelines are critical for sea turtle and waterbird nesting, beachgoers can have a big impact on their nesting success. To help nesting sea turtles and waterbirds, give them space, minimize disturbances, and keep beaches clean and dark.

Obstacles on the beach can prevent sea turtles from nesting as they crawl across the sand to lay their eggs. Trash, holes in the sand and other obstacles can also prevent sea turtle hatchlings from reaching the water once they emerge from their nests. Food scraps attract predators, such as raccoons and crows, that prey on sea turtle hatchlings,

shorebird eggs and chicks. Litter on beaches can entangle sea turtles, birds and other wildlife. Beachgoers can help our native wildlife by stashing all trash, filling in human-made holes in the sand, and removing boats, beach toys and furniture from the beach before sunset. Fishing line can be deadly to sea turtles, waterbirds and other wildlife, so be sure to dispose of it properly. To find a monofilament recycling station near you, visit [mrrp.MyFWC.com](http://mrrp.MyFWC.com).

Any lighting can misdirect and disturb nesting sea turtles and their hatchlings, leading them



away from the ocean and toward potential danger. Beach-

goers should use natural starlight to see on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches should use natural starlight to see on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches should use natural starlight to see on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches should use natural starlight to see on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones.

Getting too close (50 feet or less) to nesting sea turtles can cause them to leave the beach before they complete

nesting. Remember – it is illegal to harm or disturb nesting sea

turtles and their nests, eggs and hatchlings. Shorebirds, seabirds and wading birds also need plenty of space to prevent them from flushing from their breeding sites, leaving vulnerable eggs and chicks exposed to the elements and predators. Egg temperatures can increase to lethal levels after just a few minutes of direct sun exposure. Shorebirds and seabirds nest in shallow scrapes in the sand and their eggs and chicks are well-camouflaged, making them vulnerable to being stepped on unless people look out for them and avoid walking through flocks of birds.

In general, it is best to keep at least 300 feet from nesting birds and to avoid walking through flocks of birds or entering posted areas. Pet owners can also help by keeping dogs at home or on a short leash and away from wildlife on pet-friendly beaches.



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# NWFSC Coach Steve DeMeo Named to FCSAA Men's Basketball Hall of Fame

The Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) announced that Steve DeMeo will be inducted in the Men's Basketball Hall of Fame as a member of the Class of 2023. DeMeo is the head coach for the Northwest Florida State College Raiders men's basketball team and will be recognized during this week's FCSAA/NJCAA Region VIII Men's Basketball Tournament at Raider Arena.

Spanning three decades and across all levels of the college game, DeMeo's achievements are well-known throughout the greater basketball community.

In 2015, he took NWFSC to a national title and was named the Spalding NJCAA National Coach of the Year. Under DeMeo's direction, the Raiders turned in a six-year record of 170-27 (.863), earned an additional berth in the 2017 NJCAA Final Four, and advanced to the Elite Eight in 2016, 2018, and 2019.

With DeMeo at the helm, the Raiders captured the Panhandle Conference Championship five-straight years (2015-19) and earned four FCSAA State Tournament Championships in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019.

"I am extremely proud of Coach DeMeo for earning this recognition as an inductee of the FCSAA Men's Basketball Hall of Fame," said Dr. Devin Stephenson, NWFSC president. "His integrity, passion, and decision-making skills make him one of the best, and this recognition is



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well-deserved."

For more information on Raider Athletics, please contact

Brady Peters, the athletic coordinator, at [petersb5@nwfsc.edu](mailto:petersb5@nwfsc.edu).



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# The Thyroid Explained



By DR. RICHARD CHERN M.D.

I'd like to start off by saying thank you to everyone who voted us BEST IN DESTIN for both Anti-Aging Clinic and Women's Wellness Clinic. We are so excited and for readers of South Walton Life we will be offering FREE consultations in the month of January- so call us today! In this article, I want to talk about how The Hormone Restoration

Center looks at the thyroid just a little bit differently than other physicians in the area. The thyroid cycle can be confusing, **EVEN FOR DOCTORS!** We occasionally get calls from primary care physicians who worry their patient's thyroid level is too high or too low. The problem is they are looking at the wrong lab values. If you ask any of our patients, they will tell you we spend a long time discussing the thyroid with them and they all say, "Wow, I've never had someone explain it to me before." To get the thyroid to work, the brain secretes Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) to tell the thyroid to produce hormones. Thyroxine (T4) and tri-iodothyronine (T3) are two of the main hormones produced in response to TSH. Thyroxine (T4) goes

back to the brain to tell the pituitary to reduce the amount of TSH produced while tri-iodothyronine (T3) regulates nearly every aspect of our metabolism. This is called a negative feedback loop like you see between a parent and child. The parent yells louder and louder at the child to clean his room. He eventually does which causes the yelling to stop and then the room slowly gets dirty again which restarts the yelling. In the same way TSH increases and causes T4 to increase. This causes TSH to decrease, which then causes T4 to decrease which causes TSH to increase. Sounds much more complicated this way. T3 is the active thyroid hormone that regulates body temperature, heart rate, body weight, muscle strength,

cholesterol, menstrual cycles, mental health, concentration, hair growth, energy and much, much more. Most physicians **ONLY** look at TSH to determine thyroid function which causes confusion as patients will say their thyroid is high when actually their TSH is high and thyroid is low.

At The Hormone Restoration Center, we look at your symptoms and **ALL** your thyroid levels to determine your need for treatment and optimal dosage. If you need treatment, optimal levels of T3 and T4 will often cause your TSH to be low. This is what concerns your physician. However, if your T3 is good, your symptoms have resolved and you don't have symptoms of too much thyroid, then your dose is usually fine,

or as we prefer to say, optimal. So, if you have fatigue, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, joint and muscle pain, depression, anxiety, weight gain, trouble sleeping, coarse hair or hair loss, temperature sensitivity, weakness, high cholesterol, constipation, dry skin, or menstrual irregularities you might have a thyroid disorder even if you have been tested optimal in the past.

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## Help Raise Funds for Suicide Prevention

The Tatissa Foundation for Suicide Prevention in support of Okaloosa Suicide Prevention and Support (Okaloosa SPS) announces its first fundraiser for April 13, 7-9 p.m., at the Edge Seafood Restaurant and Bar, Destin. This is the group's inaugural fundraiser and seeks to raise funds for suicide prevention awareness and improved

access to support and resources in Okaloosa County.

Tickets are \$50 per person and may be purchased online at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8psrx8>. The event will feature a dinner buffet, local and national guest speakers and a silent auction. Funds will be used to pay for QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Gatekeeper training and

other suicide prevention, intervention and postvention trainings, as well as informational materials, speakers, and other suicide prevention resources and events.

Okaloosa SPS was established in collaboration with concerned local residents in January 2023 as a program of The Tatissa Foundation, [https://](https://www.thetatissafoundation.org)

[www.thetatissafoundation.org](https://www.thetatissafoundation.org). While many organizations focus on prevention within certain age groups or populations, Okaloosa SPS recognizes the need for broader outreach and suicide prevention activities and is dedicated to raising awareness to everyone in the county.

Sabina and Louis Zunguze,

founders of the Tatissa Foundation and Okaloosa SPS, said, "from our personal experience, suicide is a complex issue that can affect anyone and, as such, it is everyone's business. We are all touched by suicide in unique ways that require com-

*Continued on page 40*



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 Wellness


BY KAY LEAMAN,  
Health Architect, HealthyDay  
HealthyLife

Gout is a painful form of arthritis that occurs when high levels of uric acid in the blood form crystals and accumulate in and around the joint. However, gout can still occur without high UA levels. The onset of gout is sudden with severe joint pain, redness (feels like the joint is on fire) and is tender to the touch. It often occurs at the base of the big toe, but can affect other joints as well. It is a type of arthritis which creates inflammation in the affected area. Men are more prone than women to have gout. The chances for women increase after

menopause. Areas affected are the joints, bursae (sac between bones in joints), tendon sheaths and kidneys.

Gout arthritis increases bone fracture risk notably due to low vitamin D levels but also oxidative stress and inflammatory cytokines induced by hyperuricemia. Inflammatory cytokines and oxidative stress can increase bone resorption and decrease bone formation increasing the risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures.

Uric acid is produced when purines (a naturally occurring chemical in the body and some foods) are broken down during digestion. UA normally passes through the kidneys and exits through urine without issue. Higher levels due to excess production of UA or failure to eliminate properly triggers the condition.

Risk Factors:

- Family history
- Age and sex
- Diet
- Obesity (UA levels higher primarily due to lowered elimination)
- Medical Conditions: HBP, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, kidney disease, kidney stones, heart attacks, congestive heart failure, psoriasis
- Any disease that increases UA levels
- Certain medications: Diuretics (helps body to eliminate fluid), low-dose aspirin, Cyclosporine (immunosuppressant), niacin-B vitamin (if taken in large amounts).

A healthy diet (fruit, veggies, whole grains) can help alleviate or prevent this painful disease. Cherries have been shown to reduce symptoms. Foods to avoid

due to their sugar content or purine levels are:

- Steak and organ meats
- Sweetbreads and other sugary food and sodas
- Seafood such as anchovies, shellfish, sardines and tuna are higher in purine than other types but the health benefits of fish may outweigh the risks
- Alcohol and beer (avoid during gout attacks), wine doesn't appear to increase risk

High quality supplements can play a positive role in treating gout. They can also improve metabolism, reduce inflammation, improve kidney function and filtration, and may help keep UA levels normal. Certain antioxidants also help to reduce inflammation as well as reduce frequency and severity of attack.

Vitamin D: High levels of UA inhibit vitamin D production. D

deficiencies are common with gout.

Grape Seed extract with Vitamin C: Best supplement Dr. Ladd has seen to reduce symptoms of gout. Patients had great success reducing pain and recurrence of gout flare ups. Doses varied with patients.

Joint support with curcumin (turmeric extract) mixed with vitamin C and several other important supporting ingredients creates a synergistic safe anti-inflammatory response that reduces pain effectively, while at the same time helps heal the tissues.

If you feel you may be at risk it may be time to take steps toward a healthier lifestyle. As we used to say in the olden days, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

*Here's to Health.*

*succeed.hdh@gmail.com*

## Self-Care Corner: Red Light Therapy for the Best YOU

BY KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER

It's officially spring, and Beverly Hills Day Spa has kicked the season off in healthy fashion—an opportunity to look and feel vibrant and healthy. It's called Red Light Therapy.

We all grow up hearing "Beauty isn't skin deep." And, it's not! Beauty is inside and out! So,

it's best to treat yourself as such. Even the outer layer of your skin, hair and nails thrive when you sustain yourself internally. Hence, the reason Red Light Therapy is gaining in popularity is due to its long-term positive effects, internally and externally.

The vast array of Red Light Therapy benefits can include in-

creased energy, wound healing and tissue repair, increased collagen production, hair growth stimulation, increased metabolism, increased fat loss, increased strength gains, faster recovery post workout, flawless skin, anti-aging, psoriasis reduction, dental pain reduction, skin damage reversal, reduced inflammation,

improved hormonal health, better quality sleep and improved liver function. Outwardly, your skin becomes smoother, pores shrink, wrinkles diminish and collagen is restored. Inwardly, light therapy works directly with your cells, generating an increase of ATP, the energy that fuels your body.



As you know, when you have sun damage, aging or skin disorders, your healthy skin cells are compromised, leaving them helpless to renew on their own. But Red Light Therapy can come to the rescue, using its color wavelengths of visible light, each with specific skin benefits, to repair and restore. Besides, it's a much better alternative to surgery.

Your skin will soak it up, turning it into fuel for your cells, helping them reproduce faster and more efficiently. This repairs and rejuvenates damaged cells, while also killing bacteria. Collagen production is stimulated, circulation is boosted and tissue repair is accelerated. Because it works inside your cells, you feel better, too, physically and mentally.

A package of 10 red light therapy treatments is \$200 or \$30 per 10-15-minute treatment and can be added onto other services. Ready to make a positive major change in YOUR overall well-being? Schedule an appointment with me at Beverly Hills Day Spa for an in-depth consultation. Call me at (850) 654-8544. Or visit us at [beverlyhillspaspa.com](http://beverlyhillspaspa.com).



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# April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

*“Every year we try to create awareness of April being National Child Abuse Prevention month and the services that ECCAC can offer to child victims. It is imperative that everyone does their part to help protect children. Prevention is the best protection against child abuse.” ~ Julie Porterfield, ECCAC CEO*

a child-friendly environment to abused and neglected children and their families. ECCAC is one organization with two locations. The Children’s Advocacy Center in Niceville serves Okaloosa

County and the Pierce Family Children’s Advocacy Center in DeFuniak Springs serves Walton County.

Julie Porterfield, ECCAC CEO said, “Please join our ini-

tiative to paint the town blue! For the month of April, our Centers are selling a yard sign and t-shirt for \$30 for the set. It will help to raise child abuse awareness by placing the sign in your yard,

window, home or business as a signal of hope for the kids in our community. There is no excuse for child abuse.”

Order on-line at [www.eccac.org](http://www.eccac.org), or email [info@eccac.org](mailto:info@eccac.org).



National abuse statistics are alarming. According to the National Children’s Alliance, the national association and accrediting body for Children’s Advocacy Centers, nearly 700,000 children are abused in the U.S. annually. Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment with 75% suffering from neglect, 17.2% from physical abuse and 8.4% from sexual abuse. Roughly four out of five abusers are the child victim’s parents.

With National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, it brings to light the fact that many do not realize the peril our children can experience and have to deal with right here in Northwest Florida. There are approximately 1,100 cases of child sexual and physical abuse reported annually in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, an average of three per day. Despite those big numbers, nearly 2/3 of the actual needs to help child victims go unmet due to lack of reporting to authorities. It is estimated that for every one child ECCAC helps, there are two children out there who are not helped.

Enter the Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center (ECCAC), a multi-disciplinary team with all support services and personnel under one roof. They provide services 24/7 in

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 Wellness

# Regret Avoidance vs. Living and Learning



By **STEPHENIE CRAIG,**  
JOURNEY BRAVELY

I was a high school senior deciding between college in my home town or five hours away. I meticulously weighed the pros

and cons and spun up scenarios of different directions my life might take if I didn't choose the exact right university. The back and forth had a deadline and I eventually decided to leave my home town. Five years later, I was 1 year into a job, married, and moving forward in life when it hit me...it didn't really matter which school I chose. Either way, I would have chosen the same career path, likely married the same person (since he was a childhood friend), and my life would have been good. Some things would have been different, but it all would have turned out okay.

Do you ever find yourself

immobilized in decision making because you fear regret? Maybe you feel that every decision needs to be made perfectly in order for your life to progress well. Fear of regret can make it hard to choose a school, take a job, commit to a relationship, make a move, or plan a trip. Worrying that every decision might be the wrong decision can keep you from enjoying your life and creates a stuck feeling of anxiety.

What if there was a way to flip the script in your head about every decision being a chance for failure and regret? What if every decision is an opportunity to live and learn, to grow and become wiser?

I talk with hundreds of humans each year about various life decisions. Over time, I have observed and embraced the reality that most decisions don't have one right path. Most decisions have some flexibility and you could choose one of various options and still experience a positive outcome. Of course there are poor, unwise decisions and we all want to avoid those. But outside of that, most decisions aren't permanent, can be adjusted if needed, and produce growth and learning. It's possible to define a life well lived as one characterized by growth and learning rather than by a list of

specific accomplishments. So, how do you shift from a regret avoidance approach to a living and learning approach to life?

## 5 Ways to Shift from Regret Avoidance to Living and Learning

**1. Identify the decision at hand and notice any fear of regret thoughts surfacing in your mind and body.** Name the fear of regret to yourself and gently release the thought rather than obsessing about worst case scenarios.

**2. Brainstorm decision options.** Notice that most of the time, multiple healthy decision options exist. Narrow your brainstorm down to the top 2 or 3 decision options that seem wise and in line with your values.

**3. Remember your decision history.** Remind yourself of times when decisions have been flexible and could be adjusted over time. Remind yourself of times when decisions have produced growth and learning that resulted in positive change in your life. Remind yourself of times when even decisions you would make differently now taught you something important you might not otherwise have learned. Try journaling using the above reminders as prompts.

**4. Watch for life's lessons.** As you make decisions, watch for opportunities to learn, to pivot, to embrace a new skill or character quality. When something doesn't go like you planned, reach for the learning, notice the discomfort, then be open to growing. Our greatest times of personal growth tend to result from unexpected and hard circumstances.

**5. Embrace the resulting freedom from letting go of fear of regret.** Lean into the joy of knowing the vast majority of your decisions are able to shape you into a more mature and whole person if you don't resist the process. Try creating an internal message like, "I'm going to make a wise decision based on the information I currently have. I will make adjustments as needed. I will embrace all the growth and learning from the decision I'm making and choose not to regret it." It's okay if regret emerges from time to time. Gently dismiss it and move forward with your new approach.

As you seek to release fear of regret and incorporate joyful living and learning into your journey, you can connect with us at [journeybravely.com](http://journeybravely.com).





## JOURNEY BRAVELY



**Stephenie Craig, LCSW**  
Therapist  
918-221-9987 | [stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com](mailto:stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com)

**Todd Craig**  
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# Walk In The Footsteps of Jesus



By JODELL HAVERFIELD,  
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

Recently, I was talking to a friend who I knew was well traveled. She mentioned she had been to Israel four times, and she wanted to go again! She was interested in our tour coming up in December. I asked her why she wanted to go again, suddenly her voice went up a pitch as she responded, “because it’s so magical!”

I almost felt like I had asked her a stupid question! I soon learned she didn’t mean Disney World magical; she was referring to a very spiritual connection to the Savior. I have never been there myself, which is why I was curious about my friend’s desire to go again! Dave and I plan to go this December with our oldest son Jason, who is one of our travel agents at HTM and who is familiar with the incredible and unique Israel experience. He has not only studied the ancient history in depth, he was last there just four months ago on an educational tour with other travel agents.

One of my dear friends and favorite clients called me last year to book our tour to Israel, even though we both knew her husband absolutely hated organized group touring. However, we booked it anyway. It was a December tour, so using it as a Christmas gift, she was able to keep it a secret until the last minute. When they returned, she reported their whole trip was amazing from the start when her husband met another doctor and made a new friend on the plane to Tel Aviv. She said he also very much enjoyed their group and the tour as well. They both loved their guide and, as two of my choosiest luxury clients, I was relieved they returned all smiles and extremely pleased.

Here are just a few of the comments made from recent travelers about this trip.

Most common is this one: “It was the experience of a lifetime.”

“Since going on this journey, I cannot read the Bible the same anymore.”

“The Bible really came to life as we walked the same lands Jesus walked.”



“When I saw the tomb, I experienced a new appreciation for all that Christ did for our salvation.”

Almost everyone remarks on how well priced these tours are. Including Air from New York, our All-Inclusive Dec. 5 tour is only \$3,498 for 10 days. We also offer post extensions such as Wonders of Petra and the Dead Sea \$1,098, Cairo and the Route of the Exodus \$1,198 or a Nile Cruise \$2,098.

The 5-star hotels, concierges, food experiences, tour guides, even the buses for this itinerary are provided by our vendor, who has been leading these journeys to the Holy Land since 1974. Israel is not the only faith based itinerary offered, either, as the Ancient Wonders and Stories in the Bible take place all over the world. You can choose to visit Egypt, Greece, Turkey, England, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, even South America and there’s more! Many of these tours are offered on cruise ships as well as river cruises, such as Celebrity, Norwegian and AmaWaterways. You can book a group pilgrimage with your own church or book a group with your girlfriends. Who knows, if you have a group, you yourself might even be able to go free, or you can just travel solo. There are so

many available options.

Dave and I have been privileged to travel to Ephesus and visit the home of Mary, where she lived after Jesus ascended. It has been one of our favorite trips. Last year, we saw the Passion Play in Bavaria. We are looking forward to finally being able to go to Israel in December, which is, by the way, a great time of year to be there. The

weather is nice and it’s a little less crowded. Living on the Emerald Coast, we can understand that mentality.

Imagine standing where the miracles happened, such as the Sermon on the Mount, where the feeding of the 5,000 took place, or Cana, the site of Jesus’ first miracle, turning water into wine at a wedding, the Western Wall, the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus performed the Sabbath miracle when he healed the crippled man who had waited so long.

This month, we will remember the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ as we celebrate Easter. I can’t believe our tour will include visiting the traditional location of the Upper Room where the events of the Last Supper took place. I am eager to walk the Palm Sunday Road, and the Garden of Gethsemane. It will be humbling to envision the scenes that took place the night before Jesus’ crucifixion and see the Garden Tomb where he was laid.

Much of our trip will include visiting Jerusalem and the City of David, Masada and the Dead Sea, Bethlehem, Jesus’ birthplace, and Nazareth, Jesus’ boyhood home, Jericho and Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. We will visit the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized by John the

Baptist and sail on the Sea of Galilee. Did you know there is a city continuously inhabited for over 5,000 years? It’s the city of Beit Shean.

I just don’t have enough room to keep telling you how excited I am about our magnificent upcoming trip to Israel, but

you can view all about it on our website. I am so excited about the return of travel. I hope I have inspired my readers to get familiar with these amazing stories of Christ’s life this Easter.

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 Environment

# Stay Cool By Ruling Your Attic

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Pop quiz: Which state has the highest summer relative humidity? Was it Hawaii? Florida? Louisiana? The answer: None of those! Alaska ranked No. 1 last year in relative humidity.

Don't be upset. Florida fol-

lowed closely behind and ranked second. I'm proud to be living in a state which always ranks high on rising temperatures and humidity compared to other states, GO FLORIDA! There is great research, data and comparisons generated by NOAA and other agencies illustrating climate change. The fact is, just step outside and you know it's warm. Most describe our weather as

hot, balmy, sticky and even unbearable. I like to describe our weather as tropical or sun-filled. With that said, I enjoy the feeling of cool bought air (air conditioning), ice in my drink and the Gulf when it's not the temperature of warm bath water.

So how can we keep more of our bought air in our homes? The majority of wasted conditioned air leaks through our attics. Attics are the No. 1 source of air loss, so what can we do? It's simple – rule your attic. First, check the amount of insulation you have in the attic. If you see joists, wood supports, running down the attic floor, you need insulation. If you measure the thickness of insulation and it is less than 11.5 inches, you need insulation.

Adding insulation not only increases your comfort, it also puts less wear and tear on your HVAC equipment, saving you money. Another way energy is lost through the attic is leaking conditioned air into the attic by unsealed penetrations. These



consist of electrical wiring, ceiling fans, bathroom vents and light switches, just to name a few.

Plumbing located in your attic also requires air sealing around vent pipes. Toilets and drains require proper venting. Vent pipes supply fresh air to each plumbing fixture in the house, which helps the system move water through the drainage pipes each time a toilet is flushed or a sink is drained. Plumbing air vents also prevent sewer gasses from entering the home and allow wastewater gas and odor to escape. These areas normally have the most concerns because the required diameter of these holes varies and they are usually drilled to the

largest size to save time during construction, but cost you money when not sealed.

Air sealing around light fixtures and recessed lights also will have a positive impact on air loss and comfort.

Most attics are engineered to circulate air by soffit vents and ridge vents, not by using improperly sealed electrical and plumbing attic penetrations. Leaking ductwork is also ranked high on the energy list. By the time your cool air reaches vents to cool rooms, cracked or unsealed ductwork will suck in hot attic air and dust to those rooms, wasting your money and causing your HVAC to work harder.

If you experience hard-to-cool rooms, high heating and cooling bills or know you have low insulation and opportunities to become more energy efficient, Rule Your Attic. If you decide to do these projects yourself, take precautions; wear safety glasses, proper clothes and gloves, stay hydrated, take breaks and have a buddy to help. If you decide to hire a professional to assess and suggest solutions, get estimates in writing, ask to air seal and what they air seal and how much insulation will be added. And start Ruling Your Attic.

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

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**BENEFIT**

*continued from page 33*

munity-wide well-coordinated, affordable and sustainable services and we hope that this fundraiser will be our contribution to that cause.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-34. In 2020, an estimated 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 million made a plan, and 1.2 million attempted suicide. Rates have nearly doubled since 2006 for children ages 10-14. In Okaloosa County, in the last five years there

have been 30 deaths by suicide between the ages of 10 and 24.

Dial or Text 988 the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline if you are experiencing mental health-related distress or are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. You can also find help at 988 lifeline.org if you need help.

For additional information about the fundraiser or donating/contributing to the silent auction, contact [okaloosasps@gmail.com](mailto:okaloosasps@gmail.com). To learn more about Okaloosa SPS, or how you can get involved, email or visit Facebook

# Wisdom Workforces for the Emerald Coast and Beyond



BY DR. JEFF AND ROBIN CERNY

Because of technology change and the associated worker turbulence, greater attention is being placed on workforce development. Workforce Development refers to policies and initiatives aimed at improving the skills, education, and overall employment prospects of workers in the labor force.

The rapid pace of technological change is disrupting work and workplaces. Policy makers have been slow or unable to predict what skills will be needed in our future businesses. As a result, more and more workers are finding that their acquired skills are quickly becoming obsolete.

A workforce that seeks wis-

dom will develop ‘higher level skills’ needed for change.

The Bible teaches that while human beings can make plans and decisions, it is God who orders our steps and guides our paths (Proverbs 16:9). This scripture encourages the development of a Wisdom Workforce in three ways. 1) Wise workers approach their tasks with humility and a willingness to learn. Instead of assuming that they have all the an-

swers, wise workers seek God’s guidance and wisdom in their work. 2) Understanding that God may guide our paths in unexpected ways helps wise workers to be flexible and adaptable. Instead of being stuck in rigid plans or expectations, wise

workers are open to change or even better yet will generate divine ideas and open doors. 3) Wise workers trust that God will guide them in the right direction, even when things seem uncertain or difficult. Instead of being uncertain and anxious, this trust provides a sense of peace and confidence that will be beneficial in any workplace. Wisdom Workers which include the Leaders are willing to learn, to adapt, and are confident in their ordained steps.

*C12EmeraldCoast.Com is a Wisdom Investment Group. It operates in Cohorts of 12 committed Business Leaders that share Godly Wisdom and Best Practices together for a Greater Purpose.*

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 Business


BY JOE CAPERS

With Spring Break and Summer around the corner, a lot of us locals (and our guests) will be out in our golf carts. You might even want to purchase one. Just remember, as there are different kinds of golf carts, which you'll discover when you go to the dealership and start looking at them, there's also different types of insurance coverage depending on your vehicle.

Let's shed some light on the differences, coverages and when you need what.

To begin with, there are two main 'uses' for golf carts/LSVs. Either personal or business/commercial. When your golf cart or LSV is used by you and your direct family members only, that's considered personal use. If you have a rental condo, for instance, and include a golf cart for your renter's use, that makes it business/commercial.

So, you're wondering, what's the big deal? Let's start with personal use and the two types – golf carts and LSVs. Golf carts are usually electric and have a maximum speed of about 15 mph and are designed to be used on your property or within the community your home is located, and back and forth to the

## It's Golf Cart Season! Make Sure You Have the Correct Coverage for Yours

golf course. They aren't tagged or registered for driving on the street like your car. Some home or condo policies might include minimal golf cart coverage with an endorsement, but this won't give you everything you need and is not recommended. A separate golf cart policy would give you the best coverage.

Next, there are LSVs, or low speed vehicles. These are a type of golf cart with a maximum speed of around 25 mph and are manufactured with safety features such as rear-view mirrors, seat belts, brake lights, and turn signals, among other features. When tagged and registered, they are allowed on public roads with posted speeds of a maximum 35 mph.

There are differences in both coverage and premium. Essential golf cart coverages for any Personal Insurance Program should include: Liability to Others (Bodily Injury and Property Damage), Medical Payments, Guest Limits Liability, Uninsured Motorist Limits, and, if you need coverage to protect for damage to your cart, Comprehensive and Collision. BUT, once it's tagged and registered for street use, you will also need PIP (personal injury protection) coverage Florida requires of every vehicle on the road. This one coverage, in insurance speak, changes the product from golf cart coverage to LSV coverage and must be written on an auto policy platform. LSVs are

more expensive to insure (with the mandatory PIP coverage) than golf carts, since LSVs are allowed on the road with cars, trucks and semis which increases the risk/exposure substantially.

As an example, your chances of being involved in a severe accident in your complex is much lower than if you were driving your golf cart on a public road. A Mercedes colliding with a golf cart going 35 mph would probably cause more damage than two golf carts bumping heads.

When you allow your renter to use your golf cart, you now need different coverage. If you have a personal use golf cart policy, it will not protect you or your renters if they cause Liability to Others from their negligence. This is where a policy designed for rental exposure is necessary. Because your renter is using your golf cart, this falls under the purview of a commercial product. So, you need a type of Commercial General Liability insurance. This insurance is designed to give you, typically, \$1 million in liability coverage and some physical damage (Inland Marine) coverage for the golf cart. Keep in mind, this product may not have the same coverages as a properly structured personal use golf cart policy as described above. And this policy does not provide the PIP coverage that would be required if the cart is tagged and registered with the

state. And it is nearly impossible to find an auto carrier that will write a policy with PIP if it falls under a rental situation.

Here in Okaloosa and Walton counties, as well as Bay and Escambia counties, we have many beachfront, gated and golf course communities with a plethora of golf carts being used every day.

Talk to your agent to ensure you have the correct coverage for your use as there are many different scenarios that will determine the right coverage for

your golf cart.

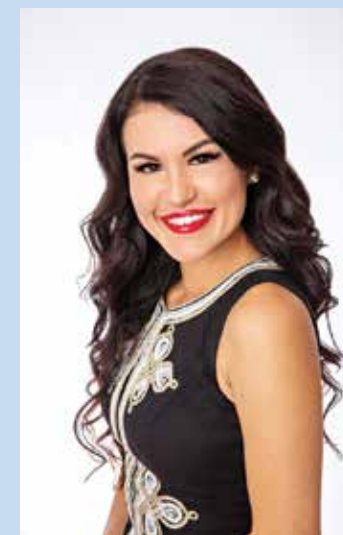
*Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is now Abora Insurance Group. Voted Top in the Market for 10 years in a row, Abora is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Abora can find solutions from a wide variety of the best insurance carriers in the market for Home, Auto and Life insurance on your terms. Call (850) 424.6979 or visit [Getabora.com](http://Getabora.com).*

### Hana Hawkins Joins Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida

Hana Hawkins has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida as Managing Broker for the Destin location. Hawkins will be responsible for overseeing daily operations, managing brokerage transactions, implementing agent training programs to ensure the delivery of quality customer service, and recruitment. The Destin office is located at 151 Regions Way, Suite 4A.

"We are thrilled to welcome Hana to the executive team at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida," said Jimmy Burgess, CEO. "Hana's exemplary record of service to the local real estate community, her expertise in the field, and her enthusiasm and passion for the industry makes her the ideal candidate to lead our growing Destin location."

A veteran of the local real estate market, Hawkins has been a licensed agent since 2012 building her business on professionalism, ethics, and market knowledge. She has been consistently active in the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, serving as the Miramar Beach Director on the Board of Directors from 2021 to present, as the 2021 Co-Chair and 2022 Chairman for the Young Professionals Network, and a 2020 ECAR



Leadership Academy Graduate. Hawkins was also awarded ECAR's 2022 Realtor of the Year for Destin and 2021 Realtor of the Year for Miramar Beach. In addition, Hawkins has led the ECAR Destin Tour for over nine years.

"Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida's focus on the customer and dedication to providing the best services and products for its sales professionals attracted me to the brand," said Hawkins. "Known for its innovation and leadership in the local real estate market, particularly along Scenic Highway 30A, I look forward to helping expand the agency's market share in Destin and surrounding areas."

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# Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

It was our place. That's what it was. I grew up in a little fishing village, nestled in the Florida Panhandle.

This was long before the tattoo parlors, before the T-shirt shops, before Whole Foods and Bass Pro.

Today our little town is not even a shadow of its former glory. On any given month, Destin is inundated with 8 million tourists wearing thong bikinis. And those are just the men.

But once upon a time, we had Pepito's. It was your quintessential Mexican dive restaurant. It was clean. The staff was friendly. They had ugly orange walls. The joint was always packed.

They served good food. The chips were always hot. The salsa was fresh from an actual tin can. They had ice-cold Tecate.

You could order a "King Burrito," and you wouldn't be hungry again for the next three

or four presidential administrations.

My first kiss happened outside Pepito's. It was late. Her name was Teresa. She had red hair and she smelled like Head and Shoulders.

Do people name their kids Teresa anymore?

As a young man, all my friends went to Pepito's because it was where you went. We spent entire evenings in those booths, discussing who we were going to grow up to become.

For a few bucks, you could fill your belly on queso dip that would turn your bowels into stone. If you had enough cash left over, you could take in a movie across the street.

Years later, I worked at the restaurant next door to Pepito's. We served cheap sirloins. I was a line cook. I worked in a dank kitchen until 1AM every weeknight, doing dishes.

They were long nights. Pepito's shared our same dumpster. So, whenever I took out the trash, there were always a few Latino guys out there smoking cigarettes, speaking in rapid-fire Español, drinking longneck Pacificos.

I learned to speak Spanish in that alley. I had no idea they were teaching me dirty words.

Before I married, I would take my future-wife to Pepito's. On weekends, they had a mariachi trio. Three portly men played vihuelas, guitaelas and violinos, strolling between tables. If you didn't put money into their guitar soundholes, they would play louder.

One night, I requested the trio play "Besame Mucho" for my fiance. They actually let me sing a song with them. My musical performance was so impressive, all the people in the restaurant sprang to their feet and rushed for the exits.

After we married, my wife and I lived in a cheap apartment behind Waffle House. It was a horrible place. I got fleas. Twice. We were flat broke, so eating out was a luxury. Whenever we treated ourselves, we went to Pepito's.

But then, that was a long time ago. Somehow I grew up. And so did our fishing village.

One by one, the mom-and-pop shops disappeared and became real estate offices or vape outlets. The post-war block houses were demolished so that homes shaped like the Sears Towers could be built in their places. They tore down the fishing rodeo docks and built Six Flags over Avarice.



But Pepito's was a mainstay. You could always count on Pepito's. You could walk inside, order an immobilizingly cold beer, eat lukewarm guacamole, and play the memory game with old friends.

"Remember when we used to...?" "Remember when we were kids...?" "Whatever happened to what's-her-name...?"

For a few bucks, you could eat mediocre Mexican that tasted the same as it did a lifetime ago. And you could remember things.

Such as the night, long ago, when you brought your widowed mother here and broke the news that you were getting married. She cried. And so did you.

Or the night your best friend brought you here and told you he was leaving for Afghanistan in the morning.

Today, they're vacating Pepito's. The property was owned by investors in Canada. But the good ole days are gone. It's been purchased. The new investors want to build a Publix. Tourists got to have their groceries.

Even so, I'll always remember the balmy evenings from the summers of my Florida youth. I'll remember the dim-lit booths of an average Mexican-American eatery, where the promise of my entire future hung in the air.

I'll forever remember how young we were. How smooth our faces looked. And how good it felt when, in that corner booth, a young woman once took my hand and said, "Yes, I'll be your wife."

You can tear down Pepito's. But keep your hands off my memories.

## Want to Join an Easter Church Service?

### Destiny Worship Center Destin Campus

Friday, April 7 | Good Friday Service | 6pm

Saturday, April 8 | Eggstravaganza Community Egg Hunt 3pm | Easter Service 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Services: 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am  
DestinyWorshipCenter.com



Friday, April 7 | Good Friday Service | Noon

Saturday, April 8 | Holy Saturday Service | Noon

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Sunday Resurrection Worship | 9am  
Iacdestin.org

### Village Church

Thursday, April 6 | Maundy Thursday | Village Greens | 6 pm

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Sunrise Service | 6:26am  
Easter Sunday Service | 10am

Egg Hunt | 11am  
VillageBaptist.org

### Immanuel Anglican Church

Holy Week April 2-9  
Sunday, April 2 | Palm Sunday Worship | 9am

Thursday, April 6 | Maundy Thursday Foot-washing and Eucharist | 7pm

### Oceans Church

Friday, April 7 | Good Friday Service | 6:30pm

Saturday, April 8 | Easter Service | 5pm

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Services: 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am  
Oceanschurch.org

### Shoreline Church

Friday, April 7 | Good Friday Service | 7pm

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Services: 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am  
Online | 10am  
shorelinechurch.net

### Destin United Methodist Church

Friday, April 7 | Good Friday Service | 7pm | Destin Life Center

Sunday, April 8 | Easter Sunrise Service | 6am | Henderson Beach State Park

Beach Worship | 7:30am | Crab Trap Restaurant Scenic 98

Contemporary | 9:30am | Destin Life Center

Traditions Service | 11am | Sanctuary

Destinumc.org

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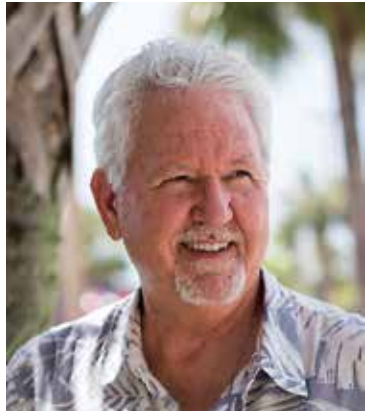
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Musing

# A Pastor's Ponderings: Easter Brings Hope, Joy



BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be

delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. Luke 24:1-12

Where's Jesus?

Depression hung on them like a bitter aftertaste. Jesus is dead. Their feet dragged with disappointment and disillusionment. Jesus is dead. Duty called for them at the tomb to anoint His body. Jesus is dead.

Luke 24:1-12 unfolds like a short four-act play as the writer unveils the greatest event in history. The first act shows us a group of dejected women drag-

ging themselves dutifully to the rock cave, supposedly housing the dead remains of Christ. Someone had to embalm Him, so these faithful women summoned the courage and ingredients to prepare Him for the grave. I'm guessing they were numb with grief, putting one foot in front of the other to do what had to be done.

The women discovered Christ's body was gone – they surely felt shock and perhaps anger. Imagine going into the mortuary to say goodbye to your dead grandfather before the funeral. You open the casket to look at him one more time, and the casket is empty. I doubt that resurrection would be the first thing coming to mind.

As the scene unfolds, light suddenly erupts in the tomb and two men clothed with lighting flash into the cave. Trust me when I tell you they didn't beam down from a spaceship. God the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and He left two angelic witnesses to clues these poor humans in. The angels said in

Luke 24:5, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Really? Yes, really. "Just like He said back in Galilee, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" {Luke 9:22} All who believe this statement are saved from judgment and destined for heaven, according to I Corinthians 15:1-4. Believe and receive all God has for you.

The angels followed with a question that still haunts us, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" We fill our minds with the daily news cycle, sports, entertainment and hobbies, yet we do not find life in them. He is risen! Look up, He is risen. He is here with you now. He is risen in His supernatural body. God incarnate is present-just a whispered prayer away.

The women raced to tell the disciples the greatest news in history and they responded with a "you girls are crazy" attitude. Disappointment makes

people cynical, unbelieving, and apathetic. Except for Peter. He jumped up and ran to the tomb to see for himself. Why Peter? He was feeling the most guilty after denying the Lord three times during His trials.

The empty tomb baffled Peter, who walked away wondering what this could all mean. There are those who ponder the meaning of their lives. Jesus isn't there in the pondering. He is risen.

The Bible says in Romans 10:9-10 (NIV) "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

Please pray, "Lord Jesus. I believe you died for me. I believe you were buried and rose from the dead. Save me from my sins, though they are blood red. Wash away regret, guilt and

Continued on page 44

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## A Dream of America!

On April 6th, the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO), under the leadership of Music Director and Conductor Todd Craven, will perform its final classic of the season at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center in Niceville.

The concert, entitled “A Dream of America,” features all works by American composers. Beginning with Samuel Barber’s

first work for full orchestra written in 1931, the Overture to The School for Scandal, the first half also spotlights George Gershwin’s jazzy and vivacious Piano Concerto in F featuring internationally-acclaimed pianist Brian Ganz. Brian Ganz is widely regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation. A laureate of the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud and the Queen Elisa-



beth of Belgium International Piano Competitions, Mr. Ganz has appeared as soloist with the

St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the London Sinfonia and the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra, and has performed with such conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, Mstislav Rostropovich, Piotr Gajewski and Yoel Levi.

The second half of the program presents young actors from the Northwest Florida State College (NWFSO) theater de-

partment portraying early 20th century immigrants reaching the United States for the first time. The music of Los Angeles based composer Peter Boyer provides the emotional backdrop to these powerful stories drawn from the Ellis Island archives; the perilous journeys across the Atlantic to reach Ellis Island and the relief and emotion of seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time.

## A New Twist for Mother’s Day

Painting with a Twist is fun art, not fine art! Connect with your friends in a warm, supportive and positive environment. Wine, art and fun combine, whether you’re hanging out with Mom, friends, a date or the entire family.

### Mommy & Me events

All ages, paint colorful giraffes Saturday, May 13, 1-3 p.m.

On Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 14, 2-4 p.m., it’s Sippin’ Sunday. For \$62-\$72 per person, paint a beautiful bouquet of colorful flowers on canvas with your mom while sipping on a complimentary mimosa.

From 1:30 to 4 p.m., enjoy the painting and candle bundle for Mother’s Day.

At 5 p.m., it’s still Sippin’ Sunday when you and your mom paint a beautiful sunset on canvas or wood pallet, again with complimentary mimosa! Price varies \$42-\$52 per person. You can also upgrade to a wood pallet, too. All Sippin’ Sunday events are ages 18 and up.

### NEW! Add a candle to any event

Make your own soy wax candle that burns for 40 hours. Candles are soy and paraben free and scented with essential oils. There are 24 scents from which to choose from and they are ready by the end of class to take home. DIY Soy Candles can be added to any event for \$20. Just show up 30 minutes before painting class. There are also pre-made candles that can be purchased any time when you need or want an extra gift for someone.

### Date Night Each Weekend (Friday and Saturday Nights)

Never stuffy or routine, you



can include everything you love about regular dates — your favorite BYOB beverages and finger foods, plus the fun that comes with trying something new. You’ll take home a great painting and even better memories. You and your partner will create a complementary set of masterpieces — together. See calendar online for upcoming date nights.

### Girls’ Night Out Every Night

Just when you thought you were out of girls’ night out ideas, you found the most creative one yet! BYOW (bring your own wine

— ages 18-plus) to a paint party that’s a toast to your girl gang. Reserve your fun party time now online.

You can also book Private Parties—birthday, bachelorette, reunion, work events, get together, reunions and more. You focus on quality time and we’ll handle the rest!

Set your kiddo’s creativity free with a new twist on fun. Book a birthday party, kids camp or Mommy & Me for ages 8 and up. And there’s all-age classes each Saturday from 1-3 p.m.

The April and May calendars offer a variety of paintings

— from seasonally-inspired landscapes to decorative DIY wood board signs, funny self-portraits, Seaside sunsets, paint pour and more.

Find a paint night theme that fits you, then reserve your spot online at [paintingwithatwist.com/studio/fort-walton-beach/calendar](http://paintingwithatwist.com/studio/fort-walton-beach/calendar).



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**Arts & Music**

# Sinfonia Gulf Coast Link Up Performance Featured 2,000 Local Elementary School Students

On March 8 the Emerald Coast Convention Center in Fort Walton Beach was transformed into an electrifying concert hall when Sinfonia Gulf Coast — the only fully professional non-profit orchestra on the Emerald Coast founded in 2005 by music and artistic director Demetrius Fuller — presented its 9th live Link Up concert performance “The Orchestra Moves,” a national program it presented in partnership with New York’s Carnegie Hall Weill Institute of Music.



This year’s Link Up program showcased the talents of more than 2,000 local 3rd-5th grade students from Okaloosa and Walton Counties performing on recorder and singing. The concert was conducted by Sinfonia Gulf Coast Maestro Fuller.

With recorders in hand, the students performed from their seats when given their cue by Maestro Fuller to join the Sinfonia Gulf Coast orchestra for a range of pieces from Danzón No. 2 by Arturo Márquez, The Blue Danube by Johann Strauss

and Toreador from Georges Bizet’s Carmen and others. But these inspired kids didn’t stay in their seats, at this spirited performance they were up out of their chairs singing, dancing choreographed moves they have been practicing for months.

This curriculum is geared towards 3rd-5th grade students, and in many cases locally, is the only music education that they receive during the school year. The theme of this year’s Link Up program was centered around movement. Students learn how we can perceive music as moving through space from high to low, filling the spaces in between with harmonies, timbres, and textures. They learn that when music moves us, it evokes a full range of emotional responses, and compels us to move our bodies and create dance.

Sinfonia’s Link Up program is funded in part by the St. Joe Community Foundation, the Dugas Family Foundation, and the Emeril Lagasse Family Foundation. Additional funding from Sinfonia Gulf Coast’s Crescen-

do! annual fundraiser, Treble Makers, an honorary membership committee of Crescendo!, and community donors, have helped Link Up steadily grow to the Sinfonia’s largest education initiative.

“We are so honored to sponsor this incredible Sinfonia Link Up initiative for the students in our community,” said April Wilkes, executive director of the St. Joe Community Foundation. “For 10 years, the Foundation has made an investment in this program and it has been great to see the growth and impact that it has on all of these students.”

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

**PASTOR’S**

*continued from page 42*

remorse from my soul and show me how to really live.” You are

born again because He is risen.

All of heaven rejoices each time a person prays like this and Christ rushes into your heart. Where’s Jesus? He is with you,

He is in you, He is risen indeed.

*Pastor Dave just released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled “Prodigal Je-*

*sus” You can get a copy of this book from his website, [DaveHolland.org](http://DaveHolland.org), or at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at [DavidHolland54@gmail.com](mailto:DavidHolland54@gmail.com).*

*Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin.*



## BEETHOVEN V. COLDPLAY

### A Merging of Musical Giants

Music visionary Steve Hackman conducts this transformation of the *Eroica* into an oratorio weaving the melodies and lyrics of Coldplay’s *Yellow*, *Viva La Vida* and *Clocks* into Beethoven’s original score.



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# Spring and Summer at ECTC

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Spring is here and summer is right around the corner at Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC). I've already started humming along to all of my favorite Sound of Music songs in preparation for our May 5th-14th production. The hardest part for me is not humming along during the show! The excitement from our young cast members is palpable, not just for this production but for all of our upcoming summer camps as well. We're excited too because that means a whole lot of energetic students dancing, singing, acting, and bringing life to our space. We love providing a place where students can par-

ticipate in creative, team-based activities that don't involve a screen. There are so many great skills that these kids build while having fun- like teamwork, literacy, confidence, communication, and voice and movement.

Our summer camps start at age 5 (rising Kindergarteners) and go through 12th grade. We offer week-long mini player camps throughout the summer for our youngest students to act, dance, sing, and create art while learning how to put on a production. Our elementary aged children have their choice of singing and dancing in our week-long Camp Showtime camps, or show their spots in our two-week musical theatre camp 101 Dalmatians. We also offer the one week, non-musical



camp for our elementary aged students Alice in Wonderland at three different locations including ECTC, Defuniak Springs, and Gulf Coast State College in Panama City.

Our teens have a variety of choices as well with our one-week Cabaret Comedy camp, Playwriting camp, and Film

camp. We also offer a two-week, non-musical production camp Puffs, a hilarious Harry Potter-esque play. We round out our summer with a fantastic three-week musical theatre intensive offering for the teens—Grease! Students sharpen their skills while working on a super fun musical that culminates in a

fantastic full-length production. Whether you have a student or friend in the show, or you were just “born to hand jive baby,” this show is a fun way to end the summer.

If that isn't enough theatre for you, our Broadway on the Boulevard summer spectacular is featured every Thursday night at 8:00pm in Grand Boulevard starting May 25th. You can also stay tuned for summer pop up shows in our air-conditioned space at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs. There's something for everyone at Emerald Coast Theatre Company this summer so be sure to check out our website and sign up for our newsletter at [www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org). See you at the theatre!

# Native American Flute, Art and Cultural Festival

Musical Echoes Flute Festival returns to the FWB Landing, 139 Brooks St., Friday, April 21-Sunday, April 23. The festival opens at 9 a.m. each day. Join us as we once again celebrate Native American culture, art, and music. Admission is free! This is a non-alcoholic event for the entire family.

The festival features solo

performers and full bands, with live music from the stage. Dancers offer colorful, rhythmic traditional dances and share the meaning of each dance. Flute-makers will collaborate with you to find your perfect flute and provide a few tips on playing as well. Visit art and craft vendors as they share their custom jewelry, baskets, leath-

erwork, and more. Traditional Native American fry bread and other delicious festival food add to the fun. Visit the silent auction and raffles at the main tent. Purchase the annual festival T-shirt, featuring the butterfly, this year's totem.

Internationally acclaimed authentic Native American musicians and dancers are part of the festival lineup, includ-

ing Nation of Change Native American Dancers, Gareth and award-winning Shelley Morning Song. Don't miss the special performance by Michael D'Maria. A torchlight ceremony takes place Saturday at 6 p.m., featuring the Thunderbird Honor Guard and Poarch Creek Indian Traditional Dancers. Visit [www.musicalechoes.org](http://www.musicalechoes.org) for the complete schedule.

Musical Echoes Flute Festival Inc. is a nonprofit 501c3 charitable organization run by a group of dedicated volunteers. The festival relies on funding through sponsorships and donations. To contribute, go to [www.musicalechoes.org](http://www.musicalechoes.org).

For more information, call (850) 685-4428 or email Tisha at [tmaraaj@gmail.com](mailto:tmaraaj@gmail.com).

www.MusicalEchoes.org  
850-685-4428

The Landing, 139 Brooks St.  
Fort Walton Beach

Tickets or Info, call 850.684.0323 or visit [EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG](http://EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG)







## Ask Destinites: Positive Change Wish List for Destin Part 2



BY PATRICIA LEE, OWNER  
DESTINITES.COM

Last month, in our local Destinites Facebook group ([www.Facebook.com/Destinites](http://www.Facebook.com/Destinites)), I asked, "What is one positive thing you would like to see implemented in the Destin area for 2023, which you feel would benefit or even partially benefit the community?" I started the thread by saying I would like to see crosswalk bridges placed in certain areas along Hwy. 98 which lead to the beach area(s). And, I would especially like to see one that goes over

to HarborWalk Village. My post received more than 400 responses and I shared some of them with you. Below is a continuation of some of those responses, which were too good not to mention. Our new mayor, Bobby Wagner, has acknowledged many of the suggestions and already started implementing action. What more could you ask? Keep in mind, though, change takes time and manpower. Go to council meetings and get involved!

### Continued Wish List:

1. "We really need the Emerald Coast EC Rider to stop at VPS. It drives past the airport four times a day on Hwy. 85. Why can't it stop? Think of all the rental cars that it could take off our roads. There has been talk on this for years but nothing has been done. Maybe our new mayor can find out the reason for community leaders not moving forward with this idea."

2. "Limit airbnb. It has overwhelmed our community. People

can't afford rent anymore because at least half the rentals have switched over to short term."

3. "Commercial land owners and businesses should be responsible for picking up trash on and around their property. One example is the open spaces and side areas around the Target and Winn Dixie complexes."

4. "Definitely more bike paths OFF the main highway (like what they have on Scenic (old) 98 from Crystal Beach to the outlets, but rather through Destin and on both sides of 98. This would be fantastic for locals who work along 98. To raise money for it, we can host more 5Ks, bring back the local triathlon, etc."

5. "Dog-friendly beach with a license – that's also revenue for the city."

6. "I would like to see Destin/Okaloosa County adopt the same dog permit program as Walton County, which allows you to walk your dog on the beach at certain hours of the day."

7. "Roundabouts – keep traffic

flowing all along Commons Drive and Scenic 98. Crepe Myrtles in the medians of Hwy 98."

8. "More beach access! What I'd like to see is condos give access to the beach. It could be just five parking spots, but at least allow some access! It's ridiculous how inaccessible some areas are like Holiday Isle. Before any non true locals attack me, I was born and raised here and remember when this was not a problem!"

9. "Commons drive west at The Home Depot entrance... need something done at that intersection. People think it's a four-way stop and just pull out in front of you onto commons drive. Seen so many near bad accidents. Need a turnabout and four-way stop. At the same time, please repaint the directional on the road at this same area. People sit in the middle of the road instead of to the left if they're turning left or sitting right if going right. It gets so backed up for no reason other than we need it repainted. Such an easy, cheap fix to help the flow

of traffic."

10. "A solid sports complex center for kids from young age to teenage. We love Destin, but this town caters more towards tourists than locals and, more importantly, to our kids, who will be Destin's next generation. Second thought, I believe toll bridges should be exempt for locals who live in Destin and/or the surrounding area. Charge tourists, not locals. Help us, Bobby Wagner!"

You can see the full complete list and discussion in our Destinites Facebook group, posted in the Featured section.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, join our private local's Destinites Facebook group at [www.Facebook.com/Destinites](http://www.Facebook.com/Destinites) — more than 7,500 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out the monthly newsletter and local business directory at [Destinites.com](http://Destinites.com). If you own a local business, you may advertise in our targeted locals group or in our newsletter, email [Destinites-GroupBox@gmail.com](mailto:Destinites-GroupBox@gmail.com).

## 14th Annual Okaloosa Arts Alliance Poster Contest Call to Artists

The Okaloosa Arts Alliance (OAA) invites all Okaloosa

County school students to participate in the 14th Annual

OAA Okaloosa County School Poster Contest. The theme is

"What art means to me." It can be anything you can create on paper with markers, pencils, paint, pastels, charcoal, mixed media or crayons.

There will be 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners for elementary school students (K-4), middle school students (5-8), and high school students (9-12). Each winner in each division will win a cash prize. Additionally, the 1st place winners' artwork will be posted in the OAA newsletter and on the OAA website.

Any Okaloosa County student grades kindergarten through 12 grade can enter; entries can be submitted by an Okaloosa County school or by an individual student. Deadline is April 21. Submit only one entry per student. Posters need to include the name of the artist, grade and the name of the school on the front of each entry or attached directly below the poster. Mail entries to Okaloosa Arts Alliance-Poster Contest, P.O. Box 4426, FWB, FL 32549. To drop off entry(s) take them to HH Arts at 100 Beal Pkwy SW, Fort Walton Beach (near



Hwy 98). Hours are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. They are closed on Sunday and Monday.

All poster contest entries will be on display from Saturday evening, April 22, at Enlightened Studios, 142 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, until the evening of May 6. Winners will be announced, and prizes awarded at the intermission of Okaloosa's Got Talent, approximately 7:30 p.m. May 6 at Enlightened Studios. Email Amy at [amybatyl@gmail.com](mailto:amybatyl@gmail.com) for more information or go to [www.okaloosaarts.org/2023-school-poster-contest.html](http://www.okaloosaarts.org/2023-school-poster-contest.html).

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