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# DESTIN Life

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## Team Wegner Embarks on Ultra Paddle Event to Benefit Cystic Fibrosis

By CHRISTOPHER MANSON

This month, local anesthesiologist and paddleboard enthusiast Ryan Wegner heads to the Bahamas for a massive 80-mile, approximately 16-hour paddle event benefiting Piper's Angels Foundation for Cystic Fibrosis. The Palm Beach Gardens-based non-profit hosts its 10th annual Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis June 21-25.

Wegner, the father of twin Autistic 14-year-old boys, heard about the event from his cousin, who will join him for the Crossing. "I was aware of cystic fibrosis through my education and my involvement with kids with special needs," he says. "I feel like this is something I need to do. It's part of my nature to help other people."

Two hundred paddlers will participate this year. Wegner will be part of a relay team, paddling for three or four hours. He'll bring a 12-foot live watersports board, made by a Clearwater company and



Gary Coram, Jessica Shuffitowski, Ryan Wegner, Matt Duncan and Tony Maganzini at Gulf Wind Paddle & Surf in Santa Rosa Beach. Wegner will be participating in the Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis event using the 12-foot LIVE Watersports board similar to the one pictured.

graciously provided by the owners of Santa Rosa Beach's recently opened Gulf Wind Paddle & Surf store.

"I've only been using it for a month," says Wegner. "It's amazing." To prepare for the Crossing, he trains daily "whether it's in the gym or on the water." When we speak at Gulf Wind - "The Coolest Li'l Surf Shop on the Panhandle" - he tells me that each paddler must raise \$2,000 individually. He's been reaching out to locals - mostly through his job - and friends to meet or exceed his goal.

"Ryan came in and introduced himself, and we saw an opportunity for us to do some philanthropy," says Matt Duncan, who co-owns Gulf Wind with Tony Maganzini. "We're helping Ryan with the board and uniforms, and sponsoring his team." In turn, Wegner is raising awareness for the store and its top-of-the-line wares.

**RACE**

*continued on page 3*



## Join the Brigade



By HEATHER BENNETT EYE

You probably know someone who's had a cancer diagnosis, or know someone who knows someone. It's hard to find anyone who hasn't been touched by cancer in some way. Our community is no different. People are affected every day.

Michele Bailey, founder of Bai-

**BRIGADE**

*continued on page 3*



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**BRIGADE**

*continued from page 1*

ley Brigade, and her family were affected in a big way when her husband Scott passed away in December 2021 from a rare salivary gland cancer. He was only 54. While there are many organizations offering resources to more common specific types of cancer, we need to remember that there is a wide variety of debilitating cancers. Bailey Brigade was started to honor Scott and support locals battling all types of cancer. It's a non-profit organization that provides copay assistance, backpacks with self care items, and scholarships for those wanting to go into the medical field.

All money donated goes to

help patients from The Emerald Coast. "Your money stays local," stated Michele, who is working with oncologist Dr. Hayes at Ascension Sacred Heart. Part of the donations go towards helping patients with their copay. Qualifying patients are handed a card at checkout letting them know the Brigade covered their copay that day.

Backpacks provided to patients consist of self care items in themed zip lock bags such as "All Wiped Out" with cleaning and sanitizing wipes along with "Take It Easy Queasy" that comes with anti nausea items to help with the side affects of chemotherapy. The backpacks also come with letters of encouragement and support. Local students have supplied them with letters, but anyone wanting to offer letters of encouragement



can send them to Bailey Brigade. Inside the backpacks are cards with a QR code. The code will take the patients directly to a patient-only patience resource page where they can find assistance with services or discount services for them.

Another way to give back to the community for Bailey Brigade is through their scholarship program. Lukas Burgis was just announced as a scholarship winner. Lukas has also been affected by cancer in his family. He

is studying medicine at Florida Atlantic University and holds a 4.6 GPA.

The community has been a huge support for Bailey Brigade. South Walton High Lacrosse and Basketball have both held fundraiser nights. The local Young Professional Networks through the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors held a costume party and silent auction with proceeds benefitting the Brigade. Owners of First Watch opened a new location in Tallahassee and donated all the proceeds from its soft opening weekend to Bailey Brigade. As Scott and Michele's oldest son is their Operations Manager, it was personal for them as well.

"We've been here for 30 years," stated Michele, referring to Walton County. "Our roots run so deep in the sand. We've

seen the community grow and change. The heart of the community has only gotten bigger."

If you are interested in making a donation, you can check out their website at [www.baileybrigade.com](http://www.baileybrigade.com). Monthly subscriptions are encouraged, but one-time donations are always appreciated. It takes approximately \$50 to fill one backpack for a patient. They are always looking for corporate sponsors as well. Businesses can get their name on backpacks they sponsor, links on the patient resource page, or even a scholarship given in their company name.

Bailey Brigade is gearing up for a fall fundraising event. It is looking for an outdoor location. If you are interested in donating space, please reach out to Michele at [info@baileybrigade.com](mailto:info@baileybrigade.com).



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**Editor & Publisher**

Lori Leath Smith  
[Lori@LifeMediagr.com](mailto:Lori@LifeMediagr.com)

**Director, Advertising Sales**

Scott Miller  
[Scott@LifeMediagr.com](mailto:Scott@LifeMediagr.com)

**Editor**

Kenneth Books

**Production & Layout**

Kim Harper

**Contributing Writers**

Kenneth Books  
Heather Bennett Eye  
Will Estell  
Christopher Manson  
Doug Stauffer

**To Advertise**

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**To submit events:** Cali Hlavac  
[cali.hlavac@gmail.com](mailto:cali.hlavac@gmail.com)

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**RACE**

*continued from page 1*

Wegner is the only Crossing participant from the area, but he'll be cheered on by Panama City Beach resident Jessica Shuffitowski, the mother of a 5-year-old boy with CF, Stone. Shuffitowski, Stone, and husband Gary Coram will trailer their boat down to South Florida for the event. For the first time in his life, Stone will meet other children with CF – from a distance of at least six feet, due to medical rules.

Stone's mom says treatment for CF patients is nonexistent in the immediate area. She and her son make the trek to Pensacola for treatments – blood work, breathing tests, etc. – every three months "unless something else comes up," she says. She is grateful to Piper's Angels for offering incentives to CF patients. "They offer grants for saltwater equipment. I can get Stone a paddleboard or surfboard, and they'll pay for lessons. He'll be

interested in trying anything."

According to the Piper's Angels Foundation website, Cystic Fibrosis is a chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive systems of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States. A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick and sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and leads to life-threatening lung infections. The mucus also obstructs the pancreas and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food.

"It's a progressive disease," says Shuffitowski. "And it's a very invisible illness. My son looks completely normal, but at the turn of a hat, he can be hospitalized for a month."

She adds that there is zero federal funding for CF, and that any grants come from foundations and sponsorships. "A lot of CF patients are living longer now, and more adults are living with it than ever before." This is largely due to the drug Trikafta,



which was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2019.

But, "it's one of those things where you can either afford it or not. My son will be eligible to take it when he's 6." Currently, the cost of Trikafta for a single patient runs about \$80,000 a month.

Learn more about the Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis at [crossingforcysticfibrosis.com](http://crossingforcysticfibrosis.com) and [pipersangels.org](http://pipersangels.org). Gulf Wind Paddle & Surf is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Visit it online at [gulfwindpaddlesurf.com](http://gulfwindpaddlesurf.com).

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 Community

# Prepare Now for Hurricane Season

FROM THE INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & HOME SAFETY

Hurricane Season started June 1. Not quite five years removed from the devastating impact of Hurricane Michael, our area does not need to be reminded about the importance of being prepared. But, with information available from various sources, it can be hard to discern the best steps to take.

Based on decades of field and lab research, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) has released its 2023 Hurricane Ready guide featuring preparedness tips to help home and business owners strengthen their properties against storms. IBHS research shows resilient construction and re-roofing can significantly reduce the risk of storm damage. The nonprofit research organization has also identified some low-cost DIY projects that can help any building better withstand high winds and heavy rain.

“One of the things we note when investigating storms is that homeowners can do things to reduce the likelihood and severity of storm damage,” said Dr. Ian Giammanco, lead research meteorologist at IBHS. “Even with Hurricane Ian, which caused extreme damage due to storm surge, we saw limited wind damage in homes built after 2002 when the Florida Building Code was first adopted. Amid the overall destruction, this positive result helps show that we are

not powerless against Mother Nature.”

## First Line of Defense: The Roof

IBHS analysis shows that as much as 90% of all disaster-related insurance claims include damage to the roof, and that oftentimes relatively minor roof damage leads to extensive interior repairs. One way to reduce the risk posed by high winds is to identify existing damage or wear on your roof. Most roofing contractors will provide an inspection, sometimes at no cost, and then make necessary repairs. If it is time for roof replacement due to age or existing damage, re-roof to the FORTIFIED standard. Based on decades of the nonprofit’s research, FORTIFIED is a voluntary construction and re-roofing method requiring third-party verification of the key elements that strengthen roofs against severe weather. Lab studies and real-world events show FORTIFIED prevents damage from high winds up to 130 mph.

## Wind-Rated Garage Doors

Garage doors represent another common source of “cascading damage” during hurricanes or other severe weather events. When the largest opening in most buildings fails, pressure can build inside the garage and push up on the roof and out against surrounding walls. This can lead to major structural damage and even

collapse. In this area, property owners should have wind-resistant garage doors with a rating of at least 130 mph. If a garage door is not labeled as wind resistant, it should be replaced or at least reinforced to provide needed protection.

## Cost-Effective Repairs

While a stronger roof and garage door will significantly help to reduce the risk of storm damage, other more budget-friendly steps can be taken, as well. Hurricane Ready suggests sealing gaps and cracks to keep wind-driven rain from intruding into a home or business. Other actions like securing soffits and trimming trees can also help to limit damage caused by wind.

## Know Your Codes

Modern and enforced build-

ing codes are critical to reducing the damage and destruction caused by hurricanes each year. Florida ranks atop IBHS’s Rating the States which examines building codes in 18 Gulf Coast and Atlantic states and grades them based on adoption, enforcement, and contractor licensing.

While Florida’s building codes have been among the nation’s strongest for the past 20 years, they have improved over time. Therefore, a home built “to-code” in 2005 does not have the same level of protection as a home built in 2023. One key example is the sealed roof deck, which only became part of Florida’s statewide code last year. Homes built or re-roofed prior to that are missing this important level of protection that IBHS studies show can stop escalating damage which often leads to ex-



pensive repairs and homeowner displacement.

“If your home wasn’t built or re-roofed to the newest code, you can make it stronger,” Giammanco added. “If your budget doesn’t allow bigger ticket items like a new roof or garage door, something as simple as trimming trees could help to make your home better protected. The most important thing is to take the first step.”

Visit [www.disastersafety.org](http://www.disastersafety.org) for a full Hurricane Ready guide and downloadable checklists to schedule and track progress.

## Okaloosa County Hurricane Preparedness Resources

Okaloosa County has compiled a variety of resources with information to help households and families prepare for the upcoming Atlantic hurricane season which began June 1.

### Hurricane Guides

The county has printed a limited number of Hurricane Guides. The guide is a comprehensive document containing important phone numbers, checklists, information about evacuation zones and other storm-related information. The 2023 Hurricane Guide can be found online and downloaded at [myokaloosa.com](http://myokaloosa.com).

While supplies last, physical copies of the publication are available at all six area libraries in the Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative, including the Destin Chamber of Commerce.

### Alert Okaloosa

It is important to have multiple ways to receive information during an emergency. Alert Okaloosa is one way residents can receive communications. Sign up to receive emergency notifications via the county’s alert system at [AlertOkaloosa.com](http://AlertOkaloosa.com). You can also sign up by texting “OKALOOSAFL” to 888777.

### Additional information

Okaloosa County maintains a complete online resource, including the Hurricane Guide, at <https://myokaloosa.com/ps/emergency-management>.

In the event of an emergency and if the Emergency Operations Center Activates, up-to-date information can be found at [myokaloosa.com/eoc/home](http://myokaloosa.com/eoc/home).

You can also stay up-to-date via traditional social media by following our Facebook page [facebook.com/OkaloosaCounty](https://facebook.com/OkaloosaCounty).

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# 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/](http://Windowhero.com/locations/pensacola-destin/) to find out more.

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Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! JUNE 2023

..... 4 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Distillery 98 Paddle Boil | 11am-4pm | Distillery 98
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Sallywag Sunday | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 5 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 6 .....
Fishing Seminar Series: Tarpon | 6pm | Legendary Marine
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Boomin' Baytowne | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 7 .....
Birdies Fore Butler Golf Scramble | 9:30am | Burnt Pine Golf Club
Ladies at the Helm | 1pm | Legendary Marine
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 8 .....
Wine & Design | 4pm | Renovation Flooring
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
All American Thursday | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Open Poetry Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Broadway on the Boulevard | 8pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co. Grand Blvd
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 9 .....
Walton Chamber Golf Classic | 8am | Black Stone Golf Course
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
..... 10 .....
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Alaqua FORE! | 10am | The Links Golf Club
National Outlet Shopping Day | 11am | Silver Sands Premium Outlets
Pool Deck Party | Noon | Emerald Grande Pool Deck
Rock The Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 11 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Cornhole Tournament | 2:30pm | Destin American Legion
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Sallywag Sunday | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 12 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 13 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Boomin' Baytowne | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 14 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 15 .....
Wine Walk | 5pm | Gulf Place
Broadway on the Boulevard | 8pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co. Grand Blvd
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
All American Thursday | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village



EC Blue Marlin Classic

Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
'Livin' Right Red Snapper Rodeo | Destin-Fort Walton Beach
OneBlood Drive | 10am | The Market Shops
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
..... 17 .....
'Livin' Right Red Snapper Rodeo | Destin-Fort Walton Beach
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Pool Deck Party | Noon | Emerald Grande Pool Deck
Rock The Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 18 .....
'Livin' Right Red Snapper Rodeo | Destin-Fort Walton Beach
Coffee & Donuts for Dad | 8am | FOOV
Forrest 5K | 8am | Boathouse Oyster Bar / Marler Street Parking Lot
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Sallywag Sunday | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 19 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 20 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Boomin' Baytowne | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 21 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 22 .....
Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic | 11am | Destin Pass Bridge
Broadway on the Boulevard | 8pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co. Grand Blvd
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend FWB
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
All American Thursday | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Trivia | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 23 .....
Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic | 4pm | Baytowne Marina
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
..... 24 .....
Farmers Market | 8:30am | FWB Landing
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Festival of Speed | 10am | Five Flags Speedway 7451 | P'cola
June Jam | 10am | Pensacola Boys & Girls Clubs
Pool Deck Party | Noon | Emerald Grande Pool Deck
Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic Big Weigh-In | 4pm | Baytowne Marina
Rock The Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Ballet at Twilight | 7:30pm | Grand Boulevard

Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 25 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Farmer's Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Sallywag Sunday | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 26 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 27 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Boomin' Baytowne | 7:15pm | Baytowne Wharf
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 28 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm | The Block FWB
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 29 .....
Independence Day Bike Parade & Celebration | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Destin Sports Complex
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Broadway on the Boulevard | 8pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Co. Grand Blvd
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
All American Thursday | 6:30pm | HarborWalk Village
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Trivia | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 30 .....
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



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# It's Officially Summer! Celebrate, Escape and Embrace the Best at Baytowne Wharf!

## Red, White & Baytowne!

**Tuesday, July 4th**

Celebrate Independence Day at the Village of Baytowne Wharf, July 4, 7-9:15 p.m. After a day of fun in the sun, come out for an evening that lights up the sky. Join Baytowne Village merchants for a spectacular free 4th of July Red, White and Baytowne 2023 celebration with live music on the Events Plaza Stage from 7-9:15 p.m., followed by a patriotic fireworks display at 9:15. The kids will love activities, including kids' crafts, face painting and balloon sculpting, too.



## Duck Regatta

**Saturday, June 17**

**9 a.m.- 1 p.m.**

Join us for the Emerald Coast Duck Regatta and adopt a duck for your chance to win. First place receives \$3,000. This family-friendly event includes a scavenger hunt, face painting, hula hoop contest, animal encounters, duck costume contest, free carousel rides and the duck race at 1 p.m.

Event net proceeds will benefit Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast Family Birth Place Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Funding will be used to purchase eight NeoPuff Infant T-Piece Resuscitators. To adopt

a duck, visit [www.emeraldcoast-duckregatta.com](http://www.emeraldcoast-duckregatta.com).

Baytowne is boomin' with events, activities and family fun all summer long! The Village and all of its merchants welcome you to visit, shop, dine and play!

## Scallywag Sunday

**Sundays through Aug. 6**

**7-9 p.m. | FREE**

Join Baytowne Wharf for magic, music and mayhem. Watch as the featured pirate, Captain Davy, takes you on an adventure with two magic shows

on stage. Shows at 7 and 8 p.m.

## Movie Monday

**Mondays through June 26**

**8 p.m. | FREE**

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

**June 5 | Aladdin**

**June 12 | Coco**

**June 19 | The Game Plan**

**June 26 | Lightyear**

## Boomin' Tuesday

**Tuesdays through Aug. 8**

**7:15-9:15 p.m. | FREE**

Turn your eyes on the sky and watch as Baytowne Wharf lights

up the night with a breathtaking fireworks show over the Village Lagoon at 9:15 p.m. Plus now enjoy a DJ Dance Party with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza at 7:15 p.m.

## A Can't Miss Wednesday

**Night Concert Series**

**Now through June 28**

**7-9 p.m. | FREE**

**Events Plaza Stage**

Wednesday Night Concerts at The Village of Baytowne Wharf are back! Sit back and relax with an outdoor concert and enjoy live entertainment. The concert series features local

and regional talent from a variety of genres. Don't forget your lawn chairs and blankets.

## Live Local Favorites

**Music Lineup:**

**June 7:** The HooDoos

**June 14:** Boukou Groove

**June 21:** Forrest Williams Band

**June 28:** Six Piece Suits

## Fly Guy Thursday

**Now through Aug. 10**

**6:30 & 8:30 p.m. | FREE**

Enjoy shows from fly-board 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*

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# Trends & Treasures!



## Dads, Athletes and Military: Less Pain, More Life

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## Home For Sale in Frangista Beach

### Be On The Coast™ Real Estate Group

Nestled between Destin and Sandestin, you'll discover this charming home, just a short stroll to the beach, complete with a white picket fence in the heart of the sought after enclave of Frangista Beach. The home affectionately known as "Coastal LegaSEA," will quickly become your family's gathering place for weekends, holidays and summer. Or make this your full-time home in paradise. This area of NW Florida is known for its white sandy beaches and crystal clear Gulf water and for its family-friendly amenities including quaint local shopping centers, award winning restaurants, pickleball and tennis courts, championship golf courses and a Scenic Hwy. 98 walking path. Frangista Beach is a haven for water-sport enthusiasts with paddle-boarding, kayaking and surfing opportunities. Imagine sipping your coffee from the home's spacious screened-in porch as the sun rises, then spending the day frolicking along the seashore and toasting the sunset.

This charming 2-story, 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom home is conveniently located near the community pool and is only a short stroll to your deeded beach access. You will love the serene environment and lush treescape, giving it the quaint Florida feel. This home would be an excellent primary residence, second home or vacation rental. Its quaint coastal living architecture defines the relaxed culture of the area. The white picket fence frames the house; a large, screened porch welcomes you to the front door; the lofty, 11-ft. ceilings and beautifully cased Pella windows provide natural light. A combined living and dining area flows into the gourmet kitchen with stainless steel appliances and features marble countertops. The kitchen adjoins a sunroom that exits to the



masterfully landscaped backyard with lush tropical plants and mature oak trees. The master bedroom can serve as your private suite with an adjoining jacuzzi tub, separate shower and double vanities. For a private showing of this furnished home or a FaceTime tour of MLS# 924000, call Brian K. LoCicero, REALTOR® at (850) 739-3800 or visit [BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com)

## One-of-a-Kind Exquisite Designs For That Special Day!

### Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

Let's design something for you for Father's Day, 4th of July or that most special day! There's a variety of radiant red, white and blue just waiting for you. A Ceylon sapphire seems like a great way to celebrate (pictured above)! Or a wow, art deco-style diamond ring with a ruby halo. Whether you're shopping for a special gift to honor dad on Father's Day, an engagement ring for that "special" day, 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 for summer in coastal colors, too! In fact, Beyond Measure has tons of gemstones available in varying gemstone colors and shades. 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, special-occasion 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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## Purely Handsome!

### Pure & Couture Salon; Pure Collective Salon

Pure & Couture Salon can transform your summer, Father's Day or special day with spray tans, grooming products and massage specials! Men's grooming products can be pretty utilitarian at times. They clean and detoxify just fine, but they rarely moisturize or condition skin and that doesn't sit well with Pure & Couture's artists. In fact, they've always felt that men deserve the same deeply nourishing skin care that the gals enjoy. Pure & Couture offers decadent salves, creams and lotions all packed with natural ingredients designed to nourish and revitalize your skin without disrupting the natural balance of sebum oils or exacerbating any problems with dryness or irritation. There's also a fantastic range of men's styling products, including an excellent grooming cream and clay effect spray as well as an array of absolutely stellar hair pomades. Our stylists can help find you the best products for your hair and skin type to keep it as healthy as possible. Professional products for men (or women) will help you achieve your hair and skin goals every day. This year, give Dad the gift that keeps on giving with Pure & Couture's team of experts, so he can tackle his day with "pure" confidence! In South Walton? Stop in to Pure & Couture's sister salon, Pure Collective, 600 Grand Blvd., Suite 102. Or book a stylist for your special event.

(850) 424-3935  
[pureandcouture.com](http://pureandcouture.com)  
[www.purecollectivesalon.com](http://www.purecollectivesalon.com)



## Fun in the Sun!

### Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

If you love the pool and beach and enjoy an active lifestyle you know the importance of having personalized accessories, which makes it easy to spot your items along the seashore or pool deck.

By adding your monogram, beach house name, a single letter monogram, your initials or a word to your towel, beach bag or sunhat, it makes them instantly recognizable and adds pizzazz to your style. It's fun to coordinate your swimsuit with your beach towel. Pick a solid-colored beach towel that coordinates or matches your suit, or perhaps stripes that pick up a color in your suit. Throw on a fun pair of shades and you have a stylish beach ensemble.

A tote bag for a road trip or a day at the beach is a must to carry all your daily essentials inside. Frill Seekers' zipper swimmie bags are perfect to store your wet or dry swimsuit inside. A two-tone name can be added to the bag.

Whether you like solids or stripes, Frill Seekers Gifts has you covered when it comes to beach towels. If you can dream it up, chances are their team can embroider it.

One of the best parts about a great beach towel is that it is also an instant swim cover-up. Whether you throw it over your shoulders or wear it more like a sarong, it will give you instant warmth and coverage when you want it. You can also cozy up by a beach bonfire with our personalized towels when the sun goes down.

Shop Frill Seekers Gifts' summer collection now at their shop located in City Market Bayside or online at: [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com)

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# Making The Most of Father's Day For Your Dad

By WILL ESTELL

It's no secret that particular historical figures, presidents, and the men and women who've served to keep us free all get a special day to signify their immense contributions. What you may not think about as often, however, is that the average dad is also quite the hero himself. So much so, in fact, that his own day is right around the corner, Sunday, June 18, to be precise.

For as long as we've observed Father's Day – since 1972, as a nationally observed holiday — the most frequent question has probably always been, "What do we do with Dad to celebrate?" And, you guessed it, 94.38 per-

cent (if I'm totally guessing here) of dads polled would answer with something like, "I don't care where we go, or what we do, as long as my kids are with me." Which sounds, well, like a dad joke.

Here I've put together a short list of some local fun spots in our immediate beach communities where your dad might really dig going, even though he says he doesn't care where you take him. Trust me, I'm a father of three. I know we'd rather be out on a boat than at another bouncy house place.

Breakfast out with the family is always a great way to spend some time together over some-

thing Dad, the kids and even adults can all enjoy – eating Tailfins on the Destin Harbor is definitely one of my favorites, where I've shared great times with my own children, friends and family. Besides the wonderful view, Tailfins serves up an array of good food, coastal concoctions and live music that, quite frankly, I think any dad would be happy with... I mean, as long as you're there with him. Try the Cajun Omelet, and don't forget about its very dad-like Bloody Mary specials.

Get out on the water! Whether Dad likes to fish, float, hit Crab Island or go wave jumping on a Sea Doo, don't let not own-



ing the particular watercraft of your own put a damper on his big day. It's no secret that Destin and Fort Walton Beach have a fair share of charter boats and watercraft rental companies. So, if you book a week or two in advance, there is a good chance that you, and the 200,000 tourists coming that same weekend, can likely all find something.

For pontoons and watercraft rentals, check out any of the rental locations along Destin's harbor, and those along Okaloosa Island and Fort Walton Beach. I'd personally recommend S.E.A. Chase Watersports for pontoons, Waverunners, kayak and paddleboard rentals, as well as Boogie's Watersports. You can also look into some of the special watercraft tour opportunities, such as the early morning guided dolphin tour at Boogie's.

As for fishing, Destin isn't called "World's Luckiest Fishing Village" for no reason. Boasting the largest fishing fleet in the entire country, it's pretty easy to find a good half-day or full-day charter from one of the many reputable companies along the harbor. That said, our recommendations include Charter Boat Outta Line ([charterboat-outtaline.com](http://charterboat-outtaline.com)), with excellent service, equipment and guidance.

If our beautiful Gulf doesn't float your boat for your dad's big

day, then try floating with him at Destin's Float Brothers Spa. It's a great way to give dad some relaxing time to unwind, and you can even do it with him, side by side. This water adventure of a different type offers the experience of Epsom Salt water in a temperature that mimics your body, bringing your dad (and you, if you go along) into a state of bliss with no gravity, sound, sight or touch during his float. ([FloatBrothers.com](http://FloatBrothers.com))

If your dad is into movies, Father's Day is also a great time to hit a local theater and treat him to his (uh, not yours today) choice of new flicks. With multi-cinemas in both Destin and Miramar/Santa Rosa Beach, there is sure to be something new you and dad, or the entire family, can agree on taking in.

If your dad is a fan of the beach, Father's Day is also a great time to grab the chairs, pack his cooler with his favorite beer, drink or water and hit the more than 75 miles of beach that encompass Destin, Okaloosa Island, Fort Walton and the beaches of 30A/South Walton. In fact, as a dad who loves the beach myself, I can't think of a much better way to spend the big day than with those you love in a place you love... like these white sands some of us are lucky enough to call home.

Whether you choose one of the above Father's Day outings, or you take dad for a picnic, to watch live music at his favorite beach bar, to a local shooting range, or just for a day at the pool, the important thing is you have a dad, and your dad has you. Make the most of it and have fun!

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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

# "Reel Talk" From the City of Destin

It's time for more "reel" talk from the Mayor and me. This time, the City of Destin's Mayor, Bobby Wagner, and I sat down and discussed turtles, trash and other beach issues. Email me at [tyoung@cityofdestin.com](mailto:tyoung@cityofdestin.com) if you'd like to submit a question or have a topic you'd like discussed in an upcoming issue.

~Tamara Leigh Young, PhD, Public Information Manager for the World's Luckiest Fishing Village

**TY:** On May 18, we had a meeting at City Hall with almost 30 other people who have various interests in the beaches – local beach vendors, Destin lifeguards, code enforcement, county workers and the trash/raking crew. While healthy debate occurred on many topics, the one thing we all agreed on was the importance of support-

ing the sea turtles. Nesting season is May 1st through October 31st, and our favorite "Turtle Girl" Jessica Valek shared that the turtle surveying takes place each day on the beaches 30 minutes before sunrise. The Gulf has four different species of sea turtles: Loggerhead sea turtle (most common), Green sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, and the Leatherback sea turtle. Jessica taught me that the incubation period (when the eggs are in the ground) determines if the turtles become male or female. Warmer temperatures produce more females and cooler temperatures produce more males, and sea turtles can lay over 100 eggs per nest and nest multiple times in the season! We definitely want to do our part to support that.

**BW:** Definitely. The biggest issue that locals and I come across that affects our turtles are HOLES on the beach. We must do everything we can to educate our guests and newer locals about the importance of filling in their holes and flattening their sand castles. Local

sand sculpture artist "Dan in the Sand" spends hours every day building one-of-a-kind sand castles and at the end of the day he even flattens his creations. His recommendation is to take a photo and keep the beautiful memory, but don't leave a trace! The other problem is light pollution on the beach at night. So please turn off all lights or use red lights. Turtles cannot see red so whether it be a red porch light or red flashlights while walking the beaches, this is critical to keep the baby sea turtles from becoming disoriented and not making it to the gulf. Do we have any red lights left for those wanting them?

**TY:** I have at least 100 sea turtle-friendly flashlights left to give out to residents or tourists who want to put them to good use, and I'll order as many more as we need. Just this week, I fulfilled requests from visitors from Oklahoma and Indiana wanting the lights.

**BW:** We should also remind people that if they come across an injured or trapped sea turtle, to call the Gulfarium C.A.R.E.

Center at 850-243-9046 or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Wildlife Control at 1-888-404-3922. People should also know that beach raking immediately follows the turtle surveying and happens every other day so it's helpful to give space to these workers.

**TY:** And all this happens early in the morning, with the status of our beach flag warning system determined and displayed around 8 a.m., so we need to make room for the turtle surveying, the raking, the trash collections and the emergency lanes.

**BW:** Yes, we have got keep the fire lanes OPEN. At the meeting, another idea that came up was having the lifeguards fly the flags on ATVs while they patrol the beach.

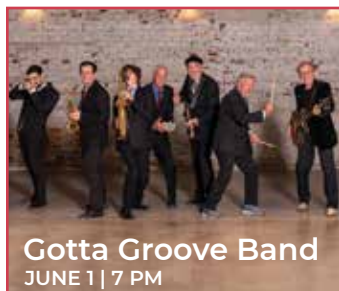
**TY:** Also, the City of Destin Code Compliance said they'd follow suit and do the same.

**BW:** That's the biggest thing. We all want great, safe beaches, so finding ways to collaborate for safety and also finding this line in the sand of pub-

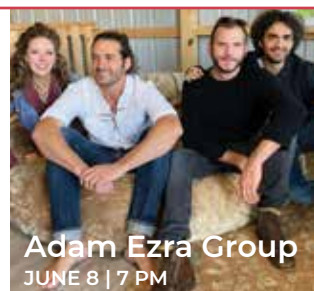
lic and private is important. We also talked about having vendor beach chairs 25 feet from the high crest of the water line, with traverse areas to be open. But we know we need a lot more discussion on this. The new, blue trash cans are another good partnership with the County. There are more trash cans out on the public beaches to make it more convenient for people to dispose of their belongings. The cans also have the flag systems on there for another smart visual of that program.

**TY:** I also remember them saying to never put seaweed in the trash cans. I could imagine some people doing that in an attempt to be helpful. Maybe we'll be helpful by passing along the message. Glad to support all the County and City workers, and our friends at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Coastal Resource Team who work hard to protect our local sea turtles through innovative conservation efforts.

**BW:** It's all about collaboration.



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Adam Ezra Group  
JUNE 8 | 7 PM



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- JUNE 22** Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
- JUNE 29** Roman Street Party Band



Journeyman: A Tribute to Eric Clapton  
JUNE 15 | 7 PM



Big Bad Voodoo Daddy  
JUNE 22 | 7 PM



Roman Street Party Band  
JUNE 29 | 7 PM

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# Trees On the Coast Educates Destin Elementary Students On The Importance of Conservation

By WILL ESTELL

Destin-based 501 C3, Trees On The Coast, recently helped 200 graduating fourth graders at Destin Elementary plant 15 Live Oaks, while Destin Mayor and Trees On The Coast CEO Bobby Wagner, along with TOC board members Rebekah Manley and Will Estell, gave the students a lesson on the benefits of practicing conservation and what trees mean to humans and our environment.

In the program, which took place May 19, TOC board

members worked with students in digging the right depth holes to planting the trees, which the board members had unloaded from a large delivery truck and trailer earlier that morning, after digging the 15 holes for the six-foot-tall trees to be planted in.

Trees On The Coast was founded in 2015 and has been instrumental in procuring and planting more than 600 trees across Okaloosa and Walton counties. These trees are paid for by Trees On The Coast



through fundraising efforts and donations and provided free of

charge to the beach communities, schools, recreational facili-

ties, cities and counties the Destin based group serves.

The board, led by Mayor Wagner, consists of seven volunteer members who have all served in their capacities for a number of years, donating their time and resources to help beautify the beach communities they call home, while also helping to educate the next generation of conservationists about the importance of trees in our communities.

# 21 Graduate from Chamber's Community Education & Leadership Program

By ELIZABETH SPIES

The Destin Chamber celebrated the graduation of 21 business professionals from its 14th Destin Forward class May 2. The prestigious Destin Forward Leadership Award, chosen by class vote, was presented to Kayla O'Leary of Waypoint Title.

Destin Forward, a community education and leadership program, was created to help find and educate future city and business leaders. After a retreat in August, the class spent the next eight months touring and learning about Destin's waterways, tourism industry, arts & culture, non-profits, environment, city programs and services, economic development and military. With the graduation of this class, the total number of program alumni is now 236.

Class requirements included attendance at several Chamber and civic functions, as well as a group project that creates a lasting impact on Destin. For their project, class members raised funds for and provided volunteer labor to restore the Destin Main Street Community Garden. The restoration included a new brick paver patio and patio swing, fencing, and a newly painted and organized tool shed. The class also cleared an area and created a garden for The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast to educate youth on growing their own fruits and vegetables.

Graduates include Brandon

Babb, Island Time Mobile Detailing LLC; Shane Bining, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; Hannah Cobb, Salt Water Vacations; Joshua Cowser, Parrot Head Yachts, LLC; Josh Foster, Gateway Payments Gulf Coast; Christopher Funk, Pen Air Federal Credit Union; Cynthia Garber, Destin Commons; Zachary Hilton, Destin Water Users, Inc.; Ryan Holloway,

*Continued on page 15*



The Destin Forward Class of 2023 celebrates its graduation on Tuesday, May 2, during a reception at The Resorts of Pelican Beach.

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 Community

# Around Town



### Destin Rotarians Invest in Destin Middle School

Destin Rotarians recently facilitated a service project for Destin Middle School and a dedication ceremony was held for the new outdoor classroom. DMS Teacher and Interact Club sponsor Mary Lynn Bettinger conducted a contest with the students and faculty to name the space. The winning name was The Makaira — the scientific name for a blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*). “What an amazing experience this week with the generosity of Destin Rotarians, James Hernandez of

Martelle Homes and his crew for their countless hours on this project, the Destin Rotary Sunset Club and many, many others who came together to make this happen,” said Marcia Hull, Destin Rotary Club president. “

### Immanuel Anglican Church Consecration & Celebration

The Immanuel Anglican Church family has been part of the Destin community since 1928. It has hosted the Blessing of the Fleet for 66 years and HolySmokes! BBQ Cookoff for the last five years, along with

the annual Blessing of the Animals and other community events. Noah’s Ark Pre-school and The Alpha Course are all part of the church’s life. Immanuel has been on its current property since 2005. “By God’s grace and generosity we’ve been able to build this new building through the sacrificial giving of church members,” said Rector, Fr. Caleb Miller.

On the morning of Sunday, June 4, former rector, Bishop Sandy Greene, and Bishop Martyn Minns prayerfully consecrated the building to the service of the Lord. Immanuel Anglican Church is located at 250 Indian Bayou Trail, just north of the Nancy Weidenhamer Dog Park in Destin.

### Okaloosa County Students Raise Funds for Change for Children Campaign

Students from across the District participated in the annual “Change for Children” fundraiser campaign for Children in Crisis (CIC), Inc. The CIC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of caring people who provide homes to our community’s abused, neglected, and abandoned children and keep siblings together. The Change



Destin Elementary School

for Children Campaign began in 2007 to raise funds in the Okaloosa County schools to help provide food, clothing and school supplies for the children living in the Children in Crisis Neighborhood. The campaign gives students unique opportunities to learn the value of giving back and helping less fortunate children. School sponsors conduct creative, fun, and often competitive ways to collect change, such as Talent Shows, class competitions and Pie the Principal. The retired teacher chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, an honorary educational sorority, facilitates this campaign. Students from 19 schools brought change to help support the mission of the CIC. Students raised nearly \$23,000, and the top fundraising schools were Destin Elementary – \$1,587.21, Ruckel Middle School – \$8,000,

Choctawhatchee High School – \$1,897.00, Southside Primary School – 3,169.67.

### Destin Garden Club Flower Show

Destin Garden Club held its first flower show: “Garden Party,” an NGC Horticulture Specialty Flower Show June 6 at the Destin Library, 150 Sibert Avenue. The horticulture specialty show included a wide variety of exhibits, including cut specimens as well as container-grown plants grown by club members. Two educational exhibits were also on display: “Preserving Our Beautiful Butterflies” and “Destin Garden Club Celebrating 20 Years of Service.” Visitors had the opportunity to stroll the library grounds to see the most recently completed Butterfly Garden and the

*Continued on page 46*

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# Patient Centered Care – Your Right to Choose

By TERESA HALVERSON,  
DESTINATION HEALTH &  
REHABILITATION

Spring is in the air and summer is on the way. As we get out and enjoy the beautiful area that we live, work and play in, accidents and illnesses do happen. As individuals, we all have a right to Patient-Centered Care from our Health Care Professionals. Exactly what is Patient Centered Care? This approach takes into account the totality of the individual needing health care. As a patient, you have questions, opinions and most of all choices for your health care needs. Patient Centered Care focuses on working together with the patient and family members, and not making decisions for them.



As we age, health concerns arise and cause anxiety. When you have a say in decisions about your health care needs and understand the treatment recommended, everyone benefits. Our area is blessed to have many acute and post-acute providers in our community that

provide excellent health care services. If you need acute care, you have a choice. If you need post-acute care, rather it be for Home Health or Skilled Nursing Rehab, you have a choice. The patient is always in the driver's seat to make these decisions. The only detriment to the

care provider you choose may possibly be your insurance. Our senior population is growing and so are the Medicare Managed Care Replacement Plans. While many of the plans offer great benefits at reduced costs, they also direct your care and decide where you should go, and how long the care will be provided. It is wise to explore all the options of a plan you choose

before switching from your regular Medicare. Some plans are now denying care by using Article Intelligence to scan clinicals to determine the care you may need. Patients are getting denied care when they clearly need continued care. Learn your rights as a patient to make your own decisions for health care benefits and care. It's your right to choose.

## 21 GRADUATE

*continued from page 13*

Holloway Yacht Charters LLC; Emily Ishee, Scenic Stays; Caroline McCarty, OWN, Inc.; Savannah McQuaig, Realty One Group Emerald Coast; Victoria Henien, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale LLC; Brandon Nicholson, First National Bank; Kayla O'Leary, Waypoint Title; Erin Sarria, SimpleHR; Robin Sax-

on, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Hospital; Deanna Simonsen, WM of the Gulf Coast; City of Destin Mayor Bobby Wagner; Sean Whalen, Community Bank; and Tonya Wolfe, Century 21 Blue Marlin Pelican.

Four class members, chosen by class vote, will join the Destin Forward Advisory Board for a three-year term, where they will help steer the program for

future classes. Those chosen were Babb, Garber, McQuaig and O'Leary.

Applications are now available for the Destin Forward Class of 2024. For more information about the program, call (850) 837-6241 or email [mail@DestinChamber.com](mailto:mail@DestinChamber.com).





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 Community

# Destin Charity Wine Auction Raises \$3.5 Million for Children in Need

The Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) announced that the 18th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family raised \$3.5 million for children in need in Northwest Florida.

Held April 28 and 29 to a sold-out crowd of more than 600, proceeds benefit DCWAF's 16 partner children's charities in Northwest Florida.

"When we come together with a common goal, we become a force multiplier for the children of our community," DCWAF President Karah Fridley-Young said. "I am blown



away by the results of this weekend's auction and am once again humbled by the generosity of our friends in the wine and culinary industry as well as our board of directors, sponsors, and patrons that raised their paddles high and often for those who need us most."

The auction weekend began Friday, April 28, with 11 patron dinners in private homes and

restaurants spanning from Gulf Breeze to Rosemary Beach, which collectively raised more than \$560,000. The live auction kicked off on Saturday, April 29, with DCWAF's flagship Magnum Force lot featuring 50 magnums from vintners past and present that raised \$70,000. This year's auction also boasted two lots that sold for more than \$100,000. A five-night trip with



private air passage donated by NetJets sold for \$105,000. Other notable lots included a trip to Paso Robles, which sold three times for a total of \$90,000, an immersive trip to Umbria, which sold four times for a total of \$100,000, and a trip to Portugal, which sold twice for a total of \$90,000. This year's Paddle Raise also raised over \$250,000.

The funds will be distributed to 16 local non-profit organiza-

tions for specific projects and programs that benefit children. DCWAF's charity partners for 2023 are AMIkids Emerald Coast, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis, Children's Volunteer Health Network, Ellison McCraney Ingram Foundation, Emerald Coast Autism Center, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, Mental Health Association of Okaloosa and Walton Counties, Opportunity Inc., Point Washington Medical Clinic, Shelter House of Northwest Florida, The Arc of the Emerald Coast, Westonwood Ranch and Youth Village.

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Canal Front home with 90 ft. of waterfrontage. Two boat slips with lifts and two jet ski lifts. Pool and hot tub overlooking water. Two garages. This home in the highly desirable Holiday Isle community of Destin features a spacious updated kitchen and large living area, along with a second-floor deck that wraps around the living and dining areas, overlooking the water. Three bedrooms, two with private baths separated by the custom living area- giving privacy to each room. Additional bonus room that can be a fourth bedroom. Great for rental or full- part time residence. **\$2,500,000.**



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The ladies pictured above were recognized at the **Women of Honor** event at UWF Emerald Coast May 4. The event was sponsored by the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women (OCCSW). Each woman's name has been added to a plaque that hangs on the Wall of Honor at the UWF Emerald Coast campus library. A letter that includes the honoree's photo and brief nomination bio, along with the names of the person or people who nominated her, will be placed in the Book of Honor below the plaque. From left, front row: Quandra Pace, Clara Oates, Mary Bell Lundsford, Joyce Loughrige and Teneka Locks; standing at left, Pam Strecker and LaShana Douville; second row, Deborah Stone, Doris Scaife, Christie Pratt, Jan Pooley, Belva Parrott; standing at right, Kathie H. Blue; third row, Lija Eldridge, Caralee Gibson, Maureen Bierman, Rochelle Brown, Cindy Frakes, Kathy Marler Blue and Sabina Zungze (chair of OCCSW); back row, Michelle Carmical, Kristen Genrich and Sheila Hale. Not pictured are Nitsi Bennett, Dr. Sandra Hanson, Holly Karr, Lenda McCain and Dr. Maxine Reed.

  
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# Insights for Investors: Should You Invest in AI?



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Innovations and industrial revolutions might bring a lot of opportunity for the economy and the people of the world. Today, investors can't go a day without hearing the latest news on artificial intelligence, or AI. Many might be wondering if they need to incorporate this into their investment plans. We think investors should always consider innovation, invention and productivity, among other things when considering investing for their future. We feel that stocks (along with the risk) provide investors with the greatest opportunity to grow and compound their assets. So, what should investors be thinking about when it comes to AI?

## What is AI?

Artificial intelligence, per Microsoft Bing is "the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages."

Who is developing it? While certainly not limited, investors would recognize such firms as Microsoft, Google, IBM, Apple and Google, among others. There is even a firm called OpenAI which has developed an online program called ChatGPT. What do people find when they go there? That tool can answer questions, provide information and generative AI can create songs, contracts, lesson plans, and a host of other things. There are producers of chips that can help make AI work, firms like Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices as other examples.

AI has been put to the test with college and graduate entrance exams as well as the

exam to become licensed and registered in the financial securities industry. The results have reportedly been mixed on those attempts.

Will the innovation of AI bring about another industrial revolution? Should investors be prepared for that?

The Economist magazine, in its May 13 issue, addressed that. It pointed out that while past industrial revolutions brought about change two things also occurred: 1) It took much longer than originally thought (decades for example) and 2) while it boosted productivity, in some cases it was only marginal. One example was the advent of the locomotives to power the movement of freight. It was pointed out that the nation's productivity could have done just as well with the current methods and with additional waterways or canals for the mass movement of goods and services. In other words, the boost in productivity proved to be marginal. Also take note that while many jobs go away, many more jobs are created. The World Economic Forum predicts that 97 million jobs could be created while 85 million might go away. Goldman Sachs reported that generative AI could raise global GDP by 7 percent, a very significant effect for any single technology. Many of today's technology jobs didn't even exist just one or two generations ago. And some jobs may take decades to go away. The Economist takes note that telephone operators continued to grow in number even after the advent of advanced phone technology.

Manufacturing, too, may be transformed by AI. The manufacturing sector is facing many challenges, including sustainability, a shortage of skilled workers, and geopolitical instability. The World Economic Forum notes that AI can help by improving productivity and efficiency, while increasing flexibility and augmenting the workforce. Yet today, only about 9 percent of manufacturing organizations are leveraging AI today. What are the implications for workers, revenues, and the bottom line of profits? Technological advances also bring about an acceleration in output, think gross domestic product or GDP. Many risky jobs might be



able to be done with machine vs man. Lawyers, medical professionals, and accountants – cognitive workers – might see some of their work done by AI. Unlike most advances in automation in the past, AI is a machine of the mind affecting that work. A recent research paper found that the Large Language Models like ChatGPT (LLMs) could affect 80 percent of the U.S. workforce in some form. Less complex work – e.g., case prep, procedures, tax returns – will lower cost for clients and legal cases. Implications for training: Medical procedures can become more precise and hence more effective. That could mean getting more done and becoming more organized, efficient, and profitable. That could boost industries across the entire stock market.

There are 11 sectors of the market: Consumer staples, consumer discretionary, financials, health care, energy, real estate, materials, industrials, utilities, communication services, and, of course, technology. We can't think of an industry, sector, business or person that would not benefit from the advancement of AI. So, in conclusion, we encourage investors to think about the opportunities across the economy, not just the makers and distributors of AI. We think, over time, companies will see job creation (acknowledging that many will go away), new products and services, greater revenues and, if managed well, greater profits. We think that the world will continue to see affluence build and problems solved and standards of living enhanced. While today's problems seem plentiful, the quality of life (mortality, health, wealth) has continued to grow. For children born today, there is an incredible opportunity that awaits them. Whether still in the workforce, or retired, the quality of life can only continue to grow.



In the end, attaining any goal means building a plan and investing according to that plan and trying to lower personal biases as well as the noise from the media. Someone was heard to comment on Bloomberg TV this past week that if you listen to all the talk about the markets all day, you will believe that the world is coming to an end by sundown. Expect that investing at times like these can be more volatile due to debt ceiling, banking, international and economic issues.


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: 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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### Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.


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**Maurice Stouse**  
Financial Advisor

**The First Wealth Management**  
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Destin, FL 32541  
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**Amy Parrish**  
Financial Advisor

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 Community



BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR

The term “honey-do list” has become a common phrase in households, referring to a list of tasks or chores that one partner (usually the wife) asks the other (usually the husband) to complete.

When it comes time to sell your home, you may find yourself overwhelmed by the myriad tasks and improvements needed to make your property “market-ready.” That’s where the “honey-do list” comes into play — a compilation of household chores and maintenance tasks that can significantly boost the appeal and value of your home.

**1. Enhanced Curb Appeal.** One of the first things potential buyers notice about

a home is its curb appeal. A well-maintained exterior creates a positive first impression and sets the stage for what’s inside. Your honey-do list should include tasks such as landscaping, power washing the exterior, repairing or repainting the front door, and tidying up the driveway. You can dramatically enhance the curb appeal, attract more prospective buyers and potentially increase the sale price.

**2. Increased Market Value.** Investing time and effort into completing the honey-do list can result in a higher market value for your home. Simple repairs like fixing leaky faucets, replacing broken tiles or patching up holes in the walls can make a substantial difference. Potential buyers often perceive a well-maintained home as a reliable investment, willing to pay a premium for a property that doesn’t require immediate repairs or renovations.



**3. Expedited Sale Process.** A thorough honey-do list can help expedite the sale process by ensuring your home is in optimal condition for prospective buyers. Buyers are often more inclined to make an offer on a property that is move-in ready and well-maintained. By addressing necessary repairs and improvements in advance, you reduce the likelihood of buyers using minor flaws as a bargaining chip for price reduc-

tions or negotiation. Additionally, a well-maintained home is more likely to pass inspections smoothly, further expediting the sale process.

**4. Competitive Advantage in the Market.** In a competitive real estate market, having a completed honey-do list can give you a significant advantage. When buyers compare multiple properties, a home that requires fewer repairs and updates will naturally stand out. You position your home as an attractive option.

**5. Positive Perception and Emotional Connection.** A well-maintained home sends a message to potential buyers that the property has been cared for and loved. This can help buyers form an emotional connection with the house, imagining it as

their future home. When buyers feel emotionally attached, they are more likely to overlook minor flaws or even be willing to pay a premium for the property.

While selling your home can be a daunting task, by enhancing curb appeal, increasing market value, expediting the sale process, gaining a competitive advantage and fostering a positive emotional connection, you set the stage for a successful home sale. The effort invested in completing the honey-do list will be handsomely rewarded when it comes time to sell your home... and when that time comes, call me and I can help you navigate the process with ease so you can get it sold quickly, with the fewest hassles, and for the most amount of money.

Happy Father’s Day! (May your honey-do list be short!)

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# Peace of Mind in Retirement

BY BOBBY MCFERRIN,  
GULF FINANCIAL

Welcome dear reader. I'm glad to have you here with me and hope to share insights into the quest for joy and peace in retirement. As the leader of Gulf Financial, you might expect me to say that money has a lot to do with happiness in retirement. That is far from the truth. In my years of experience, happy retirees have a few unique ways of looking at life that yield living dividends day after day.

We live faithfully in the present moment a day at a time. Do you remember when you were a kid, school was out and a summer day seemed to last forever? Peaceful retirees have a way of experiencing the day with that same sort of wonder and excitement. It is good to exist in the present moment, free of resentment, anger or worry about the



future. This is the day that God made. Rejoice and be glad in it for it will not come again.

Upon awakening, many find that prayer and meditation help them to think about the 24 Hours ahead with a clear head. They ask for truth and love to

direct their thinking and that it be divorced from self-pity or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions, one can employ their mental faculties with assurance; for, after all, God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a

much higher plane if cleared of wrong motives and thoughts of the past or fears of the future.

In thinking about our day, we might face indecision or difficulties. Here we can ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle and the right answers seem to come. We can take on the day a step or decision at a time and know

that all will be good. There is only so much we can do in a given day. It is enough to know that we did, with God's help, the best we could. If we were honest and helpful, loving and kind, we can lay our head on the pillow at night in peaceful sleep. Stay tuned next month for more thoughts on living a happy retirement.

“Don't Worry. Be Happy”

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 Education

# DHS Students Get Wisdom from Celebrity Guest Speakers For 2023 Commencement

Destin High School hosted two celebrity guest speakers for the 2023 Commencement, which featured the first graduating class in the school's history. The ceremony took place Fri-

day, May 26, at the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Amphitheater.

"We were excited to invite the entire community to join us as we celebrate the Class of 2023 and to hear from not

one, but two celebrity keynote speakers, with local ties to Destin, for the Destin High School Class of 2023 commencement," said Head of School Christine Cruickshank.

"Our Graduation speakers brought a diverse range of life experiences, business acumen and both embody the values we strive to uphold each day — making a difference, innovative thinking, hard work, and resilient leadership, all while inspiring hope, and promoting kindness, with a touch of laughter."

Leigh Anne Tuohy, dubbed a "warrior princess" by author Michael Lewis in his best-selling book, "The Blind Side," is the inspirational matriarch of the Tuohy family and a graduate of Ole Miss. Her love for the Destin community runs deep, as she and husband, Sean, have had a home along the Emerald Coast for decades. Leigh Anne is a motivational speaker and an interior designer by trade. Her work has been featured on numerous TV shows, including HGTV, Extreme Makeover Home Edition and Designing on a Dime. She has designed for clients from athletes such as Peyton Manning and Scottie Pippen to CEOs and universities. She is a New York Times best-selling author of "In a Heartbeat: Sharing the Power of Cheerful Giving."

After "The Blind Side" book and movie were released, the response was overwhelming and as a result The Tuohys established their charity, The Making It Happen Foundation, which promotes awareness, provides hope, and improves the standards of living for all the children fighting to survive in the invisible cracks in society. Leigh Anne truly believes that everyone has the ability to make a difference.

"As discussions turned to keynote speakers for our first class of seniors, we knew we wanted the speakers to have a connection to Destin and to have an inspiring story to share with this historic group of seniors, who have made a difference in the community," said Heidi



LoCicero, Destin High School founding board member. "I immediately thought of my friend, Leigh Anne Tuohy. Her life story and her ability to make great things happen for others continues to inspire many."

Acclaimed writer Sean Dietrich, also known as Sean of the South, is a columnist, novelist and stand-up storyteller known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Newsweek, Southern Living, Reader's Digest, Garden and Gun, The Tallahassee Democrat, the Birmingham News and The Mobile Press Register, and his column appears in newspapers, including this one, throughout the United States. He has authored 15 books, and he is the creator of the Sean of the South Podcast.

Most readers familiar with Dietrich's work know that it's important to have a tissue handy, as it will leave you laughing until tears run down your face or crying from the emotional story he has detailed with such eloquence that you can't stop sniffing. His style of writing is

both comforting, yet riveting, poignant, yet profound.

Born in Missouri, Dietrich moved to Walton County as a teen after his father died. "It's really the only home I've ever known," he has said. "I'm a Panhandle guy. It has been my inspiration, too." He started writing as an adult, after going back to school at Okaloosa-Walton Community College. Dietrich, who is also a musician, met his wife, Jamie, playing the piano for a Baptist church in Destin. She's a Brewton native with a culinary degree and certification as a math teacher. The couple, formerly of Santa Rosa Beach, now reside in Birmingham, and make frequent trips back to the beach and to Nashville, where Dietrich appears on The Grand Ole Opry. "Sean Dietrich's life story of finding his passion in life by writing and pursuing a career in that field, despite obstacles, was one I felt the students would connect with," said Julie Worth, dean of students. "His stories pierce the heart and often remind us of what is really important in life."

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# Can Your Outdoor Furniture Handle the Gulf Coast Elements?



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

Patios are like an extension of our home. Our patio furniture needs to be able to withstand our intense UV Rays, salty air and rainstorms. Since good outdoor furniture can cost as much as our indoor furniture, it's important to consider the materials and maintenance required to maximize your investment.

Yes, you can purchase inexpensive outdoor furniture but you'll likely need to purchase it again and Again and AGAIN.



Ultimately, you may spend more than you would have, had you invested in quality patio furniture from the start.

Wood, plastic, wicker and metal each have different needs and upkeep. Below are a few ways you can help weatherproof your outdoor furniture. However, we suggest you consult your owner's manual for specific care instructions.

**Teak Wood Furniture:** Teak wood is the most popular type of outdoor furniture. It has a "living finish," which means it will patina over time from a warm caramel color into a gray weathered look. There are many products to enrich your wood and just as many products to seal your wood. Oil nourishes the wood and sealer helps to protect it. **NOTE:** It's important to follow the manufacturer's recommendations to enjoy your set for years to come.

**Plastic Patio Furniture:** Constant exposure of plastic lawn furniture to different elements, coupled with our humidity, makes it very prone to mold and mildew. UV Rays can break down the plastic material when it continuously bakes in the sun and makes it more susceptible to mold growth. Preventing mold on plastic outdoor furniture is possible with regular disinfecting. Molded plastic is typically thinner and susceptible to fading in the sun. **NOTE:** High-density polyethylene furniture is durable and requires the least maintenance.

**Wicker Patio Furniture:** Real wicker is timeless and is making a major comeback. While it is low-maintenance, wicker is best suited for covered areas. Sunlight can damage and break down the natural fibers. Today, wicker is (typically) a polypropyl-

ene product that can be weather-resistant. Understanding the construction of the metal frame under the wicker is key to the longevity and maintenance of your furniture. When the frame is made of steel, it will eventually rust and cause a breakdown. If the frame is made of aluminum, it won't rust and will be much easier to maintain.

**Metal Patio Furniture:** You have a choice of wrought iron, aluminum and steel. Each of these metals is usually finished with a powder coat for better protection and longevity. Wrought iron and steel will naturally rust over time and should be covered when not in use. Aluminum is rust-free and is typically light and easy to move around.

**Cushions & Pillows:** Investing in high-quality fabric is crucial for outdoor use. These fabrics are treated at the factory level to

help prevent getting bleached or deteriorated from the sun in just a season or two. Durable fabric can help to extend the life of your cushions and pillows.

**Storage:** A heavy-duty outdoor storage container is ideal to store your cushions, umbrellas and pillows during inclement weather and the off-season. While you may have purchased

the high-end durable fabric, it will have a hard time battling the mold and pollen if you leave it outside 24/7. You should also protect your furniture by covering it with a durable, water- and UV-resistant cover. When purchasing a cover, make sure it's large enough to cover the entire piece of furniture and check its warranty policies.

By now, I'm sure you've realized that not all outdoor furniture is created equal. Coastal Design by Kim can help you select the perfect patio furniture for your lifestyle. We can also provide custom patio cushions. Contact us today at (850) 904-6622 or via email at [kim@coastaldesignbykim.com](mailto:kim@coastaldesignbykim.com). Website: [www.coastaldesignbykim.com](http://www.coastaldesignbykim.com)

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 Military

# Honoring the Fallen: The 54th Annual EOD Memorial

By DOUG STAUFFER

Sunday morning, while preparing my sermon, I received a call from Lt. Kearns about a death in Niceville that required my attention as a police chaplain. A retired EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) technician had passed away in his home. After arriving, I comforted the grieving widow and met another retired EOD officer and his wife. He invited me to attend the 54th annual EOD Memorial Ceremony taking place that Saturday.

The EOD community is tight-knit, and the Kauffman EOD Training Complex memorial service was both humbling and emotional. Assembled military personnel, civilians, and Gold Star Families were present, along with distinguished guests like Congressman Matt Gaetz

and Congressman Brian Mast. Capt. Beall, USN, welcomed everyone and expressed gratitude to the Gold Star Families, emphasizing the EOD community's commitment to remembering their fallen heroes.

The memorial walls bear the names of 343 EOD men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country. This year, the 344th name was added: Lt. JG Aaron Paul Fowler. Gen. Poole described him as "a man of faith who lived it out and exemplified it every day of his life."

The most moving part of the ceremony was the reading of the 344 names, starting with the Army, followed by the Navy, Marines and Air Force. The atmosphere was solemn as the crowd listened to each name be-



ing read, honoring the memory of those who served, and sacrificed their lives.

I flew to Washington two days later to meet with 20 Congressmen and women, including

Congressmen Gaetz and Mast. In addition to other subjects, I wanted to get their impression of the memorial and ceremony. As I stood with Congressman Mast, I asked him about his perception of the memorial and ceremony. The Congressman is a member of the EOD community who lost both legs while serving in Afghanistan.

Congressman Mast stated, "I knew many of the names personally, along with others not mentioned with life-altering injuries. The memorial is a testament to the fact that the job is inherently dangerous and often deadly." It was a surreal experience standing with him in his office, knowing that his name was not on that wall but that he, too, paid dearly for his sacrificial service to our country.

EOD graduation ceremonies traditionally take place at the memorial, a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made. Brig. Gen. Poole addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of honoring the fallen. A wreath-laying, three-volley salute, and playing of taps were a moving tribute to those who gave their lives.

Supported by the EOD Warrior Foundation, the ceremony reinforced the bravery and dedication of these heroes. As I left, the profound impact of the event stayed with me. The 54th EOD Memorial Ceremony was a stark reminder of the selfless service and ultimate sacrifice of these brave individuals.



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## Okaloosa County to Celebrate Women Veterans Day

The Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners is continuing its tradition of celebrating veterans with a Women Veterans Day event and wreath laying at 8 a.m. on June 12. An indoor ceremony will take place inside the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the base of the Margaret Corbin statue at Women Veterans Monuments at Veterans' Park. Women Veterans Day was recognized by the State of Florida by proclamation from Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2021.


"Florida has the second largest population of women veterans in the country. With our military presence in Okaloosa County, it is only fitting that we take a moment to recognize the courageous contributions wom-

en have made to this nation," said Okaloosa County Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel. "We are so fortunate to have a one-of-kind park that honors women veterans like Margaret Corbin, who bravely took up arms to protect our freedom in the Revolutionary War."

A total of eight women who served in combat, during various U.S. military conflicts, are honored at Veterans Park with life-sized bronze statues strategically placed along a quarter-mile path. It is surrounded by native wildlife that includes a nearby great blue heron rookery.

Another hero recognized at Veterans Park is Cathay Williams. She was the first documented African American

*Continued on next page*




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# Military Association Awards \$29,000 In Scholarships

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

The Northwest Military Officers Association (NWFMOA) Annual Scholarship and Awards Luncheon in May saw eight scholarships awarded totaling \$25,500 to JROTC cadets at six of our communities' local high schools and one \$4,000 scholarship awarded to a local ROTC cadet at the University of South Florida.

NWFMOA board members Maj. Dave Parisot, USAF, Ret., and president of the Scholarship Fund, Lt. Col. George Colton, Lt. Col. Bob Allen, Lt. Col. Fred Westfall, Col. Karl Eschmann and Lt. Col. Charles Farmer establish the scholarship policies and procedures, review and score the applications, and interview the applicants in March and April each year.

"The MOAA Medal was crafted to recognize leadership and academic achievements of ROTC and JROTC cadets," said Maj. Parisot. "It is presented annually to specially selected junior year students who are participating in ROTC or JROTC programs throughout our country and who exhibit high potential for military leadership. This award reflects the cadet's superior accomplishments and support of his or her high school Junior ROTC program, high academic achievements and service to school and community. This award further reflects the high regard of each school's JROTC instructors."

"When you hear what they [these students] have done,



2023 NWFMOA JROTC scholarship awardees (from left): Cadet Major Kelvin Lora, Cadet Colonel Paige Lettelleir, Cadet First Lieutenant Alissa Easley, Cadet Major Jeremy Figueroa-Olmeda, Cadet colonel Mark Almazan, Cadet Petty Officer First Class Jacob Herrera. Not pictured: Cadet Colonel Dawn Kerwin.

you know our nation is in good hands," said Brig. Gen. Fran Hendricks, chapter president.

Begun last year, NWFMOA continued its program of naming its scholarships in honor of deceased NWFMOA Chapter members. Following are this year's JROTC scholarship recipients:

1. Cadet Col. Dawn Kerwin, Fort Walton Beach AFJROTC, received the Lt. Col. James "Jim" Heavener, USAF, Ret., and Mrs. Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship – \$4,500.

2. Cadet Col. Mark Almazan, Fort Walton Beach AFJROTC, received the Dr. Howard Fisher, Lt. Col., USAFR, Ret., and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship – \$3,000.

3. Cadet Petty Officer First

Class Jacob Herrera, Navarre NJROTC, received the Dr. Fred Westfall, Lt. Col., USAF, Ret., and Mrs. Janet Westfall Scholarship – \$3,000.

4. Cadet Col. Paige Lettelleir, Choctawhatchee AFJROTC, received the Mrs. Chong Cha (Kim) Parisot Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

5. Cadet Lt. Col. Maziah Davis, Crestview Army JROTC, received the Cdr. Olive Clyde Locke, USN, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

6. Cadet Maj. Jeremy Figueroa-Olmeda, Choctawhatchee AFJROTC, received the Col. Richard "Dick" Prater, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

7. Cadet Maj. Kelvin Lora, Baker School Army JROTC, re-

ceived the Col. Jack Gardner, USA, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

8. Cadet 1st Lt. Alissa Easley, Niceville AFJROTC, received the Col. Donald Panzenhagen, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

9. Cadet Col. Kayla McCarthy, AFROTC, University of South Florida in Tampa criminology major,

received the Col. Douglas L. 'Doug' Hardin, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$4,000.

Three local high school seniors who have received appointments the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo., were also honored and selected for the USAFA Class of 2027: Olivia Beard and Alexander Davidson, both Fort Walton Beach High School, and Therese Sherwin, Niceville High School.

Maj. Parisot also recognized two retiring JROTC Senior Instructors: Col. Mark Batcho, USAF, Ret., is retiring after seven years at Fort Walton Beach High School AFJROTC, and Maj. Scott Bates, USAF, is retiring after 11 years of leading the Choctawhatchee High

School AFJROTC. During their tenures, these instructors have influenced more than 3,500 JROTC cadets.

NWFMOA is a local, non-profit organization of more than 200 local active, retired and separated officers, including warrant officers, who have served in one of the eight uniformed services: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The membership also includes surviving spouses who belong in an auxiliary member context.

In addition to scholarships, one of NWFMOA's missions is to purchase gift cards at the base commissary to distribute to young enlisted families in grades E-4 and below to purchase food. NWFMOA partners with the Eglin and Hurlburt First Sergeant Councils, the 7th Special forces Group and the Military Family Readiness Centers at Hurlburt and Duke Field to distribute the gift cards to their neediest enlisted families. In the past three years, this local chapter has donated 610 commissary gift cards of \$25 each, for a combined value of \$15,250! The chapter also advocates for Wreaths Across America, Bob Hope Village, and other community outreach projects.



## OKALOOSA

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woman who served as a soldier in the U.S. Army and the only known female to serve with the famed Buffalo Soldiers in the Civil War. Despite the ban allowing women to serve in the war, she nobly posed as a man to enlist.

A Northwest Florida veteran, Jackie Cochran, is also among the eight recognized at the park. Cochran was a pilot from DeFuniak Springs who held more speed, distance, and altitude records than any other flyer during her career. In 1964 she flew an aircraft faster than any woman had before. In 1953, eager to make the transition to jet

aircraft, Cochran became the first woman to break the sound barrier, piloting an F-86.

In honor of Cochran, Northwest Florida State College is holding a production of "Flight of Jackie Cochran," at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center's Sprint Theater on June 4, at 2 p.m. The cost is \$30 and proceeds will benefit the Okaloosa County Women's Veterans Monuments. Tickets can be purchased at [mattiekellyartscenter.org](http://mattiekellyartscenter.org).

Learn more about the heroes depicted at Women Veterans Monuments at Veterans' Park at <http://myokaloosa.com/bcc/women-veterans-memorial>.

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# Heroes Among Us: Courage and Resilience

By DOUG STAUFFER

Ted Corcoran and the Fort Walton Beach Chamber hosted the American Veterans Center (AVC) from Washington D.C. (www.americanveteranscenter.org). They interviewed numerous local veterans who have bravely served their country. I was honored to be invited by Ted to share in this incredible experience and interact with the seven men telling their stories.

Col. George Ferkes served in the Air Force during Operation Eagle Claw, the mission to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980. The operation faced numerous challenges, including harsh weather conditions, malfunctioning equipment and complex logistics. Ultimately, the mission was unsuccessful, resulting in the tragic loss of eight American servicemen. Ferkes shared his experiences and lessons from the operation, empha-

sizing the importance of preparation, teamwork, and resilience.

Retired Cols. Ron Webb, David Gray, Howard Hill and Ed Hubbard were Air Force Vietnam War veteran POWs. Each of them recounted their time in captivity: the brutality, and how they and their fellow POWs supported one another throughout the ordeal. Their powerful stories evoke a sense of awe as they emphasized the importance of camaraderie, perseverance, and the indomitable human spirit in overcoming extreme adversity.

During the interview breaks, I had the opportunity to sit across the table from the POWs as they recalled their experiences. This unforgettable event left a lasting impression on me. I was present for Ron Webb's television interview, where he discussed the midair collision of two F-4s, resulting in his subsequent capture. Two of the pilots in the collision

died. After the crash, he managed to avoid immediate capture but was eventually taken by enemy forces.

Communities in the area were rewarded for turning in soldiers, which contributed to his eventual capture. During his first interrogation, Webb was told, "You and your President L. Johnson are now prisoners of war." Ron thought this was a shrewd comment because the Vietnam War haunted Johnson throughout his presidency.

I never tire of hearing the POW stories, including the Tap Code used to communicate in secret. The military trains servicemen to provide only the basic four pieces of information as required by the Geneva Convention: name, rank, service number, and date of birth. The captors wanted much more.

The POWs were kept alive with the intention of reforming, proselytizing and ultimately turning them against their own country. Webb said there was no chance of this because every service member considered communism and socialism revolting. The captors also demanded tactical intelligence from their prisoners.

Webb's captors wanted to know how he got shot down, which turned into a cat-and-mouse game. He initially told them it was a large gun, but they checked and found no large guns in the area. He then claimed it was a Russian MiG jet, but they checked with their air force and discovered that no MiGs had been in the area.

The next day, Ron Webb and I were together at the Crispy Warriors breakfast, and I jokingly suggested that he could have



simply said, "I was in the backseat, and I couldn't see a thing." We laughed at the thought as he said, "I never thought of that."

Col. Larry Ropka was interviewed next as he retold the Son Tay Raid, the rescue attempt of Vietnam POWs. Although the mission was ultimately unsuccessful, Ropka's story underscores the dedication of those involved in attempting to bring home their fellow servicemen. His account highlighted the desire and dedication to free fellow servicemen held prisoner by the North Vietnamese.

CMSgts. Bill Walter and Bernie Oder were interviewed. Both served in the U.S. military during the 1989 invasion of Panama, known as Operation Just Cause. Walters and Oder shared their experiences during the mission, challenges and lessons learned from the operation. Their stories

provide insights into the complexities of modern warfare and the importance of adaptability and cooperation.

By sharing these stories, the AVC hopes to honor the sacrifices made by these veterans and educate future generations about their contributions to American history. The personal narratives of these brave individuals serve as a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of perseverance, hope, and unity in the face of hardship. A heartfelt salute to Ted and the Chamber for organizing yet another remarkable event to celebrate our military heroes. The interviews will be posted on [www.americanveteranscenter.org](http://www.americanveteranscenter.org).





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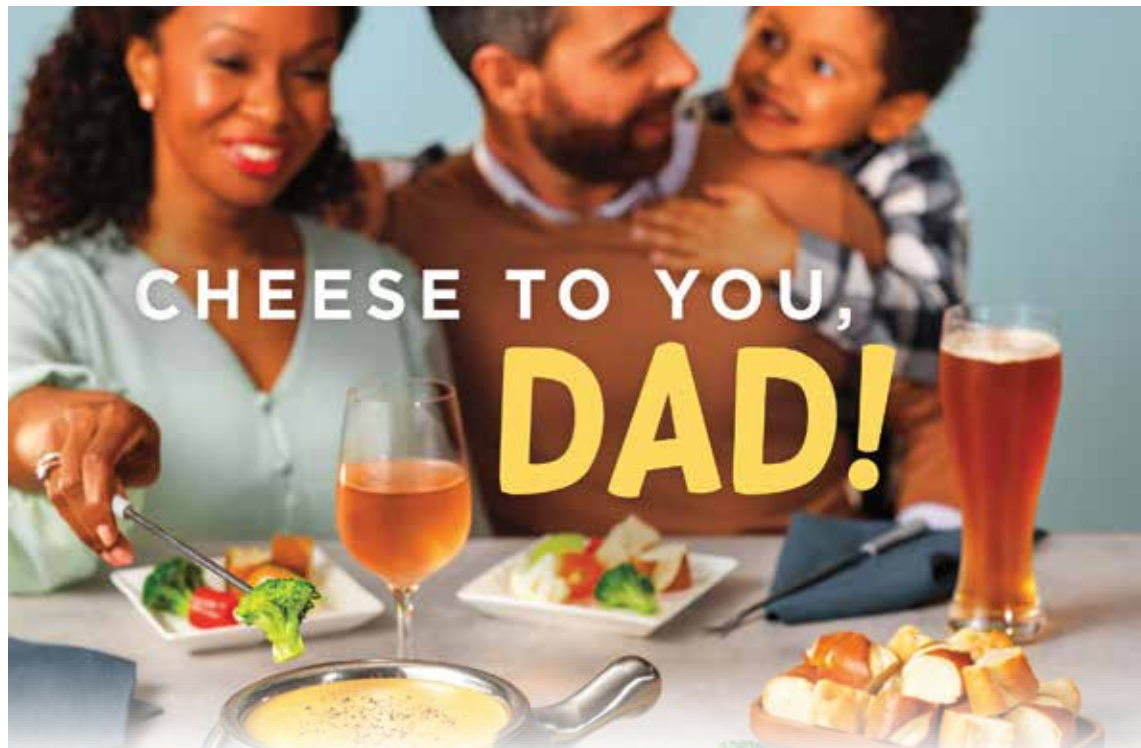
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and well drinks and \$5 Long Island iced teas. Live music on the docks. Tailfins is a go-to destination for sports watching featuring more than 70 big screen TVs. Be sure to check out the new Video Wall upstairs, possibly the largest indoor TV on the harbor.

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dishes. Football season is here, so don't miss a game all season long. Celebrate Taco Tuesdays with 2-for-1 margaritas. Lunch specials are offered Monday-Friday for \$8.99. "Our love lies in the food we make and the connections we create with our customers every day," says Oni, Tequila's owner. "Our goal is to have the widest selection of tequila brands in town. You're sure to find your favorites here." Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner or call ahead to place your take out and to-go orders.

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**Independence Day Bike Parade & Celebration**

Thursday, June 29 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Destin Sports Complex | 633 Kelly St. | FREE

The City of Destin will host its Annual Family Independence Day Celebration & Bike parade for children 14 and under at the Destin Elementary School track Thursday, June 29, starting at 5:30 p.m. with parade kick-off at 6 p.m. Pre-registration is required; visit [www.cityofdestin.com/reconline](http://www.cityofdestin.com/reconline).

Show off your decorated bike, stroller or wagon. Awards will be given for different categories. Free to the public, spectators are welcome and refreshments will be available to all participants. For more information: (850) 654-5184.

# Area Independence Day Fireworks!

## City of Destin

Fireworks are set off from the West Jetties Beach and can be seen over the East Pass beginning at 9 p.m. Tuesday, July 4. Tune in to Z96 (96.5 FM) for the simulcast music. In case of inclement weather, the fireworks show will take place Wednesday, July 5, 9 p.m. Norriego Point is a great place to watch the fireworks if you want to be as close

## 4th of July Celebration at HarborWalk Village

HarborWalk Village's Independence Day fireworks will be held over the Destin Harbor at 9:30 p.m.

## Smoke on the Coast

The Annual Smoke on the Coast BBQ and Fireworks Festival is set for July 3 at Destin Commons, with live music

joy bounce houses, stilt walkers, face painting and live music with Black Eyed Blonde, 6-10 p.m. Fireworks begin at 9 p.m.

The **Fort Walton Beach 4th of July Fireworks** show will take place on Tuesday, July 4, 8:45 p.m. Fireworks are set

off from a barge over the Santa Rosa Sound. You can see them from anywhere along the water downtown. The best place to watch them from is the Landing Park downtown where other July 4 festivities will take place earlier in the day.

Fireworks continue at **The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island** each Wednesday at 9 p.m., and over the Destin Harbor directly behind HarborWalk Village every Thursday throughout the summer at 9 p.m.



as possible to the launch spot or if you just prefer a more quiet beach spot. Parking is limited to a small lot or street parking on Gulf Shore Dr. though so get there early. You can also take Destin Water Taxi to Norriego Point from any restaurant, condo or house on the Destin Harbor.

5-9:30 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., enjoy \$1 samples from 18 area restaurants and barbecue groups and vote for your favorite. Fireworks extravaganza begins at 9:30 p.m.

## Sandestin Hilton

The Sandestin Hilton July 4 fireworks are set off right on the beach directly in front of the hotel Tuesday at 9 p.m.

## Red, White & Baytowne

Tuesday, July 4, 6 p.m. at The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, with lawn games, inflatables, kids' crafts and face painting. At 7 p.m., enjoy live music on the Events Plaza Stage followed by the fireworks display at 9:15 p.m.

The **Seaside 4th of July Fireworks** show will take place on Tuesday, July 4, at 8:30 p.m.

## Stars & Stripes Celebration at AJ's on the Bayou

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 Dining

# Sip & Splash Brings Locals Together

BY WILL ESTELL

The Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation's second annual Sip & Splash: An Aquatic Affair, took place May 20 at the Taj Renee Community Aquatic Center in the heart of Destin. Attended by more than 250 guests in support of the foundation's mission, the top-tier event was sponsored by Tim Smith Acura, and kicked off with a wonderfully presented pool-side sunset cocktail hour that featured a list of spectacular craft cocktails, made from local spirit and craft beer brands, including: Distillery 98, Campesino Rum, Good Clean Wine, Palm Folly Seltzer, and Odd Pelican Beer Company, all served in event logoed cups sponsored by Hand, Arendall,

Harrison, and Sale.

During cocktail hour, the 250-plus guests mingled while sipping on their signature beverages, and perusing the array of silent auction items, which included everything from lavish international trips to artworks. Additionally, attendees enjoyed watching local sushi master Yoshie of Camille's create hand-rolled appetizers, while taking in the creation of live art by renowned local artist and gallery owner Maxine Orange.

Following the cocktail hour, guests were seated in the adjacent dining area, where they were served a six-course farm-to-table dinner, prepared by some of Northwest Florida's most admired restaurants and



catering companies. During the course of the dinner, guests were entertained by the always

enthusiastic Al Alvarado, before hearing the encouraging stories of The Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation's Kathi Heapy, Eglin Federal Credit Union's Jerry Williams and others, as part of the Okaloosa Swimming and Diving Hall of Fame's 2023 induction ceremony.

The event planning, coordination and marketing was handled by the uber-talented Jessica Bracken of Proffitt PR, with the proceeds received from guest admissions, silent auction items, donations and corporate sponsorships going toward funding the ongoing efforts and community enhancement of the Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation's mission of competitive excellence for area adults and children in the fields of cycling, running and swimming.

If you haven't attended this wonderful event for a fantastic cause, I definitely suggest putting it on your shortlist of fundraisers for next year. I can tell you first-hand that even as someone who is invited to, and tries to attend, quite the array of various worthwhile balls, parties and fundraising events, my wife, Laura, and I were immensely impressed with every aspect – from the multicourse meal to the signature drinks to the innate attention to detail of the setup, décor and service of this special night.

You can also find out more about Destin's Taj Renee Community Aquatic Center, and Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation by visiting [www.ecfitness-foundation.org](http://www.ecfitness-foundation.org)

*Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, and coastal real estate professional with more than 600 pub-*



*lished magazine features in an array of genres, from travel and tourism to automobiles, real estate and celebrity interview features. Over the past 25 years, Will has been instrumental in founding 12 magazines from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others. Originally from the backwoods of rural Mississippi, Will and his wife, ABC 3 news anchor Laura Hussey, call Destin and Navarre home. Will is a regular contributor to Life Media, as well as other magazines, papers and websites regionally and nationally.*

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# Current Demand: Summer Escapes and Travel Beyond



By JODELL HAVERFIELD,  
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

There are two main dynamics affecting travel in 2023: Supply and Demand. If I hear the phrase “pent-up demand” one more time, I think I’ll scream! Unfortunately, it perfectly describes the way it is. Many people have not been able to travel due to covid regulations; however, as soon as they were finally all lifted, the flood gates opened. Now, not just airlines, but even cruise lines are overbooking, and I hesitate to mention the price increases. While pent-up demand is inherently temporary, the good news is travel is expected to remain one of the strongest areas of consumer spending.

Credit Cards are reporting that despite inflation and interest rates, they find that consumers’ discretionary spending is proving more resilient than during prior downturns as they continue to prioritize travel and experiences over things and eating out. Consumers feel strongly that



travel with family and friends is a top priority, often referred to as the three F’s, Family, Friends and Fun. Cruises and international travel are headlining the competition. Even though employment and wage levels could present strong headwinds for travel demand, all current indications are that the “Experience Economy” is not going anywhere.

Here are a few things I suggest as you plan your next trip:

- I suggest using a travel adviser to help you navigate the industry changes.
- If you don’t already have a passport or yours is expired, apply for a new one asap. So many people let theirs expire during the pandemic that it is often taking a long time to get a new one.
- Always book Travel Insurance.
- Be flexible as today’s travel

experiences, especially flights, can be quite stressful, but a good attitude can go a long way—no pun intended.

• Book early. Should overbooking occur, the earlier you book your trip, the better. Also, plan and reserve your excursions as soon as possible as they often sell out.

Traveling close to home is also a great experience. The



cost of flights for the whole family might be too prohibitive. So, you need to drive to your vacation. As I have said many times, there are endless options for road trip escapes everywhere. Many a family has found on more scenic stretches of road, the best way to inspire wonder and appreciation is a family game known as “looking out the window.” I will include a couple

of pictures from my clients’ trips for inspiration.

My best advice for 2023 is to embrace the carefree spirit of summer!

*Thanks for 'Travelin' with JoDell!*



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Off the Hook

# Destin-Fort Walton Beach Sets New Records at World's Largest Lionfish Tourney

BY NICK TOMECEK, OKALOOSA COUNTY PIO

Divers participating in the 5th Annual Emerald Coast Open Lionfish Tournament set a new record with the successful removal of 24,699 lionfish! Last year's total was 13,835. Divers from throughout the country competed for prize money totaling more than \$100,000 in an effort to eradicate this invasive species in the Gulf of Mexico. Lionfish have few known predators due to their venomous spines.

"Okaloosa County continues to be a leader in helping to create sustainable marine ecosystems," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. "We are thankful for all of the divers and sponsors who helped make this event so successful."

The Emerald Coast Open,

hosted by Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism and Florida Fish and Wildlife was held May 19-20 with an award ceremony at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar on May 21. The tournament had 144 divers participate, competing in a variety of categories. The largest lionfish was caught by a diver from the team Dibs on Bottom and measured 17.95 inches while the diving team Deep Water Mafia caught the most lionfish at 2,898. In addition to the main tournament over the weekend, the event also set a pre-tournament record of 5,139 lionfish caught.

The tournament coincided with the 5th Annual Lionfish Removal & Awareness Festival along the HarborWalk Village in Destin. The festival included Lionfish & Libations, an event where the public tried sam-



plings of various local brews paired with food provided by participating vendors. Various educational booths were also set up for a crowd of about 5,000 to learn about the species.

Leading up to the tournament, Emerald Coast Open

Restaurant Week offered the public unique lionfish dishes prepared by chefs at local restaurants that both satisfied their customers while also informing them of this beautiful, yet invasive species. Judges selected La Paz as this year's winner who

served Filete de Lionfish Em-papelado. Ingredients included lionfish, epazote, calabacitas, carrot, potato, and peppers.

"Every year this event gets bigger and bigger and wouldn't be possible without the community's support," said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager with Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism. "We know that lionfish removal events have significant positive impacts on the local ecosystem. Hosting the Emerald Coast Open in Destin - Fort Walton Beach at the beginning of the season really does help our local fishery that is so important to our destination."

More results and information can be found at [www.emeraldcoastopen.com](http://www.emeraldcoastopen.com) or for local information, visit [www.destinfwb.com](http://www.destinfwb.com).

## June Fishing Report

BY KAYLA BURLESON

It's that time of year where the days get longer, fishing heats up and anglers get more time on the water. We've spent some time doing all types of fishing, and here's a report straight

from the water.

If you're fishing from shore, you may have noticed some grass out on the beaches. It is most definitely fishable, and it has likely helped the ecosystem as well. The pompano

are plentiful and reds are still being caught from the shore. We've also seen whiting and a few Spanish mackerel hanging around, too. Looking to catch them? Try small pieces of Fish Bites or FishGum on a pom-

pano rig. Weight size varies depending on the swell, but a typical go-to is a 3-ounce weight.

If you're fishing in the Bay, Spanish have been found the last couple of weeks. We prefer small g-Eye jigs or a gold spoon, but they are not as plentiful as they once were. You can also catch the occasional trout or redfish as they dock hop, if you

know where to look. They may not be trophy fish, but they are fun to catch. Live shrimp on a popping cork or Carolina rig is typically the ticket, but that is not to say you cannot catch some good reds on fiddler crabs or even top water lures near the docks.

*Continued on next page*

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# New Club Takes Youngsters Fishing

BY CALI HLAVAC

It's been an eventful few months for the Emerald Coast Big Game Fishing Club (ECBGFC) here on the Emerald Coast. The newly founded club has had many successes in a short time frame. The 2nd Annual Billfish Extravaganza recently held at Harbor Docks was a huge success! Despite the wet and windy conditions, teams were able to weigh in a variety of great fish and we were honored to provide more than \$50,000 in prize money.

What's next from the ECBGFC? We've got two major events coming up: the Youth Tournament and Hit the Gulf. The Youth Tournament will give the young anglers in our community an opportunity to get their lines in the water July 29-30 at



Harbor Docks. In August, Hit the Gulf will be a month-long tournament where teams can fish for two days of their choosing. It will be divided into private and charter boat divisions, so don't miss out! Plus, every

member will receive tickets to the Sportsman's Ball on Sept. 16 at the Destin Fort Walton Beach

Convention Center. It's a night of fun and celebration with dinner, drinks, and dancing!

It's not enough for ECBGFC just to go out and have a good time. We are focused on giving back to our communities and conserving our local waters. That's why we are thrilled to be host for the ECBGFC Destin for Success fundraising event in August to raise money for scholarships to the top five winners of Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties. Junior and senior students compete by submitting their marine artwork and meeting our qualifications. We are accepting both donations and item donations to make this event

successful for our local youth.

ECBGFC is all about Community, Conservation and Giving Back. "We give back to the Destin High School Fishing Class and are honored to run the Destin High School Fishing Club, support students through our Destin for Success Scholarship Program, and support billfish conservation efforts," says founder Crystal Lafosse.

With more than 300 members and counting, there is still time to join the club! Join online at [www.ecbgfc.com](http://www.ecbgfc.com) or reach out to Crystal directly at [ecbgfc@gmail.com](mailto:ecbgfc@gmail.com). We would love to have you be a part of this organization.

## FISHING REPORT

*continued from previous page*

Fishing from the pier means you have a chance to catch a variety of species. Cobia fishing hasn't been what it used to be, but we have seen a few caught this year; some on jigs, some on live bait. There have also been jack crevalle and Spanish Mackerel caught in the meantime, also on jigs. We've also seen a few mahi sneaking up close and plenty of hardtail along with a few pompano.

Trying to fill a cooler? Mingo on a two-hook rig bottom fishing have been plentiful. You can find trigger as well, but for them to be legal size has proven to be a bit more of a challenge unless you are out past 125-plus feet. Amberjack are also plentiful, and red snapper are definitely

out there and just waiting for their season! Announced this month, there will be 70 days to harvest red snapper, beginning June 16. The season will include every day June 16-July 31, and three-day weekends during October and November. There will be a two per person limit at 16 inches.

Head offshore and you may see some awesome bluefin tuna caught in the last few days as well as wahoo and even swordfish. Grouper have been showing up in great numbers, which definitely makes our taste buds happy!

The temperatures are heating up and so is the fishing. We'd love to know what you're seeing out there! In the meantime, here's to warmer, more consistent weather patterns and tight lines.

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## Relentless Raiders:

# A Season of Resilience and Unforgettable Comebacks

By DOUG STAUFFER

The Northwest Florida Raider baseball team, a group of tenacious young athletes, demonstrated exceptional resilience, grit and an unwavering spirit throughout the season, especially in their recent games. Their journey, punctuated by numerous comeback victories, is a testament to their will to win and the enduring heart of this remarkable team.

They embarked on their journey to clinch the Panhandle Conference, which required them to face Gulf Coast State



in the season's final three games. Every game was a thrilling spectacle, filled with suspense and nail-biting moments. The Raiders, always maintaining their composure, clinched the series

with a trail of electrifying late-inning performances. It was a true spectacle of sportsmanship, a testament to their never-say-die attitude. They fought tooth and nail, displaying an extraordinary

combination of skill and courage that saw them overcome the odds.

Then came the district championship series against Polk State. After suffering a blow in the first game, the Raiders dusted themselves off and rallied to win the next two games, proving that they were not to be underestimated. The deciding third game was nothing short of a sports classic. Behind 11-8 going into the 8th inning, the Raiders clawed back, scoring two critical runs. But in the 9th inning, under the most intense pressure,

the team's spirit truly shone. With two outs and a 3-2 count, the Raiders launched a 3-run walk-off home run, a moment of pure magic that will forever echo in the annals of Raider history. Every player and supporter felt the euphoria of that 14-11 victory, a reward for their unwavering faith and perseverance.

In the words of sports enthusiast Mo Young, the team's energy was infectious. He shared, "This team was so much fun to watch. They were playing great pressure-packed baseball for the last several weeks of the season." Pausing for effect, he added, "The often used 'cardiac kids' moniker can apply to this team." His words echo the pulsating thrill that the Raiders brought to the diamond, encapsulating the adrenaline and excitement gripping fans game after game. As Young aptly dubbed them, the "cardiac kids" kept spectators' hearts racing with their nerve-wracking comebacks and unyielding spirit.

The Raiders then entered the double-elimination District Tournament with their heads held high. Despite losing their opening game to the College of Central Florida, they bounced back with characteristic determination. They beat the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, in an extra-innings thriller, scoring three runs in the bottom of the 10th to win 8-7. Then they edged out Miami Dade College in a nerve-wracking encounter that saw the Raiders maintain their lead for an 8-7 win. However, in their final game against the College of Central Florida, the Raiders, exhausted yet unbroken, succumbed 7-2.

Despite the final defeat, the Raiders' journey was extraordinary. Their unwavering spirit, tenacity, and refusal to be beaten defined this remarkable team and season. They showcased the true essence of sports—that it's not just about winning but also about the heart, the determination, and the will to keep fighting, no matter the odds. The Northwest Florida Raider baseball team truly lived this ethos, and their unforgettable performances will resonate in the hearts of their fans for many years to come.

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# Learning About Asthma



By KAY LEAMAN, Health Architect, HealthyDay HealthyLife

Even if you don't have asthma, having knowledge about it can help someone you know or who you may run into some day.

Did you know that asthma is a disorder of the bronchial airways with no known cure? The airways react to certain types of stimulus by swelling and narrowing along with producing excessive mucus. It is the most chronic disease among children and some of these children experienced improvements as they aged. The highest percentage of deaths occur in adults over 65 years of age. Severe attacks, if left untreated, can also cause death.

**There are four classifications for asthma:**

- Mild Intermittent (1-2 days/wk)
- Mild Persistent (+2 days a week)
- Moderate Persistent (daily+night)
- Severe Persistent (throughout the day and frequent nights)

Risk factors for developing asthma can be genetics (parent or sibling), allergies or an allergic condition – especially hay fever (allergic rhinitis) – being overweight, smoking or being around second-hand smoke, high levels of air pollution, household chemical irritants, molds or dust mites and occupational chemicals (farming, hairdressers, mfg.).

**Triggers:**

- Exercise, especially in cold air

- Emotional stress
- Air pollution
- Cigarette smoke
- Seasonal allergies, pollen
- Pet dander
- Exposure to airborne chemicals
- Viruses such as cold and flu
- Sensitivities to food preservatives such as sulfites
- Acid reflux (GERD)
- Medications such as beta-blockers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen)

There are several treatments that help in controlling or minimizing the attacks through medications and/or high quality nutritional supplements. Supplements should not be removed from their choices as they can improve the quality of the person's life.

**Medications:**

- Inhaled Corticosteroids – The inhaled options have a much lower risk of side effects and are generally safe for long time usage vs oral options. Examples: Flonase, Flovent HFA, Pulmicort Flexhaler, Rhinocort, etc. Leukotriene Modifiers – These are uncommon and control attacks for about 24 hours. Side effects include depression, aggression, agitation, anxiety, hallucinations and suicide. Examples: Singulair, Accolade, Zyflo.
- Long Lasting Beta Agonists – These can increase the risk of a severe attack which is why they are used in combination with inhaled corticosteroids. Examples: Serevent, Fordil, Perforomist.
- Combination Inhalers – Mentioned above, examples include Advair Diskus, Symbicort, Dulera.

**Nutritional supplements:**

- Magnesium and Vitamin D deficiencies are associated with increased incidence in asthma attacks as well as an increase in the severity of attack.
- Omega 3 (DHA & EPA) are associated with reduced inci-

dences (frequency and severity) of attacks. It exerts specific anti-inflammatory effects, including a reduction of eosinophils, specific white blood cells seen in allergies and asthma.

- Antioxidants, besides A, C, & E, such as grape seed extract, resveratrol, curcumin, quercetin, green tea extract and


many others are all associated with improved lung function in human and animal testing. Example: Gamma tocopherol is a sub-type of vitamin E. It has been shown to reduce the inflammatory response and help maintain asthma remission.

The nutritional information above is only a sample of the


spectrum of supplementation that has shown sound benefits to those suffering with asthma. To Learn more about a doctor's recommended protocols send me an email with ASTHMA in the subject.

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Dr. Jeffrey Hubbard, M.D., M.S. is a concierge medical doctor, researcher, and entrepreneur on a quest to enlighten people about the long-term effects of poor diet, stress, and unhealthy lifestyle habits on the body. Through provision of personalized proactive wellness solutions and technologies, he believes these potential health problems can be prevented. In addition to his love for the core sciences and genuine empathy for the sick, Dr. Hubbard sought a career in medicine because the urban areas of Houston, TX where he grew up were underserved and lacked access to quality healthcare providers.

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."

Practitioners Tuesday, June 13:

On Tuesday, June 13th, Dr. Hubbard will share the science, testimonials and how you can find relief from acute pain, inflammation, chronic fatigue, restless sleep and much more.. while focusing on the science he will show you how to expand your practice with this leading edge, revolutionary (all natural) technology! Register Here: <https://bit.ly/DrJeffEventJune13>

General Public Wednesday, June 14:

We invite you to see how you can find natural relief from pain, inflammation, fatigue, sleeplessness, as well as age related issues. Register Here: <https://bit.ly/DrJeffEventJune14>

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 Wellness

# Semaglutide: Weight Loss Magic



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, M.D.

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 development. 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: Why Men Should Visit the Spa



BY KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER

In today's world, it's a myth that a spa is just for the ladies. In more recent years, approximately 47 percent of spa-goers were men! Males have finally realized that grooming and taking care of their appearance is a means of style. Trimmed facial hair, clean cut nails and hair, you name it, men are all for it.

More and more, men are flocking to the spa for male-specific options, such as scrubs and

waxing. Waxes for the chest, back or face are one of the top choices for a men's spa trip. It lasts longer than shaving and gives your body a cleaner, more defined look. It also allows more time to do other things, like work or go to the gym or meet with friends, rather than stuck in front of the bathroom mirror tediously shaving away. Unique and ultra-defined facial hair is another favorite trend for men

right now. Waxing gives them the option of fine-combing the shape of their facial hair with razor-sharp precision.

Massages are not just for women; your dad, husband or brother deserves an unwind, too. A massage has incredible benefits for your physique and soothes your sore muscles more than just stretching after a workout.

The now-dubbed "man-

ly-cure" is another spa treatment that's gaining ground with the guys. Clean, cut and shaped nails on both hands and toes are both professional-looking and help with your cuticle health.

Scrubs for men are an excellent way of maintaining clean and healthy skin with exfoliating dead skin cells from the body. Men, in particular, are drawn

*Continued on next page*



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# Leave People Better Than You Found Them



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG,  
JOURNEY BRAVELY

Have you ever gone through a day only to realize you interacted with people and don't remember it? Perhaps you were glazed over as you went through the grocery store checkout or you nodded and talked to your kids while looking at your phone not really paying attention. Or, have you ever gotten to the end of a day and realized you were not a great version of yourself at some point during the day? Maybe you were short with a server at a restaurant or you took out your frustration on someone else. In the midst of busy, hectic lives, it's easy to be lulled into believing many of your daily human interactions don't matter. However, there are no throw-away human interactions. You are either leaving people better or worse than you found them based on how you engage.

I was driving through a business recently and was struck by the friendly, kind, and enjoyable nature of the drive through employee. We chatted at the window and I drove away having a great conversation with my kids about how positive it is to interact with someone who cares about their job. The simple engagement brought joy and important conversation to our day. On the other hand, I was in a different store and was treated poorly by an employee. The interaction left me feeling angry, discouraged, and like I would avoid returning to the store.

How you treat people matters. Your engagement has the power to shape how people view themselves and the world. How do you want people to feel when they have spent time with you? Would you like them to say they feel small, belittled, ignored, unimportant and unvalued? Or, would you like them to say they feel encouraged, seen, understood, and valued?

## 5 Ways to Leave People Better Than You Found Them

1. Listen more than you talk. Most people spend more time talking about themselves than they do listening to oth-

ers. You don't always need to fill the space with your words. Try slowing down and intentionally leaving space for others to speak. Then listen intently to what they are saying and to the feeling and meaning behind what they are saying.

2. Ask meaningful questions and listen carefully to the answers. Go beyond questions like "What do you do?" and try questions like, "What made you want to go into that field?" or "What feels most meaningful to you about your work?" Ask open ended questions rather than yes/no questions. Listen with interest to the answer and then ask follow up questions. Allow yourself to become truly interested in the other person.

3. Put away distractions and be fully present in the moment. Put the phone away, turn off the screen, stop scanning the room for the more exciting, popular person you'd like to engage. Make eye contact and pay attention fully

4. Notice the good and give genuine compliments. Criticism is cheap. Genuine compliments are valuable. All people have positive qualities. Try noticing specific positive attributes and

speaking them kindly to the person. We all want others to see the good in us.

5. Treat others as though they are as important or more important than yourself. Take a moment to reflect on ways others have treated you that left you feeling valued and seen

and important. Now practice doing those things for as many people in your path as you can. Send a thoughtful text or note, hold a door, do something kind without being asked, give generous encouragement.

Leaving others better than you found them can feel easier when the people look like you, talk like you, dress like you, have

similar beliefs, and don't get on your nerves. However, all people are human and worthy of being treated with dignity and kindness. The deeper work is in the practice of leaving people better than you found them when they are difficult for you in some way. This is certainly more work for you, however, it leaves both your soul and the world around you more beautiful. As you walk along your journey of leaving people better than you found them, connect with us for counseling and coaching at [www.journeybravely.com](http://www.journeybravely.com).







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

**Todd Craig**  
Life & Leadership Coach  
918-740-1232 | [todd@journeybravely.com](mailto:todd@journeybravely.com)

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## SKINCARE

*continued from previous page*

to this spa treatment. Not only is it a pleasant feeling to have clean, smooth skin, but it's also great for confidence and physical mentality.

For Father's Day, pamper your dad, brother, husband or

son at the spa! Drop into Beverly Hills Day Spa or visit online and purchase a gift certificate available for pickup during normal business hours. Visit [www.beverlyhillspadayspa.com](http://www.beverlyhillspadayspa.com) or call me at (850) 654-8544. 114 Palmetto Dr., Suite 6, Destin, 32541, on Tuesday – Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

## OCSD Highlights Mental Health

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the Student Services Department and its mental health providers developed a monthly Mental Health Matters focus. Each month the Okaloosa County School District's (OCSD) mental health team, along with school administration, faculty, staff, and students, focused on one specific component of mental wellness and practiced self-care activities and resources to develop that area of focus for the

month. "Our District's commitment to promoting mental health extends far beyond what the State of Florida requires. Currently, we have 21 mental health counselors, nine social workers, and eight CDAC counselors on staff. As we look ahead to the 2023-2024 academic year, we plan to expand our team by adding three more CDAC counselors and two additional mental health

*Continued on next page*

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Wellness

# Work, Don't Jerk: A Smooth and Efficient Workout



By LISA LEATH TURPIN, HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

Your "form," the way you perform each exercise, is very important if you want to stay safe, injury free and improve. Everyone wants to progress in their efforts to be more healthy and fit. That's the whole point, isn't it? Exercise is a challenge, stress and test we put our bodies through, so that our bodies build back stronger, become more agile and run cleaner. Moving with precise technique, not rigid or too loose, will keep you from injury, but also from wasting precious time. The definition of good form changes based on the particular exercise in question, as well as the particular

person performing the exercise. What I mean is, good form can look different depending on the individual and the situation; it's dependent upon the individual's needs and limitations. According to GMB Fitness Co., there are two important characteristics of good form that run through all types of movement:

It must minimize the chances of injury for the individual practicing the movement.

It must employ efficient body mechanics, to maximize the available strength and energy of the movement.

Following, I will aim to hit a few indicators of good form for you.

As in our heading, "Work, Don't Jerk," notice your speed, range of motion and control. Proper technique is a combo of body stability and mobility. If you are too loose, your form will fall

apart. If your movement is too rigid, your work will be unnecessarily restricted. Through good control of your momentum, you should have the ability to pause at any point within the performance of the movement. Moving with intention of control funnels the stresses to the appropriate muscles rather than inappropriately hitting an area prone to injury. Slow down. Think of your movements as rhythm and count two to four seconds for both parts of the movement (positive and negative). Hit your range of motion (ROM). ROM is the totality of movement a joint is capable of doing. ROM changes based on our limitations. However, it's important to work through our en-

tire ROM when we can while also being cautious at the beginning and ending of our ROM.

Step back a bit. If the weight you are using keeps you from performing good form, then change to a lighter weight and progressively move up as you get stronger (you get stronger when you are consistent with your routine). Good form does not mean perfection. Everyone is a little different—I can't emphasize this enough. A trained eye can help evaluate your form and help you tweak your movements to fit your specific needs and or limitations. Performing with good technique is important. Keep your focus during your workout.

Have fun, but control your

moves. If you are ever unsure about your form, use a mirror. Bad form just looks bad and you will probably be able to notice for yourself. For instance, when performing arm work, both biceps and triceps, keep your elbows close to you. When doing squats, keep your knees and feet aligned with each other and sit back as far as you can, balancing on your heels. In almost all situations, keep your back straight, shoulders back and down (depressed away from ears) and abs pulled in tight, all to protect the spine.

Just pay attention and do each move with purpose and control. Your body will thank you for it!

## OCSD HIGHLIGHTS

*continued from previous page*

counselors," stated Superintendent Marcus Chambers. We also plan to have a full-time Mental

Health Counselor available on campus at each middle and high school." In addition, each school is proud to have HOPE Squad, a peer-to-peer suicide prevention and awareness program.

The District joined Mental Health America's nationwide recognition of May's Mental Health Awareness Month where each school participated in activities to promote mental health for students and staff. Knowing what mental health resources are available in our community is "key" to accessing those resources," stated Teri Schroeder, Student Services Program Director. Families can reference OCSD's Student Services Counseling Resources to find a myriad of resources in our community to assist in accessing treatment, counseling and support for mental illness or to improve their mental wellness. For more information, visit [www.mhanational.org](http://www.mhanational.org).



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# Beach Time – ECES Style



## ENERGY TIPS by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

BY CHRIS BALZER, EMERALD COAST ENERGY SOLUTIONS

When planning your next beach day, take some extra time and enjoy the beach ECES style (Emerald Coast Energy Solutions). Of course, we like the traditional beach things: sitting by the water, watching the waves curl ever so slightly, looking for that pod of dolphin fins, listening for and watching low fly bys or watching a sea turtle grab breakfast—you know, the ordinary beach stuff. Going to the beach here is anything but ordinary. We are blessed to have, on a regular basis, air and sea shows almost every time we go to the beach. Here are a few more things to think about on your next beach day.

One of the first things you should know is what the heat index is. The heat index is the “feels like” temperature to the body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature. It could be 93° with a “feels like” 102°. Heat indexes of 103° or higher are considered dangerous, use caution when planning beach days or outings with a high heat index.

While checking the weather forecast and heat index, be sure to check the UV forecast. Checking UV (ultraviolet radiation) should become as much as a habit as checking the weather. UV forecasts include many factors. So, don’t assume cloud cover or lower temperatures mean low UV. Anyone who has gotten a sunburn on a cloudy day understands. Checking UV is particularly important if you plan to spend several hours outside and even more so at the beach where UV radiation can be increased by reflecting off our white sands and water.

Wear reef safe sunscreen. The best way to protect yourself from UV radiation is by staying in the shade or wearing protective clothing. Another way is slather on reef safe sunscreen.



Be sure to check the back of the sunscreen bottle; some sunscreens contain chemicals that can harm marine life including corals, fish and even dolphins.

Get to know the sand between your toes. We have some of the whitest beaches in the world thanks to the Appalachian Mountains and the Apalachicola River. 20,000 years ago, when the world temperatures began

warming after the last Ice Age, large volumes of water were carried by rivers to the world’s oceans. The Apalachicola River carried small quartz particles to the Gulf of Mexico and continues today. These unique quartz particles created our shorelines and beautiful white beaches.

Share the shore. Our beaches are great, but they aren’t ours—we’re all just visitors.

Snorkeling, diving and even sitting, one can experience a whole world coexisting at the beach. Share the shore and take the pledge that you will find out how to keep yourself and the marine animals around you safe. As tempting as it is, keep your distance from marine life and leave that shell souvenir behind. Some shells play a vital role in our beach ecosystem and taking some washed up items can actually be illegal. If you are looking for that perfect souvenir, try an airbrushed t-shirt reading, “My friends visited the beach and all I got was this lousy t-shirt.”

The next time you plan to go the beach, do it ECES style;

check the heat index and UV forecast, use reef safe sunscreen, enjoy the sand, share the shore and Beat the Heat!

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



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# Benefits of a Customized Business Owners Policy

Do you have a good BOP (Business Owners Policy) covering business? If you were to incur damage to your business location, such as a fire, would you be concerned about not just the building repairs and replacement of damaged or destroyed equipment, but also your employees? They need their paychecks.

For small to medium-sized businesses, Business Owners Policies or BOPs as they're referred to, are a great product, combining protection from major property and liability risks in one package, similar to your homeowners policy. They cover things such as:

**1 - Property insurance** for both the building and contents owned by the company. This includes furniture, fixtures, and inventory. Your policy should always be written on the Special Form, which is broader coverage, changing the policy from a named peril to an open peril policy.

**2 - Business Income and Extra Expense insurance**, which covers the loss of income

resulting from a fire or other catastrophe that disrupts the businesses operation. It can also include the extra expense of operating out of a temporary location.

**3 - Liability coverage**, which protects your company's legal responsibility for the harm done to others.

This harm can be triggered by you or your employees for what they do or fail to do in your operations that may cause bodily injury or property damage due to an error in providing a service, faulty installation or defective product. It also covers the cost of your defense as businesses can be sued even if they are not negligent or did nothing wrong.

In conjunction with the BOP, there are additional coverages that can be purchased, depend-



ing on the type of business you have and your exposures. You should always consult your agent and purchase the correct coverages for your particular risk.

And other exposures and additional areas of coverages for a business to consider:

**Business Auto coverage** – To protect your owned business vehicles, hired and non-owned auto and your employees when they drive on company time.

**Crime Insurance** – To

protect your business against burglary, forgery, computer fraud, employee dishonesty and other crimes.

**Cyber Liability coverage** – For computer attacks and damage to electronic data and computer systems.

**Employee Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI)** – To protect against employee lawsuits.

**Professional Liability insurance (E&O)** – To protect against lawsuits for negligent acts, errors and omissions that result in financial losses during business activities.

**Inland Marine coverage** – To protect property, goods or equipment in transit and over water or land.

**Umbrella coverage** – To obtain higher limits over underlying policies you have in place.

**Workers' Compensation** – To protect employees against accidents and diseases at your workplace. (Information gathered from: <https://www.nationwide.com/business/insurance/business-owners-policy-bop/>)

Being a business owner is stressful. Make sure you have all the coverage and protection you need, so you can focus on being successful instead of worrying about what might happen to your business if disaster comes to visit.

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



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# Leadership Supercharge: Why Reading Should Be Your Daily Ritual



BY BILL MASON

In the dynamic world of leadership, where continuous growth and development are essential, there is one undeniable truth: leaders are readers. Even if you despise reading, the act of consuming books on a regular basis can be a game changer in your leadership abilities. Discover six ways in which reading can significantly enhance your leadership skills. Learn how incorporating this simple daily habit can transform your leadership journey.

### Condensed Knowledge:

One effective way to better understand authors' life message, experiences, insights, and wisdom is by reading their

books. Their published works contain a wealth of knowledge that can be used to improve your leadership abilities and advance your career. By delving into their writing, you can absorb their expertise and apply it to your journey as a leader.

### Accelerated Leadership Growth:

Regularly reading books can accelerate your growth as a leader by providing new insights, lessons and strategies to apply to your leadership style. Exposure to diverse ideas and experiences continually improves your personal and professional development, allowing you to address challenges better and motivate your team.

### Broadening Perspectives:

By reading, you can expand your outlook and learn new viewpoints, even if you already have your own preferences and biases. Exploring diverse perspectives to gain new insights and better understand the world is beneficial. This worldview expansion can aid in navigating complexities, making informed decisions and connecting with a broader range of people.

### Leading with Empathy:

To become a better leader, it's critical to prioritize goal accomplishment and build relationships through empathy and understanding. Reading can aid in developing emotional intelligence, empathy and understanding of human actions. By analyzing the challenges and accomplishments of various characters in literature, you can learn and apply those experiences to how you interact with your team and stakeholders.

### Igniting Creativity:

Reading books can increase your ingenuity and imagination as the stories, ideas, and concepts they contain can inspire innovative thinking and problem-solving skills. By being more



creative, you can approach challenges with new perspectives, develop novel strategies, and encourage transformation within your team.

### The Reluctant Reader's Journey:

If you have a busy schedule or don't enjoy reading, consider listening to audiobooks on Audible instead. I prefer audiobooks and have listened to them for five years. I began listening to audiobooks at twice the regular speed to get more bang for my

buck. It took some time, but I gradually increased the playback speed to help my brain adjust. As a result, I can now complete an eight-hour book in just four hours. I listen to audiobooks while driving, working out, or doing yard work. Investing in personal growth is essential because time is a precious resource. When something is valuable to you, you'll always find a way to incorporate it into your life.

Starting today, set a goal to read a few pages or listen to 20 minutes of a book daily. A recommended book to begin with is "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie.

Remember, leaders are readers, so start today!

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**Business**

# Collaboration Program Celebrates Inaugural Graduates

At a closing retreat and graduation ceremony May 12, Florida's Great Northwest (FGNW) Foundation honored its new graduates from Leadership Northwest Florida, a new regional collaboration program focused on community, content and connection. Eighteen leaders from across Northwest Florida participated in the inaugural program that fostered a deeper understanding of the region's diverse landscape.

Class I participants were immersed in a seven-month educational program, which offered a holistic view of the conditions, challenges and opportunities that are shared throughout Northwest Florida, focusing on the areas of Business Vitality, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Infrastructure, Talent and Quality of Place.

Marcus McBride, president and CEO of CareerSource Escarosa, was selected as a participant in the inaugural Leadership Northwest Florida class. He was also elected by his classmates to serve as president of Class I.

"I am grateful for the con-

nections established, information shared, and countless economic development resources identified across the Northwest Florida territory," he said. "The Leadership Northwest Florida program was well-organized, allowing every leader in this class to see the Panhandle of Florida in its truest form and understand how invaluable our communities are when connected with a common purpose."

Another class participant was Elizabeth Forsythe, a Senior Associate with CBRE, Inc. She shares a similar experience with the Leadership Northwest Florida program.

"Making new life-long connections and friends, visiting and hearing from successful business owners throughout the region, learning about the partnerships and innovation initiatives happening right here along our Emerald Coast and learning more about our incredible talent base are just some of the things I took away from this program," she said. "The work that Florida's Great Northwest does to attract new businesses to the area, and to spread the word



about all this region has to offer is invaluable."

**The graduates from Class I of Leadership Northwest Florida are:**

- Kimberly Aderholdt, Navy Federal Credit Union
- Robert Arnold, Grayton Beach Capital
- Elizabeth Crowe, Florida State University Panama City
- Jason Crowe, Community Bank Panama City
- Elizabeth Forsythe, CBRE, Inc.
- Tiffany Garling, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce & Jackson County Economic Development Committee
- KC Gartman, Baptist Health Care
- Kelli Godwin, ITI Digital
- David Harless, Regions
- Lesley Hatfield, Holmes County Development Commission
- Charles James IV, Clark Partington
- Ryan Long, The Highland Group
- Marcus McBride, CareerSource Escarosa
- Stacey McGilvray, Hancock Whitney Bank



- Chuck McIntosh, Florida Caverns RV Resort
- Johnathan Taylor, LandrumHR
- Matthew Wright, Troy University

To apply for consideration of Class II of the program, visit

[FloridasGreatNorthwest.com/LNWFL](http://FloridasGreatNorthwest.com/LNWFL). The deadline to receive applications for the Class of 2023-2024 is Sept. 6. For more information, contact Kasey Killebrew at (334) 790-4557 or [kkillebrew@fgnw.org](mailto:kkillebrew@fgnw.org).

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## Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida Welcomes Chip and Caroline Wasson

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida announces that real estate veterans Chip and Caroline Wasson will join the brokerage. They will be based out of the Destin location and continue to serve customers along the Emerald Coast.

"We are thrilled to welcome Chip and Caroline to our growing Destin office at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida," said Jimmy Burgess, Chief Executive Officer for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida. "They are widely respected both as area sales professionals and as leaders in our local community and they are exactly the type of sales professionals we are seeking as we continue to grow the company."

With two decades of real estate experience, Louisiana native Caroline Wasson has called Destin home since 1995, using her background in sales and management to



build a thriving real estate business alongside her husband, Chip. Born and raised in Destin, Chip has an intimate knowledge of the coast, and the team is known for providing personalized service to their clientele.

Established in 2007, Beach Properties of Florida became an affiliate of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network in 2016 and became wholly owned by HomeServices of America in 2022. Since that time, it has earned a host of honors, including being recognized for seven consecutive years as members of the Berkshire Elite Circle, a prestigious designation given to the Top 50 companies in the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network.





## Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

I had a dream about him last night. It has been nearly three decades since he died, but there he was. Alive. We met in some kind of diner. A breakfast joint. Maybe this was heaven?

He was running late, I was already sitting in a booth, sipping coffee. When he arrived, his first words were: "Did you miss me?"

"No," I said.

He studied my face to see if I was joking. He could tell I wasn't.

I couldn't quit staring at him. My God, it really was my father. He looked good, too. Slender, red hair, tucked-in shirt, slacks. I'd gone so long without seeing him that I'd forgotten what he looked like.

But it only takes a moment to bring it all back. I could even smell his trademarked hair oil. The day after he died I confiscated his pillow and it was covered in this same scent. I slept on that pillow for five years.

"You really didn't miss me?" he said. There was that easy smile of his. He wasn't offended.

"No, I really didn't miss you."

He ordered a Coke. And I suddenly remembered that he always drank Coca-Cola. He never was a coffee drinker. Hated the stuff. Just one of the many things I'd forgotten.

Then I started thinking about the differences between us. There were hundreds of them.

For example: he was always well-dressed, whereas I always looked like I crawled from beneath a Chevy. He was a hard worker; I sleep in on weekdays. Everyone called him "handsome;" nobody has ever ascribed that word to me. He was a planner; there is nothing I love more than canceled plans.

When he was alive, he expected great things from me, but I failed to deliver. From a young age I knew within my kid brain that I would never accomplish the things he hoped for me.

I'm not saying I disappointed him, but I don't think I ever made him so proud that he wanted to shout publicly, "That's my boy! That's my boy!"

The waitress approached our table. She removed her notepad and said to him, "You want the usual, John?"

I couldn't believe it. They knew him by name in this heav-

was. Maybe this was his perpetual Saturday morning.

He finished his breakfast and said, "I got something I wanna show you." He was already sliding out of our booth. "C'mon, it's in the parking lot."

Parked outside the cafe was a huge flatbed trailer attached to a truck. On the trailer was a disassembled 1957 Cessna 172

ness, no apologetic undertones. Then I realized that here in this holy place there was no sadness or guilt.

Here, he was free. Here, a man was unencumbered by the weight of his crimes. Even the worry lines on his face had disappeared. This truly was heaven. I was sorry I ever hated this beautiful man.

He took one step toward me. He didn't ask permission, he simply enfolded me in his two skinny arms, just like when I was a child. My tear stained face was soon buried in my father's shoulder. There was that smell again.

"I was lying," I said into his shirt. "I do miss you."

"That's my boy," he said.

*Sean was born in Missouri. But, after his father's suicide, when he was 12, he moved with his family to our own Walton County at age 14. He dropped out of school and worked construction and other jobs, then became a professional musician. After going back to school, he discovered writing. He has published 10 books (some of them self-published), and has written columns for many publications including appearing in Life Media. Since 2014, he has written a daily blog called "Sean of the South."*



enly place. They even knew what he ate. He had lived a whole lifetime without me.

After we ordered we didn't speak much. He was in a good mood, but I felt myself clamming up. Maybe I was mad.

Throughout breakfast I kept remembering the day after his suicide, when I was a boy. Back then I had this horrible notion that he wasn't really dead. I don't know why. It was some kind of denial thing. It used to keep me up at night.

To put my mind at ease, my mother finally called the sheriff's department and asked the deputy to assure me that he was indeed dead. The deputy — God bless him — sighed and gave it to me straight.

He said, "We used dental records to identify the body. Your dad's teeth were about all that was left of him. So yeah, he's definitely dead."

My insides turned to water. I hung up the phone and cried. But in the back of my mind I always wondered, what if he'd kept on living? What kinds of things would he be doing? Would he have new hobbies? New friends? Would he still read novels? Would he still go out for breakfast on Saturday mornings?

Maybe that's what this place

Skyhawk airplane. The wings were removed, the fuselage was strapped to the trailer, the propeller was red.

"I'm gonna restore it," he said, slapping the wing. "Gonna take flying lessons." He looked like a little kid.

He always wanted to learn to fly. Flying was his frustrated dream. But the dream never materialized. When he died, his garage workshop was plastered with posters of jets, biplanes, F/A-18 Super Hornets and A-10 Warthogs.

He kicked the landing gears of his new prize. "So do you like the plane?"

I refused to show approval because no matter how old I get, there is still a little piece of me that wants to punish him for what he did. What did he want me to do? Throw a party? Congratulate him? He ruined my life and now he's playing Charles Lindenberg?

He obviously noticed my hardened face.

After a few moments, he said, "You know I don't blame you for not liking me anymore. I get it. But, gosh, it's so nice seeing you again."

I said nothing.

At first I was struck by the tenor of his words. Because, oddly, they contained no sad-



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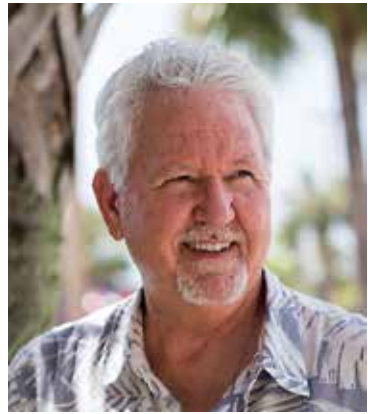
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Musing



BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

# A Pastor's Ponderings: Our Father

do you need? How much is required?

Some think that God wants us to pray for at least an hour. If we were devout, we would pray all night like Jesus often did. Elijah withdrew to a desolate cave to pray where the earth shook, whirlwinds roared and God's audible voice spoke to him. We think that if we were worth our salt, we would pray and kick the devil a few times, heal the sick and raise the dead. We feel defeated before we even start because we don't pray like that.

The disciples shared our feelings and asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Similarly, we need to ask God to show us how to pray. His answer may surprise you. The Lord gave us a 34-word model prayer, four brief sentences to live by. A kick start prayer to ignite your day with power, purity, and grace. It's really not difficult.

Our model prayer begins as Jesus points us toward the Father. To "hallow" His name means to set it apart as holy, to humble yourself and revere

our Father, the most-high God. The Lord is truly omnipotent in power and loving as a father with a newborn baby. Oh, how many would run to prayer if we grasped the love of our Father!

Second, Jesus invites us to demand that His kingdom come now. Jesus is telling us to establish God's kingship and authority over our lives each day. We can invoke the power of God to rule over the events of our lives. Pray that God's power and authority reign over your family, home, and job. Yield everything to your King.

Third, Jesus calls us to pray, "Give us each day our daily bread." I wish I could have back all the moments I wasted worrying over bills and finances. I would probably live to be 100. Too many people worry about what might happen instead of trusting God's promise of provision. Believe that God will provide for you. Pray this one simple petition to the Lord, give your finances to God and live in peace.

I remember reading one

evening about a poor missionary. He would sit at the dinner table with his family and pray for a blessing over their supper – even when there was none. During his prayer, someone would knock at the door to give them food. I told this story to my wife and as I was speaking, someone knocked. I opened the door and there stood a couple, each carrying two bags of groceries. I stood overwhelmed by the goodness of God. The Lord will provide if you ask.

Fourth, forgive. How we need forgiveness and how we hate to give it. Without forgiveness, no person will see God. It is the crux of Christianity. Everyone must come to the Lord through God's forgiveness. The ultimate test of your faith becomes your ability to forgive others as God forgave you.

Finally, pray that God will lead you away from evil. We will walk thousands of steps today, each with a variety of choices. Ask the Father to guide you to his best and expect his subtle answers. God watches over you

– look in his direction.

Jesus made prayer simple. Start with these four statements of 34 words that require less than a minute. Then step back and marvel at what God can do with you.

"Holy Spirit, help me pray according to God's pattern. Empower me to trust God will meet my needs. I confess my doubt and ask you to deliver me from my weakness. Deliver me from temptation as I confess and renounce its hold on me. Enable me to forgive, as God has forgiven me. You are my source of strength and I receive it now. In Christ's name, I pray. Amen."

*Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled "Prodigal Jesus, Journey Back to the Father" You can get a copy of this book from his website, [DaveHolland.org](http://DaveHolland.org), or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at [DavidvHolland54@gmail.com](mailto:DavidvHolland54@gmail.com).*

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# Music Fans Swarm to Northwest Florida for Country on the Coast

By WILL ESTELL

If you're a music fan and live or play anywhere along the beaches of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, you likely already know about country music's biggest party at the beach, Gulf Coast Jam. The festival, which took place in Panama City Beach, is now one of the largest outdoor music festivals (of any genre) in the country, boasting an attendance of more than 30,000 people per day for each night's headlining shows.

For 2023, Gulf Coast Jam was more popular than ever, having sold out most ticket packages six months in advance. The party brought millions in revenue to accommodation providers,

restaurants, retailers and entertainment establishments across the three-county (Okaloosa, Walton, Bay) area, where most of the thousands of jammers stay, dine and take in the beach.

Having covered the festival for six years now, I can attest to its growing popularity and draw. I've seen everyone from Tim McGraw, Luke Bryan, Old Dominion, Brooks & Dunn, Cadillac Three and Florida Georgia Line to Riley Green, Big & Rich, Lynyrd Skynyrd, LOCASH and Kid Rock, along with many other well-knowns playing to growing crowds of music lovers from every state and those who travel from abroad to attend the festival.



For 2023 Gulf Coast Jam's headliners encompassed some of country's most popular artists, including Kenny Chesney, HARDY, Maranda Lambert and Kane Brown, as well as well-known hitmakers such as Chase Rice, Justin Moore, Gabby Barrett, Breland and Bailey Zim-

merman – with many others rounding out the total 32 artists taking the stage over the four-day event.

Kenny Chesney's late addition to the bill was secured only four weeks

out from the festival weekend, having been added as the replacement for Morgan Wallen, who was originally on the ticket, but was forced to cancel a chain of concert dates due to a vocal issue.

I've had the pleasure to see Kenny play at both festivals and live at the CMA Awards, as well as, having conducted one-on-one feature magazine cover interviews with him twice in the past seven years (with a third interview set for next year before his 2024 tour) and I can assure anyone who hasn't seen him work a stage and crowd that he knows how to throw a party.

Craig Campbell of Campbell Entertainment Group in Nashville, who has played an instrumental role in orchestrating various behind-the-scenes aspects of Gulf Coast Jam since its first year, says the talent alone runs well into the multi-millions each year.

"It's actually because of our great sponsorships, and the generous support of Panama City Beach that we are able to throw this level of music festival and keep the ticket prices where they are," Campbell said. "That's one of the aspects that Rendy and Mark, (the festival founders and organizers) are most proud of: bringing great music to Panama City Beach and making it attainable to most everyone."

For additional information, follow Gulf Coast Jam on Facebook and Instagram or visit GulfCoastJam.com where you can grab your T-shirts, hats and festival merchandise early, and, if you're lucky, grab one of the few secondary market tickets as they become available.

## Ballet Summer Camp at studio6twenty5!

**Ballet Summer Camp is open for registration!**

**Monday, July 17 - Friday, July 21st, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

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Please send your dancer to camp with a packed lunch and a water bottle each day. Wear any color leotard and ballet skirt with pink tights and pink leather ballet shoes and secure hair neatly in a bun.

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Arts & Music

# Beginning Strings Summer Camp

## June 12-16 | 9 to 11:30 a.m. | Destin High School

Calling all young string musicians to Destin. Sinfonia Gulf Coast Youth Orchestra announces the Sinfonia Beginning Strings Summer Camp, a fun-filled five-day program designed to introduce children ages 7-11 to the world of string instruments. The camp will take place from June 12-16, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Destin High School.



This beginner strings summer camp is open to all children, regardless of prior musical experience. Participants will have the opportunity to choose between violin, viola, cello, or bass and learn the fundamentals of music theory, music history, and how

to play their chosen instrument. Throughout the week, dedicated instructors will provide comprehensive instruction, ensuring a supportive and engaging learn-

ing environment for all participants.

To enhance the learning experience, each student will receive a rental instrument for the duration of the camp, along with all the necessary accessories. The tuition fee for the camp is \$125 per student, which covers instruction, instrument rental and all required accessories. The camp is limited to 25 students, and registration will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

The highlight of the camp

will be a final presentation where students will showcase their newfound skills to their parents and families on the last day of class. It will be an excellent opportunity for the young musicians to demonstrate their progress and celebrate their accomplishments.

“Education is the centerpiece of Sinfonia. It was founded in 2005 not only for its entertainment value, but for the fact that Northwest Florida needed an organization that could be the proponent for arts education in schools, specifically music education,” said Sinfonia Gulf Coast Music & Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller. “Beginning Strings

Summer Camp is a wonderful way for local young musicians to experience a new music adventure and have fun doing it.”

To register for Sinfonia’s Beginning Strings Summer Camp, interested individuals can visit the following link: <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?class=sgc>.

For additional information, please contact Margaret Gordon, Music Director, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra Coordinator of Education & Community Engagement by calling (850) 460-8800 or emailing [mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org](mailto:mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org).

# Area Local Presents First Solo Art Exhibit

Fort Walton Beach local and University of Florida College of the Arts BFA senior, Ora Wolfgram, presented her first solo art exhibit titled “Florida: A Famil-

iar Fantasy” at the GFAA Gallery in Gainesville.

The exhibition showcased eight mixed media landscape paintings ranging from 24” x

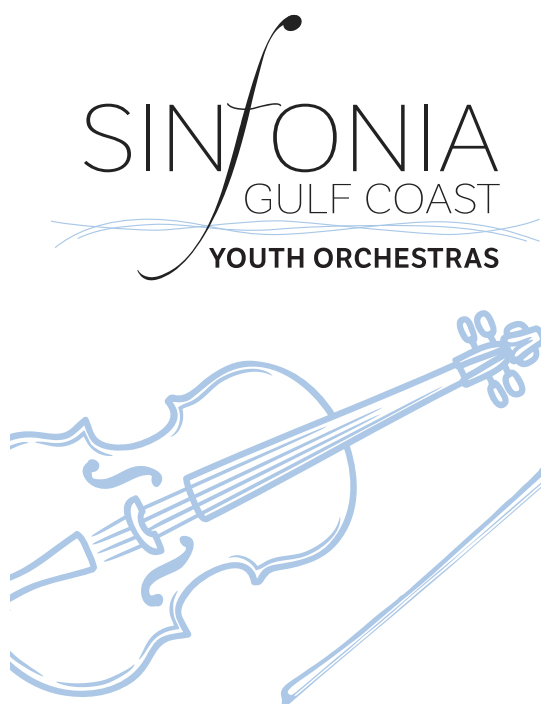
36” to 84” x 48” illustrating the extremes of the coastal environment of Northwest Florida. Wolfgram’s work depicts her experience of living on Okaloosa

Island, a barrier island located in Northwest Florida.

In her artist statement, she said, “The works I created are part of a series to illustrate an

escapist fantasy based on living along the Gulf Coast in Northwest Florida. Each painting

*Continued on next page*



## BEGINNING STRINGS SUMMER CAMP

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Limited to 25 students. Registration is limited on a first come, first serve basis.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
**Margaret Gordon**  
Music Director, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra  
Coordinator of Education & Community Engagement  
(850) 460-8800  
[mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org](mailto:mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org)

# Emerald Coast Theatre Company's 10 Years of Magic Continues with Season 11 on the Horizon

By ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

We just closed our 10th season with a sold out run of one of my absolute favorite musicals, "Sound of Music." It was a little bit magical to end 10 years of incredible shows with such a profoundly beautiful story. I look forward to Season 11 with such excitement and anticipation for what another year of great theatre will bring!

We launch Season 11 next fall with Million Dollar Quartet in September/October. This smash-hit musical tells the story of legendary music icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins as they come together on Dec. 4, 1956, at the famous Sun Studios. This show has so many great songs including "Blue Suede Shoes," "Sixteen Tons," "Great Balls of Fire" and "I Walk the Line" just

to name a few. Elvis will be in the building y'all!

We follow that with the timeless holiday classic A Christmas Carol in December. This fast-paced stage version is so fun and includes all of your favorite characters like Tiny Tim, the Fezziwigs, all the ghosts and, of course, the original grumpy old man, Ebenezer Scrooge. This show is a mug of warm wassail on a cold winter's night and just the right thing to get you into the holiday spirit. Our favorite Scrooge, Bruce Collier, will be returning to the stage as well in this production.

There's plenty of chances to catch The Marvelous Wonderettes: Caps and Gowns throughout the winter months with shows in January, February and March. This is the delightful sequel to The Wonderettes and follows our favorite girls as they graduate in 1958. With songs

like "Rock Around the Clock," "At the Hop," "Dancing in the Street" and "River Deep, Mountain High," you will find yourself tapping along to this gem of a musical!

Another offering we have during those winter months is The Play That Goes Wrong. I absolutely adore the humor in this show! If you want a good laugh while trying to solve a murder mystery, this is the perfect night out. It was a smash hit on Broadway and we are thrilled to produce the show at ECTC!

If you liked Steel Magnolias, you will love Crimes of the Heart premiering in late February. This is a deeply touching, funny play about three eccentric sisters in a small southern town



who deal with the fallout when Babe, the youngest, shoots her husband. This story serves up humor and pathos along with a large glass of sweet tea!

And since everyone loves a mystery, we're keeping the final musical of our season under wraps! Just plan to come on out to ECTC for a fantastic show in May 2024.

If Season 11 can't get here fast enough for you, make plans to catch "Broadway on the Boulevard, Dancin' in the Street"

outdoors in the Grand Park at Grand Boulevard every Thursday during the summer through the end of July. We also have a fantastic group of teens performing Grease at the end of July at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs in our theatre. I hope no matter how busy life gets, you always make time for the joy of a well-told story and the richness of a night out with friends and family. See you at the theatre!

## ORA WOLFGRAM

*continued from previous page*

captures a different experience from living on Okaloosa Island—highlighting the impres-



siveness of the natural flora that can easily shift from a peaceful and inviting to rageful and frightening."

The exhibit ran from April 18 to April 22 with an evening gallery reception on April 21. The reception was attended by 87 people, including family, friends, Fort Walton Beach High School alumni, and fellow University of Florida students and professors.

Wolfgram's artwork has pre-

viously appeared in several art shows, including the DAMN Art Show (2023), the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) Collaborative Art Exhibit (2023), the SA&AH Briccetti Exhi-

bition (2022), and the WARP Student Exhibition (2020). As a high school senior, Wolfgram won the MKAF Festival of the Arts Best in Show Collaborative Art Exhibit award (2018). She was the first student invited to exhibit in the Destin Banner Art Beautification Project. When she graduated Fort Walton Beach High School in 2019, she was the most awarded art student in the school's history.


"I'm grateful to my family and

friends who attended to support me, as well as my professors, Julia and Bethany," said Wolfgram. "They've done an incredible job guiding me and my classmates in understanding where we want to position ourselves with our art and in the art world."

Wolfgram, 21, a native of Fort Walton Beach, will be graduating summa cum laude with a BFA in drawing and a minor in art history in May. A credited costume designer and advocate of the performing arts, she plans to return to Northwest Florida,


where she will work as a production assistant for the Emerald Coast Theatre Company.

To view artwork by Wolfgram, follow her on Instagram @Art\_by\_Orabel.



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# Ask Destinites: New City Center - Main Street Complex



By PATRICIA LEE, OWNER  
DESTINITES.COM

This month in our local Destinites Facebook group, Mayor Bobby Wagner posted about plans for the proposed improvement of the city center area where the new Publix will be located. He presented a drawing of what the complex might look like, including landscaping and the beauty is far beyond what exists there now. You may view the drawing on the mayor's Facebook page. Here is a

list of businesses which could be in the complex surrounding Publix; Example: Retail area, East Parking Deck, West Parking Deck (shared parking with Destin UMC), City Hall, Community Center, Amphitheatre, Residential Over ground Level Retail, Ground Level Retail, Publix Pharmacy Drive-thru ground level, Office Building, and Restaurants. These plans are all proposed, as nothing has yet been decided.

There are 11 bid proposals for the city center complex job. "The winner will work with citizens, the council, and the city staff to create a conceptual site master plan and landscaping," said Mayor, Wagner.

Numerous citizens responded to the mayor's city center complex group post with their concerns, opinions and suggestions. Below are some of those replies. These may be viewed in their entirety at [www.Facebook.com/Destinites](http://www.Facebook.com/Destinites).

## Citizen Replies:

1. "All I can say is I'm happy it sold recently & we now hope to have a chance to partner & make something wonderful there."

2. "I think the old movie theater would be perfect to place the fishing museum... the schools can take field trips there, watch short films about how Destin evolved, maybe even get some hands-on exhibits. I'm sure there are a dozen captains who would volunteer (off season) to come talk about Destin, fishing, etc."

3. "Mayor Wagner, so glad you are thinking of expanding the Destin Fishing Museum – they are full to the brim as it is & collection growing – please consider that you could bring the Destin Fishing Museum to the town center & house it in a nice new building adjacent to a gorgeous aquarium full of Gulf marine life – both would be a nice attraction anytime but es-

pecially on a rainy day giving our residents & visitors a fabulous Destin / Emerald Coast experience....."

4. "Looks great! If you are moving the community center and city hall to the new location, what would be done with the current locations?"

5. "I'm confused! Is the city of Destin going to develop land? Typically such renderings and concepts are brought forward by a developer right?"

Mayor Wagner's Response: "We selected our top design firm last night to give us a plan of what this area can be. We are open to partnerships to make this dream a reality."

6. "Why would we be willing to spend money on a design like this on a piece of property that my understanding the new owners don't want. And are not interested?"

...Mayor Wagner's Response: "Because if we don't come up with a plan we will watch another

developer come in build 600 apartment units and we will be stuck."

7. "Could there possibly be a place for an open market like the Salty Market to set up? Maybe where the city hall is now?"

8. "Much needed shot in the arm, Gonna be great for the community!"

You may see more comments and replies from the mayor on the Destinites Facebook page. We appreciate his keeping us all informed with his post about the complex and appreciate him actually responding to questions, as they came up.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private local's group at [www.Facebook.com/Destiniteswith](http://www.Facebook.com/Destiniteswith) more than 7,900 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out the monthly newsletter and sponsored local business directory at [Destinites.com](http://Destinites.com). Sponsors do advertise in our group.

## AROUND TOWN

*continued from page 14*

Blue Star Memorial Garden as well as the new Japanese Garden currently being installed. The gardens were initially established 20 years ago by the Destin Garden Club, are maintained by the Club, and continue to grow and evolve through the Club's continuing efforts.

### Free Notary Service at the Destin Library

The Destin Library staff reminds the community that it offers notary services free of charge. No library card is required. The Notary Public, Kit-

ti Capps, is available Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9-10 a.m. and 3-4 p.m.; Wednesday, 3-4 p.m.; and Friday, 9-10 a.m.

Call (850) 837-8572 to make your notary appointment or if you have any questions about what is required to notarize your documents.

### Dog-Harmony Launches "Love is in the Air" Calendar Contest

Show dogs how much you adore them by entering the 2024 Dog-Harmony calendar contest themed "Love is in the Air."

World-renowned photographer, Jane Shirek, whose work

has been featured in major publications such as Vogue and Vanity Fair, will capture winning dogs looking their most "fetching" at the elegantly romantic Hotel Effie Sandestin.

Scenes the camera could capture in this spectacular venue include being a pampered pooch at Spa Lilliana, whining and dining, enjoying a muttmosa in the Lobby Bar and canine couples exchanging vows.

To be a canine calendar girl or boy, a dog must fetch enough money to be ranked in the top 12. It also must be available to strut its stuff at the photo shoot July 16-19.

The contest runs June 1-30.

To enter, register at <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2023calendarcontest> or email [hello@dog-harmony.org](mailto:hello@dog-harmony.org).

### Boy Scouts of America Gulf Coast Council Announces 2023 Friends of Scouting Campaign

Fort Walton Beach May 12. The campaign provides an opportunity for the community to invest in the success of its members throughout the Emerald Coast and southern Alabama.

Providing one year of programming and support for one Scout in the Council costs \$500, and half of that funding originates from community support through the Friends of Scouting campaign and other fundraising initiatives. Funding will be used to increase recruitment efforts, promote accomplishments and efforts, support the Council's Troops, Packs, Ships and Crews, and enhance the camp experience through special projects.

### Attention Golfers, Sponsors and Alaqua Lovers

Fore!: The Love of Animals, Alaqua's 2nd Annual Golf Tournament, promises to be fun. One-hundred percent of the proceeds go to help comfort and feed all the animals at the

refuge and those yet to experience a second chance.

Golf at Links Golf Sandestin on Saturday, June 10, is \$250 per player and \$850 per team.

Registration, 8:30 a.m.; Shotgun Start, 10a.m., Yappy Hour and awards, 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Sunset Bay Café Pool Deck across from the course.

### HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital Introduces Pet Therapy Program

HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital has launched its first pet therapy program in partnership with the nonprofit Dog Harmony.

Patients and staff got a special visit recently from 6-year-old Goldendoodle Maya to wrap up National Hospital Week and National Nurses Week. Maya stopped by each department, including the laboratory, respiratory therapy, surgical services, the emergency room and intensive care unit, giving kisses and lifting spirits.

Maya is one of three certified service dogs who will visit the hospital weekly to help relieve stress, anxiety and depression.

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