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DESTIN Life

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Blessed: An Event-Packed Week that Blesses, Unites and Strengthens Destin

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

*“May the Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”
- Numbers 6: 24-26*

According to Immanuel Anglican Church’s Reverend Caleb A. Miller, Destin’s annual Blessing of the Fleet began in May 1958. “Reverend William Erwin stated the intent behind the event was to ask the Lord to bless the labor of those making their living on the Gulf and waters, and that God would keep them in safety,” he says.

Rev. Miller has been a part of the Blessing of the Fleet since 2014. He says the Blessing launched with 12 to 15 fishing vehicles and has grown to more than 150 watercrafts. “Now we bless charter fishing, parasailing, law enforcement, Coast Guard, snorkeling, pontoon, sailboats, pirate boats and, it seems like, everything in between.



Boat captains, families and friends take part in the Captain’s Worship and Prayer Service.

“The event has always been held 40 days after Easter for a specific reason – to worship Jesus, crucified and risen, on the Day of his Ascension. After Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, (He) ascended into heaven in victory, to reign and

to intercede on our behalf. And so, while we have gathered to bless the fleet, we have gathered primarily to worship the Ascended Christ.”

This year marks the Blessing’s 66th anniversary, and the event – part of Destin’s Week

of Blessings – will be held Thursday, May 18, at 4 p.m. on the Destin Harbor behind Brotula’s. The City of Destin will waive parking fees at the

BLESSING
continued on page 4



Get Your Art On with CAA in May

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Celebrating its 35th year this month, the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) of Walton County’s ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival is one of the organization’s signature – and biggest – events. In recent years, the CAA has expanded this into Art Month, with visual, performing, and literary arts programming in diverse formats at various venues throughout Walton County.

Additional Art Month events and programs include Under the Sea, a fundraiser for the CAA’s Underwater

ART
continued on page 3



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ART

continued from page 1

Museum of Art; the Longleaf Writers Conference, formerly the Seaside Writers Conference, a gathering of creative writers from across the nation, featuring award-winning scribes from the worlds of poetry, fiction and screenwriting offering workshops and seminars; Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, a unique “projection art” festival employing digital technologies; “Sinfonia Goes Pop!,” a free concert at the Alys Beach Amphitheatre; performances by the Emerald Coast Theatre Company; and, of course, gallery events.

Find the complete Art Month schedule at culturalartsalliance.com.

CAA Events Director Al-

lie Anderson says patrons can expect new twists for May 13 and 14’s ArtsQuest festival at Grand Boulevard Town Center. “Things are different with the layout,” she says. “We’re expecting around 5,000 people over the weekend.” This year’s festival includes adult art classes with the likes of Justin Gaffrey, non-stop live entertainment and new sponsors.

“The other events are happening almost every day throughout May,” says Ms. Anderson. “We support and promote them all and want people to go to as many as they can.”

Ms. Anderson handles all of the huge CAA events, including the 30A Songwriters Festival and the Flutterby Festival. “Anything involving 500 or more people,” she says.

She came onboard in September 2022. Prior to that, Ms. Anderson ran her own business designing custom apparel – t-shirts, tote bags and the like – for sororities all over the country. Originally from Panama City, she has also lived in Dallas and California.

Now she’s back in Panama City with her two daughters and couldn’t be happier. “It’s nice to be back with friends and family,” says Ms. Anderson. “I appreciate the growth that’s going on. There’s so much to do here now. I just love the community and how much everyone supports each other.”

Her connection to the arts began at a young age. “I was an artist growing up, and my mom is a glass artist,” she says. “We used to do paint classes together. We were always around the arts, and I really found an appreciation for it at a young age. My mom is the one who told me about the CAA position.”

ArtsQuest officially kicks off Thursday, May 11, at 6 p.m. with the Underwater Museum of Art fundraiser at Grand Boulevard Town Center. The event celebrates the museum’s fifth



installation with art, dancing, cocktails, food and more. “We’ll have two sculptures by Allison Wickey and Zachary Long – about six feet tall each – at Under the Sea for people to view before they go underwater,” says Ms. Anderson.

Dallas Primavera, this year’s ArtsQuest featured artist, is a longtime CAA member. His work will be featured on posters and t-shirts. Mr. Primavera is based out of Jacksonville Beach and has been painting for over 20 years. “I’m traveling around the state of Florida to do art shows and trying to get my name out there,” he says.

The Florida State alum says he’s always been a vivid dreamer. “I have developed a skill that I will try to put into words,” the

official bio reads. “As I close my eyes, every night I relive the same dream – long halls filled with paintings on both sides, in every color, shape and size.

“At first, I would wake up with a feeling of jealousy, like what I saw was exactly where I was going. A warm wave of understanding washed over me as

I realized everything I saw was mine to come. Best part, I remembered everything I dreamt about. To this day, the process is the source of my inspiration, and it keeps getting stronger.

“He does beautiful work,” says Ms. Anderson. “The posters are amazing.” Discover more at artbydallas.com.

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 **Community**

BLESSING

continued from page 1

Marler Street Parking Lot for the event.

This year's participating churches are Immanuel Anglican Church, Shoreline Church, Destin United Methodist Church, Coastline Calvary Chapel, The Summit Church, Safe Harbor Presbyterian Church, Impulse Church, Village Baptist Church, Impact Life Church and Destin Assembly of God.

Michelle Terry currently serves as president of the Church of Destin, which puts on the Week of Blessings. She describes the collective of local places of worship as "one church, many congregations." Ms. Terry was born and raised here and became a member of the board two years ago.

It's the 20th anniversary of the Week of Blessings, started by Mel Ponder, Captain Mike Parker, Father Mike Hesse and Pastor Paul Kummer. Pastor Kummer will be speaking at this year's Blessing of the Marketplace.

"We're excited about bringing Pastor Paul in," says Ms. Terry. "He had a great vision for the unification of the churches. We believe the Week of Blessings is part of what makes our community special."

Capt. Parker agrees, calling the week "a real blessing to the community as we come together. We are promoting unity among all the people of Destin." Father Hesse had asked Capt. Parker to



New Florida Girl's American Spirit passengers accept their blessing, some with hands raised high.



Local clergy pray individual blessings over vessels that make their living on the sea.

pray at the Blessing of the Fleet two decades ago "and I thought, 'Why can't we do this for the rest of the community, too?'"

"The most rewarding thing to me is getting to serve the pastors and community with the

love of Christ with no agenda and no strings attached, other than to bless people," says Ms. Terry.

Fun Fleet Facts

In 2016, 152 boats were blessed.

In 2017, 152 boats were blessed.

In 2014, 140 boats were blessed.

In 2019, after Memorial Day

weekend, 134 boats were blessed.

In 2020, 131 boats were blessed. No public service or fish fry was held, due to COVID-19.

In 2021, 140 boats were blessed.

Last year, at the start of Memorial Day weekend, 134 boats were blessed.

Week of Blessings Schedule

**Sunday, May 14
Blessing of the Families**

"Intentional blessings made over families in our community during Sunday services."

**Monday, May 15
Day of Prayer and Fasting**

"Pray for your neighbors, your community, the leaders of our nation, and our world."

**Tuesday, May 16
Community and First Responders Outreach**

"Blessing of local government and first responders with a treat provided by Church of Destin."

**Wednesday, May 17
Blessing of the Marketplace**

200 Beach Drive, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

"The business community is invited to worship together and be blessed. Pastor Paul Kummer will speak." Lunch to be provided.

Blessing of the Youth

Destin Life Center, 200 Beach Drive, 5-7 p.m.

"Families and kids of all ages are invited for a night of blessings, food trucks, inflatables and games."

**Thursday, May 18
Sixty-Sixth Blessing of the Fleet**

210 Harbor Blvd. (Behind Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer), 4 p.m.

Prayer and worship service with Boat Blessing to follow immediately. Boats used to earn a living on the sea are invited to register by calling 850.837.6324. The event begins with a Captains' Worship and Prayer Service under a large tent. Around 5:15, clergy will bless preregistered vessels, and a community fish fry (meal donation suggested) will take place. The latter is made possible by Ariel Seafood and Brotula's.

**Friday, May 19
Random Acts of Kindness**

"Share the love of Jesus by practicing random acts of kindness throughout of community. Leave big tips, lend a helping hand, and give generously of your time and resources."

Learn more – and donate! – at Destinblessings.com. Donate by mail by sending a check or money order to The Church of Destin, P.O. Box 1077, Destin, Florida 32540.

Visit their Facebook page or email churchofdestin@gmail.com.

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Studio6Twenty5 Brings the Beauty of Ballet to NWFL

BY WILL ESTELL

If you are a lover of the arts, dance and, more specifically, ballet, and you reside anywhere along Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, you may already be well aware of Destin's Studio6Twenty5 and this relatively new school's efforts to answer the need for instruction in the growing demand for classical performing arts. If you aren't, that's o.k., too, because we're about to change that.

Studio6Twenty5, located in Destin, is the brainchild of Northwest Florida native and professional dancer, Rachel Prescott, who opened her school last August.

Prescott's personal experience – having moved to New York City and danced professionally for some time – ensures that both classical ballet and contemporary dance are taught at her studio, and presented in a way that inspires and educates both the students and our community as to the strong benefits of ballet and the discipline that comes with mastering it.

Studio6Twenty5 uses the

American Ballet Theatre® National Training Curriculum, consisting of a nine-level program, combining the fundamentals of dancer health, adolescent development and a high degree of artistic training.

The curriculum consists of in-depth, age-appropriate instruction ranging from classes for Pre-Primary Ballet, primary A & B, Intermediate, Tap, Jazz and Pointe to advanced classes. The school has 50 children and 15 adults enrolled, and offers classes six days a week in various disciplines.

Prescott emphasizes that, "Outcome-based guidelines, such as ours, tend to provide the highest quality ballet training to a variety of students of all ages and skill levels. Our mission is to be a community school, for, and made up of, students and adults here in these coastal communities—the same communities our own family loves and calls home."

As interesting and artistically



inspirational as everything Rachel has conveyed to me about Studio6Twenty5, one of the most intriguing aspects to me is the family and community aspect, and how important that camaraderie and sense of family is to her.

"I'm from Fort Walton, and grew up in Destin, and have been involved in ballet since I was barely old enough to walk. My dad (renowned Destin architect, Jeffrey Prescott) was a dancer all of my life, and was

a driving force in my becoming hooked on ballet at an early age.

"I did The Nutcracker at six years old," she said. "My 7-year-old daughter is involved, and my 77-year-old dad still dances every week. He even drops by often to talk with and encourage the students. He's particularly inspiring to our male students in helping them to overlook and break the stereotype that has often been associated with boys and men taking ballet."

Prescott's students, along with

those of the studio's assistant director, Shaye Smith, are developed as individual artists through well-rounded, classical curriculums and are supported by a nurturing, positive, curated environment that evolves from the instructors' own love and passion for ballet.

As a showcase of this dedication and training, Studio6Twenty5's staff and students will present "Coppelia: A Ballet in Three

Acts," featuring all 50 children and 15 adult students, for two general admission ticketed shows on June 3 and 4 at Destin Community Center. Rachel, her students and staff invite all to attend and see firsthand what their school's innate attention to training, community and the wonderful art of ballet is all about.

For tickets and more information about Studio6Twenty5, visit Studio6Twenty5.com



STUDIO6TWENTY5

COPPELIA

A BALLET IN THREE ACTS

JUNE 3, 2023
6:00PM

JUNE 4, 2023
3:00PM

DESTIN COMMUNITY CENTER

DETAILS & TICKETS
STUDIO6TWENTY5.COM



Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! MAY 2023

Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Pavilion
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Pairing and Sharing Wine Dinner | 6pm | Rosemary Beach Town Hall
Hiring Event | 9am | LuLu's Destin
Bingo | 10am | Salvation Army FWB
Book Club | 4pm | Tommy Bahama
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Kick off Party + Crawfish Boil | 6pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Patron Margarita Cinco De Mayo Party | 12pm | AJs Destin
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Locals on the Harbor Free Beer Fund-raiser | 5pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Cinco De Mayo Party | 5pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Cinco De Mayo Dinner | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Car Show | 9am-3pm | The Island Hotel FWB
Burning Up The Beaches | 9am-3pm | Destin Commons
Paddle at the Park | 9am | The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island
Burger Battle by the Bay | 11am | Community Maritime Park
Derby Party | 2pm | SkyBar at Edge Seafood
Okaloosa County's Got Talent Competition | 6pm | Enlightened Studios
Comedy & Cocktails | 6pm | Timber Creek Distillery
Designer Purse Bingo | 6pm | Hotel Effie Sandestin
Annual Hats & Horses | 3pm - 6:30pm | Capt. Anderson's Event Center
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Brunch & Bubbly by United Way | 11:30am | Watervue on Brooks Street

Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Bingo in the Ballroom | 6pm | American Legion FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Music Singo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Bingo | 10am | Salvation Army FWB
ECBGFC Billfish Extravaganza | 5:30pm | Harbor Docks
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Pavilion
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Tequila & Taco Festival VIP Party | 6pm | Sandestin Marina Bar & Grill
Legendary Scavenger Hunt | 6pm | Legendary Marine
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival | 10am | Grand Boulevard
Tequila & Taco Festival | 1pm-4pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
30a Foam Fest | 2pm-6pm | 30Ave
My Chemical Cocktail Competition | 6pm-9pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Women's Climbing Circle | 9am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival | 10am | Grand Boulevard
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin



Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Pool Party Brunch | 11am | The Beach House Sandestin
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Young Professionals of Northwest Florida Leadership Conference | 11:30am | Northwest Florida State College
Music Singo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Women in Business Networking | 6pm | Palms Coffeehouse
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Music Singo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival Pre-Invasion | 6pm | Pub Crawl | Downtown FWB
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Planetarium Night | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Pavilion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament | Destin Harbor
Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival Pre-Invasion Skirmish & Fireworks | 6pm | FFWB Landing

Emerald Coast Parrot Head Club Presents Escape to the Island | FWB Elks Lodge
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash | 5:30pm | Seascape Towne Center
Tequila Tasting | 6:30pm | The Gulf Restaurant
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Digital Graffiti | 8pm | Alys Beach
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Festival | HarborWalk Village Destin
Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival Invasion, Downtown Street Party, Fireworks | 6pm | FFWB Landing
Navarre Paddle Classic | 7:30am | Navarre Beach Marine Park
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Lionfish & Libations Festival | 12pm | Harborwalk Village
Sip & Splash, an Aquatic Affair | 6pm | Taj Renee Aquatic Center
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Festival | HarborWalk Village Destin
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
FWB Food Truck Festival | 11am | FWB Landing
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival Torchlight Parade | 7pm | Downtown FWB
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
World Turtle Day | 10am | Gulf Breeze Zoo
Music Singo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
Open Jam Night | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Music Singo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Pavilion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Farmers Market | 8:30am | FFWB Landing
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Slacker 0.5K Race | 10am | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Memorial Day Celebration | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Memorial Day Celebration | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Sinfonia Goes Pops | 7:30pm | Alys Beach Amphitheatre | Alys Beach
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
Family Fun Memorial Day | 6pm-9pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Vintage Air Show | 6:45pm | Harborwalk Village
Firework Show + Fire Spinning on Main Stage | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
Fireworks | 9pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Music Singo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Music Singo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

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Spring Into an Event-Filled May at Baytowne Wharf!

There's something BIG going on every month it seems at The Village of Baytowne Wharf. And May is no exception!

Baytowne is boomin' all month long with events, activities and fun! The Village and its merchants welcome you to come shop, dine and play! Celebrate, escape and embrace some of the best of Baytowne Wharf at one of the most gorgeous times of the year!

Welcome Summer During the Memorial Day Celebration Weekend!

Saturday, May 27th, 7-9 p.m.
Sunday, May 28th, 6-9 p.m.

Kick off the 100 days of summer as festivities begin on Saturday, May 27th, when a true locals' favorite, Forrest Williams Band, takes the stage at the Events plaza from 7-9 p.m.

On Sunday, enjoy live music from Trest Richerson Band from 6-9 p.m. Free children activities will be from 6-9 p.m. and fireworks at 9 p.m. You won't want to miss the fireworks, live music, shopping, dining and fun all weekend long!

Tequila and Tacos Anyone? It's Almost Time for the Tequila & Taco Fest!

Friday, May 12, 6-9 p.m.
Saturday, May 13 | 1-4 p.m.
Sunday, May 14 | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf will come alive with local restaurants and food trucks competing for the Best Taco on The Emerald Coast 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, Anjeos and even Mezcal while indulging in some of the area's best tacos. For tickets: www.efestevents.com

To purchase tickets, visit www.efestevents.com.

Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios Presents a Spring Concert!

Friday, May 19th 7-8:30 p.m.
Events Plaza Stage | FREE

All Invited! Please join Vocal Coach Alissa Steffens and some of her very talented students as they present a night of music! All Genres! Performers are Kids through Adults! May 19th at



7pm. Location: Baytowne Amphitheater! (Next to Zip Line) Will be a night to remember! Come on out and support local talent! Open to the public! No charge. Grab a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening! Can't wait to see you there!

Coach Alissa Steffens is a Performer, Professional Songwriter, Recording Artist and Vocal Coach with a history rich in the Nashville Music Industry! After moving to Sandestin/30a area a few years ago, she continued her work as a Vocal Coach, specializing in Mentorship, Vocal Performance, Songwriting, Artist Development/Career Planning, Acting and Speaking. Alissa works with students regionally, nationally and internationally. Her students sing all different musical genres and range from the Beginner to the Advanced Career Artist. She and her students work on various projects together that involve vocal performance, songwriting, albums, tours, career planning, artist development, commercials, film acting projects, theater, speeches, etc. Alissa has a big heart for giving her students both a voice and a platform.

Wednesday Night Concert Series Wednesdays, May 3-31, 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. Don't forget your lawn chairs and blankets.

May 3: Jarred McConnell and The High Aces
May 10: Dion Jones & The Neon Tears
May 17: Shenanigans
May 24: Casey Kearney

May 31: Horseshoe Kitty
FREE to attend.

Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, May 18, 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.

Scallywag Sunday Sundays, May 21 - August 6, 7-9 p.m.

Join Baytowne for FREE magic, music and mayhem each Sunday from 7-9 p.m! Watch



as the featured pirate, Captain Davy, takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage! 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. show times!

Movie Monday Monday, May 22, 8 p.m.

Grab a lawn chair or blanket and cozy up on the Events Plaza Lawn for a free, featured film, High School Musical 2, on the big screen!

Boomin' Tuesday Tuesdays, May 23 - Aug. 8, 7:15-9:15 p.m.

Turn your eyes to the sky and watch as we light up the night with a free, breathtaking fireworks show over the Lagoon at 9:15 p.m. Beforehand, dance a little at the DJ Dance Party with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza at 7:15 p.m!



Fly Guy Thursday Thursdays, May 25 - August 10, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.

Enjoy free shows from flyboard extraordinaire Ben Merrell over the lagoon! Watch as he soars to the sky and makes waves at Baytowne Wharf

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.

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



The Good Life Destin

 Community

Trends & Treasures!



One-of-a-Kind Exquisite Designs For Spring, Summer and “Beyond” Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

Let’s design something for you for Mother’s Day, Memorial Day or summer! With so much colorful variety like the colors of Destin, your only challenge is choosing. Whether you’re shopping for a special gift to honor your Mom for Mother’s Day, an engagement ring, or a patriotic piece, 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 spring and summer coastal colors perfect for Destin such as a rare and exciting 4-carat, natural, no heat, teal Sapphire gemstone (pictured above)! Destin, is this our vibe or what!? In fact, Beyond Measure has tons of gemstones available in varying shades of teal for that coastal look! Want to stick to diamonds? Check out “Bubble Bands,” stunning individually or for collecting and stacking! Intrigued? 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 Fine Jewelry, where a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting!

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Polished, Classy, Edgy, Inviting... for Yourself or Mom! Pure & Couture Salon

It’s a beautiful thing when a career and a passion come together, says Adrienne Brackett, owner. “For me, it’s not just about making our clients look and feel beautiful, it’s about educating and sharing my knowledge with my team of stylists and our community.” Pure & Couture offers a unique experience to make you feel welcome. Most guests say the atmosphere feels different. “I tell them, it’s because we love our stylists, therapists and guests like family. Our relationship with you means everything to us.” Whether you come seeking a product or a service, Pure & Couture wants you to experience the absolute best every time you visit. Did you know Pure & Couture offers bridal and special event styling? Adrienne’s stylist team even offers on location services for weddings and other events. They would love to help you look fabulous on your special day! Pure and Couture Salon’s team of stylists will listen to what YOU want. They’ll work with your skin tone, face shape, lifestyle and budget. And they can transform your hair from ok to wow! Pure & Couture’s hand-tied hair extensions are a game changer for eyes-on-you as you enter a room. This year, give mom the gift that keeps on giving with Pure & Couture’s team of experts that can take her to summer with “pure” confidence. Or book a stylist for your special event. Be “purely” beautiful!

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

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Cheers to Fun, Unique Gifts! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

Looking for the perfect gift Mom or your BFF? For starters, a Champagne Nite Shirt will have her celebrating Mother’s Day in super soft 100% cotton sateen fabric with pink trim and French cuffs. Add initials or a monogram for a pop of personalization.

Spiritual items make for a sentimental gift for Grammys and Mommies, too. Frill Seekers’ custom porcelain ring boxes are a sweet gift for Grandmothers, mothers or besties, too! The box lid features a custom monogram and a personal note can be tucked inside.

It’s no secret that moms love to write notes and letters. Plan ahead and order a set of notecards, notepads, stationery or calling cards engraved with her name and monogram. Your Mother will fall head over heels for a fragrant Volcano scented candle by designer Capri Blue. With its familiar citrus and sugar Volcano scent and cult following, it will fill her home with the simple pleasures in life.

Frill Seekers can even make a gorgeous gift basket, filled with the treasures and treats you select. Call in with a price range or simply visit the store and pick out the items you’d like to include. Free gift wrapping, too! Shopping online is also an option. Complimentary signature gift wrap and shipping for any occasion. Start shopping now: FrillSeekersGifts.com or visit the store M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m. or Saturdays from 10 a.m. -2 p.m. Visit the shop in City Market Bay-side or visit FrillSeekersGifts.com. Open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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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.



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 Community

Get Your Pirate On at the 67th Annual Billy Bowlegs Festival!

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Ahoy, maties! Avast, ye! It's time to open your treasure chest, get your eyepatch on, take out your sword and get your pirate gear ready for 2023's 67th Annual Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival—May 18-22.

This is the second year the festival has been established on its new dates (the weekend after Mother's Day), but Pirate Captain Billy Bowlegs has been setting his sights on our sandy white shores since the 1950s! As all you landlubbers know, it's been Captain Billy's mission to

take control of the fair seas near Fort Walton Beach since then. Will we prevail in keeping the dastardly pirate crew from gaining a foothold along our sands?

Produced in partnership with the William Augustus Bowles Foundation, the Krewe of Bowlegs, the City of Fort Walton Beach, the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses and community organizations, since 1954, the festival's purpose has been to promote business and tourism, and showcase our beautiful Emerald Coast community.



Queen's Lackey Bill Wendel, Captain's Lackey Diane Baughman, Captain Billy Bowlegs LXVII James Baughman, Queen of Bowlegs LXVII Amy Wendel, First Mistress Amy McBride, and First Mate Bobby McBride

draws locals and visitors alike. "We have to look back to the founding of the Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival and the Krewe of Bowlegs for guidance in preserving its traditions," said the new captain. "In 1953, local business and community leaders hosted a Labor Day weekend water ski show as a way of attracting tourists for one last business push before the long, slow winter season. Building upon the success of the water ski show, the idea of a pirate festival was put forth based on the legend of Captain Billy Bowlegs, a pirate of questionable authenticity who operated in nearby waters, and who was thought to be historical figure William Augustus Bowles. Recognizing that a pirate festival would need pirates, local businessmen stepped up and hired local seamstresses to create pirate costumes, and that is how the Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival, and shortly thereafter the Krewe of Bowlegs, was born," said James. The festival was then organized by the Jaycees. "We are proud to carry on the tradition and the original purpose of the festival," he said.

New each year, the festival's theme reflects the personality of the new captain. 'Loud & Proud' represents Captain Billy 67's love of loud music and loud motorcycles. But, he said, "It also symbolizes American freedom, independence and the power embodied by the military capabilities in our local area that defend this nation." His 'Krewe in Black' are ready to rumble.

Contrary to what some may

Continued on page 40

Each year, a new "Captain Billy" plays the part of the fun and not-so-horrible pirate hoodlum. This year, Fort Walton Beach native James Baughman takes the helm as Captain Billy Bowlegs LXVII. He and his wife, Diane Wyman Baughman, also born and raised in the Fort Walton Beach area, were high school sweethearts. "We always looked forward to the Bowlegs treasure hunt clues that would appear in what was then the Playground Daily News, and to the Torchlight Parade," they recall. "As someone who grew up in Fort Walton Beach with the Billy Bowlegs Festival, I never imagined I would one day be Captain Billy. I am humbled and honored to have this opportunity to serve the Krewe and the

community," James said.

James is joined this year by the 67th Queen of Bowlegs, Amy Wendel and her husband, Bill. Also on board are the 67th First Mate and First Mistress of Bowlegs, Bobby and Amy McBride. Ten additional couples form Captain Billy's Honor Guard and round out the group known this year as the 'Krewe in Black.'

James, along with his 'Krewe in Black,' was "unveiled" as this year's new Captain Billy back in June '22 at the 67th Krewe of Bowlegs Coronation Pageant held at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center at Northwest Florida State College. He feels being a new "Captain Billy" is an honor and a responsibility to reflect and promote the festival that

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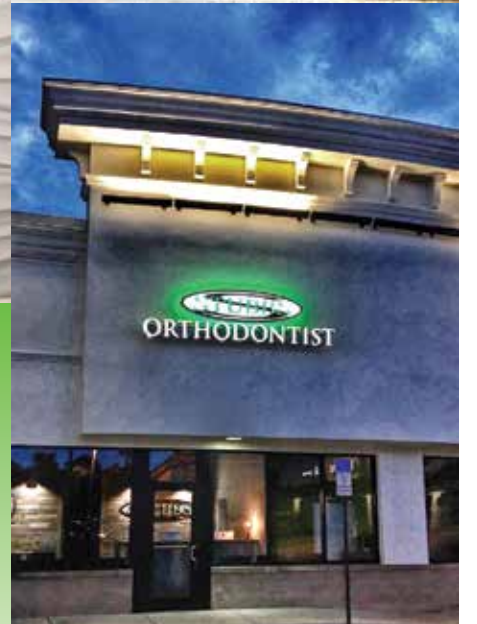
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha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

 Community



Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

BY TAMARA YOUNG,
CITY OF DESTIN PIO

Troy Williams, the City of Destin's new Code Compliance Director, recently retired after serving more than 26 years as a police officer with the City of Portage, Ind. During his career, he served in numerous capacities including as a patrol officer,

FROM THE CITY OF DESTIN

Destin's New Code Compliance Director

patrol supervisor, field training officer, Police instructor, less-lethal instructor, undercover narcotics officer, SWAT Team member and school resource officer. He also served as chief of police for eight years. Prior to this, Troy spent six years in the U.S. Marine Corps, attaining the rank of sergeant.

Troy earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2001 from Indiana University Northwest and is working on a master's degree in homeland se-



curity and emergency management through Purdue Universi-

ty Global.

Williams and his wife, Carrie, have four adult children.

"I'm very excited to be part of Team Destin," said Troy. "I have been on the job two weeks now and everyone at City Hall and the various departments has been truly welcoming and extremely kind. I don't know what a Destin resident's expe-

rience has been with code compliance in the past, but I want to assure you that I come here looking to immerse myself in your city and provide you with a level of professional service that you deserve. We've already made substantive changes within the Code Compliance Department and, going forward, I'm certain you will see the fruits of our labor, drive and love for this city."

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Tribute to My Mom

BY LORI LEATH SMITH,
PUBLISHER

I once saw something written: It takes someone brave to be a mother, someone strong to raise a child and someone special to love someone other than herself. How true that is of moms!

I never knew how deeply my love could run for another person until the day my first child was born. Then I realized, my mother made a choice every day to put someone else (me) in front of herself—just like I did when I became a mother. In fact, she was always putting others in front of herself.

I lost my mom years ago. And I still miss her deeply. She was my best cheerleader!

My mom was talented—an artist (watercolor, pen & ink and acrylic), a graphic designer (before computers—imagine that!), a writer, a designer, a polished professional, a good wife and a good friend to her friends. And even though she has been in heaven quite some time, her friends are still my friends.

She loved God, her family and her husband. She left the best of herself to me—her legacy. The inspiration and wisdom I gained from her has continually played an important role in the shaping of my adult life, professionally and personally.

If your mom is still living, don't forget to say "thank you"

Continued on page 14

Know Your Local Pro: Window Hero and Owner Ryan Jackson

There are three hallmarks of a great business: a trustworthy brand, a hard-working business owner dedicated to customer service and a team of highly trained professionals. When you choose businesses to work with, you deserve the best. Introducing Ryan Jackson, owner of Window Hero Pensacola-Destin – the only name you need when you’re looking for professional, reliable exterior cleaning for your home or business.

Founder Tyler Kirk started the business in Charlotte, NC, in 2006 under the name Labor Panes, offering window and pressure washing. In 2022, the company rebranded as Window Hero and expanded to serve even more customers with a franchise model. Since then,

it has achieved rapid growth, and there are now 24 locations across six states. Window Hero’s meteoric success comes from building strong relationships, responding to customer needs and adding value to their lives. It has extended the selection of services to better serve its customers, adding full-home and building exterior washing, window cleaning, gutter cleaning, gutter guard installation, roof washing, and solar panel cleaning. Window Hero has become the go-to company for quality exterior cleaning, earning a five-star rating on Google and thousands of satisfied customers.

Ryan Jackson is proud to serve the community as your local Window Hero owner. He graduated from the United



States Naval Academy, followed by Naval Flight Officer training. Ryan served 24 years in the

Navy flying combat operations during his deployment in Operation Enduring Freedom. After retiring from the military, he returned to the Emerald Coast to be a permanent part of the community he fell in love with while at NAS Pensacola for flight school from 2004-2006.

Window Hero allows Ryan to achieve a longtime goal: to own a business that supports initiatives to get involved in the community and create jobs that will enable employees to achieve personal and professional growth. Ryan knew he wanted to be a part of the Window Hero family when he read the core values of its parent company, HomeFront Brands: “Community – We make a difference in the community one person, friend, or

neighbor at a time. Accountability – We do more than expected, by our own choice and our own will. Respect – We treat others as we would like to be treated. Excellence – We set high standards and rise to meet them. Service – We meet others’ needs with a servant’s heart.”

Window Hero Pensacola-Destin has it all. It’s a trusted brand with 17 years of experience, a local veteran business owner focused on giving back to the community, and a team of friendly, skilled technicians.

Make your home or business shine. Call your local pro, Ryan Jackson, at (850) 601-9609 for your free quote. Visit Windowhero.com/locations/pensacola-destin/ to find out more.

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Around Town Events



EC Children's Advocacy Center Reopens in Niceville

The public is invited to attend and celebrate the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy

Center's (ECCAC) grand re-opening of its center in Okaloosa County with a ribbon cutting and the official renaming to the Julie Sacco Porterfield Children's Advocacy Center,

401 McEwen Drive, Niceville, at 10 a.m. Friday, May 5. This center experienced a fire and significant water damage last summer that flooded both floors of the 13,000-sq.-ft. building. The center had to be completely vacated with staff and services continuing to provide services for kids in various other donated locations in the area. With the help of many, the center has since undergone a recently completed major renovation and restoration. Guests can tour the center, meet the team and learn more about the programs and services offered to the children and families it helps. It will be a celebration with music, food and beverages.

Mosquito Spray Schedule

The Okaloosa County Mosquito Control division operates a county-wide program, excluding the Air Force Bases and all state parks, which provides surveillance and spraying services to control mosquitoes in both the larval and adult stages. Treatments will begin one hour before sunset. The schedule for the Destin area basically includes Mondays from Airport Road to the County Line and Tuesdays from Airport Road to the Destin Bridge.

FORE! The Love of Animals Golf Tournament

Calling all animal lovers and

golf enthusiasts! Alaqua Animal Refuge will hold the Second Annual "FORE! The Love of Animals" Golf Tournament Saturday, June 10, at The Links Golf Club at Sandestin. Presented by Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort® as the Top Dog Title Sponsor, the Tournament welcomes teams of four plus. 8:30 a.m. check-in; 10 a.m. shotgun start, scramble format; breakfast by Chick-fil-A and a Bloody Mary and Mimosa bar; 18 holes of golf with a cart; boxed lunch; two drink tickets and a fun after-party. Registration is open at www.Alaqua.org; \$250 per golfer or \$850 per foursome.

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- Are you embarrassed about smiling in front of people?
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- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
- Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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TRIBUTE

continued from page 12

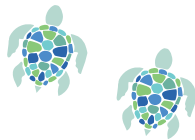
to her often, especially on Mother's Day. And if she's graduated to Heaven, thank God often for the memories you have and the life and legacy she left you.

Happy Mother's Day to all you moms! Never underestimate the power of your love and your influence.

"Love...always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

1 Corinthians 13:7-8 NIV

And now I leave you with the special gift written by my mom: God's Art Show by Carolyn Sheets Leath.



God's Art Show

Discover Little River Canyon
Where Alabama meets Tennessee
Find mountains, rocks and waterfalls
And rabbits and deer running free.

Hidden underneath the cliffs
Deep down in the ravine,
A river flows along its path
Washing the rocks so clean.

Inhale the beauty of the valley,
Guarded by the towering heights,
It takes your breath away to view
Such magical, natural sights.

Wildflowers in abundance grow
Not planted there by man
But springing up to greet the sun
Because it is the Father's plan.

A union lives amidst this place
Of nature linked with man.
The connection is a holy one
Conceived by God's own hand.

People blending with the earth
Hearts beating kind and pure
Proud to live in God's creation
Trusting it will endure.

Thankful to have come this way,
Enlightened, we now know
His timeless love bestows these gifts
As part of God's Art Show.

by Carolyn Leath, August 17, 2001

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MKAF Showcases A Range of Music At 2023 Concerts in The Village

From Classic Rock, Reggae and Disco to Modern Pop, Live Music Series Features Premier Regional and National Musicians and Bands

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) kicked off its highly-anticipated 2023 Concerts in the Village on Thursday, April 20. The area's first live concert series is held each spring on Thursday evenings at the MKAF Dugas Pavilion in Destin. This year's 28th annual family-friendly series runs from April 20 to June 22. The 10-concert live music series will feature premier regional and national musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae, and disco to modern pop.

May concerts include the following:

Ozomatli takes the stage May 4. A cacophony of sounds melding salsa, jazz, funk, reggae, and hip hop is Ozomatli. This social-minded ensemble rock band formed in Los Angeles in 1995 to give voice to Latinos, fight for workers' rights, and promote a global unity. After performing around the world, this Latin-pop infusion is ready

to rock Destin. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty military.

May 11 will feature **Lucky Chops – New Day, New Tour**. Lucky Chops has been unleashing high-energy brassy funk on the world since forming in NYC in 2006. The intensity of the band's energy is fueled by their desire to share the healing and inspirational power of music with others. It's your lucky day to see Lucky Chops live in concert. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty military.

May 18 get ready to chill with **Yacht Rock Revue: Reverse Sunset Tour**. This top-notch group of musicians, presented by SiriusXM, trademarked the term "yacht rock," both metaphorically and literally (U.S. Registration Number 3834195). From humble beginnings in a basement, they've rocked on-stage with John Oates, Eddie



Money, and now headline sold-out shows across the country. Come chill to the smooth sounds of West coast-inspired '70s and '80s rock. Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military.

May 25 don't miss **Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James in Symphonic Soul with special guest Ryan Shaw**. Morgan James brings the classic sounds of Memphis accompanied by Sinfonia Gulf Coast. This program is a love letter to one of the great American birthplaces of soul, featuring brand-new arrangements of Memphis classics by Al Green,

Otis Redding, Ann Peebles, Sam, and Dave, and, of course, Elvis. James rounds out the evening with her own Memphis soul originals and storytelling. Hear your favorite soul tunes come to life in a brand-new way that will have you dancing and singing along! Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military.

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

General admission varies per concert. Prices range from \$20 to \$35 for adults. Discounts offered for active-duty military (must show ID). New this year, patrons purchasing tickets in advance of concert day will save \$5 per ticket. Children (12 and under) are free. A limited number

of VIP tables (reserved table for eight guests for the entire season) are available for \$2,250. Corporate VIP tables are \$2,750.

Proceeds will fund the MKAF's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and active/veteran military suffering from visible and invisible injuries in our community.

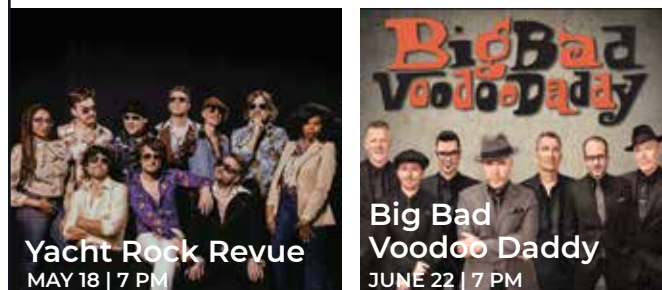
Purchase tickets online at MKAF.org/events. For more information, call (850) 650-2226.

MKAF members enjoy early entry and free admission to every concert as well as discounted pricing to other MKAF events. For more information on MKAF membership, visit MKAF.org.

Concert lineup is subject to change. All sales are final; sorry, no refunds. Pets, tables larger than two feet, and drones are not permitted. Children 17 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



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



Yacht Rock Revue
MAY 18 | 7 PM

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
JUNE 22 | 7 PM



Adam Ezra Group
JUNE 8 | 7 PM



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May 4 | Ozomatli

May 11 | Lucky Chops

May 18 | Yacht Rock Revue: Reverse Sunset Tour

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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 Community

Thunder Beach Celebrates 25 Years!

By PAUL BONNETTE

Panama City Beach may be quiet now, but soon the sounds of thunder begin rolling in; locals and visitors alike know it is once again time for the Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally. This five day event returns to Panama City Beach May 3-7 and they're celebrating its 25th anniversary by pulling out all the stops.

Known throughout the Southeast as the "most biker friendly free rally in the United States," Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally pulls crowds from all over for numerous arts and crafts vendors, bike shows and contests, and of course, legendary rock concerts. For their anniversary, Thunder Beach is



going all out with some of the biggest names in rock including **Rob Zombie, Buckcherry, Jasmine Cain, Pantera, Candlebox, Big Engine, Drowning Pool, Jackyl, Lynyrd Skynyrd and more.**

Chase Michael took over as owner of Thunder Beach Productions last year with the desire to make Thunder Beach into an even bigger event by adding more headliner concerts. For Michael, as Thunder Beach

was already a household name in the Southeast, it was an easy transition.

"Thunder Beach is a well-known name that has been around a long time," he explains. "That is kind of what drives the ability for us to bring in these concerts and really dictate where the event is going. Honestly that's what appealed most to me to get involved in Thunder Beach is it had the crowd there already, so it just needed to elevate it and bring it to the next level and that was bringing the concerts in."

For motorcycle enthusiasts of all ages, Thunder Beach offers something for everyone, from numerous vendors, bike shows, and plenty of daytime entertainment to parades and the aforementioned block-buster concerts. In terms of overall experience, it doesn't hurt that Frank Brown Park, the event's host, is such an easily accessible venue. "I have been to at least five hundred rallies all over the country and there is not a motorcycle venue like Frank Brown Park," Michaels says. "There is nowhere as big as that. To have all of those vendors and concerts all in one venue, it just doesn't exist anywhere else. To be five blocks from the beach and to have this beautiful ven-

ue... Frank Brown Park is quite the spectacle because they will have everything from corporate displays from Harley, Indian, Yamaha and BMW and the concerts as well as a ton of vendors that everybody can shop. It's pretty amazing in my opinion."

As thousands of riders and spectators descend into Bay County for the Thunder Beach Spring Rally, Michael plans to keep the momentum going to make Thunder Beach part of our area's tourist season. "I'm really focusing on the spring and fall rally, the two bookends to the Panama City Beach summer season. I'd like to make it make sense to where every business in the town benefits from it whether they are a grocery store, bar, restaurant or a hotel. It's just an opportunity to showcase the town and what it has to offer," he says.

Whether you are a rider, motorcycle enthusiast or just looking to shop at the numerous vendors and enjoy some exciting concerts, Thunder Beach clearly has something that draws visitors and locals to this event and the 25th anniversary promises to be even bigger. For more information or to buy tickets, visit www.thunderbeach.com.

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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 your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.

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Maurice Stouse
Financial Advisor

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 Community



BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR

The real estate market in the Destin/Miramar Beach area has seen a lot of changes in recent months. With the current housing inventory at 3.98 months, and the average days on the market before going under contract year-to-date at 72, it's clear the market is shifting. In fact, in April, the average days on the market was 137, which is a significant increase from earlier in the year.

So, what's causing these changes? There are a few factors at play. For one, the demand for homes in the area has remained high, while the inventory of available homes has been relatively low. This has led to a competitive market, with many buyers vying

for a limited number of homes.

Spring and summer are the busiest seasons for home sales. With warmer weather and longer days, more potential buyers are out and about, looking for their dream home. If you're planning on selling your home, it's important to understand the benefits of home staging and how it can help you sell your home. When done right, it can help you sell your home faster and for a higher price.

Here are some home staging tips to help you sell your house:

1. Declutter and Depersonalize

The first step in home staging is decluttering and depersonalizing. This means removing personal items such as family photos, personal collections and memorabilia. You want to create a neutral canvas that allows potential buyers to imagine themselves living in the space.

Remove any unnecessary items from your home and organize what's left. Keep in mind

that less is more when it comes to home staging. A clutter-free home feels more spacious and inviting.

2. Clean and Repair

A clean and well-maintained home is more appealing to buyers. Make sure your home is spotless by deep cleaning carpets, floors, walls, and windows. Hire a professional cleaning service if necessary.

Repair any visible damage such as cracks, holes and leaks. Consider repainting walls and refreshing the grout in your bathroom and kitchen. Small repairs can make a big difference in the overall appearance of your home.

3. Enhance Curb Appeal

First impressions are crucial, so make sure your home's exterior looks inviting. This means enhancing curb appeal by cleaning up the yard, trimming hedges and trees, and adding potted plants or flowers. Consider painting the front door or adding a new mailbox to add a pop of color.

4. Stage Key Rooms

Focus on staging the key rooms in your home, such as the living room, kitchen, and master bedroom. These are the rooms that potential buyers will spend the most time in, so make sure they are staged to perfection.

Arrange furniture in a way that highlights the space and creates a natural flow. Add decorative touches such as throw pillows, artwork, and plants to make the space feel more inviting.

5. Use Neutral Colors

When it comes to home staging, it's best to use neutral colors. This allows potential buyers to imagine themselves living in the space without being distracted by bold colors or patterns. Stick to neutral colors such as beige, gray or white for walls, furniture and accessories.

6. Let in Natural Light

Natural light can make a space feel more open and inviting. Make sure your home is well-lit by opening curtains and blinds and turning on all the lights. Add

lamps or other light fixtures if necessary.

In conclusion, home staging is an effective way to make your home stand out in a competitive real estate market. By decluttering, cleaning, repairing, enhancing curb appeal, staging key rooms, using neutral colors, and letting in natural light, you can create a space that is visually appealing, functional, and inviting. With these tips, you can sell your home faster and for a higher price.

Overall, home staging is an important part of the home-selling process, especially during the busy spring and summer seasons. By creating an inviting and memorable atmosphere, and showcasing the full potential of your home, your home will stand out as the best to potential buyers in a sea of options!

Need help? Call or email me, I'm here to assist: Gail.Pelto@KW.com, (850) 374-0454.



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Part 2: 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 2, we take a look at FIVE 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.



Mazda MX-5

When it comes to true-to-the-definition sports cars there's not much debate among auto aficionados about which one brings the most smiles per miles and dollars: It's almost always hands down Mazda's classic Elan inspired MX-5 roadster. There is a reason more MX-5's are raced on tracks every weekend than any other car in this country. And it's the same reason that the MX-5 is about the only sub-\$40,000 car (new) that the same guy who owns a Porsche 911 GT3, classic Ferrari 328 or Lotus Esprit would still choose to buy for his fun-to-drive, dependable ride, while he keeps the miles off the more expensive car candy.

Besides being one of the only new(er) cars that still maintains that basic analog, driver-at-one-with-the-road sensation, the two most recent iterations of the MX-5 (internally the NC and the ND cars) provide enough room and comfort (this isn't a Mercedes, however; you're supposed to feel the road under those 45 series tires) to make them great daily drivers – top up or down.

For years, test drivers and auto editors at the likes of Automobile, Road & Track and Car & Driver have called the

daily basis, in most of the much more expensive, and powerful, sports cars available.

I'd suggest an NC, from 2012 to 2015, in the highly desirable PRHT (power retractable hardtop) with a 6-speed manual. And if you can find one, a Club edition, with all of the above mentioned, plus the larger wheels, unique front fascia, rear splitter, along with Bilstein shocks and strut tower brace. If you prefer the look of the newer, 2016-present, ND cars, then you can still get in a nicely equipped 1- to 3-year-old version for well under our price point for this article. Either way you go, the cars are ultra-dependable, low cost to maintain, get decent mpg, and will almost certainly be one of the most thrilling and rewarding

cars to drive... no matter what other cars you may have owned.

BMW Z4 and Toyota Supra

The Toyota Supra doesn't need much of an introduction to the car-obsessed crowd. Even though it resurfaced in 2019, after a 17-year absence, the Supra was an immediate hit, with long waitlists for those sports car fans in line to order one.

Similarly, the BMW Z4 has always been a popular choice for the Euro sports car crowd looking for a sporty, but comfortable, drop top with some pedigree and overall good performance. This is still the case, though the newest generation of the Z4, the G29, shares its platform with

Continued on page 46

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We are proud to announce Ecco Motors HarborSide! Opening to the public mid-May.

As the pioneer of the golf cart and LSV business in the area, Ecco Motors is excited for this additional location to better serve our West Destin and Fort Walton Beach clients and friends.

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SOF Missions and the Unseen Wounds of War

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Almost every hour, one U.S. veteran commits suicide!

SOF Missions is a non-profit organization that assists and supports active duty and veteran Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their families. Dr. Damon Friedman, a former Special Forces operator, founded the organization when he recognized the need for a support system within the SOF community.

Damon served on active duty for twenty years—five in the Marine Corps and 15 in the Air Force's special warfare. Damon tells his story of almost becoming a statistic, but some incredible people stepped in to help him. He believed it was his turn to help others. So, his wife, Dayna, and he started SOF Missions in Bagram, Afghanistan, in 2011. SOF Missions aims to empower America's warriors to find purpose and be resilient.

SOF Missions helps the battle brother, America's true heroes, find freedom through post-traumatic growth. Many veterans feel hopeless and without purpose, with an inability to reconnect. Damon said, "We are trying to help them to not only get to a better state mentality but to be the best version of themselves." The program focuses on a whole health, interdisciplinary model. They treat mild traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, insomnia, post-traumatic stress and chronic stress. He continued, "Helping our war-



riors is a completely systematic approach."

The Resiliency Project is a four-pillar methodology project: psychological, physical, spiritual and social wellness. "We believe that humans are made up of mind, body, and soul, and our Creator is the designer of the universe. One of the biggest challenges in America is that people do not really know their purpose." SOF Missions purposes to help those in the program to find their purpose in life. "Our veterans are the treasure of America called upon to change the world for good, to make this world a better place."

The keynote speaker for this year's banquet was 37-year veteran Marine Corps Major General James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. General Hartsell pointed out that since 9-11, nearly four million Americans have raised their right hand to

defend our Constitution and country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Half of those went to war—two million. He stated, "Those who went to war were exposed to moral injury. They were exposed to things they would not have been exposed to in a normal life."

He quoted, "In war, there are no unwounded soldiers," which emphasizes that all soldiers are wounded in some way, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. The unseen wounds are the least treated but still have a lasting impact on their lives.

Gen. Hartsell talked passionately about everyone's "life load" and the need to balance military, family and employment life. SOF Missions helps warriors carry the burdens of life load. Everyone has these burdens, and getting out of balance creates trouble. SOF Missions helps veterans balance the psychological, social, physical and spiritual domains.

He learned through experience that psychological trauma is the hardest to keep in balance.

Bob Conrad is a 25-year Army Veteran and a local representative with SOF Missions. Bob says, "Attitude-Behavior-Results! It starts with the choice of commitment to impact the lives of our extended

Veteran Community, to reduce suicide, increase resiliency and guide others to thriving, not just surviving! In a purpose-driven organization, that's called commitment!" Bob has been with SOF for six years in Donor and Strategy Development with a team led by Sherrie Hayes, Kristi Beckman and Annette Beard. The Tampa-based HQ worked hard to increase the passion and participation from 180 in 2022 to 240 supporters in 2023! The Gala is a premier event along the Emerald Coast.

The Gala pays tribute to the brave men and women who fight and sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy. We must emphasize

the importance of acknowledging and honoring our heroes, recognizing the responsibility that comes with freedom, and understanding the true meaning of courage. We must never forget or minimize the sacrifices made by our soldiers in service to this country. Their sacrifices should inspire future generations to strive for greatness. We owe it to our heroes to remember and honor their legacy, to appreciate the liberties they secured for us, and to continue to protect and defend those freedoms for future generations.

SOF Missions relies on the support of donors and volunteers to carry out its mission. A local Regional Support Team can meet with individuals, organizations, and potential sponsors to expand the SOF MISSION passion, commitment and service to our warrior community. Bob Conrad would be happy to meet with anyone wanting to know more about SOF Missions, the RST, and how they might be a part of a fantastic mission and purpose-driven team. For more information, check out www.sofmissions.org

Memorial Day: A Tribute to Our Fallen Heroes

DOUG STAUFFER, PASTOR,
CHAPLAIN, VETERAN (FATHER,
SON AND BROTHER TO
VETERANS)

From every branch of service, every walk of life, America's soldiers are faced with peril and strife.

Bravery and sacrifice we continually recognize, Never forget those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Memorial Day: a reminder to pay respect

To those who served, freedoms to protect.

On this solemn day, their legacy lives on,

Honored and remembered, even after they're gone.

Let us guide our children to look up high

To heroes who serve and fight, and some die.

Not to those in sports or Hollywood's fame,

But those who defend our country's name.

Remember the Gold Star families still here.

Show them our gratitude for losing those dear.

They deserve our love, honor, and care,

For their loss is beyond compare.

Take a moment right now to remember and reflect

Of the fallen soldiers we must never forget.

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Class of 2023 Honor Students Thrived Through Covid

BY LINDA EVANCHYK,
OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL
BOARD MEMBER

On April 18, the Okaloosa County School District held the Anne T. Mitchell Academic Senior Honors awards on the campus of Northwest Florida State College. Each year the school district recognizes students who are graduating Cum Laude (3.75 – 3.99 weighted GPA),

break ever, since the week prior to spring break would be the last week students would attend classes in their school buildings that school year. Students finished the year in an online format.

For their sophomore year, there was a delay in the start of the school year as protocols were put into place for the safety of students and employees.

counselors for each school, and by instituting the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program in high schools.

On a lighter note, during my address at the honors program, I reminded them that they would have some great stories to share with future generations.

“Tell your grandchildren about the ‘to mask or not to mask’ debate, about sitting be-

they can tell of their high school days, but hopefully their greatest stories have yet to be written.

Graduation Ceremony Dates for Okaloosa High Schools:

Destin High School May 26
Baker School May 19

Choctawhatchee High May 24
Crestview High May 25
Ft. Walton Beach High May 25
Laurel Hill School May 18
Niceville High May 24



The top academic students from each Okaloosa County High School are: Christian Oglesby, Baker High; Kendall Small, Niceville High; Ella Shelton, Choctawhatchee High; Tyniyah Haughton, Crestview High; Rachel Allen, Ft. Walton Beach High; and Mikayla Long, Laurel Hill School.

Magna Cum Laude (4.0 – 4.29 weighted GPA), and Summa Cum Laude (4.25+ weighted GPA).

In the class of 2023, 607 students met the criteria to graduate with honors designation.

I was asked to deliver remarks to the students and their families at the ceremony. The more I reflected on the events that have taken place since these students started their freshman year in 2019, the more in awe of their success I became.

I told them they made history without intending to do so. When they started their high school career, all indications were that it would be a normal year of learning and adjusting to

life as a high school student. No one anticipated that in March 2020 the students would have the longest spring

Terms including Coronavirus, Covid 19, social distancing and quarantining would become part of the everyday vernacular. Students were sent home from school, sometimes several times that year, and were told to quarantine as contact tracing was put into place by the Okaloosa County Health Department.

While these actions were deemed necessary for the safety of everyone at the schools, by the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the stress was beginning to take its toll on students. They told me, along with Supt. Marcus Chambers, in a town hall-style meeting at Baker School a year after that long spring break, that they were weary of being in and out of school, and that it had affected them mentally. The school district and school board responded by hiring more mental health

hind desk shields, and about the pungent scent of hand sanitizer that permeated the school each day,” I joked.

As I shook their hands and congratulated these honor students, it hit me that the students in the Class of 2023 do not want to be defined by the pandemic. While they have overcome obstacles no other class has, they not only survived, but they have thrived.

Truly, they seemed to be ready to move on from high school and the pandemic. I did ask them to please take some time, when all the pomp and circumstance has calmed down, to reflect on the last four years, noting their challenges and accomplishments.

Hats off to the approximately 2,200 Okaloosa County students who will graduate in the Class of 2023. What stories

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How Does Gluten Affect Your Dog?

BY STEVE KOTOWSKIE

We've all heard about the mysteries of gluten allergies over the last decade. It seems there are more and more people with gluten sensitivities and allergies than

ever before. There are now special menu designations at our favorite restaurants that are "Gluten-Free" and disclaimers on nearly every menu.

Did you know your dog can be sensitive to gluten as well? It can cause a myriad of issues that can easily be cleared up

with a change in dietary routine. For instance, Itchy skin, Irritable bowel syndrome are just a few of the problems that are presented in dogs.

They are often generalized by veterinarians as a «food sensitivity.» Often, as a remedy, people are instructed to change proteins, but that is rarely the root cause of the issue.

Gluten is being discovered to be the larger offender. It may be due to the genetic modification of the grains being used. Wheat, Rye, Barley, and Brew-



ers Yeast are commonly found in dog foods and treats. When you recognize your dog's body (from teeth to intestine) was not designed for grain consumption in large amounts, it begins to make sense.

A deeper look at gluten will open another door into an even more mysterious issue called «leaky gut.» This is where the intestines become permeable and toxins leak into your dog's bloodstream. This creates an immune response in the system that sends things spiraling. Stomach issues, skin issues, joint pain, and even behavioral issues can arise.

Brain fog is reported by humans with gluten sensitivity and leaky gut, so we must consider that this could be an issue for dogs that are unable to convey to us how they are feeling. So remember, If your dog isn't feeling well - it is feeling compromised.

Just as we humans tend to get irritable when we don't feel 100%, the same applies to your

dog! So, let's get them healthy by fixing the problem.

So, how do we fix it? Leaky gut is best resolved by cutting out gluten and all dairy, including eggs. Eggs are a great protein source for dogs, but not while they are having secondary issues. Find a clean diet, free of glutenous grains - there are some great gluten-free grains to use instead.

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Dog Harmony Goes National; Expands Therapy Program

As an exhibitor at the The Humane Society of the United States' annual Animal Care Expo in New Orleans, Nancy Brown introduced the 2nd edition of Human & Dog Harmony and led two round table discussions on "DIY Canine Enrichment."

Human and Dog Harmony is an illustrated children's guide covering everything you need to know to be your dog's best friend. The book offers expert advice on the dos and don'ts of dog care, with a focus on keeping your dog healthy with proper food, exercise, vet care, and fear-free training. It was very well received, and multiple rescues and shelters around the county plan to use this guide in their own community education programs.

At the round tables, Nancy shared the importance of canine enrichment, detailing specific enrichment activities and toys for shelter animals that can help to improve adoptability while in the kennel. If you work or volunteer at a shelter in our area of northwest Florida and missed the conference, let us know. We're happy to come to you to speak on canine enrichment or share more about how to use Human and Dog-Harmony in your programs.

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Say Farewell to These Design Trends



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

We're always talking about the latest and greatest in design trends, but we never really acknowledge what styles are on the way out. If you're considering a room refresh or a complete remodel you may want to avoid some of the following trends

high to safely grab. Some of the upper cabinetry is being eliminated to give us a more open, airy feeling. The days of Herringbone patterned backsplashes are numbered too. While it is a classic design, many are realizing it's a busy pattern for a relatively small space.

Bedrooms: All of the matchy-matchy bedroom furniture is a thing of the past. Bulky dressers and chests are disappearing too. Overstuffed upholstered headboards are no longer dreamy, due to hair and body oils leaving stains and the dust that gathers in the tufting.

Wood: We've overused lighter-colored wood tones on floors,

cludes greige (tones of gray-beige) paint colors too. All of these white to light monotone colors are exiting stage left. White ceilings, baseboards and crown molding are starting to diminish in popularity too after years and years of infiltrating many homes.

Furniture: A room full of rattan furniture came back with a vengeance but it's leaving with one too. Too much of it created a monochromatic look that

is no longer viewed as an in thing. Cheap, quick furniture is out too. Initially, you may have thought of it to be a great way to save money, but in the long run it had to be replaced sooner than later and ended up being wasteful in the long run. Oh, and those curved "conversation" sofas that were so cool have now hit the not so cool list too.

Trends come and go, but I'm a firm believer in "we like

what we like." As we age, being comfortable is a priority. However, we must also know when to edit. It's all about balance and that's where many get stuck. Incorporating your "must keep" item(s) is equally important. Coastal Design by Kim is here to help create a beautiful, functional space for YOU. Call (850) 904-6622 or email kim@coastaldesignbykim.com. Website: www.coastaldesignbykim.com.



that are quietly fading into the sunset.

Bathrooms: We all love a pristine, squeaky-clean bathroom. The all-white bathroom proved to be harsh and unwelcoming and showed every speck of dirt and dust. Many housekeepers found themselves on speed-dial with this style. Those extra-large soaker tubs are disappearing too. They're hard to clean, many are difficult to maneuver in and out of and bathing the kids was found to be equally as challenging.

Kitchens: Microwaves over the range are disappearing due to the difficulty of handling hot items that are sometimes too

cabinets and furniture for years. The same wood tone utilized throughout the home gives it an uninviting vibe.

Rose Gold & Gold: While you may feel like gold and rose gold fixtures, handles, pulls and knobs have just hit the scene, they're making their exit. It's almost impossible to find matching tones from vendor to vendor and many homeowners are frustrated. For many, settling on a bright gold fixture with muted gold knobs is not an option. Mixing metals is not for everyone and vendors can't seem to align the family of gold tones.

Paint: Say good-bye to white, gray and beige, this in-

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BY JODELL HAVERFIELD,
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Freedom isn't free!

I love the South and I especially love living in the South. This Memorial Day, consider taking your family on a road trip to explore a few of the South's forts and memorials honoring those who saved the South. You hardly even need to go beyond

your own backyard.

Southern history is far more than the culture of the antebellum South, (which I love by the way). She served a vital role in the problems and difficulties of becoming the nation the United States is today, from the Native Americans, American Revolution, Civil War and on to current history. We live in the shadow of our nation's oldest settlement, with more than 450 years of history, and Pensacola Bay is just the beginning! After the war of 1812 the United States began constructing coastal forts along its 3,500-mile coastline to protect important waterways and seaports. Pensacola Bay was one such area. Europe had long considered Pensacola Bay one of the most important seaports on the northern Gulf Coast due to its width and deep water providing the deepest anchorage as



well as a large, protected harbor for ships.

Construction on Fort Pickens began in 1829 and was completed five years later after more than 21.5 million bricks had been laid by skilled tradesmen and slave labor. If you look closely, you can often see their fingerprints in the bricks. The massive pentagonal fortress was necessary to protect against attacks on the newly established Pensacola Navy shipyard. At the time, Fort Pickens, named after Brig. Gen. Andrew Pickens, a patriot who fought with distinction in South Carolina during the Revolutionary War, was the largest brick structure on the Gulf of Mexico.

Three months before the start of the Civil War, a high stakes meeting took place outside of Fort Pickens to decide who would control one of the most

seacoast artillery pieces, the most massive cannons used by the armies at the time, shook the earth. The bombardment could be heard as far as 125 miles away. Fort Pickens remained in use until 1947.

Many southern historical forts in the United States were erected to strengthen U.S. defenses due to the losses experienced during the War of 1812. Here are a few more famous Forts of the South.

Fort Morgan, Ala., is a pentagonal Bastian fort at the mouth of Mobile Bay. Completed in 1834, it stood as the guardian of Mobile Bay through four wars – the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World Wars I and II – but it is most famous for the Civil War “Battle of Mobile Bay” when on Aug. 5, 1864, Adm. David Farragut ordered his fleet to charge the heavily

mined bay. He went “full speed ahead” to win the war. This fort claims more than 40 million bricks and pays tribute to the skilled masons, many were enslaved African Americans. The Mobile Civil War Trail spans more than 90 miles along the Gulf of Mexico to North Mobile County. It was reconstructed in 1895 and remained active until 1949.

Fort Smith, Ark., was originally built to maintain peace and harmony between the Osage and a band of Cherokee in the area. Fort Smith is where some of the most famous outlaws of the Wild West were brought to justice.

Fort Marion – Castillo de San Marcos, St. Augustine, is the oldest masonry fort in the United States. Originally it was a Spanish fort in 1821 until it was dedicated as a U.S. Army base and renamed Fort Marion. During the fort's more than 100 years as an Army base, it housed Native American prisoners and was most notably the site of mass Apache incarceration in 1881.

Fort Pulaski, Ga., was built to protect the port of Savannah in 1847 until it was overtaken by Confederate soldiers and seceded from the Union in 1860. It was again overtaken just two years later and began to deteriorate around World War I.

Fort Boonesborough, Ky., a frontier fort founded by none other than Daniel Boone himself in 1775, also played a role in the Civil War. Fort Boonesborough also served as an outpost in the American Revolution and remained active until the early

Continued on page 26



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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 written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked, just the way you like 'em. The first Friday of each month, The Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on Facebook for updates. (850) 837-3645

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Continued on next page

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DESTIN DINING*continued from previous page*

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FORTS*continued from page 24*

19th century. It has since been reconstructed as a working fort, complete with cabins and period furnishing.

Fort Jackson, La., was originally constructed to defend New Orleans, however this fort saw battle only from April 16 to April 28, 1862, when it quickly fell to the Union forces.

Fort Massachusetts, Miss., is where the Confederate militia took this partially built fort in the summer of 1861 and then quickly abandoned it. However, it didn't stay abandoned for long as Union forces began using it in early 1862. This fort was last active in 1903.

Fort Macon, N.C., was also established for coastal defense during the war of 1812 and, like many forts erected during this time, it played a significant role in the Civil War. This southern fort was soon captured by Confederate militia just two days into the war. Eventually, Union troops recaptured the fort, which was again abandoned in 1903.

Fort Sumter, S.C., is one of two forts at the entrance of Charleston Harbor and was famously overtaken by the Confederacy at the onset of the Civil War. This fort was a focal

point in Charleston throughout the wars and is a favorite tourist spot today.

Fort Donelson, Tenn., is the only fort that was built by the Confederacy during the Civil War instead of being overtaken. However, after its completion the Battle of Fort Donelson ensued, and a Union victory resulted.

The Alamo, Texas, is one of the most popular forts in the U.S. This fort was occupied by either Spanish or Mexican troops until the beginning of the Texas War for Independence from Mexico.

Fort Ward, Va., was built to protect Washington, D.C. during the Civil War. Today it offers several exhibits on Civil War topics.

Prickett's Fort, W. Va., was constructed by early settlers in 1774 as a refuge from Native American attacks. Eighty local families would gather at this small fortress anytime there was a threat of an uprising.

Vicksburg's Fort Hill sat high on a bluff north of the city commanding the Mississippi River. These key defenses were blown up on June 25, 1863, laying the way for General Grant's victory over Vicksburg.

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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, Har-

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 on-site with activities for children.

Tickets are \$40 per person



vest 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

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.

The Towne Centre at Seascapes is located at 80 Seascapes Drive, Miramar Beach (one mile west of Silver Sands Pre-

mium 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 com-

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 Dining

Crackings in Destin Yelp Top 100

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Crackings, a breakfast, brunch and lunch restaurant in Destin, has been making waves in the restaurant scene. The establishment was recently named one of the top 100 restaurants in Florida by Yelp, a popular review website. In fact, it was number 27! This is a significant achievement for any restaurant, as Florida is home to excellent

dining destinations.

What makes Crackings so special? According to customer reviews, it's the consistent quality of the food and service. Diners rave about the restaurant's fresh food, including seafood, which is always cooked just right. Others appreciate the friendly and attentive service, which makes them feel right at home.

Crackings is a family-owned

restaurant by the Green family – owners Tommy and Marcia Green, with their son, Preston, as manager. "I didn't realize just how big this was. I knew it was a big thing, but I didn't realize how many people pay attention to it," said Preston. In addition to its excellent food and service, Crackings boasts a beautiful Destin location at Ninety Eight Palms.





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"On March 27 we hit our five-year anniversary of re-branding," Marcia said. "It's our five-year birthday for Crackings, but 25 years in the business." "We've won Best in Destin ever since we've turned to Crackings," Tommy said.

"But you cannot talk about the success of the business without talking about God ... because Tommy and I had no experience coming into the business," Marcia said. Tommy, a charter boat captain for years, heard God say they needed to enter the restaurant business. "We were obedient, and he equips the ones he calls," Marcia said.

The restaurant's success can also be attributed to its active presence on social media. It has a strong following on Facebook, where it regularly posts updates about its menu items and events. The page also allows customers to share their experiences and leave reviews.

You will find me and 30-plus other veterans at Crackings each Thursday for breakfast. The

Crispy Warriors have a standing tradition of gathering around the table to enjoy great food and company. At 7:30, we veterans gather at the restaurant, with Ansley's smiling face greeting us as she serves our favorite dishes. The table is set with her special touch, making the veterans feel welcome.

As we enjoy our meal, we appreciate the tales of honor, bravery, and duty, passed down from years of service. It's a time of fellowship where we can catch up with old friends, share laughs, and discuss current events. For the Crispy Warriors, this weekly breakfast is more than just a meal; it's a chance to honor our past and connect with one another in the present.

If you're planning a trip to Destin, be sure to check out Crackings' menu on its website or Facebook page. And if you've already had the pleasure of dining at this restaurant, be sure to leave your own review to help spread the word about this gem.

How is the Quality of Your Olive Oil?

We all hear that olive oil is good for us, but the quality of olive oil can vary vastly between typical grocery store olive oils and true 100% extra virgin olive oils. Extra virgin, by definition, means

the olives must be “without defect” and must be crushed within 24 hours of being picked. These olives provide great health benefits – protection against heart disease and cancer; reduction of

inflammation, improved cognitive function, and more joint mobility among other things.

However, to be labeled extra virgin, most commercial olive oil bottles only need to contain 12% extra virgin olive oil. The rest can be olive oil made from old, poor quality and even rancid olives, providing little health ben-

efit. Even worse, it can contain other oils such as soy and canola without listing these oil’s as ingredients.

Choose wisely. Look for the actual crush date and the polyphenols (the most important component of olive oil). If this information is not available, don’t trust the source.

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Healthy Olive Oil Muffins With Coconut Drizzle

2 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup white sugar
1 egg
1 cup milk
¼ cup Persian Lime, Lemon, Blood Orange or Unflavored Olive Oil
2-3 tablespoons Coconut Balsamic Vinegar (optional)
1 cup icing sugar
¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray muffin pans with cooking spray. Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Make a well in the center. In a small bowl, beat the egg with a fork. Add the milk and olive oil.

Pour the wet ingredients all at once into the well in the flour mixture. Mix quickly with a fork until moistened; do not overbeat. The batter will be lumpy. Pour the batter into muffin pans, filling ¾ full. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden around the edges (about 15 minutes for mini-muffins).

When muffins have cooled, combine vinegar*, icing sugar and ginger in a small bowl and whisk until smooth (make it very thick so add more sugar if you need it). Spoon the glaze into a small zipper plastic bag and cut a very tiny hole in one tip. Squeeze the glaze onto the muffins in small ribbons. Let dry.

*You can use other white vinegars or even water.

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 Off the Hook

World's Largest Lionfish Tournament to be Held in Destin-Fort Walton Beach

Okaloosa County Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is celebrating the 5th Annual Lionfish Removal & Awareness Festival on May 20-21 at the Destin Harbor. Lionfish are an invasive species that prey on native fish with no known predators due to their venomous spines. The Emerald Coast Open (ECO) tournament is a key component that helps mitigate the growing lionfish threat in the Gulf of Mexico. "We are fortunate to have a Coastal Resources Division in our community, focused on awareness and reducing the population of this invasive species," said Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. FWB Life is looking forward to an exciting 2023 tournament!

"The success of this annual event is undeniable," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. "It not only helps to remove this invasive species, but it brings so many different local industries together within a family-friendly atmosphere that's accessible to the public. This event grows each year and it could not happen



without the hard work of the Coastal Resource Team within our Tourism Development Department."

The festival includes the Emerald Coast Open Tournament May 19-20. The tournament gives divers the opportunity to

compete for prize money totaling nearly \$100,000 in categories like most lionfish caught and largest and smallest lionfish. In 2019, ECO had 189 participants and removed 19,167 lionfish throughout the tournament – 14,119 in three days. ECO gave away \$48,000 in cash prizes and more than \$10,000 in gear prizes. Last year's tournament was a great success and removed 13,835 lionfish from local waters. The record for the smallest lionfish was broken at 39 millimeters during the main tournament by Alabama Jammin. Diver Tim Shivers collected 604 lionfish during the pre-tournament which surpassed the 2019 record. Tournament weigh-ins will be held behind AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar on May 21.

Leading up to the tournament, Emerald Coast Open Restaurant Week offers the public unique lionfish dishes prepared by chefs at local restaurants. Each evening, a local restaurant serves a unique lionfish dish on their menu. The fish caught pre-tournament are provided to the participating restaurants to serve. Each dish is also judged and the winning chef crowned at the end of the week. Last year, the lionfish dishes were scored by a host of judges including a New Yorker Magazine journalist and Chief Scientist for NOAA National

Marine Sanctuaries. A scoring system was used and Chef Al Massa took the highest marks with Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer creation. They presented a Lionfish Pan-Seared dish with Black Forbidden Rice, Melting Zucchini Ribbons, with a Chardonnay Shellfish butter.

The festivities also include Lionfish & Libations on May 20 at the Harbor Walk Village, where you can try samplings of various local brews paired with food provided by participating vendors and learn more about lionfish.

"Emerald Coast Open and the Lionfish Removal & Awareness Day Festival continues to grow and provide awareness of lionfish removal which lessens the threat to our native wildlife in Destin-Fort Walton Beach. Our community sponsors make it possible for us to host an event that is not only educational but an enjoyable experience for families to attend on the Destin Harbor," said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

For official tournament rules, registration and more information, please visit: www.emeraldcoastopen.com.

For more information on Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida, please visit: www.destinfwb.com.



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Off the Hook: Cobia Season is Back



year, with very minimal cobia being spotted anywhere.

Boshamps held its annual Destin Flathead Classic Cobia Tournament April 20-23, with 31 boats participating, but very few fish overall – including only one being weighed in over the 45-lb. limit. That fish was caught by the boat Lucky Dog, and was worth \$108,000 in prizes. One weighed in at 44.8 lbs. with a few others between 25-35 lbs. The consensus from all the boats participating was that almost no cobia were spotted in our local area over that weekend.



to see a larger population of fish before that tournament in hopes of being able to weigh in a fish or two.

The Cobia fishery has slowed over the years, with the FWC now requiring them to be 36-inch fork length to be legal. Anglers can keep one per day or two per vessel, whichever is less.

If you've been on the docks, you've probably heard stories of the massive schools of fish our Emerald Coast used to see during the cobia migration, with the average fish size 30 lbs.-plus. So, what has happened? Some captains will say the water temps have pushed our migration farther up the East Coast so we are seeing less, while others will say that we have overfished the population. Which one is true? That's up to you.

By CALI HLAVAC

It's Cobia Season on the Emerald Coast, a short window of time each year where the cobia migration rolls through our waters and fishermen ride high in their towers trying to spot them. However, things are looking a bit different around here this

The Boathouse Oyster Bar follows the Flathead Classic with its own tournament, the Ding-A-Ling Cobia Tournament, April 28-30. Fish will need to be 45 lbs. to qualify for that tournament as well. It's open to charter boats and private boats, with anglers hoping

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NWFSC National Championship Three-peat

By DOUG STAUFFER

Champs again! Crowning National Champions in Northwest Florida is becoming habit forming with the NWFSC basketball programs. The college's women's basketball team did it again, winning the 2023 National Junior College Athletic Association Division I Women's Basketball Championship. This is the second national championship for the Lady Raiders, having been crowned two years ago. The men's basketball team filled in the 2022 gap by winning the championship. That's the three-peat: Lady Raiders (2021), Raiders (2022), Lady Raiders (2023). Be sure to get your season tickets for 2024.



Photos courtesy NWFSC



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The Lady Raiders' two national titles are the first in program history. President Devin Stephenson congratulated the team and their coach, saying, "I couldn't be prouder of the Lady Raiders and coach Bart Walker.

in the second half. Keeping the game within reach helped Mya Pierfax ice the game by making two free throws with 5.5 seconds in overtime.

The action took place at the Rip Griffin Center in Lubbock



It is an outstanding achievement and a testament to our commitment to excellence at Northwest Florida State College. The best truly is our standard."

The Lady Raiders defeated the dynasty-driven Trinity Valley Community College Lady Cardinals in a 66-63 nail-biter. The game started with Trinity Valley jumping out to a 9-0 lead in the first four minutes of the contest, but the Lady Raiders remained poised, resilient, and determined.

"We matured a lot and we had to match their physicality," Burt said. "That was the biggest thing was we got tougher as the season came on. We found our team's heart this week and that's why we won this."

In a game with nine lead changes and eight ties, neither team led by more than five points

Christian University, Texas. The Raiders spotted their opponent 10 points in the first quarter before mounting a furious comeback. Their dominating defense along with an exceptional execution on offense made the winning difference.

Sophomore Sakima Walker was named the Most Valuable Player of the 2023 NJCAA DI Women's Basketball Championship. Her 23 points led the Raiders with Destiney McPhaul, Zayla Tinner adding 11 points each. Sakima recorded 80 points and 42 rebounds throughout the national tournament.

Fans can follow NWFSC's athletics on Twitter by following @NWFRaiders or by visiting NWFRaiders.com for more information.

The Ins and Outs of Headaches and Migraines



By KAY LEAMAN,
Health Architect, HealthyDay
HealthyLife

Most of us have experienced a headache and/or migraine; I have experienced both. There are several types of headaches, classified by the cause:

Primary – caused by chemical, nerve, and blood vessels or muscles around the head and neck. The skull aches with these types.

Cluster – Normally centered in or around one eye and side of head. They are very painful and

extreme sensitivity to light and sound. They can last for hours or days and can interfere with daily activities. An Aura migraine can happen before (acting as a precursor) or during and include visual disturbances such as flashes of light or blindspots, tingling in the extremities and difficulty speaking.

Migraines are usually attributed to genetic or environmental factors. The trigeminal nerve (complex nerve in the cranium) is involved which interacts with the brain stem. Triggers can be hormonal changes or medications (including birth control) stress, sleep changes, foods and drinks (dyes, preservatives, MSG, artificial sweeteners), skipping meals and sensory stimulation such as bright lights, strong smells, loud noises or weather changes. There is also evidence that chemical imbalances play a part.



occur in cyclical patterns or periods of time. This pattern can last weeks or months with remission following, which can last for months or years before returning. In some instances remission is permanent.

Sinus – Infections or irritations in the sinuses can trigger these and are centered above and below the eyes where the sinuses are located.

Tension – Mild to moderate pain. The pain can feel like a tight band around the forehead and can include the back of the neck. The scalp, neck and shoulders and be tender to the touch.

The last class is Migraines. They create a severe throbbing pain accompanied by a pulsing sensation on one side of the head. These headaches can also trigger nausea, vomiting and

Electrical and magnetic stimulation are approved treatments for migraines. The FDA has approved the Cefaly device (transcutaneous supraorbital neurostimulator) and the Spring TMS (single pulse transcranial magnetic stimulator). Another device that offers a successful treatment (offers resolutions of active migraines) is the Electro-Equiscope (unharmful micro-current electrical device).

Things to consider that can aid in preventing headaches are aerobic exercise, having a regular sleep schedule and maintaining a healthy diet.

From the holistic side, nutrients have offered great success to those suffering from the various classifications. Among these are: Vitamin D and B complex Magnesium and Co-enzyme Q10


Curcumin and Omega 3 (fish oil), High-quality Grape Seed Extract and Resveratrol (Free radicals and oxidative stress significantly increase during attacks. Measuring thiol levels indicates that consuming these nutrients also aids in reducing the severity and incidences of migraines.), Melatonin and DHEA.

So much of our health is attributed to the attention and care we give to nourishing our cells. I have personally found, as have thousands of others, that feeding my body with the correct amounts of macro and micro nutrients on a daily basis has improved my quality of life. Factors that we have no control over such


as air and EMF pollutants, chemicals we unknowingly ingest, etc., affect our health and overload our body systems. Being proactive with our health can and does give our body a greater ability to combat these invaders.

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In 2014, Dr. Hubbard's career shifted from the traditional practice of medicine towards integrated functional approaches to wellness, the delivery of care, and medical entrepreneurship. His pursuit of the latest advancement in products and services led to the biotechnology patch company called Lifewave and their Stem Cell X39 Patch. Dr. Hubbard says "This patch is the future of stem cell therapy."

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General Public Wednesday, June 14:

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 Wellness

Semaglutide: Weight Loss Magic



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, M.D.
If you haven't heard already there is a new weight loss medication available at a reasonable cost. semaglutide is a GLP-1 receptor agonist which means it activates the GLP-1 receptor. Still confused? It doesn't matter.

It has several important actions in the body. Semaglutide ultimately helps your body lose weight by improving the regulation of sugar levels and insulin levels in the body. If this sounds like a medication for diabetes instead of weight loss then you would be correct. This class of medications was developed to improve diabetes. Astonishingly, in studies, many of my patients lost significant weight. In fact, up to 30% of their body weight. And, much of the weight stayed off after stopping the medication. This medication also slows the stomach. Food stays in the stomach longer so you feel full longer. And your stomach gets

full faster so you eat less. These medications help people lose significant weight and you lose weight without feeling hungry! Sounds like magic, right? I have been seeing patients for over 30 years. I have seen so many weight loss drugs come on and go. This is the first time I have ever been excited to tell people about a weight loss medication. So how is it possible this medication is available? Well, this medication was initially Ozempic. The FDA allows a new medication to have a patent, or monopoly, on the medication for many years. They say this gives the company enough time to recoup their cost of de-

velopment. This medication was being sold for over \$1500/month and was only available to patients with diabetes. Fortunately for us the drug company had no idea that the medication was going to be so popular and they essentially could not keep up with demand. They ran out of medication! So how is the medication available? The two ways branded medication can be manufactured by other companies is if the medication's patent has expired OR if the medication is no longer available from the manufacturer. So as soon as the company ran out, the other companies jumped in and started production of the generic equivalent

semaglutide. It's possible this price break might end once the drug company gets production online but we just don't know. If you're interested in losing significant amounts of weight and keeping it off, without feeling hungry you should give us a call at 850-837-1271. We still have appointments open.
Dr. Richard Chern MD and Sue Griffin ARNP specialize in hormone therapy for both men and women and have been seeing patients in Miramar Beach for 10 years. Dr. Chern also teaches hormone therapy to physicians across the county. Give them a call today at 850-837-1271 for your appointment.

Self-Care Corner: Skincare Tips for Busy Moms



BY KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER

It's almost Mother's Day, so I want to dedicate this column to all the busy moms trying to make it happen—moms have it tougher than most people who work day jobs. Sometimes as moms, we start to prioritize things like skincare less, especially in busy seasons. I understand it can be a struggle; so, adhering to some simple skin care tips can go a long way in keeping a healthy glow and alleviating stress while

juggling your busy schedule.
#1 Have a Simple Skincare Routine.
When you have so much to do and so little time, keep it simple for day and night. The thing I love about this routine is that it is SO fast.
A.M.
Wash with Botanical Cleansing Milk (usually in the shower to

save more time).
Spritz face with Botanical Toner (right out of the shower).
Apply moisturizer/sunscreen.
Bam! Ready to go (or apply makeup).
I follow it up with my Jane Iredale Makeup for a clean, healthy look.
Note: Botanical Cleansing Milk and Botanical Toner are both organic with the beauti-

ful stabilized Aloe Vera which is wonderful for all skin types. Our Jane Iredale makeup is easy-to-apply and includes sunscreen.
P.M.
Remove makeup with Botanical Cleansing Milk.
Spritz with Botanical Toner.
Apply a moisturizer such as Vital Essence with Aloe, Hyal-

Continued on next page



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Adjusting Life Input to Experience Healthier Output



By STEPHENIE CRAIG,
JOURNEY BRAVELY

A few months ago, I found my brain scattered, tired, and generally tense. When I slowed to reflect, I realized I was carrying stress outside my awareness. Juggling work, home, parenting, relationships, life transitions, emails, texts, news, professional research, social media, etc. was overwhelming my brain. These activities weren't unhealthy, but the output of my life was out of balance. I took a social media break and noticed quickly I felt better. That break has become a more permanent practice as I've remembered that what we put in, our life input, significantly impacts how we show up daily in life, our life output.

Do you ever find yourself trying to make an external change and it just isn't working? Maybe you're trying to reduce stress, increase joy, improve a relationship, or live less overwhelmed. You may keep trying to make adjustments to the output of your

life without slowing down to consider how the input might need to be adjusted. In reality, true change happens from the inside out.

In our fast, achievement-focused, entertainment-hungry culture, it's easy to become desensitized to anxiety-inducing input available daily. You wake up to news, social media, political commentary. You are inundated with messaging about how you aren't enough, you need to be better, you need to have more. You are told who is right, who you should be against, what you should fear, what you should know, and how the world is going to hell in a handbasket. It's hard to be more patient, kind, and peaceful when the input screams to worry more, do more, and be angrier.

The great news is you have the power to evaluate and adjust your input to create life balance. You get to decide the quantity and sources of information. You get to choose the boundaries regarding your time, activities, and practices you engage to pursue more joy and peace. So, what does it look like to begin adjusting your input to experience a healthier output?

5 Ways to Practice Adjusting Your Life Input to Experience Healthier Life Output

1. Slow down and notice where you are out of balance. Notice body tension, relationship tension, negative thoughts, unhealthy self-talk, road rage, impatience, irritability, sleep problems, anxiety, over/under eating, overspending, drug/alcohol use, feeling victimized by life.

2. Evaluate your input. Take a week to notice and note your input practices. Notice what you're looking at/listening to when you wake, drive, work, in your leisure time, before bed. Check the hour count on your phone use. Notice the hour count on social media, what you follow, and how it makes you feel. Notice the messaging/attitudes of input. Are they fear-based, critical, dehumanizing? Are they encouraging, solution-focused, inspiring?

3. Curate your input life feed. Give yourself radical permission to unfollow, quit the show, change the station, distance from relationships, reduce exposure to input that is not a fit with the world view you desire. You don't have to follow things that make you feel irrational fear, insecurity, and hopelessness. It's okay to unfollow positive things and friends if they are impacting you negatively. Try unfollowing negative inputs for 1-2 weeks and make notes about your feelings,

mindset, clarity of thought, state of overwhelm or calm. Keep in mind this can be challenging as your brain may be addicted to the dopamine hit you've been getting from some of the inputs. Push through the discomfort. It's worth it.

4. Create space. In place of excessive input, try incorporating an activity or two that creates calm and mental space. Take a walk, look at something beautiful, listen to calming music, be quiet, engage a spiritual practice, garden, hike, go for a bike ride, whatever else works for creating space.

5. Implement long-term input changes. Use your col-

lected input data to decide which things you will let go of long-term and take action steps. Remove apps, unfollow, find a new station, put limits on your phone, etc. Find consistent time to include your space activities. Determine the balance that works and begin practicing. This doesn't need to be perfect. You can continue observing, learning, and making adjustments over time.

Evaluating your input is uncomfortable work but very worth the payoff of living a more balanced, less overwhelmed life. Connect with us for coaching and counseling support along your journey at www.journeybravely.com.



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SKINCARE

continued from previous page

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#2 Dedicate Time to Self-Care.

Moms are the most deserving of a self-care day and stress can age us quicker. So, try to take a couple of hours when you can and de-stress. Put on your favorite music, pour some wine or schedule a spa day at Beverly Hills Day Spa where you will pampered. (Tell your family this is a great gift for Mother's Day!) There is nothing better than relaxing while also exfoliating your

skin and anti-aging. And you will operate much better during the busy times when you've had some relaxation time.

#3 Keep Yourself Hydrated and Nourished.

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 Wellness

What Teens Want Us to Know: Part 3

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

In the next installation of What Teens Want Us to Know, our kids were asked, “How do you wish people took care of you on a bad day?”

It can be so easy to think our kids don’t want us to be involved in helping them feel better, especially if we’re used to being kept at a distance, and sometimes that’s true. More than one teen did say, “I just want to be left alone.”

Others, however, offered purpose in their time of wanting to be alone, and it often had to do with how busy their schedules are. One teen said it would be helpful just to have time to relax and take a break. When there’s no time to slow down, it can compound problems if there isn’t time to assess what changes can be made to alleviate stress. Are we allowing students to par-

ticipate in making their schedules? Do we allow them to do less when their mental health is in jeopardy?

When students feel depleted, they also “just need peace and quiet to recuperate.” Many students shared that they wanted to talk but when they talked needed to be on their timeline, not ours.

“I don’t ever want to talk about it right away. Sit with me, give me some ice cream, and put on a movie. I’ll open up eventually. I’ve just got to process it all first.”

Not everyone needs physical touch to be comforted but for some, a simple hug makes a greater impact than talking, especially when it’s hard to articulate all the raw emotions clamoring for attention. “Just cuddle me and spend time with me.” When parents recognize their teen is going through a tough



time and do something about it, that child knows there’s relief in the hard day.

“Be there, hold me, and tell me it’s going to be okay.”

Of course, sometimes a bad day starts in the home and it’s us they need relief from.

“Just please don’t yell at me. If you handle the situation calmly and want to talk to me about it, I promise I’ll openly communicate with you.”

Unfortunately, a lot of kids are feeling isolated from the people they need comfort from the most and don’t get the chance to process a hard situation. “I don’t usually have people around me any day so I don’t really care if nobody is around me on a bad day.” Are there opportunities we can be more deliberate about

being present? Maybe a ride in the car, while you’re getting ready to start or end the day, or at a coffee shop? We can get so caught up in our schedules that we forget to ask simple, but critical questions. Forgetting to do so can be perceived as indifference.

“I wish they cared and said something like, ‘How are you feeling?’”

Another agreed: “Check on me every once in a while and then listen.”

A lot of kids know what they need on a bad day and it can get pretty specific!

“I just want to watch Friends with my mom and eat Publix sushi and cake.”

“A day inside with tea will do the trick. If I’m physically unwell I may need more but it just

depends.”

“Make some food and let me be alone.”

It can also be pretty general and open to lots of options.

“Distract me.”

Some of the teens that were getting ready to leave home wanted to feel more equipped to handle hard situations themselves.

“I just want people to take a step back so I can process and not have to be so dependent on others.”

One participant said, “Don’t sugarcoat it.” It’s hard for any of us to see someone we love have to suffer through tough times but many situations have to be confronted realistically so these kids have the tools and experience to handle it while they still have the support of our authority, resources and presence.

What your individual teen needs is not always obvious, but the universal theme is they want to be seen in their struggles, known in their process and whatever the age, feel safe.

“Understand me when I have a bad day, comfort me, and support me.”

“Just stand by me.”

“Some days I just need to be by myself and other days I want to feel protected by being in close proximity to those I love.”

Consider the book, The Five Love Languages of Teenagers by Gary Chapman to know how your teen might uniquely feel loved.

It’s a difficult time being a teen, especially now, when hard days can come from so many different places: home life, academic demands, extracurricular activities, work, relationships, burgeoning feelings, and social media.

Don’t miss those opportunities to offer relief and encouragement to keep going.

“Smile and tell me there’s always tomorrow.”



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Mom's Earth Day



ENERGY TIPS by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Mom's Earth Day? Sounds made up, right? Earth Day was April 22 and Mother's Day is May 14, only 21 days apart. So, I thought I would combine the two and make Mom's Earth Day. Here at ECES, every day is Earth Day. We increase comfort and lower CO2 emissions, saving the planet one home at a time, and perhaps maybe every day should be Mother's day. With these two great holidays so close together, I had to offer suggestions more than just flowers and home-made cards for mom this spring.

Air conditioning is vital, the states are getting warmer and we want mom to be comfortable. When you're at Mom's, change the air condition filter. Clogged filters cause strain on the system and can lead to more service calls, costing Mom money. Many HVAC professionals suggest using the less-expensive filters to allow more air flow and efficiency. These filters do need to be changed more often but cost less.

After replacing the air filter, you can pour distilled vinegar down the condensate drain line to remove mildew and grime from the line, also extending time between service calls. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this process, consult a professional. Be sure to dust HVAC vents and fans; these areas build up dust quickly and could be hurting the circulation of airflow as well.

What better way to show your mother love than with savings on energy costs? One of the easiest ways to save energy is to change out incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. LED bulbs can save as much as 75-80 percent on lighting cost and they can last 10-20 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Replacing five frequently used inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home with energy sav-



ings LED bulbs could save you about \$75 per year and reduce your CO2 footprint. It's also your turn to tell your mom to shut off the lights when leaving the room. Even with LED bulbs, when you are not in the room, switch off the lights and save energy.

What's tall, green, made of wood and can save energy for your mother? (Hint: a tree)

Doing a little landscaping and planting a tree can cut energy costs in the long run by adding shade during the summer months. Trees also help purify the air we breathe by absorbing pollutants and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife, maintaining a balance with nature.

Buy mom a power strip and plug energy vampire electronics

like cell phone chargers and other electronics, which don't need to be powered on all the time. Switching these off at the power strip when not in use or unplugging them can save up to \$100 a year. When cell phone and tablet charges are not in use, they still consume energy, costing money and wasting energy.

If your mom says her HVAC constantly runs or there are rooms which never get cool, it may be time to schedule an energy inspection by a professional. These professionals can pinpoint areas that are losing energy and costing money. By addressing these areas with energy-efficient solutions, you can

increase comfort, lower energy bills and lower your CO2 footprint.

Also try keeping our earth and our moms in your daily activities and actions.

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 or email wecare@trusteces.com and Beat the Heat.

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Is Your Insurance Ready for Hurricane Season?

June 1st marks the beginning of hurricane season. Researchers at North Carolina State said the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season will see 11 to 15 named storms forming in the Atlantic basin. The basin includes the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

So, it is time to make sure you're ready for the next round of tropical depressions, storms and hurricanes that visit the Gulf Coast every year.

Do you have what you need when it comes to homeowner's and flood insurance and hurricanes? There are a few things that should be on your radar. If you have these coverages in place, you'll be better equipped to ride out whatever storm blows through.

First on the list is hurricane/wind coverage. Most home pol-

icies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) in Florida include either hurricane, named storm, or wind/hail under a separate deductible. This is preferred since coordination and consistency of coverages is important. Some carriers don't write wind coverage close to the water. So, a stand-alone wind-only policy would be needed. If this is the case, extra care must be taken to avoid any coverage inconsistencies. In a previous article last year, we addressed the differences in hurricane, named storm, and wind/hail coverage. But suffice it to say, when it comes to wind coverage, the best option is hurricane. Under this coverage scenario, the larger deductible in the policy, usually a percentage of the Dwelling Limit, applies to declared hurricane activity, while the smaller deductible in the policy would apply to other



wind losses and all other perils in the policy. There are several deductible options available that can have a large impact on what would be your out-of-pocket responsibility if you file a claim.

Make sure you know you have sufficient Dwelling Limit (Coverage A) coverage to rebuild your home in the event of a loss. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured.

Another important coverage is Loss of Use that pays for you to live somewhere else while repairs are being done to your temporarily unlivable home. This goes for rental properties with Loss of Rents coverage as well. Remember, there needs to be direct physical damage to trigger this coverage. Some rental policies don't include Loss of Rents so you will want to read your policy or call your insurance agent so you know for sure.

Another often misunderstood coverage not offered with each carrier, but always recommended, is Law or Ordinance coverage. Most carriers, if they have

it available, offer either 10%, 25% or 50% coverage. This percentage is tied to your Dwelling Limit. If you have extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance coverage is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play.

Another vital policy to have, especially during hurricane season, is flood insurance. Flood and water damage from a wind event are not necessarily the same thing. This coverage is so vital that we will again devote our next month's article to this topic. Although there are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy, it is infrequent. For most insureds, your flood policy will be a separate policy writ-

ten through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program), and, unless your lender requires the policy, or you're closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30-day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective. Private flood insurance is an alternative. Many of the private markets in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

We hope this helps ease your concerns this hurricane season, in terms of coverage.

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Boost Work Performance with the Power of Gratitude



BY BILL MASON

In today's fast-paced work environment, productivity is of utmost importance. We all want to perform at our best and achieve our goals. Fortunately, there is a simple yet powerful way to improve work performance – gratitude.

Expressing gratitude involves showing appreciation for the good things in life, including our work. By doing so, we shift our attention toward the positive things in our life instead of dwelling on what we lack. This change in mindset can greatly affect our performance at work. Essentially, it's about focusing on gratitude instead of contempt for what we do not have. By changing our mindset, we can transform from feeling like helpless victims at the mercy of the crashing waves to having a

victorious outlook that uses the crashing waves to bolster our strength and resilience. Life is happening for our benefit rather than against us for our downfall.

A straightforward way to express gratitude in the workplace is through small acts of kindness. A thank-you note, a compliment, or a small gift can go a long way in showing appreciation for a job well done. When we take the time to acknowledge the hard work and contributions of our colleagues, we create a culture of gratitude that can have a significant impact on our work performance.

Having problems with a colleague, spouse or friend? Take the "30-day Challenge to Improve Your Relationship" that I give to many of my clients! Starting tomorrow and continuing every day, express gratitude to someone in your life, either verbally or in writing, without expecting anything in return. Examples of gratitude include thanking someone for their actions or tasks, appreciating a character trait they possess or expressing gratitude for their hard work. Ensure the action is tailored to the individual, such as recognizing their efforts or values. This small gesture can have a big impact on your relationship.



ing. The next time you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take a moment to express gratitude for the good things in your work and life. It can make all the difference.

If you're looking to improve team dynamics, increase productivity, or enhance leadership skills, Rocket Fuel Coach is here to help! Working with Bill, you can expect to develop a clear vision for your team, create actionable plans for success, and transform into a high-performing team that exceeds

Gratitude is a powerful tool that can have a significant impact on our work performance. Expressing gratitude can in-

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BILLY BOWLEGS

continued from page 10

believe, “Private funds pay for all of the custom-made costumes, the beads, cups and coins that are thrown in parades (16 throughout the year), as well as the locally-chartered landing boats,” James said. “The Krewe of Bowlegs receives no direct funding from the City of Fort Walton Beach, the county or the TDD. And while the Krewe of Bowlegs itself is not a charitable organization, our tradition is to support the community and we make several public appearances throughout the year in support of educational and charitable causes.” The Krewe of Bowlegs also works with the William Augustus Bowles Museum & Historical Foundation which helps underwrite fireworks, the treasure hunt and other expenses. The City of Fort Walton Beach also underwrites festival expenses and provides critical police, fire, EMS and other support.

The festival kicks off this year with a Pre-Invasion on Thursday evening, May 18th, just off Main St. downtown, where Captain Billy Bowlegs and his ‘Krewe in Black’ will arrive aboard

their pirate ship parade float, the Blackhawk, to greet area children, take photos and hand out treasure. The Skirmish will be held on Friday evening, May 19th, where Captain Billy and his Krewe will arrive by water at the Fort Walton Landing. The mayor of Fort Walton Beach and his forces are prepared and have threatened to arrest Captain Billy if he tries to land. The city of Fort Walton Beach will also host its Concert in the Park, and the evening will end with a Fireworks show over the sound. On Saturday afternoon, May 20th, Captain Billy will return with the entire Krewe of Bowlegs and his allies from visiting Krewes from across the country, after his defeat the night prior. The mayor will try everything to stop him from landing. Will he be a match for the overwhelming presence of Captain Billy’s pirates? Will the Captain prevail in taking over our city?

Finally, on Monday night, May 22nd, the Torchlight Parade will start at 7 p.m. on Eglin Pkwy. from First St. to Hughes Ave. The parade will be anchored by Captain Billy and the entire Krewe of Bowlegs marching down the street to celebrate



Billy Bowlegs in the early 1960s. Photos courtesy William Augustus Bowles Historical Foundation.

Torchlight Parade, there’s all sorts of grub and grog, from ice cream to seafood. There will be live music and entertainment, fireworks a plenty and vendors showcasing lots of pirate booty and the like. For scallywags young and old, there’s arts and crafts booths, food, refreshments and bouncy houses. Our high seas are filled with hundreds of boats lining the mile-long sandbar off the Fort Walton Landing, where a melting pot of people will make their way to pillage, plunder and drink rum.

FWB Life implores you to be ‘Loud & Proud’ and boldly stand guard to defend our piece of paradise at this year’s festival. Want to play a part? To enter the parade, download the entry form at fwbchamber.org. Captain Billy 67 is looking for a BIG 2023 turnout! So, join him and his ‘Krewe in Black’ as they ‘Turn it up to 11!’ and take over the city of Fort Walton Beach!

Captain Billy Bowlegs’ 67th annual capture of Fort Walton Beach.

Any local who has been around long enough looks forward to the famed treasure hunt. Captain Billy says there are fewer than 100, limited-edition, two-inch treasure coins, each having an individually engraved serial number. Some coins are being hidden with published clues, some are being given away on the radio and on social media, and some by Captain Billy personally at public appearances. The winning coin will be chosen by a live drawing on May 20th at the Fort Walton Landing with the Grand Prize valued at \$1,000.

In between the Skirmish and

Schedule

Thursday Evening, May 18
Pre-Invasion, Downtown Fort Walton Beach

Friday Evening, May 19
Skirmish & Fireworks, Fort Walton Landing

Saturday, May 20
Invasion, Fort Walton Landing, Downtown Street Party, Fireworks

Monday, May 22, 7 p.m.
Torchlight Parade, Downtown Fort Walton Beach





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Sean of the South: Dear Young Person



BY SEAN DIETRICH

I am an imaginary old man. I am every World War II veteran you never knew. I am each faceless GI from the bygone European War. Or any other war for that matter.

I am in my 90s and 100s now. Lots of young folks probably don't even know I exist.

In my war, I was one of the hundreds of thousands of infantrymen, airmen, sailors, marines, mess sergeants, seabees, brass hats, engineers, doctors, medics, buck privates and rear-echelon potato-peelers.

We hopped islands in the Pacific. We served in the African war theater. We beat the devil, then we came home and became the old fart next door.

Wartime was one heck of an era to be young. Let me tell ya. When we went overseas we were still teenagers, smooth skinned, scared spitless, with government haircuts, wearing brand new wedding rings. We hadn't seen action yet, so we were jittery and lots of us smoked through a week's rations of Luckies in one day.

Then it happened. It was different for everyone, but it happened. Shells landed everywhere. People screamed. And in a moment our fear melted away and we had war jobs to do. It didn't matter who we were or which posts were ours. Everyone worked in the grand assembly line of battle.

When the smoke cleared and the action was over, we had new confidence in ourselves and we were no longer boys.

And anyway, we weren't just boys, we were girls, too. There were 350,000 females serving in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II. People forget that.

Speaking of women. We guys were always talking about our sweethearts, wives, and mothers. If you mentioned someone's girl a man was liable to talk for hours about her. And even if you'd al-



ready seen his wallet photos before, you never interrupted a guy talking about his gal. Because eventually you'd be talking about yours.

There were nights overseas when we would stare at the moon and wonder if our sweethearts were looking at the same moon. There were moments of indescribable loneliness.

Infantrymen had it the hardest. I don't know how our doughboys did it. They lived like pack mules. Their boots got wet, their feet swelled, and their flesh became waterlogged. Chunks of their heels would fall off; the dreaded "trench foot."

The funny thing is, even though their feet were falling off, these men still didn't want to leave their posts. Many had to be dragged away cussing. That's how committed these guys were.

Oh, and the food was god awful. You learned to appreciate the rarity of a creative company cook.

In Italy, sometimes we could buy eggs from local merchants for outrageously inflated prices. One time I knew a guy who ate 32 scrambled eggs in his tent one night. I asked him why he did this and he told me he didn't want to die without tasting eggs one last time.

A lot of guys brought banjos, guitars and fiddles over there. They'd play music at night sometimes in the open Italian air. We'd square dance and laugh. Others would sit on their helmets, smoking, thinking of home, wiping their eyes.

The Germans had a local radio station that broadcast American stuff like Bing and Frank. Then, between songs, a German gal talked propoganda over the airwaves to us American GIs in

a sexy voice, trying to mess with our heads.

She would speak flawless English and say, "Give up, boys, there's no point trying, you can't win. Everyone hates you. Your girls are at home cheating on you. They don't love you anymore. Give up. It's over. You lost."

This was supposed to discourage us, but it usually just made us laugh. Or cry. Sometimes both.

When the war ended, we felt too much joy at once. In fact, most weren't totally sure they could trust good news. A lot of guys got like that.

So when we heard the official papers had been signed and the war was over, it was Christmas morning multiplied times a hundred. No. Times a trillion.

Those of us overseas immediately wrote letters to family and told our wives we were coming home, told our kids to grease up their baseball gloves. Our letters were covered in little wet polka dots, if you get my drift.

Stateside, there were huge celebrations happening. Sailors climbed lampposts to unfurl flags. Infantrymen stood on rooftops, toasting mugs of homebrew. Mothers were frying chickens out the wazoo.

People were partying everywhere from San Bernardino to Flatbush. Big cities, little towns, and the rural parts between. There were ticker tape parades, auto processions and girls would kiss any guy in government clothes.

But on this important day, you know what I think about? I think about all the guys who never got kissed again. Our men in the soil.

They were those who evaporated like the early morning fog

over Anzio, or the thick mists of Normandy. They died young. And they died for a lot more than a three-day weekend of barbecues and Budweiser.

These were men who fell upholding the mantle of our unalienable American spirit, the Blessings of our liberty and the pride of their homeland. They were friends. They were the kids next door. They were children of God who once proved, beyond speculation, that even hellfire cannot kill the great idea that is America. I hope we never forget them. I know I never will.

Happy Memorial Day.



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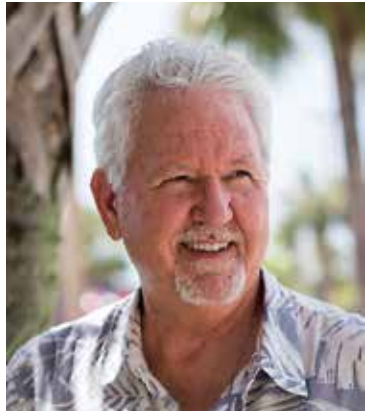
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 Musing

A Pastor's Ponderings: Mothers—Servers or Lovers?



BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’”

“‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary

has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:38-42, NIV)

Mothers serve and provide the loving environment that empowers a life worth living. Thank God for the mothers who give themselves faithfully to their families, jobs, homes, and provide stability in a chaotic world.

But moms, when is it time to stop and focus on Christ? Jesus shows us the key to balancing love and service. Most moms swing between serving and nurturing. Jesus speaks to this common human contradiction.

Martha was doing all the work. Yet Mary gets the commendation. It seems so unfair until you look at it more closely. Martha had invited Jesus into her home and was bustling about making the preparations, but inside her head criticism brewed. “Why do I have to do all the work? Why doesn’t lazy ol’ Mary help around here? Doesn’t anybody care about me? After all, I’m doing all the work.”

Martha’s critical self-talk prompted her to verbalize her accusation against the Lord. “Do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” Can you imagine accusing Christ of not caring? She goes further by commanding the Lord of the Universe to tell her sister to help her. Do you smell the stink of her self-righteous indignation?

Jesus lovingly responds to her need and not to her critical spirit. He understands Martha’s concerns, just as he knows the multitude of needs that press upon mothers. Christ seems to say, “Martha, something more important is happening right now. Mary sits at my feet because she loves me. Why don’t you let go of the busy-work and spend time with me?”

There is nothing wrong with serving. We desperately need servant-hearted people in our lives. But the problem was in the ugly conversation going on in Martha’s heart. Criticism gave birth to self-righteous indignation, manifesting in rebellion to the person she was trying to

honor with her service. People who work too much get tired, resentful, and critical. At some point, we must stop our labors and sit at Jesus’ feet to worship. Make Christ your focus.

The motivation to serve drives many people. According to author Dr. Gary Chapman in *The Five Love Languages*, many people express their love for others by serving. A high percentage of Americans intuitively migrate directly to their task list. This quality is admirable but unable to produce a happy life. Martha is learning this vital principal.

Chapman’s other four “love languages” are also insightful; physical contact, words of affirmation, quality time, and receiving gifts are all employed in Christ’s interaction with Mary and Martha. Mary sat at Christ’s feet as He gave her quality time. Jesus commended Mary and Martha with words of affirmation during the event. The sisters each gave Jesus a gift – Mary worshiped him, and Martha prepared food. Love

pervades this entire event. But Jesus shows us the supreme expression of love is time spent in worship.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism declares, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” No higher love exists than worship. God crafted us with His own hands for this purpose of loving, adoring, and worshipping. We find true fulfillment when we sit at Jesus’ feet.”

Ultimately, serving God is good, but worship is better. We must allow time, space, and focus for loving worship at the feet of Jesus.

Pastor Dave just released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled “Prodigal Jesus” You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com. Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin.

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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-togethers, 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 May calendar offer a variety of paintings — from sea-



sonally-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 painting-withatwist.com/studio/fort-walton-beach/calendar.



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NFSO at Resurrection Catholic Church: Duruflé Requiem

The Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, Todd Craven, Music Director/Conductor Featuring the Northwest Florida Symphony Chorale, Darrin Scott Isaac, Music Director Soloists: Stephanie Riegler, flute and Katie Ott, harp Works by W.A. Mozart, Matthew Fossa and Maurice Duruflé

Experience the beauty of the famous Requiem by French composer Maurice Duruflé performed in the perfect spiritual and ambient setting of the Resurrection Catholic Church with a full 65-piece chorale and orchestra.



The first half of the program highlights principal musicians from the NFSO: the premiere of a new work by principal oboist Matthew Fossa and a performance of the magical Concerto for Flute and Harp by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, featuring Stephanie Riegler and Katie Ott.

Saturday, May 13, 2023
The performance is at 7:00 p.m.
Tickets: \$25

Call the Mattie Kelly Arts Center box office at (850) 729-6000 or visit mattiekellyartscenter.org.

Tickets also available for purchase the day of the performance at Resurrection Catholic Church, Miramar Beach, FL

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NFSO
TODD CRAVEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR
Season 2022-23

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at Resurrection Catholic Church

Saturday, May 13, 2023 7:00 p.m.
Tickets: \$25

Featuring the Northwest Florida Symphony Chorale, Darrin Scott Isaac, Music Director Soloists: Stephanie Riegler, flute and Katie Ott, harp Works by W.A. Mozart, Matthew Fossa and Maurice Duruflé

Experience the beauty of the famous Requiem by French composer Maurice Duruflé performed in the perfect spiritual and ambient setting of Resurrection Catholic Church with a full 65 piece chorale and orchestra.

The first half of the program highlights principal musicians from the NFSO: the premiere of a new work by principal oboist Matthew Fossa and a performance of the magical Concerto for Flute and Harp by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, featuring Stephanie Riegler and Katie Ott.

Call or click for tickets (850) 729-6000 or MattieKellyArtsCenter.org
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 Arts & Music

Explore the Magnificence of Digital Graffiti

On May 19-20, experience Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, a one-of-a-kind projection art festival where artists from throughout the world use the most recent digital technologies to project their original works onto the iconic white walls of Alys Beach.

Sometimes referred to as “Photon Bombing,” “Guerilla Projection” or “Urban Projection,” underground artists have been using the latest design, an-

imation and projection technologies for many years to cast dynamic images onto skyscrapers and other urban structures as a means of artistic expression. Digital Graffiti brings these artists together in one place to celebrate and showcase their unique talents on an amazing backdrop.

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executives and fans of art, technology and architecture, digital submissions come from as far away as Israel, Austria, Canada, Germany, London, India, France, Italy and China. Thousands in cash prizes are awarded.

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Bring a blanket or chair and enjoy dinner al fresco from local restaurants and food trucks.

Proceeds benefit Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and its art education community outreach initiatives.



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 be-

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,

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. See you at the theatre!



cause 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 participate 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 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

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Don't miss the world's most beloved musical based on the true story of the Von Trapp family. Featuring a trove of cherished songs, including "Climb Every Mountain," "My Favorite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" and the title number "The Sound of Music," this is one inspiring musical that brings joy to audiences of all ages.

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Ask Destinites: Where Locals Get Local News



By PATRICIA LEE, OWNER
DESTINITES.COM

This article is especially good if you are a new resident to the Destin area. In our Facebook Destinites local's group (www.facebook.com/Destinites) this

month, there was some discussion about where to find local news since Destin doesn't have a news station. We have a lot of new residents and they are interested to know where locals get their local news. Below are some of the member responses.

1. "I don't watch the local news. You'll actually find out what is going on locally faster on FB. Also a lot of news never makes it on TV if it's bad for our tourism."

2. "WJHG (Panama City NBC affiliate) has a Firestick app. You can watch all their live newscasts, or recordings of older ones, it's my go-to! They definitely cover Destin, usually showing the harbor live cam during the weathercasts. Also my favorite lo-

cal news crew, so recommended."

3. "I don't waste time on any local network news channels living by the beach. Waaay too many other great things to do. I do however keep up with current happenings through great local fb pages and Newsmax for bigger things going on."

4. LocalNow covers decently.

I did find myself watching the Panama City station, WJHG, the most. They do seem to mention Destin some or, at least more than the other stations. It is not a full Destin-area news source though, by any means. I do agree that Local Now does a pretty good job of local news.

Our Facebook Destinites group is not a news platform,

but since we are a private group for residents/property owners, if something really important is coming up which will affect the community, one of our members will usually post about it for discussion.

Otherwise, **Destin Life** newspaper or any one of Life Media's other local, community newspapers, such as FWB Life and Bay Life, are a great source for community updates, events and a lot of information.

It is also a good idea to follow the Okaloosa county sheriff's Facebook page and the Destin Chamber Facebook page and website.

If locals want to know about local businesses, sales, special

events, services or discounts offered, they can find them in Destin Life. They can also find local business paid sponsors in our Destinites local resident's Facebook group, where they sometimes offer a special discount to Destinites group members. There are a few local magazines that offer advertising, as well and they can be found in stands around town.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private local's Destinites Facebook group at www.facebook.com/Destinites — more than 7,700 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out the monthly newsletter and sponsored local business directory at Destinites.com.

SPORTS CARS

continued from page 19

the new J29 Toyota Supra, and both are manufactured at the same Austria facility.

Though the J29 Supra and G29 BMW Z4 may be brothers, they're definitely not identical twins. Each has its own personality. The BMW doesn't get

a manual transmission option, like the Supra, and the handling isn't as precise and sports oriented as the Supra's rear-wheel drive layout. The turbocharged 2.0 liter inline 4 (shared by both makes) is a torquey engine with plenty of growl and good punch for most drivers. There's also the option to move up to the B58 3.0 liter, which really makes

each car a small rocket. However, I believe the lighter weight and slight benefit in agility make the turbo 4 a better choice for anyone wanting more of a true driver's car in the Bimmer or the Supra.

Between the two, it's safe to say most diehard sports car fans would likely choose the Supra, while many of their wives or girlfriends would probably choose the Z4. Either way you go, you get a great daily driver that should prove to be economical to maintain.

Toyota GR 86 and Subaru BRZ

This Toyota-Subaru sports car duo has become an immensely popular and dependable choice among many car enthusiasts looking for a fun ride they can actually drive daily. With four seats (at least kiddie back seats), decent trunk space and a great revving, naturally aspirated boxer-four, the Subie BRZ, and its Toyota GR86 twin, offer a whole lot of bang for your sports car bucks. And just like the Mazda MX-5, have proven to be about the most fun you can have in a small, rear-drive car under \$50,000 new. Did I mention both the newest iteration of the GR86 and the BRZ come standard with manuals? As any self-respecting sports car driver would only have it that way.

The second generation of these two cars started with the 2022-year vehicles, and with the new design elements, also brought a bump in horsepower



and torque, while maintaining the previous iteration's remarkable handling, dependability and daily drivability. Whether you go for a first generation or spring for a 2022 forward car, you're sure to love the true sports car feel and handling of either badged twin in this duo.

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 found-

ing 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.



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