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DESTIN Life

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Postal Customer Local

A Destin Tradition Celebrating 45 Years!

Oct. 6-8 | Friday 4-10 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

BY CALI HLAVAC

One of the locals' favorite times of year is the **Destin Seafood Festival**, back for its 45th year! So popular is this exciting, delicious, delectable event that more than 60,000 locals and visitors are expected to walk through. The entire Destin Seafood Festival is a two-mile stretch, beginning at Harborwalk Village and stretching all the way to Heron Harbor, with stages on each end. The 2022 Festival included more than 110 food and craft vendors in addition to local restaurants, and this year is expected to be even bigger.



PHOTOS: SAVVY LEIGH PHOTO

Happening Friday through Sunday, Oct. 6-8, the festival kicks off October's month-long Destin Fishing Rodeo. You need no ticket to attend and you'll get the opportunity to take in some of the best local and coastal musicians at the beach with four stages beckoning you to a variety of live rock, reggae, country, tropical tunes and more. Local Destin restaurants and

eateries will serve up scrumptious seafood specialties on the docks and along the new, pedestrian-friendly Harbor Boardwalk. Cold drinks, including beer and wine, are available and will keep you cooled off while you take it all in. You can stroll along the Destin Harbor enjoying the arts and crafts where artists and vendors display their jewelry, clothing, sculpture, glass, watercolors, oil paintings,

designs and more. And don't forget your seafood festival T-shirt!

Enjoy the festival that has always been free – or buy a VIP ticket and enjoy the VIP area. Call to Chef is a local seafood experience that brings back the flare of local seafood to our festival. Located inside the larger festival, the VIP/Call to Chef will require a paid ticket to browse the local restaurant tents, sample their

food flavors and vote for your favorites. For more information on participating as a chef or being a sponsor for this great event, visit www.destin-seafoodfestival.com.

All the food and fun began in 1978 when the Destin Charter Boat Ladies Auxiliary decided to establish a festival to celebrate local fisher-

SEAFOOD FEST
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See coupon pg. 47.

The Regatta Bay Golf Experience

BY BARBARA PALMGREN



Some people have a vision of success that turns their dream into a legend for the ages. Did Peter Bos envision that his dream of a community built with one of the finest golf

REGATTA BAY
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SEAFOOD FEST

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men. It has always been held in conjunction with the Destin Fishing Rodeo. Proceeds are donated back to the community, including the Destin Charter Boat Association which works to maintain the fishery our community was built on, the Miss Destin scholarships, Destin Fisherman's Fund to help those in need and more.

This year's musical entertainment, with four different stages, will feature local bands playing throughout the festival. Harbor restaurants and bars will offer a full lineup of local favorites as well, performing throughout the day and evening. You can bring a chair and chill or don your dancing shoes! Bands and schedule TBA. Visit DestinSeafoodFestival.com.

This year, the Kids Zone has expanded with multiple games for all ages. Sponsored by Fudpuckers, the Kid Zone will include a Mingo Toss, painting oyster shells, sand art and more. The HarborWalk Kids Fun Zone has Hamster balls, a rock-climbing wall and a zip line. There is a seating tent



nearby also. Kids will delight in face-painting and tattoos as well.

Parking will be available at Heron Harbor, the HarborWalk

Village, the Marler public parking lots, the Destin Community Center and the Destin Fishing Museum. Shuttles will also be provided from the Morgan

Sports Complex to the Harbor, free of charge.

Admission is totally free or you can go as a VIP with passes that include a complimentary unlimited food that include a variety of seafood, gumbos and catered treats and more. Tickets also include private bathrooms, cash bar, additional vendors, TVs, live music and more. To purchase a VIP pass, visit the official Destin Seafood Festival website.

For a site map, to become a vendor and other information, visit DestinSeafoodFestival.com. Email info@destinseafoodfest.com.



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www.destinseafoodfest.com



 Community

Meet our Hometown Hero Judah Claire Pierce

Persistence Through the Pain

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Publisher Note: It is always an honor to write about a Hometown Hero. For many, the word hero brings a particular image or personality to mind. Yet, our heroes vary in age and are as unique and special as the life they have lived and the inspiration they are for each of us. They come from all walks of life, and their occupations, ambitions and accomplishments motivate us to embrace our own life's challenges with determination and hope. As we listen to them share the trials and triumphs of their life journey, our heart is awakened to the reality of exactly how fragile and precious life is. The truths they communicate are a solemn reminder we should strive daily to cherish every moment and celebrate the ones who make our life beautiful in every way. Niceville local Judah Claire Pierce is one such non-assuming hero. Her story is one of resilience, persistence and zeal to maintain a sense of normalcy through soul-crushing pain.

At age 10, Judah Claire Pierce experienced an ordinary day at summer camp nestled in the foothills of Georgia. A spontaneous dash down a hill strewn with large tree roots resulted in a minor fracture in her left foot – an incident now three years past. Reflecting on that moment, Judah remarked, “Little did I know that this seemingly innocent act would lead me down a path I never could have imagined.”

Her path is one etched with unrelenting pain. Each morning, Judah awakens to a world filled with stabbing, searing and crushing sensations—a chronic condition she vividly describes as “feeling like I am being burned alive. No matter what I do, the

pain persists relentlessly. It affects even the simplest tasks like going to school, tidying my room, or just trying to live a normal life... making me feel as though I'm wearing a mask of happiness,” shared Judah.

Initially deemed a minor injury, her condition baffled doctors as her relentless suffering defied relief. Through an array of medical interventions and rigorous physical therapy, she eventually received a rare but life-altering diagnosis: Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a neurological anomaly casting her into a realm of chronic, intense pain to her left leg.

Termed the “Suicide Disease” from the relentless pain it induces, CRPS stems from autonomic nervous system imbalances and dysfunction. As Judah's parents, Blake and Candace Pierce, describe it, “CRPS is one of the most excruciatingly painful diseases known to humankind, surpassing even childbirth and amputation without anesthesia on the McGill Pain Index.” Highlighted as one of the top 20 most agonizing conditions, many instances follow forceful traumas to limbs or ankles, among other triggers. However, the mechanism behind why these injuries provoke CRPS remains elusive.

“Working with the doctors was a challenge, because Judah's pain never matched her injury. She would scream in pain,” recounted Candace, Judah's mother. She continued, “As a mom, it's so hard to watch your daughter crying in pain every day, just trying to live her life and you can't fix it. With all these healthcare



degrees, I still can't stop my daughter's suffering.”

During the summer of 2022, the Pierces found their way to a distinguished CRPS program at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where she relearned how to walk and run barefoot, revitalizing mobility in her left leg. “Unfortunately, unlike others who completed the program, my pain did not go into remission and has only intensified since then,” said Judah.

While CRPS often leads many affected children to wheelchairs and eventual bed confinement, her father, Blake, proudly stated, “Yet, Judah refuses to let this awful disease steal her childhood.” Despite enduring countless hurdles, she persistently greets each new day with a smile, striving to maintain a semblance of normalcy amidst the emotionally draining and physically relentless pain.

“I believe it's Judah's faith that fuels her with such resilience,” commented Candace. “She identifies closely with Paul in the Bible who was given a thorn. *Therefore, so that I would not become*

arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble me—so that I would not become arrogant. I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me.' ~ 2 Corinthians 12: 7-9, New English Translation.” “It's that we all want it to go away; and even though it sucks, it's not the end,” said Candace.

Now approaching age 13, Judah embraces her challenges. Her recent academic feats are noteworthy, encompassing top grades at Okaloosa STEMM Academy, securing 1st Place in the Regional Science Fair, participating in the State Science Fair, being a Thermo Fisher Jr. Nominee, winning the NASA Earth Systems Science Project Award, achieving recognition as a regional History Project winner and participating in the state National History Day. Judah excels in math, enjoys Cotillion, passed the Python certification exam, and is active in piano, violin, tennis, and as VP of the Hope Squad. She's also into acting, singing and leads worship for her church youth group.

Home for the Pierces is Niceville, where Blake is stationed at Hurlburt AFB. Candace revealed Judah's goal is to graduate at age 15 and explore aviation, possibly joining the military to fly or pursuing engineering.

However, her pain has escalated, prompting the Pierces to urgently seek relief for their daughter. “We recently discovered the

Spero Clinic, a unique medical center in Arkansas offering a 12-week Neurologic Rehabilitation program that approaches CRPS treatment differently,” said Candace. “This clinic has achieved remarkable success in achieving remission for CRPS patients worldwide. Our aim is to have her begin treatment after Christmas. Unfortunately, due to the limited understanding and rarity of CRPS, insurance doesn't cover her 3- to 4-month stay or treatment plan.”

Judah and her family have partnered with the Burning Limb Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit, to raise funds for her Spero Clinic treatment. You can help by contributing a tax-deductible donation to the 501c3 fundraising account for Judah. Visit <https://burninglimb.networkforgood.com/projects/198056-help-judah-pierce-on-her-journey-to-the-spero-clinic>.

You can also support by purchasing a t-shirt designed by Judah at <https://www.bonfire.com/crps-treatment-for-judah-at-spero-clinic/>.

For additional details about the Spero Clinic, visit <https://www.thesperoclinic.com/conditions/complex-regional-pain-syndrome/>.

“...the reality is that CRPS has consumed my life for the past three years,” said Judah. “It has forced me to grow up faster than my peers, confronting challenges that no child should have to face. Yet, in the midst of it all, I remain resilient and hopeful, believing that with your support, I can conquer this pain and reclaim my childhood.”



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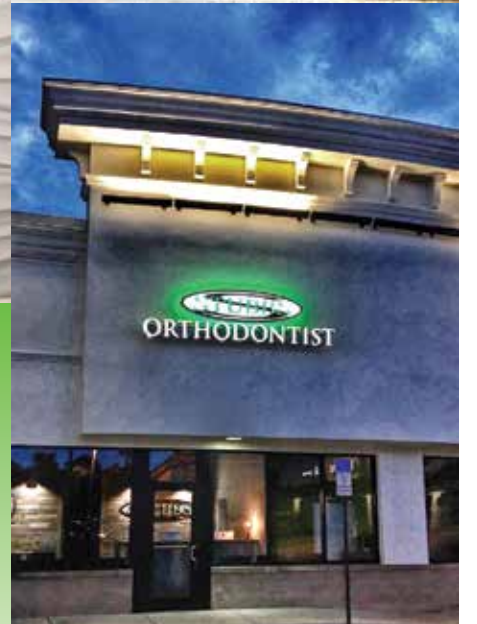
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha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

Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! SEPTEMBER 2023

..... 5
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's Destin
Black Fin Tuna Seminar | 6pm | Legendary Marine
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | Harbor-Walk Village
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 6
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
..... 7
Wine Walk | 5pm | Gulf Place
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort
Hurricane Party | 6pm | Red Fish Taco
Up the Skirt White Marlin Tournament | 6pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program | 6:30pm | Crosspoint Church Niceville
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 8
Destin Chamber Business Before Hours | 7:30am | Emerald Grande
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
September Fete | 5pm | Foster Gallery Grand Blvd
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort

Up the Skirt White Marlin Tournament | 6pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Arts & Drafts | 6pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 9
Patriots Run | 6:30am | Topsail Hill Reserve State Park
Women's Climbing Circle | 9am | Rock Out Climbing Gym
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Big Brothers Big Sisters Big Scoop | 2pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Destin For Success | 5:30pm | Harbor Docks
Up the Skirt White Marlin Tournament | 6pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
N Florida Gun & Knife Show | 9am | NWFL Fair Grounds
..... 10
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
North Florida Gun & Knife Show | 9am | NWFL Fair Grounds
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 11
First Responders Appreciation Cookout | 11am | Destin Fire Station
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 12
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
..... 13
Ladies Who Launch Powerhouse Series | 11:30am | Destin Chamber
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Women in Business | 6pm | Palm Folly
Solaris Dinner Cruise Benefitting Taylor Haugen Foundation | 6pm | Solaris Yacht
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
..... 14
Mini Makers & Experimenter's Lab | 10:30am | Emerald Coast Science Center
Emerald Coast Storytellers Open Mic | 5pm | The Bay
Karaoke Night | 6pm | Beach Weekend
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort
All American Thursday | 6:30pm | Harbor-Walk Village
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Million Dollar Quartet | Nightly/Matinee | Emerald Coast Theatre Co.
..... 15
One Blood 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
Festival of Fears Begins thru Nov 4 | Nightly | Santa Rosa Mall FWB
..... 16
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Who's Got Talent in FWB | 12pm | Ivy & Ale
Healing Paws for Warriors | Noon | 3rd Planet Brewing
Tacos Under the Trees | 4pm | The Biophilia Center
Little Black Dress Continuum | 6pm | Sandestin
Sea Shul Rosh Hashanah New Year Celebration | 6pm | Watersound Beach Club SRB
Sportsman's Ball | 6pm | Fort Walton Beach Convention Center
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
..... 17
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Mullet Toss | 6pm | AJ's Oyster Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar

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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 19
Destin Young Professionals Social | 5pm | Hotel Effie Sandestin
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Movies on the Beach | 8pm | Al's Burger Bar
..... 20
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Who's Got Talent in FWB | 5pm | Rick's Crab Trap
Fall Youth Climbing Club | 5:30pm | Rock Out Climbing Gym
Bingo in the Ballroom | 6pm | American Legion FWB
Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom FWB
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
..... 21
Wine Walk | 5pm | Gulf Place
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort
Planetarium Night | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 22
One Blood Drive | 10am | The Market Shops
United Way 40 Under 40 Awards | 5pm | Shoreline Church
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Wine and Fries | 6pm | Hotel Effie Sandestin
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Comedy Show | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
..... 23
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Fallapalooza | 9am | E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center
Walk for Chiari | 9:30am | Horse Power Pavilion Freeport
Destin Rotary Sandy Bags Cornhole Tournament | 10am | Al's Beach Club
Emerald Coast Home & Boat Show | 10am | Destin-FWB Convention Center
Oktoberfest Celebration | 11am | Odd Pelican Beer Co
Oktoberfest | 11am | 3rd Planet Brewing
Emerald Coast Spirits Festival | 12pm | 30Avenue
Burgers, Bourbon and Beer Fest | 12pm | Brotulas Back Parking Lot
International Talk Like a Pirate Day | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf
Harbor Docks Annual Charity Auction | 6pm | Harbor Docks
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort

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Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Sunday Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Emerald Coast Home & Boat Show | 10am | Destin-FWB Convention Center
Queen of Hearts | 4pm | Destin American Legion
Sunday Shrimp Boil | 6pm | LJ Schooners
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 25
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Bingo Night | 6pm | Destin American Legion
..... 26
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
..... 27
Sinfonia Cabaret feat. Laura Benanti | 5:30pm | Seagar's Miramar Beach
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
..... 28
Destin Chamber Golf Tournament | Noon | Emerald Bay Golf Club
Planetarium Sordid Secrets of the Stars | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Music Match | 6pm-8pm | The Island Resort
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The Block FWB
Game Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 29
Hole in One Golf Tournament | 9am | Blackstone Golf Course
Pensacola Seafood Festival | 11am | Pensacola
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Music Singo | 5pm - 7pm | The Island Resort
Houndfest Nine Beer Dinner | 6pm | Idyll Hound Proper
Karaoke | 7pm | Destin American Legion
80s Dance Rock Party | 8pm | Edge Seafood & Sky Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
Comedy Show | 9pm | Enlightened Studios
..... 30
Farmers Market | 10am | Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Women's Expo | 11am | The Island Resort
Oktoberfest | 10am | Ye Old Brothers Brewery
Pumpkin Patch | 11am | Camp Helen State Park
Houndfest 9 | 1pm | Idyll Hounds
Smoke on the Coast | 3pm | Destin Commons
Mullet Run 5K Run / Walk | 4pm | Beach-camp Brewpub
Zach Williams A Hundred Highways Tour | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Karaoke | 8pm | The Island Resort
80s Party for a Purpose | 8pm | The Edge

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A Milestone 15 Years! Baytowne Wharf Beer Fest at Sandestin Returns October 6 & 7!

Known as the “#1 Beer Fest on the Emerald Coast,” this popular event features more than 40 on-site craft brewers!

Friday and Saturday, October 6 And 7.

Tickets are on sale now at BaytowneBeerFest.com.

Time to roll out the barrel and discover unique suds and ales. The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin presents the 15th Annual Baytowne Wharf Beer Fest Oct. 6-7. American specialty beers from throughout the nation will be available for participants to sample and savor. The main event on Saturday, Oct. 7, will feature more than 200 domestic and international craft beers available for sampling.

Brewery representatives will be available at the event, offering an opportunity to learn about the different types of lagers and ales from a variety of styles, along with live music all during the festival!

FRIDAY, OCT. 6

Beer From Around Here \$65 Advance/\$75 Day Of 6-8 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf Events Plaza

It's back! One of our favorite events during the annual festival is Beer From Around Here. Local breweries are featured for a more intimate night of learning about craft beer culture. And, the restaurants in The Village showcase their best dishes – combining their unique light bites with the many complimentary flavors of a good brew. This event is more intimate – limited number of tickets available.



\$65 general admission and \$75 the day of the event if not sold out.

Tickets include admission to Friday night's event from 6-8 p.m. only.

SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Grand Craft Beer Tasting \$50 Advance/ \$60 Day Of 2-5 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf Events Plaza

The main event will feature more than 50 breweries, offering close to 200 domestic and international craft beers for sampling. Brewery representatives will be available to discuss the different types of lagers and ales, teaching about the variety of styles. All ticket holders will be provided a Baytowne Wharf Beer Fest tasting glass for sampling. Enjoy live music from 2-5 p.m.

Tickets: BaytowneBeerFest.com. Grand Craft Beer Tasting

Tickets: \$50 general admission and \$60 the day of the event if not sold out.

Tickets include admission to the Saturday Beer Tasting event from 2-5 p.m. only.

Grand Craft Beer Tasting Vip Event \$90 | 1-2 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf Events Plaza

Tickets include admission to VIP event hosted at Landshark Bar & Grill from 1-2 p.m. and the Saturday Beer Tasting event from 2-5 p.m. only

2-DAY TICKET

\$110 general admission for Friday and Saturday. Tickets include admission to Friday Night's Beer From Around Here Event from 6-8 p.m. and Saturday's Grand Tasting Event 2-5 p.m.

For tickets, a lineup of beers and additional information, visit



September 6: Jarred McConnell and The High Aces
September 13: Trest Richerson Band
September 20: Shenanigans
September 27: Duchess

The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf Saturdays and Sundays in September | 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Freedom Quest Saturday, Sept. 16 | 5 pm Events Plaza Stage | FREE Website: www.freedomquest.us

Join for an evening of reflection and celebration with special guest speakers and musical guest Modern Eldorados.

Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, September 5 p.m. | FREE

Sip and shop through The Village streets with FREE champagne. Check in by the fountain to receive your complimentary Baytowne Wharf glass and a map outlining specific merchants to visit. *This event is free and for 21 and up only. The village will be open to the public during this event.

International Talk Like a Pirate Day Friday, September 22 5 p.m. | FREE

Ahoy Matey! Join us for an evening full of adventure with our Special Guest Captain Davy. Come dressed in your best pirate costume and get ready for a scavenger hunt, magic show, costume contest and loads more of mayhem!

The Floyd Experience Friday, September 29 7-9 p.m. | FREE

baytownebeerfestival.com.

*Beer Tasting Glass included with all tickets.

Baytowne Wharf Beer Festival partners with Fisher House of the Emerald Coast to donate a part of the festival proceeds. Please drink responsibly.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf is always open to the public. Non-ticket holders are welcome to attend the event.

Additional, exciting September events tailored just for you:

Wednesday Night Concert Series Wednesdays through Sept. 27 7-9 p.m. | Events Plaza Stage | FREE

End summer sitting back and relaxing, and enjoying live entertainment featuring both local and regional talent from a variety of genres.



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cakes, cookies, beach cakes, reunion cakes, brownies and cupcakes-in-a-jar. Call ahead for pre-orders, DoorDash or curbside pickup! Smallcakes will help you make one delicious impression on your guests, too! Hours: Mon. through Sat., 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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These three words describe the real estate market from Destin to 30A. "A hot market means low inventory combined with a plethora of buyers looking for the perfect place," said Brian K. LoCicero, Luxury Realtor®. A hot market can mean a faster sale at or above asking price, but, you'll need to get your property ready to sell. In a hot market, you have a better chance of selling a home "as-is" without having to make major updates. However, before making any significant updates or repairs to the property before listing it, discuss with your realtor to evaluate comparable properties in your neighborhood. A seasoned realtor will give you a priority list of things to fix or update in order to list your home at the highest price point and might recommend a home inspection to identify areas that need to be addressed prior to the first showing. In a hot market, buyers want to move quickly and are driven by first impressions. So, declutter and "stage," (interior & exterior) to give the home a "wow" factor to distinguish it. Clean out closets for a more spacious and organized look. Declutter furniture surfaces and put personal photos away. Then gather all relevant property documentation for your realtor to share with potential buyers and the title company. Lastly, have a place to go before you list the property for sale. Hot markets mean quick sales and closings. However, buyers are more willing to accommodate sellers' needs when inventory is low. Ready to buy or sell your property? Call the Be On The Coast Real Estate team at (850)739-3800 or visit: BeOnTheCoast.com



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Community



Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

"Reel Talk" from the City of Destin

No Longer a Pickle: Pickleball Courts are Coming to Destin!

BY TAMARA LEIGH YOUNG, PHD, PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGER FOR THE WORLD'S LUCKIEST FISHING VILLAGE

This month's "reel" talk from the World's Luckiest Fishing Village finds Mayor Wagner and me talking about pickleball. If you'd like to submit a question or topic, please email tyoung@cityofdestin.com.

TY: With the recent 6-0 vote by City Council to start the design and permit process for set pickleball courts, it looks like it's finally going to happen! Local champions of the sport have

been vocal, loyal and ready for this for years. Where will the courts be located?

BW: Pickleball talks in Destin have been going on since early 2018. Since being on council 18 months ago, I have been putting countless hours into researching where our pickleball facility should be located. So, with the latest vote in August, I am very excited to announce we have chosen to place our city Pickleball facility next to the Destin City Annex building and dog park.

TY: Great location! I've had a blast playing pickleball at the Destin Community Center, and I know there are a few other places in town offering chances



to play sporadically as physical surroundings allow, but it will be nice to have dedicated space to this. How many courts will there be, and when do you reasonably expect them to be ready?

BW: Yes, we have had hybrid pickleball courts in Destin for a few years now, and with continuous community support, we are excited to build a permanent facility designated for the sport of pickleball. For those who do not

know, this land had originally been designed for a tennis complex back in the 2000s but was shelved. So now in 2023, we are converting these plans to pickleball courts with a budget of \$400,000 that was earmarked in the 2021 fiscal year. With this money, our goal is to build four USA Pickleball-approved courts, with shade covering, and a bathroom facility to support both the pickleball players and

the dog park patrons right next door. Our timeline is to have this facility open and ready by spring 2024.

TY: This is one of those City wins for both locals and visitors, with potentials that go far beyond even new, great pickleball courts. What do you envision?

BW: I believe projects that grow organically from the citizens always turn into a huge win-win for everyone in our community. Also included in our budget is the prep work for the future expansion of this area. With over 2.5 acres of land, I encourage our residents to dream big to make this area a one-of-a-kind sports facility! We could expand the pickleball facility and look for other sports and recreation ideas missing in Destin. Personally, I am biased toward building a beginner skate park for our kids, as I grew up skating in Destin. But, I want to hear everyone's ideas. Because, if we plan right we should have the room to fit more pickleball courts, a skate park, food trucks and some green space for everyone to enjoy!

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Estuary Program Brings Bay's Importance to Coastal Residents

BY KENNETH BOOKS

The average human body contains about 60 percent water. And we die after about three days without ingesting liquids.

Yet, most of us take water, the most crucial element in the world, for granted.

The Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program is designed to create awareness of that body of water and how its values include environmental, economic and social benefits.

"We are a grant-based program funded from the BP oil spill settlement and EPA," says Sabina Pennington, Public Outreach Specialist. The RESTORE Act, or "Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act," provides financing in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that took place April 20, 2010.

In 2019, the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition was established to provide a regional program for the management, restoration and protection of the Choctawhatchee Bay and watershed. It comprises 10 counties in Alabama and four in Florida, each of which is a

source of water flowing into the Bay.

"It's important for everybody to work to bring awareness of the importance of watersheds and the environmental and economic impact to our communities," Sabina says. "It's wonderful to work collaboratively to benefit the estuary program with a common goal. I think of it as "Connecting our Waters to People."

An estuary, she said, is any body of water that meets the sea.

The watershed has a surface area of 5,400 square miles, with an average daily fresh water inflow of 63,665 gallons.

It's also the home of a diverse group of wildlife, from blue herons to turtles. The Coalition members include Holmes, Walton, Okaloosa and Washington counties in Florida, the Air Force, the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority in Alabama.

"The Coalition works with the public to share and educate the importance to our communities, not just environmentally, but economically and socially,"



The Choctawhatchee Bay and River Watershed

Sabina says. In the future, she says, a comprehensive conservation management plan will be developed to bring together five focus areas. "I kind of call it a to-do list," she says.

The coalition seems to be made to order for Sabina, who emigrated from Czechoslovakia at age 3. She saw her position advertised on the Okaloosa County website and showed it to one of her sons, who told her, "Mom, it's perfect for you." She holds a bachelor of science in environmental science from the University of Massachusetts and a master of science from Johns Hopkins University in environmental management and planning. She moved to the Emerald Coast with her husband, Allen, a retired Air Force major



Sabina Pennington releases a small frog near the estuary.

and has three sons: AJ, 22, a recent Florida State University graduate, Alex, 17, a senior at Niceville High School and Adrian, 15, a sophomore at NHS.

"The coolest thing is I engage with the public," Sabina says. "Education and outreach are the most important and pivotal part of any program. It's very important to our community to bring awareness to the local economy to the betterment of the beautiful area we have here. We are so blessed. It's important to the life we enjoy here. It's about empowering each citizen to know and understand that they make a difference."

A Citizens Advisory Committee meets every other month. "The CAC is pivotal to help us better understand the needs of

our communities and to provide input on the best ways to manage and preserve our estuary," Sabina says. "It's so important to have people in our communities share in the decision-making processes related to the estuary program. The CAC is the bridge between the estuary program managers and the public, ensuring that community concerns and priorities are taken into account. The CAC members include residents, business owners, environmental advocates, scientists, educators, recreational users and other people who have a vested interest in the health and well-being of the estuary. The next CAC meeting is Oct. 26. If anyone wants to participate they can email me for the zoom link at spennington@myokaloosa.com.

Sabina said she is also looking for kids in middle and high school ages who are interested in being future stewards. The group is called TEACH (Teen Environmental Advisors for a Cleaner Habitat). Anyone who is interested can email her.

In celebration of National Estuaries Week, which takes place Sept. 16-23, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-

Continued on page 16

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 Community

Around Town

The 3rd Annual Wentz Brothers' Festival of Fears Continues to Become Bigger & Better

The Wentz Brothers invite one and all to their third annual Festival of Fears haunted attraction in Fort Walton Beach.

This year's event promises to be bigger and better than the last, opening in a new facility at the Santa Rosa Mall. The new location boasts over 80,000 square feet, leaving the Wentz Brothers, Alex and Andrew, with plenty of room to continue growing

the Festival of Fears into "the Gulf Coast's premier haunted attraction."

The 2023 haunt season will introduce guests to a number of new characters, offerings and attractions you won't want to miss. The Festival of Fears



Sea Shul Rings in Jewish New Year with Community and Waves

Sea Shul, the new vibrant Jewish community in Florida's 30A region, has announced its inaugural Rosh Hashanah celebration, "New Year, New Tide," including a beachside service and semi-formal dinner Saturday, September 16th, at Watersound Beach Club.

As part of Sea Shul's Rosh Hashanah weekend festivities, the event aims to offer an extraordinary experience for community members to engage in the spirit of togetherness and belonging.

Starting at 6 p.m. with a beachside service led by Rabbi Joshua Lesser, the night then transitions into a delightful Rosh Hashanah dinner at 7 p.m. featuring a range of entrees catering to all tastes, including traditional Rosh Hashanah dishes such as Challah, apples and honey, and wine.

Rabbi Joshua Lesser remarked, "A Jewish New Year brings with it hope and a promise of new beginnings, and so does the creation of Sea Shul. Sea Shul emphasizes the importance of community, finding our place, and connecting with people because it nourishes our souls. As we usher in a New Year, we welcome new friendships and a sense of belonging. Rosh Hashanah at Sea Shul is not just an event but the foundation of a collective journey."

General Admission is \$150 for Adults (Ages 11+), \$65 for Children (ages 4-10) and Age 3 and Under Free. Purchase tickets at <https://seashulRH2023.eventbrite.com>.

"Sea Shul is not just a community, it's a vibrant catalyst for unity and connection," explained Micah Davis, Interim President of Sea Shul. "As we welcome Rosh Hashanah, we're not only celebrating a new year, but the start of an exciting chapter for Sea Shul. We're crafting a dynamic future where every member feels a profound sense of belonging and becomes a key part of our collective journey. Together, we'll foster an environment that embraces warmth, friendship and forward-thinking growth."

will host three all-new, original haunted houses alongside new and improved horror-themed midway games, two haunted,

15-minute escape rooms, a spooky gift shop, food trucks and an expanded bar serving a variety of drinks from alcohol to event-exclusive Fear Potions. The Wentz Brothers also plan to host a number of new events held throughout the season such as the inaugural Drop Dead Disco costume party, two Family Day events, and a special surprise for Friday the 13th.

Keeping with the Festival of Fears' tradition of changing haunted house themes each season, 2023 will boast three unique, haunted house concepts and styles. The first, Beasts of the Bayou, will transport guests into a backwoods marsh never explored by man, but home to a bevy of hideous and hungry monsters. Next, Nightmare Menagerie will have guests venture into an abandoned, roadside zoo that has now become home to a new breed of evil. And finally, guests will step under the big top to see the newest additions to the Collector's horrifying horde in Into The Festival Of Fears: The Secret Show. Additionally, guests can test their nerves and their wits in two new, haunted, 15-minute escape rooms — Lazarus Toys: No Escape and Experiments In Evil: Razorback's Revenge.

The Festival of Fears is located in the old JC Penney's building at Santa Rosa Mall and is open select nights from September 15th to November 4th. Haunting hours start at 6 p.m. sharp with a special pre-show to kick things off — so don't be late. Guests who book their tickets for any night in September will receive \$5 off general admission or \$10 off express entry or VIP passes using the promo code: SEPTEMBER at checkout. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at www.wbfestivaloffears.com.



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Continued on page 16

First National Bank in Miramar Beach has Opened!

A long-awaited, new branch of First National Bank (FNB) has opened its doors on Scenic Gulf Drive in Miramar Beach. Todd Scali, Market President, is excited about the opportunities the Miramar Beach location will provide to customers in our region.

As part of its core values, FNB's long history of community involvement and dedication to a community's growth and development can already be seen locally. At the bank's recent ribbon-cutting and grand opening ceremony, FNB decided to give back to our community by making contributions to local charitable organizations. FNB awarded \$500 to three, non-profit organizations in the Destin/Miramar Beach area:

Austin's Music Lesson Academy - \$500

Path of Grace - \$500

Fore Her Breast Cancer Foundation - \$500

To be considered for the donation, a representative from each organization was asked to attend the grand opening event



and sign-up in person. Once nominated, an online poll was conducted through a dedicated link on the bank's social media platforms, allowing community members to vote for their preferred organization from June 27th to July 3rd. The top three organizations with the greatest number of votes each received a \$500 donation from First National Bank.

But, First National Bank didn't stop there. Since 13 non-profit organizations ap-

plied and participated, to show community, the additional 10 further commitment to the non-profits also walked away

with a monetary award. "They were all winners!" said Todd, "2,242 votes were received! \$3,300 total was awarded!"

- A Bed 4 Me - \$250
- Be Generous Inc. - \$250
- Habitat For Humanity of Walton County - \$250
- Junior League of Emerald Coast - \$250
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - \$200
- Hosanna House - \$200
- Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation - \$100
- Mission of Compassion - \$100
- Spreading the Good News, Inc. - \$100
- United Way of Emerald Coast - \$100

"Being involved and doing our part in the local community only contributes to a thriving community," said Todd. "We truly care about the communities we serve."

You can reach First National Bank Miramar Beach at (850) 608-2088 or visit fnbdc.com.

Local People, Local Decisions, Local Commitment



FIRST NATIONAL BANK



 Community

A Life Worth Remembering

BY TAMARA L. YOUNG, PHD,
CITY OF DESTIN PUBLIC
INFORMATION MANAGER

From the moment she entered the world, Tatissa Zunguze was memorable. A twin, she and her brother, Pimissa, were born two weeks apart. It's an extremely rare and special phenomenon. Rare and special, like Tatissa.

Friends and family used words such as "go-getter," "responsible," "overachiever" and "wanting to make a difference" to describe her.

Valedictorian of her high school, a STEM school in Salt Lake City, she addressed her graduating classmates with the challenge to explore the world around them in order to leave their mark. She undertook a public health internship at Johns Hopkins University immedi-

ately after high school, and went on to attend Scripps College, a liberal arts college in Claremont, Calif. "Hell would freeze over if she got a 'B' on an assignment," joked Sabina.

Not only with her intellectual gift and the multiple scholarships she received, Tatissa stood out in everything she did, according to her teachers and her father, Louis, Community Development Director for the City of Destin, and her mother, Sabina, an entrepreneurial spirit involved with many leadership positions throughout Destin.

"Tatissa loved pets," said Sabina. "She'd go to shelters and always be asking her dad for a dog. She loved doing things for families in need, especially kids,



and she worked with a Rotary Club in high school to get Christmas gifts for those who couldn't afford them. Those were her type of things."

Then in March 2017 there was a knock on the door around 2 a.m. Even after hearing the news from the police officer, Louis and Sabina couldn't process it. Tatissa had taken her own life. "The school had sent the officer to come over. We kept saying 'No, there's no way.' We had spoken to her the day before. Louis wanted to call her again, because he said it just can't be."

But reality soon set in, and it was torture. After months of barely eating, barely surviving, said Sabina, she and Louis knew they had to do something. They couldn't save their daughter, but they had to try to help others. "We could cry and keep going down a dark hole, or we could do something to make Tatissa proud," said Sabina.

What they did was create The Tatissa Zunguze Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Social Justice. The Foundation envisions a world free from the social stigmas surrounding mental health. As part of its efforts, the Foundation has established the Okaloosa Suicide Prevention and Support (SPS) group. It strives to showcase the need for broader outreach and suicide prevention activities, and it is dedicated to raising awareness about suicide and its effects on everyone in the county.

"Because Tatissa loved activism and given how she passed, we thought suicide prevention should be the focus," said Sabina. "Nobody should go through what we have gone through and continue to experience. As such, we want to honor and celebrate her life by continuing to work on the things and issues she loved. With social justice, we work to talk about mental illness. So, it doesn't matter who you are or what economic status you have, you deserve to have access to mental illness resources."

Like many cases you hear about when a suicide is involved, nobody around her had any idea Tatissa was suffering. "She was suffering in silence," said Sabina. "She left a letter. Nobody did anything wrong. She just said she couldn't take it anymore, and that she was done."

"Her school was elite. So, we know there were pressures, but

nothing indicating that she was not able to handle it or that anything was terribly wrong in her life."

Sabina said that's why the Foundation (www.thetatissa-foundation.org) and its mission are so important. People don't know where to go or how to get help. And it's not just that folks don't know about the resources. She often hears how expensive the resources can be. "Parents tell me they cannot afford to take their kids to therapy. You don't just go to counseling once if you're in trouble," she said, "and that's one reason why the Okaloosa program is working on a directory of appropriate, valuable resources."

The Foundation collaborates with other agencies and school systems to help teachers, staff and students know how to help each other and recognize signs of distress. They help certify people to be suicide prevention gatekeepers through sessions and trainings. "We use the QPR format – Question, Persuade, Refer. Knowing how to recognize the signs, to know the right questions to ask someone who is struggling, to persuade them to find help, and then refer them to an appropriate source. It's an evidence-based program."

Certified in trainings, Sabina is also a board member for the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition. "It's important to talk about this difficult topic. There's a stigma. It needs to stop." This month alone, she'll speak at a Kiwanis gathering, PFLAG, and at several sessions for the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce. The Foundation is part of collaboration globally and locally with End Child Marriage, Hope Squad and more. Sometimes she and Louis present together, such as at a Florida Suicide Prevention Conference in Tampa.

Her twin, now 26 years old, said, "We're on a mission to connect Tatissa's cause" to the people it can help.

Tatissa was one month from college graduation when she took her life. She was awarded a posthumous undergraduate degree from Scripps College in May 2018. Years later, through the memories of those who loved her and the Foundation she inspired, she continues to leave her mark.



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 **Community**

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 12

In addition to the “New Year, New Tide” event, Sea Shul has organized an array of activities for the Rosh Hashanah weekend including a potluck dinner on the first night, Mind and Movement prayer service, and Tashlich service that will be

open to the community.

For more information, visit facebook.com/seashul or contact shalom@seashul.com.

Seagar’s: An Evening with Laura Benanti

Tony Award-winning Broadway, film and TV star Laura Benanti will headline Sinfonia Gulf Coast’s Cabaret at Sea-



gar’s Prime Steakhouse at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort and Spa on Wednesday, Sept. 27. This one-night-only benefit begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m. followed by a four-course dinner curated by executive chef Fleetwood Covington and a live performance starring Laura Benanti.

Hailed by The New York Times for her “effortless” vocals, and by the New York Post for her ability to “whip up laughs out of thin air,” Benanti first took Broadway by storm at the age of 18 as Maria in The Sound of Music. (You may recognize her for her role of Baroness Elsa in the live 2013 televised version with Carrie Underwood on NBC.) Subsequently, she starred in 10 more Broadway shows (musicals, straight plays, comedies, and dramas) including Into the Woods, Nine (opposite

Antonio Banderas), Gypsy (for which she won a Tony Award), She Loves Me, My Fair Lady, and Steve Martin’s Meteor Shower opposite Amy Schumer and Keegan Michael Key.

Ticket prices for Cabaret at Seagar’s: An Evening with Laura Benanti are \$295 per person and include valet, a four-course dinner, wine, gratuity, and live performance.

Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida. Full table reservations are available, and a limited number of sponsorship opportunities remain. Purchase tickets online at SinfoniaGulfCoast.org or by calling the box office at (850) 460-8800.

MKAF Kicks Off 2023 Fall Season With Salt Water Music Fest

Presented by Salt Water Vacations and MKAF, The first-ever Salt Water Music Fest brings music lovers a sensational three-day music showcase celebration to raise funds and awareness for MKAF — Destin’s champion of the cultural arts for all. The two-day music festival is Thursday,

Oct. 12, and Friday, Oct. 13 at MKAF’s Cultural Arts Village in Destin with a singer/songwriter brunch to follow on Sunday, Oct. 14 at Soleil in Destin.

Grammy-winning pop songstress Macy Gray, best known for her international hit single I Try, headlines the Festival on Thursday, Oct. 12. Joining this captivating, eclectic R&B talent on stage is her band, The California Jet Club, performing hot tracks from her newest album, The Reset.

The event will also feature an evening of five of Nashville’s hottest singer/songwriters including Ben Burgess, Jared Mullins, Jordan Minton, Jordan Reynolds, the Josh Mirenda Band along with headliner country music duo LOCASH. Music lovers can meet and greet many of the singer/songwriters during Brunch at Soleil on Saturday, Oct. 14. The event will include multiple food trucks, beverage bars, merchandise retail sales as well as artist meet & greets (for some ticket levels).

Advance tickets are priced from \$50 per person. General admission lawn seating and table seating will be available for individuals. Full tables (seating eight) are available starting from \$750. VIP Tables are from \$1,500 and include prime seating, VIP tent access, drink coupons, a cash bar, onsite VIP parking passes, and more. Purchase tickets online at mkaf.org.




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ESTUARY

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ministration’s Office for Coastal Management is holding a photo contest. To enter, go to coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/about/photo-contest. The deadline is Tuesday, Aug. 31.

On Sept. 16, the organization will hold an Emerald Coast Native Plant Fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Paradise Plants & Palms, 695 Valparaiso Pkwy. in Valparaiso.

Area schools are also holding campus clean-ups. Interested parties can email Sabina.

On Sept. 23 a Family-Fun-Fest event, “Come get your Passport to the Bay,” is scheduled. Participants can enjoy fun activities, prizes and vendors and learn about the critters and creatures of the Choctawhatchee Bay. More information can be found at the program’s website.

Five Things To Do Before a Storm

BY JULIE A. MARTIN,
LICENSED AGENT FL

It's the middle of summer, and you just heard on the radio that a Category 4 storm is about to hit in your area. What should you do to prepare? Stocking up on non-perishable food and bottled water is a given and also batteries. Those are both good preventative measures. But, what will you do if the storm hits your house? How can you minimize damage to your home and to your other possessions?

The first thing you should do is call your insurance agent and ask for a copy of both your declarations page and your policy jacket. You should do this both for your home and for your vehicles. If you have boats, motorcycles, an RV or any other contrivance or dwellings, get all of your policy documents together in one place. Familiarize yourself with your deductibles, coverages and any exclusions or limitations. You should do this regularly anyway, because once a storm is in the box, no coverage can be changed, altered or reinstated. If there is a payment due, pay it. You might be unable to do so later, if the timing of the storm coincides with a cancellation or the expiration of your policy.

The second thing you should do is take pictures and videos of the inside and outside of your home and email them to yourself. This is to show what your house looked like BEFORE anything happened. If you re-

cently purchased big ticket items like new furniture or an entertainment center, email yourself any receipts you might have for the more expensive items in your home. In the event of a loss, receipts, photos and videos will aid the adjusters in processing your claim in a fair and timely manner.

The third thing to do is go out into your yard, front and back, and think about anything that can become a projectile. Winds upwards of 120 miles per hour can turn even a 6 oz. can of soup into a weapon. The more things that you can bring into the garage or a shed, the less they will be likely to fly into one of your windows or the side of your house. The things that you are unable to bring into your garage, lay them on their side as close to the back of the house as possible, or the shed. Try to tie them down with rope so it is less likely to fly away and either damage your home or hurt someone. Anything on your patio? Bring it into the house or into your garage, if you have one.

If you have hurricane shutters or windows, you are already ahead of the game. But, if you do not, boarding up your windows is a good close second. You might need to go to Home Depot or Lowe's where they have both the lumber and the clips/screws to board up the windows tightly. Do some research before you do this, because there is a right and wrong way to board

up your house against the possibility of storm damage.

The last thing to do is make sure you have a battery-operated charger for your phone, so that in the event you do get hit, you can communicate with your family, and call the agent and insurance company for help in putting in your claim. Get gas before the storm. Don't just top it off. If you have three vehicles, take them to the station one by one and fill them all up. The first thing that happens after a hurricane is a localized shortage



of goods, and you don't want to have to scramble around at the last minute and go without. If you prepare yourself, your home and your vehicles well in ad-

vance of the upcoming storm, you can breathe a sigh of relief that even if the storm hits, you have done everything you can to prevent against further loss.

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 Community

Navigating the Sale of a Short-Term Rental Investment Property: The Role of Specialized Realtors



BY GAIL PELTO, REALTOR

The “high” season is over, and you want to sell your investment rental property. Great! Keep in mind that selling rental investment property demands a unique approach due to its distinctive nature. And this process requires careful planning and expertise. Enlisting the services of a realtor (me) specializing in this area can greatly enhance your chances of a successful sale.

Expert Understanding of Short-Term Rental Market Dynamics: Realtors (like me) specializing in short-term rental

investment properties possess a deep understanding of the market dynamics specific to this niche. They are attuned to factors that can impact property value, such as location, occupancy rates and rental income potential.

Tailored Pricing Strategies: Setting the right price for a short-term rental property is crucial. Specialized Realtors (yup – me again) have access to data on comparable properties and can develop pricing strategies that account for both the property’s rental income history and its potential as an investment.

Knowledge of Real Estate Contracts: Different types of properties and transactions require different addenda on their contracts. A specialized realtor (me) is well-versed in the processes and procedures and can guide you through compliance to ensure a smooth and legally sound sale.

Marketing Expertise for Investment Appeal: Successfully marketing a short-term rental

investment property requires highlighting its income-generating potential. Specialized realtors (I’m one!) know how to present the property’s rental history, occupancy rates and proximity to tourist attractions to attract investors who recognize its value as an income source.

Targeted Buyer Network: Realtors specializing in short-term rental investment properties often have a network of potential buyers (yes, I do!) who are specifically interested in this type of investment. This targeted network can help expedite the sale process by connecting your property with the right buyers.

Managing Transition with Tenants: If the property has future short-term rental tenants, a specialized realtor can assist in managing the transition to the new owner ensuring a seamless change in ownership (yup, I can do this!).

Negotiation Skills: Short-term rental property sales can involve intricate negotiations, including terms related to future

bookings, furnishings and rental agreements. A realtor with experience in this area (yes, I have this experience) can skillfully navigate these negotiations to ensure a favorable outcome.

Property Enhancement Recommendations: Specialized realtors (me!) can provide valuable insights into how to enhance the property’s appeal to potential buyers. Whether it’s suggesting décor changes or recommending amenities that could attract renters, their advice can boost the property’s marketability.

Mitigating Pitfalls: The complexities of short-term rental properties can lead to potential pitfalls, such as inaccurate income projections or issues with lease agreements and/or management companies. A specialized realtor’s in-depth knowledge (pick my brain!) can help you navigate these challenges, reducing the risk of costly mistakes.

In the realm of short-term rental investment property sales,

specialized realtors offer a comprehensive suite of services tailored to the unique demands of this niche market. From their understanding of market trends and legal requirements to their ability to connect with the right buyers, their expertise can significantly impact the success of your sale. By entrusting your sale to a realtor who specializes in short-term rental investment properties, you position yourself for a smoother, more lucrative transaction that fully leverages the potential of your investment. As a realtor here, I am very fluent in the complexities of selling investment properties. Call me if you have any questions or wish to enlist my services to help you through the sale of your property – here to help!

Want to know the value of your property? Call, text or email me: Gail Pelto, Gail.Pelto@kw.com, 850-374-0454.



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Insights for Investors: Trends



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

What drove inflation down over the past year?

Inflation, by many official accounts, peaked at over 9% about this time a year ago. Most recently, we have been informed that inflation, based upon CPI, is approaching 3% (currently around 3.2%). The question on many investors' minds is who, or what, has made it happen? According to the Associated Press, it is not one thing, but rather a combination of things.

First, the drop in energy = mainly oil and gas prices. After spiking over 60%, gas prices came down as did a barrel of oil. Next was aggressive action in raising rates on the part of the Federal Reserve. One year ago, the Federal Funds rate was .25%. Today it is 5.33%. That is one of the fastest rises in U.S. history. When the Fed raises rates, savers and buyers of short-term investments see higher rates in money market funds, CDs and the like. That rate does have an intended effect on slowing borrowing and, thus, slowing the economy = adding to the decline of inflation. Lastly, there is the supply chain. The pandemic caused significant disruption in the development and distribution along the national and international supply chains. Many of those disruptions no longer exist and that, too, has helped bring prices down.

Home prices and mortgage rates are higher for sure. Many "would be" homeowners can no longer afford the note now that mortgage rates are near their highest levels in over 20 years (close to 7% after bottoming at less than 3% in 2020). Housing makes up a significant portion of CPI and, when that slows down, it brings inflation down.

What is The Phillips Curve?

According to the Corporate Financial Institute, the Phillips Curve suggests that when inflation is down, unemployment is up. Put another way, it suggests that when inflation is up, unemployment is down. Something strange is happening right now: Inflation is down, and unemployment is down (or employment is up, remains high). Why might this be so? There are a couple of points of view we have heard lately. One is from Professor Jeremy Siegel of the Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania). He stated recently on CNBC and notes that productivity is getting stronger, and the economy is growing. Rick Rieder, who is the CIO of Global Fixed Income at Blackrock, said on Wall Street Week recently that with an economy that is 70% services and 70% consumption (consumers), the historical levers of higher rates have not hurt the economy as they have in the past. Also, when it comes to long-term borrowing, Reider points out that a lot of high-tech companies' self-fund versus borrow for their cap ex (capital expenditures budgets). He notes that for sure there have been some parts of the economy hurt (commercial real estate, regional and small banks, some parts of the manufacturing economy), but for the most part, there has not been widespread pain. Hence, we have the cost of living going down, employment remaining resilient and the economy growing.

Is this a trend or a short-term thing?

Is this just a short term thing or is this a trend? We think the answers are multifold: 1) Strides in technology with AI and other innovations continue to bolster growth. 2) Liquidity remains high – a.k.a. there is still a lot of money in the economy in checking and savings accounts. 3) The labor shortage keeps unemployment low. It also looks like – depending upon what you read and believe = that the labor shortage may be here to stay for a while. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population growth rate of the U.S. was 0.4% for the 12-month period ending in July 2022. This means that approximately 1.3 million people were added to the U.S.

population during that period. Put another way, the U.S. population is growing at over 100k people per month. That is a key driver of consumption. However, according to a report by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, there will be around 10,000 people turning 65 each day for the next two decades. This means that approximately 300,000 people are retiring each month in the U.S.

Is the labor shortage here to stay or here just for a while?

We went back in time, and reviewed an article written in 2005 in the ERE newsletter (a newsletter for human resource professionals) that predicted the labor shortages starting in 2010 and going well beyond 2020. They, of course, had no idea that a pandemic was coming. The net result is that baby boomers did retire as predicted, but at an accelerated rate in recent years. Add to that, many companies have demonstrated they encourage employees to retire early at 55. There is also a coming shortage across many employment sectors: Airline pilots and air traffic controllers, for example (we understand mandatory retirement is 65). Significant numbers are at or near these ages. The labor shortage is going to be with us for awhile. Will that prove inflationary? Believe it or not, it has not so far. Wage inflation is not having the impact that many predicted it would have.

What's an investor to do now?

So, where does that leave our investors? We think this is a time where short-term rates offer yield not seen in a long time (savings and money markets over 5%). We also look at equities across the board; not concentrated in any one area and representing opportunities for long-term buy-and-hold (and patient) investors. Fixed income rates (think bonds) have climbed again lately. The increase in longer-term rates is largely due to the U.S. Treasury issuing more bonds (the main lever) and longer dated bonds as well. That will drive yields up and prices down. We think investors could lock in good, long-term yields be they in treasuries, corporate

or municipal bonds. We caution investors to always review the duration before investing in a particular bond. CDs certainly offer significantly higher yields now, but we encourage investors to think about what those represent: Mainly higher yields over shorter terms.

We hear many investing pundits wondering where and when rates will peak. With Federal Funds at 5.33% now, we are aligned with opinions that see them coming down in 2024. We think that will be 3.5 – 4%. — another potential reason to lock in a short-term CD or a longer-term fixed rate bond now. It may be a good idea to complement that with a diversified basket of stocks, as companies will continue to reap the productivity gains we are seeing now.

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 32451. Phone: 850.654.8124. Raymond

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 Community

Caregiving For a Loved One With Alzheimer's: Tips For a Compassionate Journey

By MATTHEW EATON

Anna Rogers was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at age 72, a progressive brain disease that impacts thinking, memory and behavior. For her daughter, Jana Walker, the last 14 years have had ups and downs.

"I have learned through this journey over time that there will be good days where sometimes she might remember a little, and then the next day nothing is familiar to her. Be grateful and cherish the good days," said Walker.

Walker is one of more than 827,000 Floridians serving as

unpaid caregivers. According to new research from the Alzheimer's Association International Conference, more than 10.6% of Okaloosa County residents age 65 and up are living with Alzheimer's. Florida has the second highest prevalence in the U.S., with more than 580,000 Floridians living with the disease.

When her father passed away in 2020, Walker moved her mother from long-term care housing in Oklahoma to Florida. She now makes the drive from Destin to Miramar Beach daily to visit. "The challenging

part is trying to still have your own life with your family and not let your concern for your loved one consume your life," said Walker. "...but over time I have realized that about every 6-8 weeks, I need to get away."

Caregiving for family members can be overwhelming and many report experiencing higher rates of stress. According to the Alzheimer's Association 2023 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report, 66% of Florida caregivers reported at least one chronic health condition, 29% reported having depression and 14% reported be-



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ing in poor physical health.

Practicing self-care can reduce the negative impacts of caregiving and improve quality of life. Services like respite care and adult day care can give caregivers a break to complete errands, enjoy social time or take a break. Many of these are available at low or no cost to Floridians through state and local programs. Caregiver support groups can also provide mental and emotional support while connecting with others going through a similar situation. For more information on these services, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.

The Alzheimer's Association Central & North Florida Chapter invites you to attend Walk to

End Alzheimer's happening in three locations.

Walk to End Alzheimer's in Niceville will take place on Saturday, October 7, at Bluewater Bay Golf Club at 10 a.m. Register at act.alz.org/NicevilleWalk.

Walk to End Alzheimer's in Panama City is on Sunday, October 15, at Florida State University Panama City. The event begins at 2 p.m. with the ceremony and Walk starting at 3 p.m. Register your team at alz.org/EmeraldCoastWalk.

Walk to End Alzheimer's in Pensacola will take place on Sunday, October 1, at Community Maritime Park. The event begins at 2 p.m. with the ceremony and Walk starting at 3 p.m. Register your team at alz.org/Pensacola.

THIS IS WHY WE WALK.

At the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's®, we're fighting for a different future. For families facing the disease today. For more time. For treatments.

We're closer than ever to stopping Alzheimer's. But to get there, we need you. Join us for the world's largest fundraiser to fight the disease.


Join us at Walks across the Florida Panhandle. Register your team today!



WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION



Pensacola
Sunday, Oct. 1
Alz.org/PensacolaWalk



Niceville
Saturday, Oct. 7
Act.alz.org/NicevilleWalk



Panama City
Sunday, Oct. 15
Alz.org/EmeraldCoastWalk

Creating a "Study / Homework" Space at Home



BY KIM SCHNEIDER,
COASTAL DESIGN BY KIM

School is back in session! For many parents, this means alarms in the morning, making lunches, carpool, extra-curricular activities and evenings filled with homework. Whew, I'm tired already! Kids have a lot going on these days, and when it

of the window or looking directly at a doorway as it can be too distracting. According to the principles of Feng Shui it's best to place your back to a wall that gives you a view of the door, but does not place you directly in front of the entrance.

Cabinet/Bookcase – Stock needed supplies like paper, notebooks, pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, etc. in a file cabinet, decorative boxes or baskets on bookshelves. Think of it like stocking your desk at the office with everything you need to be successful.

Information Center – Hang a bulletin board, a large calendar, dry erase or a magnetic board to display class



comes to homework and studying, they need a dedicated space to settle in and concentrate. Below are a few ways you can create a space for your high schooler and littles:

Desk – Children in Kindergarten through third grade typically need support and work better in the hub of the house than alone in their bedroom. However, setting up a small desk in their room is a great place for them to store their school bag and get accustomed to a dedicated work area. Kids in fourth grade through high school should have a dedicated desk in a quiet private space. Their desk should be a suitable size for them with a comfortable chair. A bright overhead light with a dimmer switch (helpful for everyday life) and a dedicated desk lamp are essential and will to help them stay focused. Natural light is a plus; but try to avoid placing the desk in front



schedules, project due dates, test dates, etc. Managing deadlines and being organized are keys to success.

Reading Nooks – Create a cozy spot to read in the corner of a room with a big comfy chair, an oversized bean-bag, a

blanket and a reading lamp. If you have a window seat, add a lot of pillows or set up a tent lined with lights in their room. If it's fun and comfortable, they'll use it. If your kids are too young to read, still create a fun space and read to them there. They'll grow to love reading in their special space.

Gaming Area – No, not video games, but yes to the educational ones. Create a space where the kids can play listening

games like Simon Says, Statues and Board Games. Provide puzzles and playing card games such as Memory or Go Fish. Use building blocks and Legos too. A child-sized table and chairs in a dedicated space encourages use and allows children to feel like it's theirs to explore.

Creating a comfortable study zone for your children encourages them to do their homework, and they might even enjoy it, too. An upbeat vibe with

efficient lighting and colors they like will make their bedroom study area feel welcoming and fun to them. If you're tight on space, there's always a way to add a study zone. Contact Coastal Design by Kim at (850) 904-6622 to help YOU create a dedicated study/homework space for your child/children. Wishing you and your kids a great and successful school year! www.coastaldesignbykim.com

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 Education

Meet Destin High School's New Executive Director!

A big welcome to Donald T. "Willy" Williams! Beginning this month (mid-September), Mr. Williams will take the helm of a newly-created position as Destin High School's (DHS) Executive Director, DHS's Governing Board recently announced. "Based on Mr. Wil-

liams' experience as a community superintendent, principal, teacher, school leader and parent, the Governing Board of Directors is confident that he is the right person to lead Destin High School into the future," said Heidi LoCicero, Executive Founding Board Member and

Board President.

Mr. Williams' career in education began in the U.S. and, most recently internationally, to lead schools along the shores of Japan, Germany, Italy and South Korea for the United States of America's Department of Defense Education Activity.

With mounds of experience, his specialties include strengthening communication, financial oversight, college preparatory studies, expanding career academies, school governance, improving faculty morale, mentoring new team members, athletic program management, and



building a sense of belonging and common purpose that positively influences enrollment and fundraising. With an unending quest for learning, Mr. Williams is currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. With additional talents, he is also an experienced private pilot as well as a musician.

There is good reason why Mr. Williams was chosen: the Destin Community Executive Director Search Committee and Governing Board felt Mr. Williams took the time to understand the school's and board's core values. "He demonstrated a commitment to help us maintain those values while moving the school forward in key areas," said LoCicero. A co-worker who was contacted for a reference described Mr. Williams as "a wonderful leader who is very collaborative, has a great way of sharing observations that invite more conversation, solicits feedback, and he is very approachable and authentic."

"The search committee, faculty and members of the media who met Mr. Williams during his campus visit found him to have vast experience in many of the areas we are looking to strengthen at DHS," LoCicero said. "Parents described him as articulate, approachable, humble, calm and engaged. They noted that his past leadership experience and collaborative approach would be an asset for Destin High. Faculty described him as someone who puts the students first and knows what needs to happen to strengthen the DHS community."

"Personally, I was impressed that Mr. Williams asked questions rather than simply talking," LoCicero continued. "The questions he asked indi-



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Tallahassee
PC30A



Fall Semester Kick Off September 12 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

The Hemingway Room at The Pearl, 63 Main Street, Rosemary Beach

featuring Dr. Tim Chapin Presenting "People and Housing and Jobs, Oh My!: A Look at the Sunshine State"

Join the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Florida State University Tallahassee and PC30A for engaging classes and enlightening speaker and author events. For more information contact Margaret Gamble at mwgamble@fsu.edu or check out the OLLI at FSU PC30A website at pc.fsu.edu/olli.

PC 30A Class Topics Include:

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Wildlife for Newcomers
The Pacific Air War
Tech Trends: ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence
The Magic of the Memoir

Tallahassee ZOOM Topics Include:

Race Matters in the Supreme Court 1787-2023
Immigrants Stories of Jazz, Rock and Popular Culture
Write, Speak, Listen to French for Regional Travel
Goya: The Birth of a Modern Artist

More Classes Being Added!

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Current Members Refer a NEW Member and Receive a Discounted Class

ALL NEW MEMBERS Receive One Free Class

VISIT PC.FSU.EDU/OLLI

Continued on page 24



BY BARBARA PALMGREN

It is my honor and privilege to highlight junior golf tournaments in the area. Growing the game of golf is so important, as the next generation of a Tiger Wood or an Anika Sorenstam could be found right here on the Emerald Coast. Competitive events like these truly prepare young golfers for junior high, high school and college teams. Look for future tournament results as I attend a monthly event

from Emerald Coast Junior Golf and other junior golf tours. The Regatta Bay Junior Classic hosted by Emerald Coast Junior Golf, was held on Sunday, August 27.

In speaking with parents during the tournament, I recognized a common thread of hope. Parents on Sunday came from Tallahassee, Pensacola, Alabama and Maryland, and want their children to enjoy the game. Winning is wonderful, but that is not the sole objective. Of course, there is that desire for their children to participate on a high school or college team. The majority of parents are golfers and know golf is a sport that can be enjoyed throughout life.

Growing the Game: Emerald Coast Regatta Bay Junior Classic



The Emerald Coast Junior Golf Tour is winding down its season under the tutelage of owner and tournament director, Dennis Attaway. As each group

prepared to drive off the first tee, Dennis carefully reviewed rules and special course issues for the day. He then reminded golfers to keep hydrated with bottled water available at several holes.

The brutal heat experienced during the day did not deter these young athletes. Regatta Bay is an exceptional venue for golf as everyone knows. Regatta Bay is one of several local courses that open themselves to these events, knowing they lose additional revenue from public play. They want, more importantly, to be a venue for these future champions. This is their way to give back to the community as well as to these aspiring young people.

Congratulations to the following winners:

Boys 8-9: 1st place- Reese Riley; 2nd place- Gavin Crowe

Girls 10-11: 1st place- Gabriella Godshalk

Boys 12-13: 1st place- Clark Brandt; 2nd place- Jaxson Thomason; 3rd place- Jace Steed

Boys 14-15: 1st place- Ethan MacGregor; 2nd place- Lars Wiggins; 3rd place- Rory Sheehan

Boys 16-18: 1st place- Sam Welde; 2nd place- Roman Mercado; 3rd place- Brian Mitchell

Girls 15-18: 1st place- Kayleigh Young; 2nd place- Vivian Harrison; 3rd place- Taylor King

REGATTA BAY

continued from page 1

courses in the country would become just that...legendary? His company, Legendary, Inc., began in 1996 when the Coleman L. Kelly Testamentary Trust, entrusted Peter as broker, developer and planner for Regatta Bay. With 800 acres, the homes on the first lots were built in 1996. The golf course was developed at the same time and opened in 1998. Now, Regatta Bay attracts visitors from all over the world.

Yes, Peter Bos, to borrow and change a few lines from Tina Turner, Regatta Bay is:

Simply the best.

Better than all the rest.

Better than any course,

Golf at its very best.

I'm stuck on your landmark greens, Fairways and bunkers, too.

I'll come here again,

For there's no better place,

You're simply the best.

In 2009, Mike Giammaresi, a graduate of the University of

North Florida, visited the Destin area with his girlfriend. She was employed in the area and Mike, a member of the college golf team, saw an ad for a job at Regatta Bay. Starting out with golf cart and pro shop experiences, his employment ended when he moved to Germany for three years to support his wife's merchandising career. In 2013, back in the area, Mike returned to Regatta Bay as head golf professional. Then in 2014, Mike was trusted with running the club.

Mike Giammaresi, at the helm of this excellent course, devotes his time, intelligence and hard work to elevate Regatta Bay to the prestigious position it now holds in the golf world. Both Golf Digest and Golf World rank Regatta Bay as one of the top 200 golf courses in the nation. The club lists 344 members composed of full-time golfers, non-resident golfers and social members. Members and the public enjoy as beautiful an indoor space as the gorgeous golf course surrounding it. The

clubhouse welcomes one into an elegant restaurant with a well-stocked bar and an inviting pro shop. There is even a members' lounge, that special place where golf mistakes can be reviewed.

Regatta Bay Golf Club hosts at least 25 events each year for members and charitable organizations. Tee times can be booked at www.regattabay.com and vary in price depending on time of day. The Par 72 course has championship black tees as well as several other tee options for average to beginning golfers. The owners and staff want to be sure they implement their mission statement, "To provide an experience that exceeds expectations of visitors and residents in Destin and beyond: constantly enhancing the beauty, planning, quality and up-scale style of the Destin area by developing the Legendary brand as the standard for quality and service."

Why do golfers play this special course? It appears to be a must-play for visiting golfers who come to the Emerald

Coast. The meticulous layout, crafted by architect Robert C. Walker, blends lush fairways, pristine greens and stunning water features, all set against a backdrop of landscapes unique to the Florida Panhandle. Golfers warm up on a putting green and driving range before stepping up to the first tee box. Regatta Bay's professional staff load and unload bags and welcome you immediately to the beginning of a unique golf challenge.

I have personally played golf at Regatta Bay and can attest to strategically placed bunkers that lure my golf ball like a magnet. I wish I could say my game involved skill and strategy, but that wouldn't be true. Regardless of the loss of balls and the



two-foot missed putt, I leave the course with a smile and a thank you for that perfect blend of natural beauty, superb design and the welcoming atmosphere that elevates the entire golf experience. Regatta Bay Golf and Yacht Club is the benchmark for others to achieve because it is, "Simply the Best."

Announcing Ecco Motors HarborSide!

In 2005 Ecco Motors opened a 2-person golf cart repair business as a "retirement hobby" for its owner. 18 years later, that "hobby" has flourished into Service, Rentals, Storage and now a 3rd Sales location.

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

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

Come explore our new location on Mountain Drive in Destin and be one of the first to experience the new Gorilla Ride!





Behold the Return—The Travel Comeback!



BY JODELL HAVERFIELD,
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

As the way we travel continues to evolve, the demand for more authentic, substantial, meaningful and memorable travel experiences continues to be at the forefront of every traveler's mind.

Travel Advisors not only help travelers plan their best travel

experiences, but we also belong to multiple travel organizations who lobby congress on our behalf. More than 200 travel advisors representing 47 states recently convened in Washington D.C. to personally lobby Capitol Hill, and for good reason! There has never before been this much disruption in the travel industry, and we want to make sure congress is paying attention! However, on the horizon, there's also new opportunity that comes along with the challenges of navigating travel in a post pandemic world.

All economic pressures aside, consumers are spending more on travel than anything else and 67% them already have plans to travel before the end of the year. In fact, 41% of consumers are planning to spend even more on travel in 2023. Almost 80% of Americans agree that travel is



an economic driver of the U.S. economy.

As a result of this surge in demand, 71% of consumers think travel is more complex and their research indicates nearly half, 45% of travelers, agree that using the services of a professional travel advisor puts their mind at ease.

Despite the economic pressures, people are not holding back. Did you know that 80% of

people said they felt like a vacation would do more for their mental health? Three-in-ten are planning a dream vacation within the next six months and nearly half of them will travel internationally in 2023. With pandemic fears subsiding, Americans are eager for revenge travel! Travelers of all ages are looking at bucket list travel, multigenerational travel, researching their roots, heritage travel, the spirit of exploration and adventure travel.

We at Have Travel Memories are wasting no time finding amazing travel experiences. One such trip is our **10-night British Isles cruise** through

London, Scotland and Ireland sailing September 2023. We will co-host this cruise adventure and will feature a special guest, Will Summers, who was one of the 12 horsemen. He was one of the original Special Forces soldiers to fight the Taliban in their homeland. Our guests will be able to enjoy talks, dinner and will also receive an autographed copy of Will's book "12 Strong." We have negotiated **special cruise rates** and a pre-cruise hotel in London. Air is not included, but currently it's half price from PNS at \$569. <https://www.fun-seas.com/horsesoldier23>.

Don't wait if you want to join us on this amazing cruise. I can't think of a better way to meet some of my readers than on one of my amazing hosted trips.

Thanks for Travelin' with JoDell!

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SEPTEMBER 29TH, 6PM

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DESTIN HIGH

continued from page 22

cated a genuine interest in the school, both its strengths and its challenges. I felt he understood the scope of the Executive Director job, and how important Destin High is to the community. He took time to understand our school's needs, along with our core values."

In the words of Principal Cruickshank, "I appreciated his focus on the teachers, along with the ethos and soul of a school and how it relates to the

students' experience."

"For all these reasons and more, the Governing Board and I, are delighted that Mr. Williams has chosen to join us as Executive Director," said LoCicero.

Community volunteers who helped lead the search by serving on the Executive Search Committee are Dr. Vivian Green, Al Gardner, Bernard Johnson, Susanne Griffin, Chatham Morgan, Daniel Frankfurt, Connie Lee, Julie Campbell, Dr. Prebble Ramswell and Leslie Stricklin.



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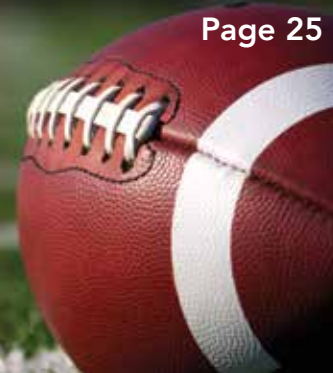
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2023 Football Guide

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



BY SCOTT MILLER

I can still remember how the excitement felt every week, every game, every time.

The chills and tingling would come over me without fail as the National Anthem played just before kickoff. It was an experience I have always treasured.

Playing football is a very unique, one-of-a-kind thing. Although my playing days are now well in the rearview mirror, the sport we call football is still very special to me. It truly is the ultimate team sport.

The cool thing is just how

Best Places to Watch Your Favorite Teams

many passionate, loyal, die-hard football fans there are and, as I've come to learn over these past eight years, especially here in the South.

Friends, now that September is here, it's time again to put that jersey back on and gather together at our favorite local sports bars and restaurants to celebrate the season! Football Season that is...

Here are a few of my favorite game day venues. I recommend you try them all!

AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

Since 1984, AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar has been serving cold Gulf Coast oysters and cool libations. What began as a popular local hang out known for fresh oysters and cold beer has grown into one of the most iconic "hot spots" on the Destin Har-

bor. From its humble beginning shucking oysters off the deck behind a small trailer on the Destin Harbor, it has grown to four locations along our Emerald Coast, serving fresh seafood, live music and exciting water activities in the Destin area. Attention all die hard football fans, AJ's boasts the one and only Jumbotron on the Destin Harbor. AJ's serves up delicious daily specials, mouth-watering drinks plus entertaining live music all month. Don't miss any of the action just come on down to AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar all season long... Come join for an amazing view of the Harbor, lots of food, drinks, friends and fun and a football-watching, Jumbotron experience like no other!

(850) 837-1913
116 Harbor Blvd.
ajsdestin.com

Austons on 98

Offering an amazing raw oyster bar and the best happy hour in town, Austons is the place to be and home of the 102-foot bar, including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England-style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail. With big screen TVs all around and football season upon us, there's no bad seat in the house. So, come by and watch the games all season long. Happy Hour Specials from Monday-Friday, 2-5 p.m., \$2 off all bar drinks and Monday-Friday from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. \$3 off a dozen raw oysters. Bucket Specials All day every day. Auston's on 98 is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and features its own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce." View full

menu at austonson98.com.
(850) 842-3200
125 Poinciana Blvd.,
Miramar Beach
Austonson98.com

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Oysters, live music and a local vibe, the Boathouse is where the locals go with live music every night. Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked, just the way you like 'em. The first Friday of each month, The Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertain-

Continued on page 28

AJ's FOOTBALL IS BACK!

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NFL SUNDAY TICKET
ESPN COLLEGE GAMEDAY
AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar
AJ's On the Bayou
AJ's Oyster Shanty
AJ's Grayton Beach

SEC	Sept 9	Sept 16	Sept 23	Sept 30	Oct 7	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Alabama	TEXAS	@S FLA	OLE MISS	@MISS ST	@Texas A&M	ARK	TENN	OPEN	LSU	@UK	UT CHAT	@AUB
Arkansas	KENT	BYU	@LSU	Texas A&M	@OLE MISS	@BAMA	MISS ST.	OPEN	@FLA	AUBURN	FL INT	MIZZOU
Auburn	@CALIF	SAMFORD	@Texas A&M	UGA	OPEN	@LSU	OLE MISS	MISS ST.	@VANDY	@ARK	N MEX ST	BAMA
Florida	MCNEESE ST	TENN	CHARLOTTE	@KY	VANDY	@S CAR	OPEN	UGA	ARK	@LSU	@MIZZOU	FSU
Georgia	BALL ST	S CAR	UAB	@AUB	UK	VANDY	OPEN	UF	MIZZOU	OLE MISS	@TENN	@GA TECH
Kentucky	EAST KY	AKRON	@VANDY	FLA	@UGA	MIZZOU	OPEN	TENN	@MISS ST	BAMA	@SC	@L'VILLE
LSU	GRAMBLING	@MISS ST	ARK	@OLE MISS	@MIZZOU	AUB	ARMY	OPEN	@BAMA	FLA	GA ST	Texas A&M
MSU	ARIZ	LSU	@SC	BAMA	W MICH	OPEN	@ARK	@AUB	KY	@Texas A&M	So MISS	OLE MISS 9/23
Missouri	MID TENN ST	Kansas ST	MEMPHIS	@VANDY	LSU	@UK	S CAR	OPEN	@GA	TENN	FLA	@ARK
Ole Miss	@TULANE	GA TECH	@BAMA	LSU	ARK	OPEN	@AUB	VANDY	Texas A&M	@GA	UL-MONROE	@MISS ST
SC	FURMAN	@GA	MISS ST	@TENN	OPEN	FLA	@MIZZOU	@Texas A&M	JAX ST	VANDY	UK	CLEMSON
Tenn	AUSTIN PEAY	@FLA	UTSA	S CAR	OPEN	Texas A&M	@BAMA	@UK	YUCONN	@MIZZOU	UGA	VANDY
TX A&M	MIAMI	UL-MONROE	AUB	ARK	BAMA	@TENN	OPEN	S CAR	@Ole Miss	MISS ST	Abilene Christ	@LSU
VAN	@WAKE	@UNLV	KY	MIZZOU	@FLA	UGA	OPEN	@OLE MISS	AUB	@S CAR	OPEN	@TENN

ACC	Sept 9	Sept 16	Sept 23	Sept 30	Oct 7	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Boston C	HOLY CROSS	FLA ST	@L'VILLE	VIRGINIA	@ARMY	OPEN	@Ga Tech	YUKON	@SYR 11/3	V TECH	@PITT 11/16	MIAMI 11/24
Clemson	Charleston So	FLA AT	FLA ST	@SYR	WAKE	OPEN	MIAMI	@NC ST	ND	GA TECH	N CAR	@S CAR
Duke	LAFAYETTE	N'WESTERN	@YUKON	ND	OPEN	NC State	@FSU	@L'VILLE	WAKE 11/2	@NC	@VIR	PITT
Florida St	SO MISS	@BC	@CLEMSON	OPEN	VA TECH	SYR	DUKE	@WAKE	@PITT	MIAMI	N ALA	@FLA
Ga Tech	SC ST	@OLE MISS	@WAKE	BOWL GR	@MIAMI	OPEN	BC	NC	@VIR	@CLEMSON	SYR	UGA
Louisville	MURR ST 9/7	@INDY	BC	@NC ST	ND	@PITT	OPEN	DUKE	VA TECH	VIR 11/9	@MIAMI	KY
Miami	A&M	Beth Cook 9/14	@TEMPLE	OPEN	GA TECH	@NC	CLEMSON	VIR	@NC ST	@FSU	L'VILLE	BC
NC	APP ST	MINN	@PITT	OPEN	SYR	MIAMI	VIR	@GA TECH	CAMPBELL	DUKE	@CLEMSON	@NC ST
NC State	ND	VMI	@VIR 9/22	L'VILLE 9/29	MARSHALL	@DUKE	OPEN	CLEMSON	MIAMI	@Wake	@VA TECH	NC
Pitt	CINCI	@W VA	NC	@VA TECH	OPEN	L'VILLE	@WAKE	@ND	FSU	@SYR	@BC 11/16	DUKE
Syracuse	W MICH	@PURDUE	ARMY	CLEMSON	@NC	@FSU	OPEN	VA Tech 10/26	BC 11/3	PITT	@GA TECH	WAKE
Virginia	JAMES MAD	@MARYLAND	NC ST 9/22	@BC	WM & MARY	OPEN	@NC	@MIAMI	GA TECH	@L'VILLE 11/9	DUKE	VA TECH
Va Tech	VA TECH	PURDUE	@RUTGERS	@MARSHALL	PITT	WAKE	OPEN	SYR 10/26	@L'VILLE	@BC	NC ST	@VIR
WAKE	VANDY	@OLD DOM	GA TECH	OPEN	@CLEMSON	@VIR TECH	PITT	FSU	@DUKE 11/2	NC ST	@ND	@SYR

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Destin High School Football 2023

9/8	N. Bay Haven	Away
9/16	Rocky Bayou Christian	Home
9/22	Lighthouse Private Christian	Home
9/29	Jay High School (Homecoming)	Home
10/6	Dean Bozeman	Away
10/13	Chipley	Home
10/20	Hilliard High School	Away
11/3	Holmes County	Home



FWB High School Football 2023

9/8	Rutherford	Home
9/16	Escambia (Military Night)	Home
9/22	Arnold (Homecoming)	Home
9/29	Pine Forest-Pensacola	Away
10/13	Booker T. Washington-Pensacola	Home
10/20	Bay-Panama City	Away
10/27	Choctawhatchee-FWB (Sr. Night)	Home
11/3	Crestview	Away



Games start at 7 p.m.

Pro Football Schedule

Week 1

Thursday, September 7
Detroit Lions at Kansas City Chiefs, 7:15 p.m., NBC

Sunday, September 10
Cincinnati Bengals at Cleveland Browns, Noon, CBS
Houston Texans at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, CBS
Carolina Panthers at Atlanta Falcons, Noon, Fox
Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Minnesota Vikings, Noon, CBS
Tennessee Titans at New Orleans Saints, Noon, CBS
Arizona Cardinals at Washington Commanders, Noon, Fox
Jacksonville Jaguars at Indianapolis Colts, Noon, Fox
San Francisco 49ers at Pittsburgh Steelers, Noon, Fox
Green Bay Packers at Chicago Bears, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Philadelphia Eagles at New England Patriots, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Miami Dolphins at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Las Vegas Raiders at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Los Angeles Rams at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Dallas Cowboys at New York Giants, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, September 11
Buffalo Bills at New York Jets, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

Week 2

Thursday, September 14
Minnesota Vikings at Philadelphia Eagles, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, September 17
Green Bay Packers at Atlanta Falcons, Noon, Fox
Las Vegas Raiders at Buffalo Bills, Noon, CBS
Baltimore Ravens at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon, CBS
Seattle Seahawks at Detroit Lions, Noon, Fox
Indianapolis Colts at Houston Texans, Noon, CBS
Kansas City Chiefs at Jacksonville Jaguars, Noon, CBS
Chicago Bears at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon, Fox
Los Angeles Chargers at Tennessee Titans, Noon, CBS
New York Giants at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m., Fox
San Francisco 49ers at Los Angeles Rams, 3:05 p.m., Fox
New York Jets at Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Washington Commanders at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Miami Dolphins at New England Patriots, 7:20 p.m., NBC



Monday, September 18
New Orleans Saints at Carolina Panthers, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:15 p.m., ABC

Week 3

Thursday, September 21
New York Giants at San Francisco 49ers, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, September 24
Indianapolis Colts at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, CBS
Tennessee Titans at Cleveland Browns, Noon, CBS
Atlanta Falcons at Detroit Lions, Noon, Fox
New Orleans Saints at Green Bay Packers, Noon, Fox
Houston Texans at Jacksonville Jaguars, Noon, Fox
Denver Broncos at Miami Dolphins, Noon, CBS
Los Angeles Chargers at Minnesota Vikings, Noon, Fox
New England Patriots at New York Jets, Noon, CBS
Buffalo Bills at Washington Commanders, Noon, CBS
Carolina Panthers at Seattle Seahawks, 3:05 p.m., CBS
Dallas Cowboys at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Chicago Bears at Kansas City Chiefs, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Pittsburgh Steelers at Las Vegas Raiders, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, September 25
Philadelphia Eagles at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 7:15 p.m., ABC
Los Angeles Rams at Cincinnati Bengals, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

Week 4

Thursday, September 28
Detroit Lions at Green Bay Packers, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, October 1
Atlanta Falcons at Jacksonville Jaguars (London), 9:30 a.m., ESPN+
Miami Dolphins at Buffalo Bills, Noon, CBS
Minnesota Vikings at Carolina Panthers, Noon, Fox
Denver Broncos at Chicago Bears,

Noon, CBS
Baltimore Ravens at Cleveland Browns, Noon, CBS
Pittsburgh Steelers at Houston Texans, Noon, CBS
Los Angeles Rams at Indianapolis Colts, Noon, Fox
Tampa Bay Buccaneers at New Orleans Saints, Noon, Fox

Washington Commanders at Philadelphia Eagles, Noon, Fox
Cincinnati Bengals at Tennessee Titans, Noon, Fox
Las Vegas Raiders at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m., CBS
New England Patriots at Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m., Fox

Arizona Cardinals at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Kansas City Chiefs at New York Jets, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, October 2
Seattle Seahawks at New York Giants, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

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172 Harbor Blvd. Destin
(850) 650-1200
TailfinsDestin.com

BEST PLACES

continued from page 25

ment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on Facebook for updates.

(850) 837-3645
288-B Harbor Blvd., Destin
Boathouseoysterbardestin.com

Tailfins Waterfront Grill

Hey football fans, Tailfins Waterfront Grill is calling you... That's right y'all Destin's favorite season is here and there's not a better place in Destin to come and watch your team play.

Looking for a locals' favorite breakfast? Start your day off right with Tailfins breakfast from 8-11 a.m., seven days a week. Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs, a seafood or Cajun omelet and even a kid's smiley pancake. Be sure to order up a round of mimosas and bloody marys. Watch Tailfins' sushi chef create right in front of your eyes. Enjoy some of your favorite food and drinks, including sushi rolls and sake bombs, scrumptious early bird dinner specials Monday to Friday, 4-6 p.m. Happy hour from 4-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, featuring \$20 domestic



bottle buckets, \$5 house wines and well drinks and \$5 Long Island iced teas. Live music on the docks. 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.

(850) 842-3333
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DAILY CRUISES: Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure! Departures seven days a

week aboard "Always Workin'," Tailfins' 45-foot-long cruiser, and "Talk of Town" Tikis, Tailfins' newest, one-of-a-kind tiki boat. Both feature on-board restrooms and certified captains. Talk of the Town tikis are the only Coast Guard certified Tiki boats in the United States! Enjoy the Destin Harbor and Crab Island like never before. Choose between the three-hour tour, sunset cruise or Thursday night's spectacular fireworks cruise. Book online: tailfinsislandadventure.com.

(850) 842-3333
On the Harbor in Destin,

172 Harbor Blvd.
tailfinsdestin.com

Tequila's Sports Bar & Grill

Did someone say Margaritas? Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill is a local favorite, with world class, jumbo-sized margaritas, Mexican food favorites inspired by years of tradition and authentic spices such as the Tequila's Plate, chili con carne, The Three Amigos and the new Master Parrillada – a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican 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.

EAT. DRINK. FIESTA!
(850) 279.6402
11225 U.S. 98 W,
Miramar Beach
Tequilasmiramarbeach.com

2023 College Football Game Day Highlights

Week 2: Saturday, Sept. 9

Texas A&M @ Miami 2:30 pm ABC
Texas @ Alabama 6 pm ESPN
Arizona @ Miss. St 6:30 pm SECN
Auburn @ California 9:30 pm ESPN
Delaware @ Penn St 11 am Peacock
Iowa @ Iowa St. 2:00 pm FOX
Notre Dame @ NC St. 11 am ABC
Southern Miss @ Fla St 7:30 pm ACCN

Week 3: Saturday, Sept. 16

LSU @ Miss St. 11 am ESPN
South Carolina @ Georgia 2:30 pm CBS
Alabama @ South Florida 2:30 pm ABC
Tennessee @ Florida 6 pm ESPN
Penn State @ Illinois 11 am FOX
Fla St @ Boston College 11 am ABC
Georgia Tech @ Ole Miss 6:30 pm SECN

Week 4: Saturday, Sept. 23

Auburn @ Texas A&M TBD
Ole Miss @ Alabama TBD
Arkansas @ LSU TBD
Iowa @ Penn State 6:30 pm CBS
Ohio St @ Notre Dame 6:30 pm NBC
Florida St @ Clemson TBD
Miami @ Temple TBD
Oklahoma @ Cincinnati TBD

Week 5: Saturday, Sept. 30

Georgia @ Auburn TBD
Alabama @ Miss St TBD
LSU @ Ole Miss TBD
Florida @ Kentucky TBD
Penn St @ Northwestern TBD
Michigan @ Nebraska TBD
Clemson @ Syracuse TBD

Week 6: Saturday, Oct. 7

Kentucky @ Georgia TBD
Alabama @ Texas A&M TBD
LSU @ Missouri TBD
Maryland @ Ohio St TBD
Michigan @ Minnesota TBD
Virginia Tech @ Fla St TBD
Wake Forest @ Clemson TBD
Notre Dame @ Louisville TBD

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Thursdays:	4pm: Flash Flood 8pm: Austin Jennings
Fridays:	4pm: Jason Findley 8pm: Airavata
Saturdays:	12pm: Kelly Byrd 4pm: Rotating Spot 8pm: Gunner
Sundays:	12pm: Kelly Byrd 4pm: Shane Curle 8pm: Rotating Spot

*Open Daily from 11 am-2 am
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Slacker Sunday Oyster Brunch 11 am*

288 Harbor Blvd, Destin
(850) 837-3645
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/BoathouseOysterBar
www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com




Café Destin

Looking for dining the entire family can enjoy? Looking for a place to work with free WiFi while enjoying your cup of coffee? For breakfast and lunch, Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples such as pancakes, waffles with Nutella, omelets, eggs benedict, biscuits and gravy and more. For a lighter take, it also has a variety of fancy toasts (avocado, salmon and more), along with pastries and muffins. For lunch, choose from a variety of burgers, sandwiches and salads. You will love the full-service coffee shop, offering everything from hot or iced fresh, local Amavida coffee to espresso and lattes. And there are diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas. Check out the special kids menu, too. Indoor and outdoor seating on the large covered patio are both available. Book after-hours for private events or special occasions. Open for breakfast and lunch every day, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

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

Emerald Coast Olive Oil

Enjoy some of the world's tastiest and healthiest Olive Oils and Vinegars. Olive Oils are 100% ultra premium-certified extra virgin (without defect). Emerald Coast Olive Oil's certification means they can trace the olives from the tree to the bottle, and every oil is independently tested to be sure they are free from fertilizers and pesticides. Whether you're shopping for yourself or a friend, need a customized gift or interested in learning more about quality flavors and tastes, visit Emerald Coast Olive Oil for the highest quality olive oils and aged vinegars, spices, pastas, sauces, jams, and other gourmet specialties. Accessories include an array of cutting boards, utensils, bowls, towels, aprons, pillows and more.

(850) 460.2210
34940 Emerald Coast Pkwy.
Destin
emeraldcoastoliveoil.com

Lady Ray's Culinary Delights

Your local, fast casual Bakery, Café and Cake Boutique has expanded! Lady Ray's Culinary Delights celebrates its first year in business with the opening of its new Pastry Bar and the launch of a new culinary brand, "Brother Tim's Sweet Heat Collection."

Known for its sweet and savory dishes and spectacular custom cakes, Lady Ray's sets its sights on the seasonal, late afternoon/post dinner crowd. The Pastry Bar offers a mouth-watering combination of contemporary flights of fancy and time-honored classics. Favorites include Lady Ray's signature Chocolate Buttercream Croissant, Mocha Latte Bombes, Key Lime bites, fresh baked Dunker Cookies and of course, plenty of coffee and bubbly. The Pastry Bar is open for Coffee, Pastries and Libations Thursday-Saturday 2-8 p.m. and offers brunch on Sunday from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. A different flavor of French Toast is highlighted each week! Lady Ray's Culinary Delights is a must to satisfy your breakfast, lunch or pastry urge.

833 Harbor Blvd Unit 19,
Destin
(850) 269-0763
lady-rays-culinary-delights.
myshopify.com

Melting Pot Destin

Fall is always a special time to celebrate love with your special someone over fondue. At Destin Melting Pot (11394 US-98 W), romance is served every Thursday with Thursdate – a romance-infused four-course menu, starting at \$56, with choice of handcrafted cheese fondue, fresh salad course, and entrée including tender filet mignon, Atlantic salmon, savory teriyaki steak, and a sparkling chocolate fondue ending. 'Due it with rose petals, candles, and a four-course menu!

Daily, enjoy several fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées, salads and unforgettable desserts such as a warm fondue bowl of fresh melted chocolate of your choice. There's also "fast fondues" and one-course fondues with cheese, salad, entrée or chocolate. Beat the heat and take a break midday for lunch Saturdays and Sundays. All of your favorite Fondue items such as creamy cheese fondue, fresh salads, premium meats and veggies, and decadent chocolate fondue are now available for lunch! Enjoy every moment together at Melting Pot this September.

11394 US-Hwy. 98
Miramar Beach
(850) 269-2227
www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl

Ovide at Hotel Effie

An elegant, culinary adventure, Ovide brings together clas-

sic Gulf Coast flavors and southern culinary traditions. Every dish is fueled by a passion for sustainability and seasonality that gives each bite incredible flavor unlike anything you've tasted before—you will want to savor every bite, from an intimate meal for two to a get-together for 10 or more. Ovide embraces the local food and cherished flavors of the Gulf Coast and presents them with a sophisticated, refreshing French influence and southern flair. Have you tried the Sea-

sonal Special at Ovide at Hotel Effie? Mondays, 5 p.m., choose one starter, one entrée and one dessert for \$50. Ask your server about the wine pairing option.

Hours: Breakfast 7 - 11 a.m. Mon-Fri. Lunch Closed. Dinner: 5 - 9 p.m., Sunday-Thursday; 5 - 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Brunch: 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

(850) 351-3030
1 Grand Sandestin Blvd.,
Miramar Beach
Hoteleffie.com

Pecan Jacks

Aficionados of sweet treats will find a new outlet for their passion as Pecan Jacks, a wildly popular ice cream and candy store in Destin. Owners, Tim, Ronnie, Dustin, Samantha and Shelby Wyatt promise a unique sugary atmosphere with creations of their own making. This is not your chain ice cream store. "We create an experience, not just an ice cream cone," Tim

Continued on next page

Don't Miss Food & Drink Events

Sportsman's Ball September 16th Destin FWB Convention Center

Emerald Coast Big Game Fishing Club is at it again! Another great event, the Sportsman's Ball, is happening Saturday September 16 from 6pm-midnight at the Destin FWB Convention Center. This event is a night to bring every-

one together to celebrate a great year filled with dinner, drinks and dancing, along with awarding ECBGFC's top teams and anglers, scholarships to students of Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay County, to give back to Destin High School Fishing Class & Club, and recognize sponsors.

This year is the 2nd annual Sportsman's Ball, with last year's inaugural event boasting

a great turnout. The event is open to the public, and tickets include entry, dinner and live entertainment. Tickets are \$75 each or \$700 for a table of 10 people, and must be purchased in advance.

The Centerpiece competition among all tables is a fun way for attendees to get involved. Each table is encouraged to decorate their table for a chance to win.



bourbon, and fan-favorite beers. The event brings back Destin's Most Epic DJ from EEE Destin as local restaurants and chefs compete for the best burger on the Emerald Coast. All proceeds from the Festival benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, a non-profit organization with clubs located in Pensacola, Crestview, South Walton, Defuniak Springs, Destin and Fort Walton Beach.

General Admission Tickets | \$45: Includes an armband for unlimited food samples and drinks tickets for craft beer and cocktail samples.

Food Only / Under 21 Tickets | \$ 25: Includes an armband for unlimited food samples.

VIP Tickets | \$ 75 | Very Limited!: Includes an armband for unlimited food samples and drink tickets. PLUS, exclusive early admission (11 a.m. - 12 p.m.) to the event, a VIP lounge with a private bar and exclusive small-batch bourbon tastings. Purchase tickets on Eventbrite or visit the Burgers, Bourbon & Beer Festival Facebook page.

Slated to be another great event giving back to our community, we hope to see you there!

3rd Annual Burgers, Bourbon & Beer Festival September 23rd Brotula's Seafood & Steamer

For the third year, the highly anticipated Burgers, Bourbon, & Beer Festival is back and, again, hosted by Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer. Enjoy delicious burgers, the best of

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PASTRY BAR

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(850) 269-0763

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Specialty Goods*

DESTIN DINING *continued from previous page*

said. "We're here to make people happy." With more than 40 flavors of homemade ice cream, specialties include Oreo ice cream, Bailey's salted caramel and banana pudding. "These are vintage recipes from our parents," Ronnie said. The Pecan Jacks candy is as singular as its ice cream. It includes southern praline, Caribbean Rum and lots of brittle. "We hand-stretch all our own brittle and package it,"

Ronnie said. The candy, like the ice cream, isn't just kids' stuff. It includes flavors like Espresso, Amaretto and bourbon. The pralines come in flavors such as Traditional, Caribbean Rum, Bourbon and Sweet Heat, while the brittles embody Pistachio, Cashew, Bayou Pecan and Picante. You can find Theo the Turtle there, too! Hours Noon to 9 p.m. daily.

(850) 427-3080
535 Harbor Blvd. (98 West)
in Destin
www.pecanjacks.com.



ovide

by celebrity Chef Hugh Acheson.

Voted Best Restaurant in Walton County by Emerald Coast Magazine, send your taste buds on a culinary adventure at Ovide. Led by James Beard award-winning Chef Hugh Acheson, indulge in delectable dishes inspired by the Gulf Coast.

Reservations accepted (844) 422-2923.

Located at Hotel Effie Sandestin

Fishing with GrandPa

Sharing the sport of fishing with children, no matter where one lives, can be an excellent way to spend time and make long lasting memories. Whether you're fishing experience began with a cane pole using a piece of hot dog on the hook, on a boat, surf fishing, going out on a fishing party boat or love fishing off the pier—fishing adventures and legendary stories always follow and are passed down to the next generation. As we all know, some of the great fishing stories become exaggerated and funnier as the years roll by.

Told by 7-year-old Dalton Arwood, this story is about him and his GrandPa fishing. Even though Dalton doesn't realize it yet, fishing has attributed to his development, thought patterns, vocabulary, behavior, and current and future relationships. GrandPa also teaches him conservation and sportsmanship. Early on, members of his family—Daddy James, Uncle Jesse (his daddy's twin brother), Paw Paw (Phillip, recently deceased May, 2023) and "especially" his GrandPa (Mark) instilled a love for fishing. Hopefully, you'll want to pass fishing on to the children in your life, too.



Dalton's Story

EDITED BY FRANK BERTE

Others might know my GrandPa as Captain Mark in Destin, but he's always been GrandPa to me. He has a boat and me and others go along to fish. Everybody has been on GrandPa's boat with me. Pictures are taken with me and my daddy and anyone that's on the boat with the fish we catch. He loves to fish and knows where red fish are hiding in Destin Harbor. Daddy tells me a lot of funny stories about himself and my Uncle Jesse when they were little boys.

My Paw Paw from North Carolina, he's been with me in Destin fishing several times and taken me fishing at several lakes and ponds in North Carolina, West Virginia and Virginia. He also went fishing many times with me and my Daddy. I will remember Paw Paw fishing with me when I grow up and the stories he told me about him being a little boy. He always told jokes and taught me how to whistle.



All of us have been on GrandPa's boat many times. Paw Paw just went to heaven.

GrandPa drives the boat all around Destin when we fish and there's things to see: Destin Harbor, Pirate ship, the pass, jetties where big fish are caught and kept during season, Crab Island, the Coast Guard Station and out in the Gulf of Mexico. GrandPa taught me that out in the Gulf is called off-shore fishing and other places were called inshore. We see schools of mullet and they jump all the time, ducks with 7-8 baby ducks swimming be-hind, seagulls and 1 time there was a big green turtle swimming on top of the water then it dove deep. Dolphins swim along the side of the boat and chase us. We listen to Craig Morgan songs first, then other music is played. I wear my life jacket all the time. When I was younger, Daddy said and I listened: my life jacket is very important, this is the first thing I do or look for right when I get on the boat—put it on. They keep buying me life jackets to fit better.

Sitting beside GrandPa in the First Mate's chair is my place on the boat and he calls it Dalton's Chair. Before we fish, bait fish has to be caught using Sabiki (hard and funny word to say) rigs. It's a lot of fun and gets a little crazy when all of us are catching bait fish. We use them to catch larger fish later. You can only keep fish that are in season and size limit. They say about the fish we catch: short, out of season, in the slot fish or keeper. There's many good fish I'd like to keep, but can't. At least, I have my picture taken with every fish I catch. It's a good idea to reel up your fish fast. If I don't and there's dolphins hanging out around the boat while fishing, they have eaten a big bite off of my fish. One time when fishing, I caught a big Amber Jack. Then, a hungry bull shark came up and ate the entire fish in one

bite! My favorite fish to catch is Red Snapper. My favorite type of fish to eat is any type of big and tasty fish cooked any way.

GrandPa always is checking the weather at night before the next morning or the morning we're going out on the boat. Out in the Gulf, the waves are called swells. When weather says big

swells, GrandPa says, "No, we can't go out on the boat today my Little Man." When there's a chance for bad weather, GrandPa always has a backup plan which is every time — we end up at Half Hitch Tackle. The store is close by and in Destin. The guys who work there gave me the greatest nickname of

"Bait," because I'm there a lot with GrandPa.

At Harbor Walk, happy strangers on vacation wave at me, because I'm GrandPa's Little Fishing Buddy. There's a good feeling from fishing and once you fish you will feel it

Continued on next page

Destin FISHING RODEO
1948-2023
65th
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Off the Hook

2023 Miss Destin Carrington Phillips

Hey! My name is Carrington Phillips and what an honor and privilege it is to be chosen as Miss Destin 2023! I am the daughter of a Destin charter boat captain, and the sister of two first mates, one being my twin brother. I am the youngest of nine children to Captain Stan Phillips and Shawn Phillips. The fishing and charter boat industry are huge parts of this community as well as my home life, and I support them wholeheartedly. Fishing is

the backbone to this community as well as my family.

I was born and raised in Destin, and I am a member of the first graduating class of Destin High School, the Class of 2023. Being in the first graduating class marks a moment in time that can't be repeated or replaced. As the first Miss Destin from Destin High School, I hope future graduates will represent the school by getting involved in our amazing com-

munity. As Miss Destin, I hope to be an excellent Christian role model to others, while interacting with the public in a positive manner by supporting Destin's history and traditions.

Growing up in Destin, I have always been involved in community activities. I played Destin Little League softball, City of Destin basketball and soccer, Upward basketball and participated in cheerleading at Destin United Methodist Church, as well as Destin Middle School basketball, cross country and flag football. I enjoy spending my free time working out in the gym, going on bike rides and taking long walks in my community that I feel blessed to live in.

My passion is health and fitness, and I plan to continue my studies locally at Northwest Florida State College for the first two years before transferring to the University of West



"As the first Miss Destin from Destin High, I hope future graduates will represent the school by getting involved in our community."

well as obtain my certification in personal training.

October is an amazing month for our lucky fishing village. This is a special time in our hometown where locals and visitors from near and far come together for the love of fishing and, of course, to catch "the big one!" I can't wait to experience being Miss Destin during the 75th Annual Fishing Rodeo. Please come by and say hello to me at the weigh-ins. I will be there all month long during this exciting time.

Florida to become an athletic trainer. My goals and ambitions are to pursue a career in the health and fitness industry, as

Tailfins Island Adventure Adds Tiki Boat Cruises!

DAILY CRUISES

Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure! Departures seven days a week aboard "Always Workin'," Tailfins' 45-foot-long cruiser, and "Talk of Town" Tikis, Tailfins' newest, one-of-a-kind tiki boat. Both feature on-board restrooms and certified captains. Talk of the Town tikis are the only Coast Guard certified Tiki boats in the United States! Enjoy the Destin Harbor and Crab Island like nev-



er before. Choose between the three-hour tour, sunset cruise or Thursday night's spectacular fireworks cruise. Book online: tailfinsislandadventure.com.

FISHING WITH

continued from previous page

like me. The guys in my family have it, too. It's called "Fishing Fever." I never want the thrill of fishing to go away. It's an awesome feeling to like fishing. I love being on the Gulf waters in Destin. We say "fish on" all

the time. I like yelling, "I have a fish, again"! Afterwards, Grand-Pa tells people I caught the biggest fish or more fish, but I know that's not true and I didn't. He just loves me a lot and wants to brag about me. The guys on the boat have always told me, it might be a good idea when you get older—pick a girl to date that loves the sport of fishing. There's always a lot of laughing.

When I'm older, I want nothing to change about going fishing in Destin. The Gulf water

is clear emerald green and you can see fish and the bottom. My friends will come and one day my wife and children (this is what they tell me). We'll go the same way and see the same things like we did when I was a little boy on Grand-Pa's boat. I want everybody to know that I like fishing with my family and friends. I would like everybody to go fishing, too.

Happy Fishing!

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@misscalimarie @southwaltonfishingadventures

Celebrating 75 Years of the Destin Fishing Rodeo!

2023 will mark the 75th Annual Fishing Rodeo in Destin, and each year it gets better and better. Created back in 1948, the Destin Fishing Rodeo had one simple goal: to extend the tourist season another month. Destin has always been a popular tourist spot for fishing, and keeping those extra vacationers here helped our town thrive.

The Destin Fishing Rodeo has expanded into one of the largest fishing tournaments along the Emerald Coast. The rodeo is a month long, spanning October 1-31st and roughly 30,000 anglers compete each year.

The weigh-ins happen on the docks behind AJ's Seafood and Oyster bar, located on the Destin Harbor. They are free to the public and are open daily from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. For boats to participate, charter and private boats must be registered at least 24 hours prior to weighing in a fish. There is no fee for anglers fishing on a registered vessel (private or charter) and shore fisherman can participate by



simply bringing their catch to the scales. Fish by kayak, paddle board, pier, bridge, jetty, shoreline and surf – whichever you prefer.

If you're planning to make a trip down to the docks, expect to see a broad spectrum of fish being weighed in. From Sharks to Amberjacks, Grouper to King Mackerel, Tunas to Marlin, the rodeo has it all. Anglers are competing for over \$100,000 in cash and prizes, awarded for both daily and overall catches.

2022 was the first year that the Extended Voyage Division added five extra species of fish for a total of ten eligible fish.

The Destin Fishing Rodeo leaderboard includes grouper, amberjack, scamp, yellowfin and big eye tuna, dolphin, wahoo, Almaco Jack, snowy grouper and yellowedge grouper. There was also a Ladies, Seniors and Junior Divisions added in 2022 for wahoo, alongside king mackerel, grouper, amberjack and blackfin tuna.



Even if you're not a fisherman, the energy level and excitement that comes from being at the docks for weigh ins is like nothing else we've ever experienced. Boats back into the scales, pull the fish from their boat while the announcer hypes up the crowd. Fish are strung up on the scale while the crowds cheer and applaud the boat and their team. For the best seat in the house, get there early, grab a few beers and snag a seat on the bleachers by the leaderboard or

above on AJ's upper deck.

Halloween on the Harbor will signify the end of weigh-ins on Wednesday, Oct. 31, when the captains, anglers, volunteers, and even Miss Destin, will be dressed in their favorite costumes. Everyone is invited to partake in the fun!

October kicks off with the Destin Seafood Festival, in conjunction with the Destin Fishing Rodeo! Make your plans to visit the Harbor all month long!

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 Wellness

Meet Dixie Allen, Pure Life Health and Wellness

Meeting Needs with Compassion for Your Well Being

By LISA LEATH TURPIN,
HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

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THE SERVICES:

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Hormone Replacement

Therapy specializing in restoring hormonal harmony, addressing concerns in both men and women. Through personalized HRT plans, symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, decreased libido, and mood fluctuations can be alleviated while focusing on precision and safety.

Primary Care such as routine check-ups, chronic disease management and guidance towards long-term wellness using a holistic approach.

Urgent Care services designed to provide you with comprehensive and immediate medical attention while upholding a

With more than two decades of healthcare expertise, Pure Life provides comprehensive health and wellness solutions by using evidence-based guidelines individualized for the circumstances of each patient. After 23 years of service in the healthcare field, Dixie Allen, FNP-C opened Pure Life Health and Wellness on May 1, 2023, with the sole purpose to genuinely care for her patients. She says she has a passion for taking care of people; "I am compassionate and have a caring bedside manner. I will not take your health concerns for granted and will help find answers or resolve. No problem too small."

Hailing from Mississippi, Dixie has permanently planted herself in Destin. She says, "You will always feel secure and welcome in my clinic. I treat my patients like family, because basically they are." Dixie combines her medical background with a holistic approach which allows her to ensure you receive not only medical attention, but also guidance on healthy lifestyle practices, stress management and emotional well-being.

Continued on page 36

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Detox (Cleanse), 'Internal Shower'



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT,
HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

In gathering information to share I discovered a few rabbit holes which I will attempt to avoid. These words offer opinions that truly oppose each other. The words detox and cleanse are used interchangeably, but they basically have the same definition. They are often used to replace the word 'diet.' It implies a short-term solution with quick results such as weight loss; but quick is not necessarily a good thing. An important point to note is that detoxes and cleanses are meant to deep clean our organs, remove toxic buildup, support them and rejuvenate them, so they continue to serve us well.

Dr. William Stiles, who has practiced traditional medicine and surgery for the last 20 years, is also certified in functional medicine and offers a wide range of virtual services geared toward optimizing health and creating personalized health solutions for clients all over the world, states:

"Our world is wrought with harmful pollutants that can be transferred, stored and cause harm within our bodies. The list of these toxicities range from pathogens (viruses, bacteria, yeast/fungus, mold, parasites), chemicals, plastics, pesticides/herbicides, radiation, heavy metals, etc. We are exposed to these harmful toxicants in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the products we put in and on our bodies. When the body can't clear these toxins, they can build up, injure our body organs, tissues and cells, and be a root cause of countless chronic diseases and bothersome symptoms."

Let's begin with answering these two questions:

Why do I want to detox?

What results are the results I want to see?

Next is the decision of which detox is actually needed. Though not an exhaustive list, below are a few from which to choose:

Fasting Detox (food restriction usually for 2-3 weeks) • Liver Cleanse • Juice Cleanse, Master Cleanse • Supplement and herbal Cleanse • Colon Cleanse • Parasite Cleanse • Foot detox • Nasal Irrigation • Oxygen Detox • Mental • Spiritual.

Many of these cleanses detox various systems of the body.

The liver, being the second largest organ in the body (skin is #1) is impacted by all of these due to its major role from filtering the blood to signaling the stomach to stop digesting food to eliminating toxins, in addition to 500+ other functions. If the liver has to divert its major functions to take care of other tasks, it won't have the time or energy to focus on keeping the body clean. Stress, toxins, nutritional deficiencies, too many calories, too little sleep and other imbalances aid in gumming up the liver. Think of it like an oil filter. What would happen to your vehicle engine if you never changed the oil?

There are also eating programs that can aid in detoxing and/or cleansing. A few of these plans are the Elimination Diet, Low-FODMAP, Core Food, Detox Food, Cardio Metabolic Food, Renew Food and Phytonutrient. These plans were developed to accomplish specific outcomes. They were created by specialists and are safe when followed.

Some pros of these programs: Benefits from an increased intake of vitamins and minerals, identifying food sensitivities, giving the system a period of rest from toxicity, etc.

Many detoxes/cleanses on the market offer products to as-

sist you through the program. This is where research and learning the right questions to ask can ensure safety and increase your understanding of what is happening on the inside of your body.

Detoxes/cleanses can also introduce healthy habits such as:

- Drinking pure, clean water
- Reducing sugar intake, salt, caffeine, alcohol
- Eliminating processed foods, smoking
- Consuming more organic and whole foods that are fiber and anti-oxidant rich, etc.
- Regular exercise

Continued on page 43

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 Wellness

You Didn't Earn My Respect



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG,
JOURNEY BRAVELY

I was talking to a student about a difficult relationship with a teacher. The student didn't like the teacher's communication style and decided the teacher had not earned respect.

The student gave less effort and had a negative attitude, because the teacher was "not worthy of respect." The student ended up with a poor grade, being grounded and not being a great version of self all in the name of withdrawing respect from someone who hadn't earned it. Following the interaction, I started wondering about the cost to ourselves and others when we practice withdrawing respect from others when they displease us or behave in ways that don't align with our values.

It's uncomfortable when we discover someone holds a different view or value that is in fundamental opposition to our

way of approaching life. We are left to decide how we will engage this person going forward. Current culture encourages us to believe respect is earned and only safely given to people who agree with us. Social media and news give us permission to cut off, cut out, publicly shame and withdraw not only respect, but also kindness from anyone who sees things differently. This begins as a way to "hold people accountable" and ends with us finding ourselves being unkind, rude, judgmental, self-righteous, bitter and a version of self that can become unrecognizable.

What if there are two kinds of respect? The traditional definition of respect is holding someone in high esteem or admiration. This type of admiring respect is what we refer to when talking about earning respect. It is based on character, performance and behavioral choices. We choose to bestow admiring respect on some and not on others. The second brand of respect is basic human respect. Basic human respect is the fundamental belief that each human has inherent value and worth regardless of what they believe or how they behave. Basic human respect is born out of respecting self and extending to others the

same level of common decency you hope others will extend to you. This respect assumes we do not have the right to subtract from the value of another person regardless of their disagreement with us in word or action. Basic human respect is freely assumed and not earned or lost.

Our culture is often confusing withdrawal of admiring respect with withdrawal of basic human respect. When we don't admire someone, there is not a significant social cost. When we don't extend basic human respect, we begin to believe we are better, to verbally assault others, to lose compassion, to dehumanize, to oppress, to reduce our character and to blindly engage in hypocrisy—all in the name of withholding respect others aren't doing their job to earn. When we make withholding basic human respect a habit, we find ourselves going down a dark character hole. So, how can we avoid this pitfall?

5 Ways to Practice Extending Basic Human Respect to Others

Extend grace freely because you're going to need it. No matter how hard you try, you will not be perfect and will make mistakes. Your values will not always align with others. You will need others to extend basic human respect to you.

Use judgment as a mirror. Typically, when we feel judgmental of others, there

is an internal issue we need to address. Ask yourself what purpose your judgment is serving both inwardly and outwardly. Try trading judgment for curiosity. Try being curious about others beliefs/behaviors.

Treat others with kindness you would show to your friend or child. You would be kind to your friend or child if they disagreed with you. Treat others in the world with this same level of kindness. Your kindness should be based on who you want to be, not on whether someone else is pleasing you.

Speak to others as equals. You are not better or worse than anyone. Use a tone of voice, words, eye contact and nonverbals that reflect your belief that others are your equal.

Embrace humility. Just because you believe you are right about things doesn't mean you are. Try remembering you are human and you have things to learn from other people. Sometimes we learn the most profound lessons from those who see things differently.

As you pursue a life marked by extending basic human respect to others, remember your internal work is making the world a better, more loving place. Connect with us along your journey of growth for counseling and coaching support at journeybravely.com.



Stephenie Craig, LCSW
Therapist
918-221-9987 | stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com

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DIXIE ALLEN

continued from page 34

holistic treatment philosophy.

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Proudly serving our country for eight years in the Tennessee Air National Guard, Dixie is licensed in the state of Florida, AANP nationally board-certified and holds her DOT Medical Examiner certification. Dixie credits her mother, Sandra Kelso, a retired education administrator who loves people and

helps make them feel at home, for helping her get the business off the ground. Dixie says she is smart, the best southern cook ever and has supported Dixie in all of her life goals, along with her dad, husband and son, also. When you walk in the door at Pure Life, say hello to Beverly, medical receptionist/office manager and Dixie's right-hand person.

Pure Life is a special combination of kindness, medical knowledge and compassion. It's such a benefit to have a knowledgeable advocate dealing with the health of your whole body. For more information, visit purelifehealthandwellness.com.





By KRISY ANDERSON

Ever heard of Microneedling? Well, now you have!

Also known as collagen induction therapy (CIT) and percutaneous collagen induction (PCI), microneedling is a cost-effective, minimally-invasive treatment for a number of skin conditions. In the past few years, it has increased in popularity due to its ability to improve skin texture and firmness, and diminish scars, pore size and stretch marks. One of the greatest benefits of microneedling is that it can be used anywhere on the body to improve texture, reduce scarring and diminish the look of discoloration. Even areas such as the delicate skin around the eyes can be treated (carefully!) as well as on sunken areas of the skin such as acne scars. It's also safe for treating fine lines, wrinkles and scars. Because the epidermis remains intact, the procedure can be repeated safely and is also suited to skin areas where laser treatments and deep chemical peels are not typically performed, such as around

Self Care Corner: Move into Fall with Your Best Skin Forward

the eyes and mouth, hands and chest. These controlled injuries trigger the skin's natural repair processes, stimulating collagen and elastin production.

The technique involves a series of small needles passed over selected treatment areas, creating tiny "micropunctures." This minor "injury" to the skin generates a healing response producing collagen and other skin building blocks that can improve color and texture.

The pores created by the microneedles can make more effective other topical therapies such as antioxidants and light-

ening creams. Because it keeps the skin's protective barrier essentially intact, treatment with micro-needling has less risk of adverse effects than other skin resurfacing procedures and is safer to use in patients with naturally darker skin types.

Treatments are quick, with only mild discomfort. Recovery time is minimal; return to school or work next-day with only mild redness. As with most in-office procedures, microneedling will increase your skin's sensitivity to the sun.

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 Business



Discover Your Superpowers: Embracing and Cultivating Your Strengths Part 2

By BILL MASON

Ever wonder how you can know what you would be exponentially great at if you put your efforts towards it?

I want to show you the secret of exponential personal growth and career development – identifying your strengths.

Knowing and understanding your strengths is crucial in making significant strides toward achieving your goals and finding fulfillment in both your personal and professional life.

Below is a list of nine ways

you can start identifying what you would be great at.

Ask yourself while doing a task, is this?

Enjoyable:

A true strength is something that brings you joy and satisfaction. It's an activity or skill that you genuinely enjoy engaging in, and it leaves you feeling fulfilled.

Natural / Innate:

Often, our strengths come naturally to us. They are talents and abilities that seem to be an inherent part of our personality or skill set.

Doesn't Everybody?:

Sometimes, we overlook our strengths because we assume everyone possesses them. But what



comes effortlessly to you might be challenging for others, making it a unique strength.

Satisfying:

A strength should leave you with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction when applied. It's something that makes you feel proud of your achievements.

Time Loss:

Have you ever been so engrossed in an activity that you lost track of time? That's a sign of strength – something that captivates you completely.

Focused:

A strength allows you to concentrate and excel in a particular area. It gives you a sense of direction and purpose.

Easy:

While strengths might re-

quire effort to refine, they come more naturally to you than other skills. They feel easier to develop and utilize.

Effective:

Your strengths should make a positive impact when applied. They lead to tangible results and contribute to your personal growth or the success of your endeavors.

Everywhere:

Strengths are versatile and applicable in various aspects of your life, not confined to just one area. They have the potential to shine in different situations.

Recognizing your strengths can be a powerful tool in pursuing your dreams and finding a career that aligns with your passions. Take some time to reflect on your past achievements and the activities that bring you the most joy.

These insights will help you uncover the nine keys that define your strengths! If you'd like to explore this further or need assistance in discovering how to best apply your strengths to achieve your goals, connect with me, Bill Mason, to further cultivate and unleash your strengths. I'm here to support and guide you on your journey to success. Visit www.rocketfuelcoach.com today!



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Jamie Creates Unique, Fun Apparel

By KENNETH BOOKS

Jamie Hernandez wasn't born to a family of clothiers. She came about it in a round-about way.

The Southern Illinois University graduate was a CrossFit instructor, helping clients to develop confidence and body awareness while performing movements that are natural for their bodies. But the idea of creating and selling fun, often

sign the more beachy/tropical style I love not only for myself, but for my kids as well," Jamie writes on her website, pinkwave-apparel.com. "Living in Florida surrounded by our beautiful beaches, it's just our lifestyle. I personally screen print all graphics myself. I hope you enjoy them as much as us!"

But that was for the future. First, she married Jose Hernandez, a native Venezuelan, and moved to that country. Life there was not the same as it was where she grew up in Holt, Fla.

"It was scary," Jamie said. "Sometimes, I had to put up my hair and wear a hat so no one knew I was an American."

But Jose had visited Destin and liked it. So, they made their way to the Emerald Coast and settled in in our city. About five years ago, they started J Lee Solutions, performing painting and gutter cleaning.

"One of my CrossFit clients told me about it," she says. "It was very stressful. There was no time to enjoy summer with my kids." They also started Southern Solutions

Restorations, a business that includes mold remediation.

In the meantime, Jamie also created Pink Waves Apparel. The clothing is uniquely Jaime's. "I make all the clothes myself," she says.

In the beginning, the clothing was decorated by screen printing. But, now she has moved more toward embroidery, including patches. She also creates fun, colorful travel bags, trucker hats and T shirts for the entire family, which she calls

"beachy-chic, because life's too short to wear boring clothes." She taught herself to make and market the clothing.

"Creating is a passion of mine," she says of her business. "I do everything made to order."

One difficulty she has discovered is how hard it is to market exclusively online. "It's hard to get it out there," she says. "You have to put up money for ads, then finally release the product."

But Jamie has dreams.

"I'd love to be out there and have a warehouse. But, I still

want to make clothes. I don't see a storefront. That's a lot of work and leaves no time for my kids." Those kids are Joimani, age 5, and Jiliana, age 2. One way she gets the word out is by participating in local events.

While many businesses are cutthroat, Pink Waves Apparel is more laid back.

"I don't see anyone as a competitor," she says. I always want to give back. I look for any way I can help."



Jamie Hernandez relaxes beside some of her creations.

quirky, clothing was dormant in the back of her mind.

"It has always been a passion of mine to have my own clothing brand and to be able to de-




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BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

*It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
~ William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet*

No one would dispute having the beauty of soft natural light shining through our windows

puts a smile on our faces and warms our hearts. We have windows to let in light and give us views into our world. You might have a lake view, an ocean view, a pool view or simply a view of the outside. What I am finding out is that many of us have windows that are letting in much more than soft natural light and have become a nuisance. We purchase blinds and curtains to

block the heat. We search for dark or mirrored film to help against the heat while maintaining some of our view. We place towels and blankets over our furniture and wood floors to protect them from fading and cracking. We even go to the extreme of replacing our windows with expensive Low E glass.

There is a solution, ERF (energy reflective film) or smart film. I know what you are thinking, another film, great, tried that, didn't work or my HOA won't allow it. ERF is not your typical window film. In fact, it has some of the most technological advances built into this smart film. Most films use dyes and aluminum, ERF uses a proprietary technology to sputter gold and silver allowing the film to be virtually clear and highly energy efficient.

A client of ours in Inlet Beach built their home in 2017. However, they struggled with trying to keep their master suite cool due to all the windows letting in heat. We coated their windows and after two months they contacted us and said, "Thank you so much! We are very happy with the heat reduction we have noticed."

There is a science behind this



magic. Astronauts use a visor assembly coated with a thin layer of gold that filters out the sun's harmful rays and protects the spacewalker from extreme temperatures. This technology has been adopted and available to solve the problems in our homes and offices. One popular question we are asked is, do I need to coat all my windows? The answer is no. We want to address the problem windows only—the windows that receive direct sunlight, the windows which you feel heat radiating from. Because the film is virtually clear, you will maintain your original architectural integrity, and basically, it won't change the look of your home.

What our ERF film won't do is block glare or shade a room. ERF blocks the heat, not the

view. Another benefit of our ERF film is that it rejects 99% of Ultraviolet (UV) rays which damage floors, furniture, blinds and drapes, thereby saving you money. If you have been searching for a solution to block the heat and not your view, contact us for an in-home demonstration and see for yourself how we can block the heat and not view.

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



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Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Recently, it came to my attention that I was one of the remaining four Americans who had not seen “Barbie.” In case you’re one of the other three, “Barbie” is a wildly popular movie that is making waves in all the headlines.

The New York Times recently said that “Barbie” is “...about becoming your own hero.” CNN stated that “Barbie” is “...Important for normalizing women’s health.” Toisto Magazine called “Barbie” the “most important film of the year.”

“Barbie” has reportedly impressed the Hollywood establishment because it proved that, to produce a hit movie you don’t need computer graphics, elaborate CGI effects, and a huge production budget to create hype. All you need is a huge promotional budget to create hype.

So I decided to see “Barbie” with my friend Dan, a former law-enforcement officer, who

asked me to accompany him and his two daughters.

I haven’t been to the theater in a long time. I think the last movie I saw was “Steel Magnolias.” Mostly, because my people weren’t big movie goers. We were sanctified Baptists who did not believe in going to the movies for fear that it could lead to mixed bathing.

When we got there, the first thing I noticed was that lots of young women were there to see “Barbie.” I could tell this because they were all dressed in neon pink.

“I’ve seen ‘Barbie’ four times,” one 22-year-old woman told me. “It’s just a great movie, with an important message.”

I asked the young woman what this message was, exactly.

“Um,” she went on, “like, it’s about, like... Like. I don’t know. You just have to see it.”

Another group of teenage women stood in line with their boyfriends. The young women had already seen “Barbie” twice. This was their boyfriends’ first film.

“We made our boyfriends come with us this time,” said one of the girls. “Because it’s a super good movie.”

“Oh my God,” said another young lady. “So good.”

Most of the boyfriends were clad in Barbie-themed, festive clothes. I asked one of the boys whether he was excited to see the movie and I asked whether I could quote him in a column I



would be writing.

He gave me a sincere but thoughtful answer by saying, “My girlfriend made me wear these pink pants.”

So we waited in a long line because it was a weekend, and everyone was at the theater. Some were there to see the new Indiana Jones movie, which features an 81-year-old Harrison Ford starring in “Indiana Jones Takes a Nap.”

Other movie goers were there to see “Oppenheimer” a film about J. Robert Oppenheimer, who invented the atomic bomb. The film is directed by Christopher Nolan, a director who critics hail for blending “thrill rides with thoughtful narratives which pose complex and pressing eth-

ical questions” such as, “When will this movie be over so I can go pee?”

We purchased our tickets for “Barbie,” and went into the dark theater. Once we nestled into our seats, the movie began, and I can honestly tell you I did not move a muscle for the duration of the film.

Namely, because my feet were glued to the floor because of movie-theater-floor gunk, which is an adhesive consisting of decade-old soft drink spills and petrified candy.

The movie began. The screen featured stunning set design, elaborate dance sequences, and wild costumes. The first thought I was struck with was, “Man, I’m really old.”

Because most of the starring cast was comfortably in their early 20s, with fit bodies that did not contain a thimble-full of adipose tissue. And every other word in their scripted sentences was “like.”

Admittedly, I am also out of touch with popular culture, so I, like, didn’t get most of the, like, jokes.

Dan’s daughters, however, were laughing with everyone else. Meantime, I was looking around wondering when, exactly, did movie theaters quit using ushers with flashlights. And what happened to the Wurlitzer organ?

The apex of the movie was a stirring scene which featured the movie’s title song, “What Was I Made For,” recorded by Billie Eilish, which had many in the theater sobbing. Admittedly, I was weeping too. Although, to be fair, I was crying because my ticket cost more than a three-bedroom beach condo.

When the film ended, we exited and passed the gaggle of teenage boyfriends, lingering in the lobby.

“Please don’t write about me wearing pink pants,” one boyfriend said.

Which I would never do.

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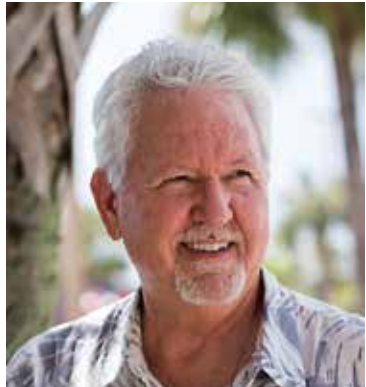
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A Pastor's Ponderings: **Someone Greater**



BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

Imagine a God who moves the moon that guides the ocean waves to break on our shores. Imagine a God who flicked a match igniting the Sun into a blazing ball of fire, heating a solar system, producing a planet as an incubator for humanity. Imagine a God who is closer to you than the breath in your lungs or the thoughts in your head.

God is greater than all that. I remember as a child attending Sunday School where I saw God on a funky used flannel board. I heard Him in starchy old hymns in a sanctuary where I was told to hush and be still.

The stiff, soulless sermons talked about life and love, but did little to show it.

God is greater than that. He's bigger than buildings, more loving than a handshake and more truthful than a sermon. Creeds and doctrinal statements describe Him but can't contain Him. A God who transcends buildings and creeds is who I aim to know.

As a child, I memorized the Ten Commandments in Sunday School and learned how a whale swallowed Noah. I learned how Christ bled and died before His resurrection. I washed that down with jellybeans and colorful hard-boiled eggs. God is bigger than that.

We need sound doctrine and buildings where we can gather to worship God, but He is so much greater than all that.

The popular worship song "So Will I" touches the majesty of the Lord in music and reveals our only proper response:

*God of creation, there at the start
before the beginning of time.
With no point of reference, You spoke*



*to the dark
And fleshed out the wonder of light.
And as You speak, a hundred billion
galaxies are born.
In the vapor of Your breath the
planets form.
If the stars were made to worship, so
will I.
I can see Your heart in everything
You've made Every burning star A
signal fire of grace
If creation sings Your praises, so
will I.
So, will I. Will you?*

Forbes magazine recently published an article by Ethan Siegal describing the James Webb Space Telescope. This device can see light from at least 13 billion light years away, located

in galaxies 33 billion light years away. Scientists now estimate there are two trillion galaxies. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is a small to medium six galaxy and has approximately four billion stars. If there are four billion stars each in two trillion

galaxies, how many stars would that be? My brain is starting to hurt.

If God is that big, how can He remember me? It stretches my faith to think the God who created this universe can know me intimately. Yes, God is all that and more. He has a Son.

The Bible says Christ spoke the worlds into existence—all two trillion times four billion of them. He is also the Word who came to us in human form. Equal to God in every way, yet He humbled Himself to die for the salvation of humanity.

The third verse of "So Will I" brings us down from the majesty of the heavens to the delinquency in our hearts:

*God of salvation, You chased down
my heart
Through all my failure and pride.
On a hill You created the Light of the
world
Abandoned in darkness to die.
And as You speak, A hundred billion
failures disappear.
Where You lost Your life so I could
find it here.
If You left the grave behind You, so
will I.*

When you stand before a God like that, what do you do? Worship Him for who He is. Worship Him for giving us His Son. Worship Him for the life He wants to give you. So, will I.

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, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com.



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PRESENTED BY:


From Student to Master: The Inspiring Zentangle Journey of Charles Burkett

By ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

Zentangle is a form of meditative drawing that involves creating intricate patterns using simple strokes. The practice was created by Rick Roberts and Maria Thomas, who discovered that drawing repetitive patterns had a calming effect on the mind. Zentangle has since gained popularity around the world as a way to reduce stress and anxiety, while also promoting creativity and mindfulness.

After practicing Zentangle for many years, Charles Burkett became a Zentangle teacher in 2022; when Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) sponsored his certification coursework.

“It was our intention to “pay it forward” by empowering a veteran to become a certified CZT and connect with active duty and veteran military personnel as a peer,” said MKAF Education Director Melanie Moore.

Collaborating with Burkett was a natural fit as he has a personal understanding of the benefits of Zentangle.

Burkett, proud to be raised in Walton County, enlisted in the U.S. Army at 17. He married his high school sweetheart, was stationed in Germany and in 1998 had a baby girl. They returned stateside in 2000. After serving 22 years, he retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 3 in 2013 and they returned to the local area.

In 2004, a devastating helicopter crash left Burkett with a Traumatic Brain Injury and extensive nerve damage, limiting most of his fine motor skills on his dominant right side. Fearing he may not regain full use of his hand, he used Zentangle for physical therapy and taught himself how to write with his left hand. Learning how to hold a pencil was the first step towards re-learning the same skills on his dominant hand. Starting with the letters of the alphabet, he progressed to drawing creative patterns and connecting lines to create images. Within months, he had regained 80 percent of his fine motor skills, and by the end of the year, he had full control of his right arm, hand, and fingers.

Zentangle worked wonders for Burkett who says, “You get

to create a product from just relaxing and letting your mind expand.”

The stress-free, no-fault method of creating beautiful patterns inspired him to share it with others. “Their mental and spiritual improvement was amazing,” he says.

Today, Burkett is as a Certified Zentangle teacher for MKAF’s Warrior Arts, a special ArtsReach initiative established by Moore in 2016. He teaches a variety of Zentangle classes both virtually and in-person since joining the program.

Burkett — who also teaches combat readiness, motorcycle safety, self-protection among other things — has taught introductory classes for mixed groups, combat vet support groups, and female vet support groups at the Okaloosa Vet Center. He has also taught virtual classes for the Bay County Vet Center female vet support group, the AFSOC Commando Caregivers/Warrior CARE summit, and the EOD Warrior Foundation. Burkett’s virtual classes have reached military service members from around the world, including their spouses and caregivers, in both active duty and veteran roles.



When he isn’t teaching Zentangle you can find Burkett scuba diving, parachuting, cross-country running, cross-fit training and caring for his family and ranch in Laurel Hill.

Burkett is inspired by those who have come before. “Living through history is such a cherished commodity. Watching things unfold before your eyes and cataloging events to share is priceless,” he says.

This veteran commits fully to whatever he takes on. If you need a nudge, follow his motto: “Give 110 percent at whatever you are doing. Whether it’s piloting a helicopter or sweeping

the floor. Therefore, on those days that you don’t feel like you are at your best, chances are your performance may have slipped “down” to 100 percent!”

MKAF’s ArtsReach program is dedicated to bringing the arts to underserved communities throughout the region. Through partnerships with local schools, community centers, and other organizations, ArtsReach provides access to high-quality arts education and programming for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Through his classes, Burkett is helping people to tap into their creativity, reduce stress and anxiety and explore the world of art.

This year, Moore has scheduled more than 100 Zentangle and painting classes through the MKAF Warrior Arts program. In addition to Zentangle, the MKAF Warrior Arts program also offers classes in painting, jewelry making and comedy/improv.

When you support MKAF, you support heroic individuals like Charles Burkett. Not a member yet? Visit MKAF.org to learn more.

DETOX

continued from page 35

Dr. Stiles also notes that “detoxification is the necessary process by which these harmful products are removed from the body. Prior to a successful and safe detoxification, the liver, kidneys, colon and lymphatic systems must be opened and draining. The patient must also simultaneously be nourished with electrolytes, ionic trace minerals, hydration, enzymes, gut support, amino acids and basic nutrition. We all have different hidden toxicities. If you are seeking real health solutions and want a personalized health optimization plan, advanced functional testing is a good next step.”

Detoxes and cleanses date back thousands of years such as fasting, saunas (I saw the ruins of a public sauna in Israel. It was amazing!), dry brushing, smudging, herbal medicine, water, crystals, meditation and exercise. If it had benefits for them, why not take the next step and reap the benefits yourself? Reach out to Dr. William Stiles at drwilliamstiles.com if you’d like to schedule a complimentary 15-minute consultation.

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Check out the September calendar and then request an event. You get to pick the painting.

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Girls Night Out!

Is it time for a Girls' Night Out? Yes!

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For the Kids!

Do you want a fun and memorable party for your child's birthday? Yes!

Do you want to create a fun Halloween or Holiday painting together? Set your kiddo's creativity free with a new twist!

Book a birthday, Halloween or holiday session online today and don't let that precious time slip away.

Add a candle to any event!

Make your own soy wax candle that burns 40 hours. Candles are soy and paraben free and scented with essential oils. Currently, there are 24 scents from which to choose from and they are ready by the end of class to take home! DIY Soy Candles can be added on for \$20 to any event. Just show up 30 minutes prior to painting class. There

are also pre-made candles that can be purchased any time when you need or want an extra gift for someone!

The September calendar offers a variety of paintings—from seasonally-inspired landscapes to decorative DIY wood board signs, funny self-portraits, Fall colors, paint pour and more! Find a paint night theme that fits you, then reserve your spot online at paintingwithatwist.com/studio/fort-walton-beach/calendar.

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Let's Get the Party Started!

Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC) has launched a new brand to continue growth and heighten its impact in the fight to end child abuse and neglect in Walton and Okaloosa Counties.

The organization has revealed glimpses of some very exciting changes via social media over the recent weeks, culminating with the launch of its

new website on August 4, 2023. Humbled by consistent growth over the past 23 years, it has taken the next step to update the logo, visual identity, brand messaging, and website to better represent where the organization is today—and the vision going forward.

"This is a monumental milestone for ECCAC. We are truly grateful for the support and

contributions of the many donors, agency and community partners, volunteers and team members who have supported our mission and helped us serve our communities over the past two decades. We would not be where we are today without each and every contribution to our cause, and we're so excited about the next chapter," said Julie Porterfield, Chief Executive Officer of ECCAC.

With the new branding in place, ECCAC will continue to rise to the challenge of ending child abuse and neglect, providing child-friendly environments and therapies, and educating children and families on critical prevention issues so that not one more child becomes a victim. Its goal is to continue making a lasting and positive impact in the lives of those served and ECCAC will not waiver until that vision is realized.

Visit ECCAC.org and follow along on social media to see the full transformation and vision as ECCAC enters its next chapter. And, if you feel called to do so, you can Become a Champion of Hope and join the fight to end child abuse and neglect.

ECCAC brings together the resources needed to advocate, care for and support children of abuse and neglect in Walton and Okaloosa Counties. For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit www.eccac.org or call 850-833-9237. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

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The Million Dollar Quartet

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ECTC

Picture it; America—1956. A gallon of gas is 29 cents and a glass bottle of Coca Cola costs you a nickel. Grace Kelly becomes Princess Grace of Monaco and new products on the market include Play Doh, Comet Cleanser and a funny little dice game called Yahtzee. It is also



the year a relatively unknown Elvis Presley explodes onto the scene at the tender age of 21. The term “catapults” might even be more apt. 1956 is a rock-n-roll pot of water that is just beginning to boil, and then Elvis comes along and cranks up the heat.

He released five songs to top the Billboard pop charts that year including “Heartbreak Hotel,” “I Want You, I Need You, I Love You,” “Don’t Be Cruel,” “Hound Dog” and “Love Me Tender.”

On Nov. 15, 1956, the movie “Love Me Tender” was released, and not long after that on Dec. 4, 1956, Elvis stopped by Memphis-based Sun Records Studios to have a chat with owner

Sam Phillips, also known as the man who invented rock-n-roll. It just so happened that Rockabilly artist Carl Perkins, who originally wrote and performed “Blue Suede Shoes,” was there to lay down some tracks. Wild piano man Jerry Lee Lewis was brought in to help fill out those tracks with his distinctive sound. Oh, and there was someone else there, too—a popular country singer named Johnny Cash.

These four legendary musicians proceeded to have an impromptu jam session that included gospel, hymns, rockabilly, country and a little rock-n-roll thrown in for good measure. Sam Phillips had the presence of mind to leave the tapes running, and managed to get a recording of this epic jam session that made the Memphis newspapers the next day with the headline “Million Dollar Quartet.”

The actual recording wasn’t released until 1981 and, even then, only in Europe. It wasn’t until 1990 that the complete recordings were released in America. The musical, which is based on this once-in-a-lifetime convergence of some of the greatest musical talent in American history, premiered in Chicago in 2008 to rave reviews and eventually went to Broadway.

I am absolutely thrilled that this incredible, based-on-a-true-story musical is the opening show for Emerald Coast Theatre Company’s 11th Season! The music makes this show great,

but the story behind the music is what gives this show a magical texture. We, as the audience, have the privilege of knowing that this event was an ephemeral, once-in-a-lifetime happening. For those guys, it was just another Tuesday. What a stroke of genius

for Sam Phillips to have the gift of foresight and capture the moment for all of us to savor years later. And just as brilliant that Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux saw the magic in the story and wrote a show about it. Get your tickets soon because Elvis will be

in the building on September 15th through October 1st.

The great thing about ECTC’s premiere of this toe-tapping musical is that you have more than one random Tuesday afternoon to catch it. As the King would say, “It’s now or never.”

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By PATRICIA LEE, OWNER
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As most of us know, the Na-

Ask Destinites: Crab Island Vendors

tional Park Service (NPS) has jurisdiction over Crab Island as part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. They are developing a Commercial Services Strategy and Environmental Assessment. The plans have potential to change how vendors operate and what services or products would be allowed.

Destin Mayor, Bobby Wagner, has expressed his concern over the implementation of the proposed changes. He stated the

plans could be “detrimental” to the vendors and there could be safety risks to the visitors. Relocating the space for the vendors would force the visitors into an area with deeper waters and where the currents could be worse, thus, causing more drownings.

The mayor’s other concern is that 88 independent vendors could be replaced by a single concessionaire contract. This would hurt the diversity of businesses currently enjoyed on the island. He feels the current family-operated businesses are important, because they not only bring uniqueness, but also the owners who know the area best. These local vendors definitely add to the Crab Island charm.

Local vendors are worried about their livelihood if the current plans go through. Mayor Wagner said via a WEAR TV interview, “The whole industry has tried to come together as best they can to try and regulate what’s best for guests and businesses. So, now that they’re working together, big government is coming in telling us they

have a better plan for us.” Mayor Wagner has made it clear that he does not want to give up regional control to the federal government. He doesn’t want locals to lose their voice or freedoms in local matters.

This is what one of our Destinites Facebook group members had to say after reading an interview with NPS on www.getthecoast.com. “I think this shares an important perspective with an interview from the NPS. It’s clear they have been communicating with local government for several years about their plans, but it’s been presented as if this is a new plan and it seems based on this interview that that is untrue. It remains a very heated issue, but Crab Island has been part of the NPS since the 70s. I would like to see a follow-up article regarding the environmental impact the commercialization of Crab Island has had on the ecosystem in that area of the Bay. The sea grass in that area has all but been destroyed and that can have far reaching ramifications for everything from fisheries to ero-

sion of channels during storms, I would infer.”

It remains to be seen what will happen with this situation. Congressman Matt Gaetz has also expressed his concerns about the safety and other issues, should the current plan be implemented. The NPS states that they plan to work with local vendors and officials on a strategy. There will be a 30-day public comment period, and that, probably, will include a public meeting to divulge the details.

If you care about what takes place at Crab Island and want your voice heard, please keep up with the progress of this situation at www.cityofdestin.com. Write letters and attend council meetings.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private group at www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinites with more than 8,500 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out our monthly newsletter and sponsored local business directory at www.Destinites.com.

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