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DESTIN Life

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Local Signs of Fall: An Array of Art and Music that Heals

By WILL ESTELL

If you're a fan of the arts—whether visually, musically or through their power of healing, and if you live anywhere in Okaloosa, Walton or Bay Counties, then you're likely already familiar with Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF)—the outreach and events this organization has been bringing to Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast for almost three decades.

MKAF has grown from its humble beginnings to becoming one of the largest champions of the arts in our beautiful communities that dot this piece of paradise. MKAF is a mission-driven, membership based, not-for-profit organization, with all MKAF event proceeds going to support ArtsReach, the organization's outreach mission.

MKAF events do more than entertain the tens of thousands who attend them each year; they elevate the quality of the people, schools, groups and communities they



PHOTO BY KURT LISCHKA OF MOON CREEK STUDIOS

impact. MKAF events, such as the annual Festival of the Arts, various concerts, wine tastings and culinary gatherings might be thought of simply as entertainment or something fun to do, but the true mission and impact of the organization is about so much more than providing a good time for attendees and members. It's about making a measurable difference—a real and lasting impact for the bet-

terment of our communities and the people MKAF serves. Since its inception in 1995, MKAF has enlightened, empowered and educated more than 400,000 children in more than 100 schools and partner agencies throughout Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast. These exciting "Arts Empower" programs provide arts in our children's schools where, as you know if you have a student, much of the arts fund-

ing had been stopped. MKAF saw the need and is producing dynamic arts learning opportunities through its ArtsReach education initiative serving local K-12 students, at-risk youth and even those with disabilities through "Arts for All Abilities." A newer program, Paint the Music, is a collaboration between MKAF and

MKAF

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Freedom Life Compass Helps Addicts Take First Step to Recovery

By KENNETH BOOKS

Recovery from addiction is hard. Resources are limited and the lure of drugs and alcohol can be overwhelming. But there is a resource in our area that helps women break the cycle of addiction, get and stay sober and create a normal, fulfilling life for those who wish to be free.

Freedom Life Compass is the brainchild of president and founder Stephanie Weidel, our hometown

FREEDOM LIFE

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Editor & Publisher

Lori Leath Smith
Lori@LifeMediagr.com

Director, Advertising Sales

Scott Miller
Scott@LifeMediagr.com

Production & Layout

Kim Harper

Contributing Writers

Christopher Manson
Doug Stauffer
Kenneth Books
Tamara Young
Barbara Palmgren
Joshua Cowser
Will Estell
Kelly Murphy-Redd

To Advertise

850.688.9886

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

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MKAF

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Sinfonia Gulf Coast (SGC), and explores the musical classics while channeling students' inner Picasso—students paint to musical selections and are invited to a live SGC concert performance. If you have a child participating in one or more of these school programs, you know how effective they are and crucial the arts are toward molding our upcoming generations.

Through "Warrior Arts," MKAF, too, serves our military population suffering with both physical injuries and invisible traumas and hardships, bringing therapeutic benefits to active duty and veteran military service members. This unique and healing program features Zentangle drawing for mindfulness and there are numerous testimonies to the program's effectiveness.

MKAF's spring and summer Concerts in the Village series showcases some of the most entertaining and talented touring artists in the entire country, bringing thousands of both local and vacationing music and arts lovers to MKAF's Arts Vil-

lage in the heart of Destin. This fun, musical series raises both awareness and funding, so that MKAF can impact more and more people in our community with each coming year.

As for the upcoming fall and winter events that you can take part in while also knowing you're making a positive difference just by being there, MKAF has quite a few just around the corner:

Festival Of The Arts

Now in its 28th year, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Annual Festival of the Arts is the place to be Oct. 28-29. The largest and most celebrated art fair in all of Okaloosa and Walton counties, the annual art fair brings in top-tier artists in an array of media from throughout the country. This October, the growing event will feature more than 100 artists, some with multiple display spaces, all ready to show, talk about and sell their pieces, while competing for various accolades in their respective categories as part of this juried festival. "This year, we enjoyed overwhelming interest and after the blind jury scored more than 200 applicants, we are proud to

present more than 100 artists hailing from 17 states across the U.S. and Europe," said Festival of the Arts Producer, Deb Nissley.

In addition to all the unique and creative pieces on display, MKAF's Festival of the Arts also features live music, food trucks, beverages, comedian Jason Hedden as emcee for the festivities and even a VIP Lounge Experience. There's also an available cash bar featuring locally sourced craft beer, including Mattie Light from Destin Brewery, and MKAF's famous Bloody Mary bar to accompany your fun in perusing the festival, seeing friends and finding those perfect pieces to call your own...ones you'll treasure for years and perhaps even hand down.

This year's festival will include a new edition, MKAF's Arty Kick Off Party, October 27th at 6 p.m. at Destin's Henderson Beach Resort—an exciting way to usher in the festival while also partaking in great



PHOTO BY KURT LISCHKA OF MOON CREEK STUDIOS

food, drinks and entertainment.

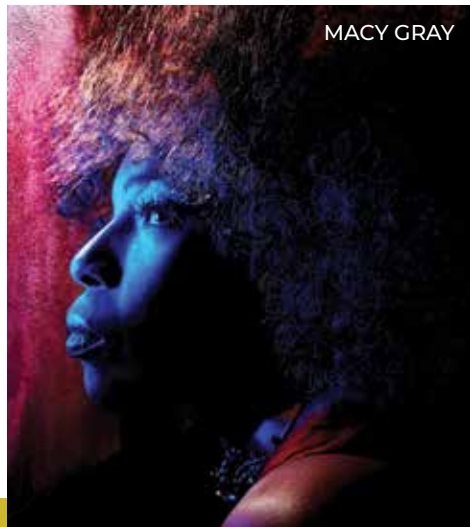
This year's Festival will also bring additional entertainment with Stage Crafters performing scenes from the Broadway musical "Something Rotten," along with local Gulf Coast artist and MKAF Board Member, Maxine Orange and her Splatter Studio, which allows children to suit up and exercise their artistic inspiration while creating their own personal art to take home from the festival. It's never too ear-

Continued on page 44



Salt Water MUSIC FEST

benefiting **mkaf** mattie kelly arts foundation



THURSDAY, OCT. 12
Dugas Pavilion in Destin

MACY GRAY & California Jet Club

FRIDAY, OCT. 13
Dugas Pavilion in Destin

LOCASH

5 Award-winning Singer-Songwriters

Josh Mirenda

Ben Burgess Jared Mullins
Jordan Minton Jordan Reynolds

SATURDAY, OCT. 14
Singer-Songwriter Brunch at Soleil
Josh Mirenda and Gary Garris



Grammy-award winning pop songstress Macy Gray and country music's "feel-good duo" LOCASH plus 5 top Nashville Singer-Songwriters hit the Dugas Pavilion in Destin. Food Trucks, Beverage Stations and Cash Bars on site.

Proceeds benefit MKAF ArtsReach initiatives including the ground-breaking arts therapy program Warrior Arts, Arts for All Abilities and arts education outreach throughout Okaloosa, Walton and Bay Counties.

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28TH ANNUAL

mkaf
Festival of the Arts
mattie kelly arts foundation

OCTOBER 28 & 29

ARTY KICK OFF PARTY

FRIDAY, OCT. 27 | 6 PM
HENDERSON BEACH RESORT
Tickets at MKAF.org/Events

Community

FREEDOM LIFE

continued from page 1

hero, whose early life was far from a Leave It to Beaver episode.

“I grew up in a drug house,” Stephanie says. “I fell into the lifestyle and started using at 11. Eventually, I became a high school dropout. I did a lot of things I’m not proud of.”

Her father was a drug dealer who later served time in prison for selling methamphetamine. Her mother was a drug addict, as was her brother, Rex.

At age 23, Stephanie found herself homeless. So she joined the Army, the only service that would accept her without a high school diploma.

“The Army was great,” she says. “It taught me discipline.”

She spent 15 months in Iraq and when she came home, she learned her mother had become a born-again Christian. “I started attending Crosspoint church with my mom,” Stephanie said. It was then that “Jesus transformed my life.”

Today, the entire family is sober. Rex is the Executive Director of Project Hope Recovery Center Florida and Stephanie is the recovery minister at Crosspoint, Niceville.

To help her brother in his struggle to remain free of drugs, Stephanie started Freedom Life Compass. The organization, which opened its doors in April, grew into a ministry to help women caught in the same trap of addiction that Stephanie once was.

“Over the last five years, one

of the biggest needs was transitional housing for women,” Stephanie says. “We saw a need for this place.”

She expressed that need at a meeting of Parakaleo (Greek for “Come alongside.) Among the listeners was Chris Shinnick, the pastor of Manna Church, which meets in Niceville High School. He gave Stephanie the use of a property on County Line Road in 2022, with a five-year lease. A large building contains a dormitory for recovering addicts, a kitchen, showers and an “emotional support cat.” Behind the building is a mobile home being set up for more clients – Freedom House Life Center.

Currently, two residents are staying there, both single women. “It’s transitional housing for



women,” Stephanie says. “We’re helping anyone to take that first step.”

One of the residents has been incarcerated in the past, but now has a length of sobriety under her belt and is looking for an apartment. The other has mental issues. “We got her off the streets,” Stephanie said.

Part of the difficulty in setting up such an organization is the need for money. Because part of the requirements for help includes church attendance, no state or federal money is provided.

Crosspoint church had hosted a bazaar for 39 years. “They gave it over to us,” Stephanie says. This year’s Niceville Bazaar, supporting Freedom Life Compass, will take place Oct. 21 at the Niceville Mullet Fairgrounds between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Booths are \$100 but are free for non-profits. Last year, the first that Freedom Life Compass sponsored the bazaar, more than 5,000 people attended the free event. Because of the City of Niceville’s grant of the grounds, Freedom Life Compass donates 5 percent of the proceeds to the city Fireworks Fund. It also donates 10 percent to another non-profit.

Recently, Freedom Life Compass hired Dave Glinka as Freedom House Manager to assist with re-entry programs. David, who spent 22 years in the Air Force as an Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) technician,

learned several years ago that C.A.L.M House, an organization for mothers in need, was looking for a director. He interviewed but was not hired, although six months later, the director left and he got the job, which he held for two years. On July 31, he began his duties at Freedom Life Compass.

“I take care of day-to-day operations, resources and case management, Dave says. “I brought a lot of networks. I know a lot of people in Niceville.”

Volunteers are, of course, needed to provide transportation, lead devotions and help with events.

“Our vision is to help individuals coming out of life-controlling situations, such as trafficking, incarceration, homelessness, and addiction, find Christ-centered recovery and resources,” states Freedom Life Compass material. “We can help begin to break the cycle of addiction and dysfunction in their lives and, in turn, change the course of their families’ lives. Our Life Skills Center will provide job training, computer skills, administration training, and basic skills. Partnering with organizations in our community we will offer classes for financial management, business etiquette, dressing for success, and other essential skills needed to become a productive member of society.

To learn more, visit stephaniewedel.com.

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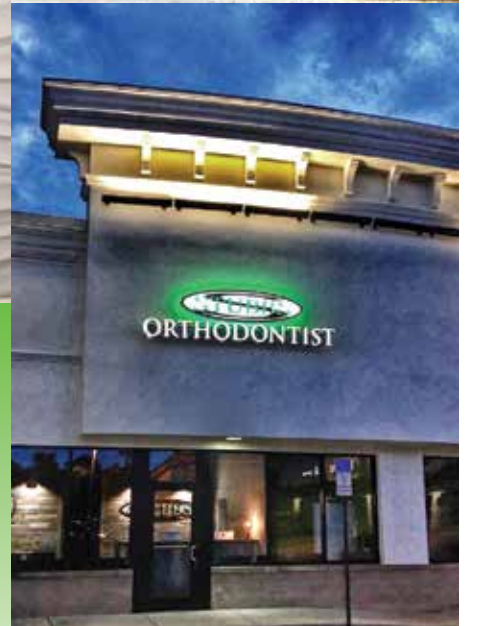
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha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

Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! OCTOBER 2023

..... 5
Helping Heroes Gala | 5pm | Destin - Fort Walton Beach Convention Center
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin

..... 6
Destin Seafood Festival | 4pm-10pm | 1 Mile Stretch along Destin Harbor
Lawn Games in Grand Park | 4pm | Grand Boulevard

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Locals on the Harbor | 5pm | Boat-house Oyster Bar
Beer from Around Here | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

..... 7
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Dog Daze | 9am | The Landing FWB
Destin Seafood Festival | 10am-10pm | 1 Mile Stretch along Destin Harbor

Beer Festival | 2pm | Baytowne Wharf
Destin Seafood Festival | 10am | Harborwalk Village
Forgotten Music Fest | 12pm | Port St Joe

Watersound Porch Fest | 3pm | Watersound Origins
Downtown FWB Art Walk | 5pm | Downtown FWB
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village

Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Fireworks & Fire Spinning | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 8
Farmers Market | 9am | Rosemary Beach

Farmers Market | 9am | Watersound
Destin Seafood Festival | 10am-6pm | 1 Mile Stretch along Destin Harbor
3rd Annual Brunch Fest | 11am | Seville Quarter

Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 9
First Responders Appreciation Cookout | 11am | Destin Fire Station
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Dungeons & Dragons | 6pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
..... 10
Speed Networking | 12pm | Beachworx
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

Music Bingo | 6pm | Lone Wolf Pizza Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Open Jam Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
..... 11
Lunch & Learn | Noon | Beachworx
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay

Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe

..... 12
Best of the Emerald Coast Winners Soiree | 6pm | Grand Boulevard
Salt Water Music Fest | 5:30pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation

Spill The Tea Poetry Night | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin

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One Blood Drive | 10am | The Market Shops
Oktoberfest | 4pm | Panama City Beach
Salt Water Music Fest | 5pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
..... 14
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

Harvest Festival | 9am | Chautauqua Winery
Women's Climbing Circle | 9am | Rock Out Climbing
Pet Adoption Event | 9am | Subaru Fort Walton Beach

Saltwater Music Fest Brunch | 10am | Soliel
Eggs on the Beach Cooking Competition | 10am | Seascape
Discover Science Saturday | 10:30am | Emerald Coast Science Center

Oktoberfest | 11am | Panama City Beach
Bloody Mary Festival | 11am | The Market Shops
Texas Hold 'Em | 2:30pm | American Legion Destin

Zombie Walk Can Food Drive | 3pm | Downtown FWB
Marina Jam featuring Mitch Malloy | 6pm | Sandestin Marina
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village

Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Fireworks & Fire Spinning | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 15
Oktoberfest | 11am | Panama City Beach

Sundays at the Patch | 11am-2pm | Destin Methodist Church
Halloween Market | 12pm | Emerald Republic Brewing
Caring and Sharing Fall Fashion Show | 12:30pm | Monet Monet

..... 16
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Walton County Fair | 5pm | Walton County Fairgrounds

Dungeons & Dragons | 6pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
..... 17
Speed Networking | 12pm | Beachworx
Thrifed Ghost Painting | 4:30pm | Caring and Sharing

Walton County Fair | 5pm | Walton County Fairgrounds
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin
Music Bingo | 6pm | Lone Wolf Pizza Destin

..... 18
Ladies Who Launch | 11:30am | Destin Chamber Office
CAREing for Turtles | 4pm | Gulfarium Marine Park

Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Walton County Fair | 5pm | Walton County Fairgrounds
Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf

Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom Pub FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe

..... 19
Wine Walk | 5pm | Gulf Place
Walton County Fair | 5pm | Walton County Fairgrounds

Planetarium Night | 6pm | Emerald Coast Science Center
Trivia | 7pm | Lucille's Kitchen Latin
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 20
Fore Her Golf Tournament | 8:30am | Links Sandestin

One Blood Drive | 10am | The Market Shops
Blast on the Bay Music Fest | 1pm | Port St Joe
Walton County Fair | 5pm | Walton County Fairgrounds

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Harvest Wine & Food Festival | 7pm | Watercolor Resort
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

..... 21
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Pet Adoption Event | 9am | Pet Supermarket
Trick or Treat | 10am | Emerald Coast Zoo

..... 22
Sundays at the Patch | 11am-2pm | Destin Methodist Church
Mariachi Sunday | 4pm | Mezcal Mexican Grill

Groovin' on the Green Concert | 7pm | Carillon Beach
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar

..... 23
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 24
Brunch with a Boss | 8am | JoJos

Coffee & Goodness
Speed Networking | 12pm | Beachworx
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys Destin

Music Bingo | 6pm | Lone Wolf Pizza Destin
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Open Jam Night | 8pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe

..... 25
City Open House | 11 am | Destin Community Center
Alys Beach Crafted | 12pm | Alys Beach

Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Mattie Kelly Unplugged | 6pm | Henderson Beach Resort

Wednesday Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Music Bingo | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

..... 26
Barktoberfest | 4:30pm | Grand Boulevard
Boos Brews & Bingo | 6pm | Rosemary Beach Town Hall

Emerald Coast Bike Fest Kick Off Party | 6pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Spill The Tea Poetry Night | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe

..... 27
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
Lawn Games in Grand Park | 4pm | Grand Boulevard

..... 28
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Festival of the Arts | 9am | MKAF Cultural Arts Village

Halloween Derby | 10am | Seaside
Harley's Angels Bikini Competition | 1pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson

Spook Street Family Event | 1pm | Harborwalk Village
Monstrous Halloween Bash | 2pm | Rosemary

..... 29
Crafted Spirited Soiree | 3pm | Alys Beach
Special Needs Trunk or Treat | 4pm | Harvest Village Navarre

Family Friendly Costume Contest | 6pm | Harborwalk Village
Rock the Docks | 7pm | HarborWalk Village

..... 30
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Fireworks & Fire Spinning | 9pm | Harborwalk Village

..... 31
Festival of the Arts | 9am | MKAF Cultural Arts Village
Sundays at the Patch | 11am-2pm | Destin Methodist Church

Brew Chews and Boos | 2pm | Grand Boulevard
Sunday Sunset Shrimp Boil | 4pm | LJ Schooners | Niceville

..... 32
Karaoke | 8pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 33
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Dungeons & Dragons | 6pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
City of Destin's Annual Fall Festival | 5pm | Destin Community Center



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Upcoming Events Make for a Fantastic Fall at Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin!



15th Annual Baytowne Wharf Beer Festival
Friday, Oct. 6, 6-8 p.m.;
Saturday, Oct. 7, 2-5 p.m.
Tickets on sale now at baytownebeerfestival.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 grand, craft beer tasting event on Saturday, Oct. 7, will feature more than 200 domestic and international craft beers available for sampling. For tickets, visit baytownebeerfestival.com

Tribute Weekend

Friday, Nov. 3-
Sunday, Nov. 5

Make plans now to be in the Village of Baytowne Wharf for Tribute Weekend. Rock out the weekend and enjoy live music from great tribute bands. Grab your blankets and lawn chairs and meet on the events plaza lawn for a jam-packed weekend of incredible talent.

Friday, Nov. 3 | 7-9 p.m.
 Saturday, Nov. 4 | 7-9 p.m.
 Sunday, Nov. 5 | 2-4 p.m.
 Admission is free.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf October Events

The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf

Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.

Local small businesses bring a brand-new farmers market to Sandestin's Village of Baytowne Wharf. Come shop with local farmers, bakers, local fresh seafood and gourmet, beef, local honey, fresh pressed juices and much more!

The Village of BOOtowne Wharf

Sunday, Oct. 1 -
Tuesday, Oct. 31

Stroll through the haunted



streets of Baytowne Wharf the whole month of October! Visit the Haunted Courtyard if you dare or swing by Baytowne Adventure Zone's graveyard for a freaky good time. Be sure to tag us in all your spooktacular pictures by using @baytowne-wharf!

Wednesday Night Concert Series

Wednesdays, Oct. 4-25, 7-9 p.m. Free.

This fall, sit back and relax and enjoy live entertainment. The concert series will feature local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Live music concert begins at 7 p.m. on the Events Plaza Stage.

Oct. 4: The Hoodoos
Oct. 11: Below Alabama
Oct. 18: Casey Kearney
Oct. 25: Forrest Williams Band

Bubbly Baytowne

Thursday, Oct. 19, 5 p.m. Free.

Bubbly Baytowne is back! Who's ready to sip and shop through The Village streets? Join us for an evening full of free champagne and shopping during Bubbly Baytowne. Check in by the fountain to receive your complimentary Baytowne Wharf glass and a map outlining specific merchants to visit starting at 5 p.m.

*This event is free and for 21

and up only. The village will be open to the public during this event.

Throwback Thursday Cinema | Halloween Town

Thursday, Oct. 27, 7 p.m. Free.

We are throwing back to some of your favorite films this fall. Enjoy a movie on the big screen during our Throwback Thursday Cinema. All movies are family-friendly and open to the public. Grab your blankets and lawn chairs and enjoy this week's featured film, Halloween Town.

Trick or Treat Street

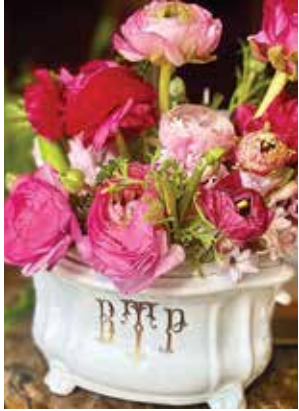
Tuesday, Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m. Free.

Calling all ghouls, ghosts and goblins to the Village of Baytowne Wharf for a spooktacular extravaganza! This Halloween, trick or treat through the Village streets and visit merchants for your favorite treat. Steve Hall will play frighteningly good tunes on the main stage. Enjoy crafts and balloon animals. Be sure to stop by Coconut Kidz to enter the costume contest and compete to win the grand prize! End the night with a spooky fireworks display at 8 p.m.



 Community

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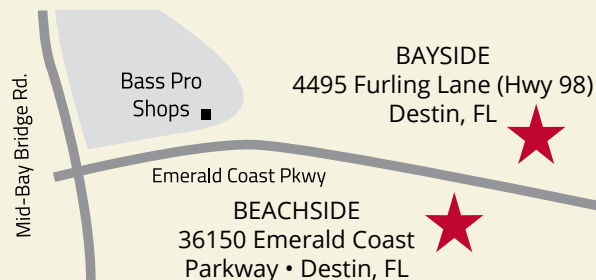


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Community



Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

"Reel Talk" from the City of Destin Annexation

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

It's time for more "reel" talk from the Mayor and me. For this column, our chat took us on the trail of annexation.

TY: A peculiar and understandably frustrating question we help many locals with is answering, "Do I live in Destin"? While people may have a Destin zip code, many are surprised to learn they are living in unincorporated Destin, which is still part of Okaloosa Coun-

ty. My question is, how did this Northeast portion of Destin get skipped over?

BW: It must be disheartening to live close enough to walk to City Hall or the beach yet be told you are not a City of Destin resident and cannot enjoy the perks. While Destin became a city in 1984, it was not the first time it had tried to incorporate. The city failed to reach the required votes in several prior elections. The late Mrs. Mattie Kelly was against bringing her land into city limits and actively opposed the idea. After an agreement was made to carve out all of Kelly's land from the city, the additional support was enough to pass the referendum, and the City of Destin, minus a

few square miles, was formed.

TY: That carved-out land is now Commons Drive, Kelly Plantation, Regatta Bay, Emerald Bay, and a few other communities in the area. What is the biggest benefit to annexation, and what is the first territory you want to see annexed?

BW: I believe the government closest to the people can best provide meaningful benefits to improve the quality of life for its community. At a fundamental level, the county operates as a regional administrative branch for the state. Municipalities are



the only form of government that provides power directly to the local citizens. This is why I am so passionate about unifying Destin. If we were to become one voice, we could guide Destin into an abundant future for generations to enjoy.

TY: If readers are interested and want to learn more or show support toward annexing these

unincorporated areas, what can they do?

BW: For those interested, please share this vision with your neighbors and the HOA board. I would be thrilled to present in person at a board meeting or a scheduled evening. You can also reach out to Tamara and myself with any questions.

Know Your Neighbor: Vet Rides Voice to Second Career

BY KENNETH BOOKS

When local resident Kevin Gaddie retired from the Navy after 20 years, he realized he had a lot of life ahead of him. He needed something to do.

"I said to myself, I'm too young to sit on the porch," remembers Kevin, now 63. Possessed of a rich baritone voice,

he decided to try his hand at voice-over work. "I ended up going to the University of West Florida and taking a class called 'Getting Paid to Talk,'" he says. "There were maybe 20 people in the class. They gave us scripts to read and we played them. When I played mine, I heard some ohs and ahs from the crowd." Kevin

was no stranger to using his voice. His two decades in the Navy were spent as a broadcast journalist, a job that won him several awards. The first thing to do was to get an agent. So, he sent his demo tape out. "I got signed around Christmas," Kevin says. "It was the best present I got."

The ball was rolling. Voice Coaches, out of Albany, N.Y., called and gave him a voice test, which went well, so they decided to train Kevin. He participated in four Saturday sessions over the phone on script reading and interpreting copy. "I pretty much breezed through it," he says. He also got 50 CDs with

his demo on them. Next, Kevin attended an acting academy run by Ann Marie Crouch, a model and actress who lives in Fort Walton Beach by way of Enid, Okla., and Los Angeles. She runs AMC Talent and is best known for her role as Princess

Continued on page 24

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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 is 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 introduces guests to a number of new characters, offerings and attractions you won't want to miss. The Festival of Fears hosts three all-new, original haunted hous-



Auction Foundation (DCWAF), recently donated \$3.4 million to 16 children's charities in Northwest Florida. To date, DCWAF has donated more than \$31 million help to children in need in Northwest Florida since its inception in 2005.

The 2023 recipients of Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation funds include:

AMikids Emerald Coast received \$125,000 to fund a GED program for at risk students between the ages of 16 – 24.

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast received \$200,000 to fund a new CT scanner to help diagnose and accurately treat pediatric patients in the emergency department.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast received \$200,000 to allow 285 students from low-income or single-parent households to attend programming for one full year.

Children in Crisis received \$200,000 to fund the facilitation of housing for abused, neglected, and abandoned children.

Children's Volunteer Health Network received \$250,000 to fund and serve underinsured and uninsured children in need of dental care—including dental supplies for the Mobile Clinic.

Ellison McCraney Ingram Foundation received \$200,000 to fund scholarships for teens that have received help from at least one DCWAF charity partner in their lifetime.

Emerald Coast Autism Center received \$315,000 to support the ECAC Phase II Learning Center Capital Campaign which will provide a new building for teens entering the Transition to Work program and in turn allow the Autism Center more space on their primary campus to serve young children on the spectrum in need of behavioral therapy.

Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center received \$300,000 to support mental health therapy programs, the case advocacy program and the CARES prevention program.

Habitat for Humanity

es 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 boasts three unique, haunted house concepts and styles. The first, *Beasts of the Bayou*, transports guests into a backwoods marsh never explored by man, but home to a bevy of hideous and hungry monsters. Next, *Nightmare Menagerie* has guests venture into an abandoned, roadside zoo that has now become home to a new breed of evil. And finally, guests can 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 through November 4th. Haunting hours start at 6 p.m. sharp with a special pre-show to kick things off — so don't be late. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at www.wbfestivaloffears.com.

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation Donates \$3.4 Million to 16 Local Children's Charities

Premier fundraising organization, Destin Charity Wine



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Continued on page 16

Avenging 9/11: Courage to Accept a One-Way Mission of Unknowns

BY KELLY MURPHY-REDD

On September 11, 2001, 2,977 people were killed by Islamic terrorists on our own soil. Thousands more were injured. By the end of the day our government was in motion. The administration, state department, DOD and the intelligence agencies were working to find out who the perpetrators were and to plan a response. Al Qaeda, from their training camps in Afghanistan, were responsible. The Taliban were providing safe haven for their leader, Osama Bin Laden.

Joint Special Forces and CIA teams planned to take tribal leaders, ousted by the Taliban, back into Afghanistan to help start insurgencies against the Taliban. Then Special Forces teams augmented with U.S. Air Force tactical air controllers would work with the Northern Alliance tribes in order to locate and destroy the Taliban. While the Afghan insurgents would directly engage the Taliban, Special Forces and the Air Force tactical controllers would call in air strikes on Taliban targets.

The mission for the CIA and the Special Forces teams was the

same: defeat and destroy the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Alex Hernandez, a CIA paramilitary and case officer, who was the deputy chief of CIA Team Alpha, describes the operation as a potential one-way mission filled with unknowns. He says the U.S. doesn't send its soldiers or agency officers on suicide missions but this was close. Alex likes to cite a rule of thumb he used during his military and agency careers: don't do anything stupid. He said this mission required an adjustment to that red line: don't do anything incredibly stupid.

Prior to Team Alpha's insertion, there was no ability to verify information from sources in Afghanistan. There would be no safety net, no rescue, and no medivac ability. The eight-man CIA Team Alpha was given the choice to say no. All said yes. They were mentally and emotionally committed to avenging 9/11. Alex told them to get one-million-dollar life insurance policies immediately.

Tribal warlord, General Dostum popped up on the radar through friendly Uzbekistan intelligence, as a leader who was



fighting the Taliban and needed help. The CIA wanted to find Dostum. Uzbek intelligence had his phone number. They talked via satellite used by ship to shore communication.

Team Alpha needed to validate the information they had received. Was Dostum for real? Or was he already captured and the Taliban was using him to lure the CIA in. Alpha needed to validate Dostum welcomed the U.S. Government, he had a viable fighting force, he was willing to fight the Taliban, confirm where he was, and determine his near-term needs. Dostum said he needed horse feed.

Dostum had no vehicles, only horses. Alex turned to his team and asked if anyone knew how to ride a horse. No one did. This would be on-the-job training.

The insertion plan was brief. Team Alpha would arrive on two

Blackhawk helicopters. The pilots were told not to take off right away. They were to remain for 20 to 30 seconds. If no one was shooting at the team when they got off, they would stay.

Team Alpha found themselves in a primitive and high threat environment. They met up with General Dostum who had approximately 300 to 600 fighters. The Taliban had 5000 to 7000 fighters. Team Alpha moved north with Dostum and his men. They were cold, tired, hungry, and didn't know what the outcome would be. The battlefield was perpetually fluid. You only owned the ground you stood on. The team did get uniforms for the fighters, so they could tell the good guys from the bad guys.

Dostum didn't speak any English though he understood some. He always had an "en-

gineer" by his side. Engineers in Afghanistan were men who were better educated and spoke English. Team Alpha relied on Dostum for the next day's plans. He knew the men and the lay of the land.

Dostum talked with the enemy every day on unsecure walkie-talkies. Team Alpha helped Dostum "orchestrate" defections from the Taliban. The Taliban fighters were conscripted and were told their villages would be destroyed if they didn't fight. So, they had no loyalties. Dostum knew the fighters weren't being paid and told them he had friends here who would take care of them. There were 300 to 500 fighters defecting at one time. How did Team Alpha know these defectors wouldn't turn on them? After all, the defectors were a larger force than Dostum's men. Dostum positioned the defectors ahead of his men. When it was time for another attack on a Taliban force, the defectors were the ones leading the attack. Willingness to lead the charge demonstrated their reliability.

ODA 595 was the first Special Forces group inserted into a denied area in Afghanistan to topple the Taliban. The Joint Special Operations Command in northern Afghanistan was called Task Force Dagger. ODA 595 also had to learn to ride horses. The horses were not trained,

Continued on next page

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 Community

Parrot Heads Flock Together to Remember

By JOSHUA COWSERT

On September 1st, 2023, the sunshine on the seas got a little bit dimmer as we said Goodbye to a legend, Jimmy Buffett. According to a press release, the beloved singer-songwriter passed away at his home in Sag Harbor, Long Island, surrounded by family and friends. Jimmy, 76, had been fighting Merkel Cell Skin Cancer for four years.

With a recording career that spanned more than 50 years and included hits such as “Margaritaville,” “Come Monday” and “It’s Five O’Clock Somewhere,” Jimmy was one of the most successful performers in popular music. He filled arenas with fans who called themselves “Parrot Heads,” and popularized a signature blend of folk, country and Caribbean music with lyrics that often reflected Buffett’s world travels.

Having spent part of his childhood in Mobile and nearby Fairhope, Ala., his name, brand and music mean a lot of things to a



lot of people, but to me it means friendship and charity. As a late arrival to the “Margaritaville lifestyle” that called so many to associate with his name, I’ve seen



so much more than what it seems from the outside looking in!

As a local and at my first run in with his fan club, the Emerald Coast Parrot Head Club, I was floored at how much more there was to find! Of course, there was fun to be had, but the primary saying of each and every encounter was, “Yes, we like to party, BUT with a purpose.” Time and again at each meeting, this concept was reinforced by the charitable donations of the fan club.

Ranging from children’s homes, to shelters for pets or people who are otherwise unable to find help, there is never a party without a close-to-home charity in mind!

In September, shortly after his passing, there was an exceptional party. However, as the purpose was a final send off for Jimmy, including the reading of a poem from one of the club members written to commemorate his passing, top rock tunes and memories of treasured times

were passed all around among friends! From concerts attended, to tailgate and after parties dearly remembered, each and every Parrot Head had something to share. We had all come together to honor and remember one of our own, and the very reason for our attendance!

According to Jimmy, “I’d rather die living, than live while I’m dead.” He certainly lived life to the absolute fullest. Though he travelled all over the world for his music, at its heart, there was always that longing for closeness to the sea and sandy beaches that he came from right here on the Emerald Coast. Come Monday, he could always walk back in those doors to boiling shrimp and a margarita; but come last Friday, he set out with toes in the water for his very own Key West in the sky.

Sail on, Skipper! We’ll see you again for our very own 5 o’clock watch!

AVENGING 9/11

continued from previous page

saddles were made of cows’ pelvic bones, and they had to jerry-rig the short stirrups with parachute cords. ODA 595 first headed to Uzbekistan on Oct. 5, 2001, then crossed into Afghanistan on Oct. 19 in an MH-47 Chinook helicopter.

Able to travel day or night, the horses allowed them to get around and behind the enemy, cutting them off from reinforcements or retreat. The horses allowed them to find the enemy’s position in the primitive and rugged terrain and call in air strikes on Taliban targets.

While occupying higher ground in order to have the best view of the land, trucks, machine guns, trenches, bunkers, and artillery, these Horse Soldiers of Afghanistan were not far from the fluid battlefield or the threat. ODA 595 executed offensive operations using the might of U.S. air power. The CIA was there to support ODA 595 and Dostum, and report back to the U.S.

On Nov. 10, ODA 595 and militia allies liberated the city of Mazar-e-Sharif from the Taliban. Weeks later, the Taliban surrendered in other areas of Afghanistan.

In November, 300 to 400 Taliban had surrendered to Dostum’s men. They were taken to a 19th century fortress. Mike Spann and Dave Tyson, members of Team Alpha, began initial interviews. Spann and Tyson suspected there might be foreign fighters in the group who might know of a future attack planned against the U.S. Tragically, this was a “Trojan Horse” plan. The defectors turned out to be Al Qaeda. They attempted to break out and killed Mike Spann. Dave Tyson fought his way out. It took three days to suppress the fighters. John Walker Lindh (“The American Taliban”) was there, though Team Alpha didn’t know this at the time. If the fighters had not been suppressed, they

would have killed everyone and undone the successful mission of defeating the Taliban.

Alex Hernandez says the collaboration between Team Alpha and ODA 595 was wonderful. He also credits the Air force,

its B52 Bombers, the Navy and Marine fighter pilots along with the rest of the Special Forces, a British team similar to our Navy Seals, and, of course, General Dostum and his men with the successful mission.



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Medicare Open Enrollment is Here! Now What?



BY GREG DURETTE, FLORIDA HEALTH CONNECTOR

It's finally here again: Medicare Open Enrollment or more precisely, the Annual Election Period (AEP). Every year, from October 15th to December 7th, Medicare eligible folks are able to do pretty much anything they want with their coverage. Some of my previous columns have addressed many of the details of those options but, simply put, you can add, drop or change virtually any plan and change to or from any insurance company. Piece of cake right? Wrong! The reason is, many folks do not want to relive the information overload they experienced when first becoming eligible. Remembering the volume of phone calls, emails and mountains of regular mail would understandably send anyone running for cover! Please know, this time will be different. First of all, you now have had some time to experience what the plan you originally selected, can or cannot do for

you. Were you happy with the premium? Were all your doctors in the network? Were all your prescriptions covered at a reasonable cost? Did you get any of the extra benefits like Dental, Vision, Hearing, Tele-Health, At Home Care, Caregiver Support or Over-the-Counter cash allowances? If the answer to any of these is no, then now is the time for you to get answers, so you can make the correct choices for 2024.

The problem for many folks becomes, where can they get this information without re-igniting the aforementioned onslaught? The answer - YOU need to initiate contact. That means calling your current agent or broker and/or finding other sources of information.

Calling Joe Namath will likely cause that onslaught to re-ignite as the company he represents simply gets you to call so they can SELL your information to any and all agents around the country willing to pay to get access to you. In fact, many of these types of advertisements do exactly the same thing. Call them all and get ready to buy the jumbo size mailbox and voicemail box!

Instead, look for advertising from local folks you know will be able to get you what you are looking for. They WON'T SELL your information to strangers. This simple tip will allow you to rest assured that you will not be overwhelmed again.

Once you have decided

which person or place to call, do it. But, be ready to answer a few questions about what you currently have, what you are paying (some plans can be as little as \$0 per month!) and what it is you would like to improve or change with a new plan. Also, make sure you are ready to answer questions about your doctors and prescriptions, so you can make sure what you are considering changing to will provide you with all you expect.

You are looking for no surprises; so, also have a few questions of your own!

The bottom-line message is this; be not afraid. This time of year (AEP) is designed to help you make improvements, not make you relive the trials and tribulations of your initial enrollment.

Reach out and look to how you can possibly make things better for you. Your health may change from year to year, but

your need for excellent health insurance remains a constant.

Follow these simple steps and make 2023 your best health insurance year yet!

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector, based in Niceville, and providing Medicare throughout the state. He has been in the insurance industry for over 40 years and can be reached at his office at (850) 842-2400 or his mobile at (978) 509-2941.



October 15

Medicare enrollment starts soon.

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Walton County Fair

The Walton County Fair 2023 takes place **October 16 - 21** at the Fair Grounds in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. Lots of family fun for the week! See Walton County Fair website for schedule of events, rides, pricing, youth activities, contest entries, live entertainment, and more!

The fair prides itself on continuing to update the areas for exhibits and entertainment. Exhibits at the fair still include animal, art, agriculture, handicrafts, potted plants, photography, and canned foods divisions. Children also have the opportuni-

ty to showcase their skills and talents with animals, speeches and educational posters. Entertainment is a big deal at the fair. Each year the building is filled with music - from gospel to country and western performers. The gospel sing on Saturday night has become a great hit and much-anticipated event.

Open Monday - Friday 5-10 p.m. and Saturday 12-10 p.m.

Learn more: walton-countyfair.com. 790 N 9th St. (Highway 83), DeFuniak Springs.

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Residential and Commercial



 Community

5 Tips to Lower Your Insurance Costs in a Rough Market

By JULIE A. MARTIN

1. Update your home. In this property insurance market, most of the standard carriers are imposing strict age guidelines on Roof, Heating, Wiring, and Plumbing. If your home is 20 years old or older, keep in mind that the older your roof is, the harder it will be to move your insurance to a different carrier. The same holds true for your hot water heater, which most carriers regard as too old once it has been in your home for at least 15 years.

2. Confirm with your agent that your insurance has all applicable discounts. Wind Mitigation discounts weigh heavily on your premium. Roof credits such as FBC, or Florida Building Code Equivalent, Hip roof, for roofs that slope on all four sides like a pyramid, and single wraps, may vastly decrease your premium from what it is now. If you have recently replaced your roof, it is best to order a new mitigation inspection directly afterwards, and submit it to your agent.

Carriers acknowledge new inspections as of the date they are received by the underwriting department, rather than the date they are performed.

3. Check your Total Insurable Replacement Cost. Ask your agent to update your replacement cost estimator. Most standard carriers have some form of inflation guard on their policies, which is designed to keep your dwelling coverage at or above the level required in order to fulfill the Florida Valued Policy Law. Due to the

recent burst of inflation in materials and the costs of hiring a licensed contractor, some policies may experience a bigger jump in dwelling coverage from policy term to policy term. It is best to check with your agent to be sure your home is not over-insured.

4. Smart Water Protection System. Some newer homes have a Smart Water Protection system which automatically shuts off the water in the event of accidental leakage, and many carriers offer a good discount to policyholders for having this device installed in their homes.

5. Increase Deductibles. This is a valid way to reduce your overall property insurance premium. However, there is a downside. For one thing, if raising your deductible significantly increases your potential out of

pocket expenses in the event of a claim, you have to decide if you are prepared for that risk. Secondly, some deductibles can only be changed at renewal. If you change your wind deductible from 2% to 5%, you will have to wait another year before changing it back, so be sure to calculate your potential out of pocket exposure before making this decision.

In this rough market, it is difficult to shop rates between carriers, but the best time to do that is after hurricane season ends, which is in December.

The guidelines are always the toughest in high summer, so that by December, many of the carriers have relaxed their rules enough for people to move from carrier to carrier with much less fuss and expense, and that, dear reader, is what we all want—peace of mind with less expense.



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BEST IN DESTIN 2019 BEST

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 12

of Walton County received \$300,000 to fund three new homes for families in Walton County with the expected impact of 3,650 annual nights of safe and secure housing for the children of the recipient families.

Mental Health Association of Okaloosa and Walton Counties received \$150,000 to fund the Brain Health Program geared toward early identification, assessment, and treatment for approximately 35 uninsured students ages 12 to 21 who experience mental health or substance abuse issues.

Opportunity Place, Inc. received \$150,000 to fund immediate housing for homeless children and their families to ensure they are safe and secure.

Point Washington Medical Clinic is DCWAF's newest beneficiary and received \$200,000 to fund the pediatric exam room and a teaching kitchen in their new facility designed to provide free medical care, education and resources to uninsured families.

Shelter House of Northwest Florida received \$200,000 to fund mental health play therapy, counseling and advocacy for youth affected by domestic violence as well as



childcare and other program supplies.

The Arc of the Emerald Coast received \$130,000 to fund the renovation and expansion of their facility warehouse into an after-school program center for children living with developmental differences.

Westonwood Ranch received \$225,000 for scholarships for individuals with developmental differences as well as funding their micro business programs and expansion project.

Youth Village received \$200,000 to fund program operations and scholarships for children from low-income households to attend their VPK and after-school programs as well as the renovation of two outdoor play areas.

DCWAF is also proud to make a \$55,000 contribution to the **Jumonville Family Children's Fund**.

The dates for next year's Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend are April 26-27, 2024. Tickets and details will be released in January. Learn more at <http://www.DCWAF.org>.



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Cracking the Code: City of Destin Code Compliance

BY TAMARA L. YOUNG, PUBLIC INFORMATION DIRECTOR FOR THE WORLD'S LUCKIEST FISHING VILLAGE

"... a hometown community approach with the intent of creating strong bonds with residents and visitors" reads part of the mission statement for the City of Destin Code Compliance Department. They do what you'd expect them to do – work on matters of public concern such as monitoring and enforcing a variety of ordinances, codes and regulations related to zoning, land use, building codes, public nuisance, beach vendors, livery vessels and short and long-term rentals. For the latter, Code has experienced an 8% increase in short-term rental registrations and has just this year discovered about a dozen never-before registered short-term rentals.

But they're striving to do even more.

Most recently, the Code Compliance Department has acquired new equipment to provide expanded services. All Code Compliance Officers are trained in CPR, and they were recently issued a water rescue disc and a portable flotation device (PFD) to respond to and assist with water rescues. The rescue discs are designed similar to a frisbee with a 100-foot cord attached to it, which allows an officer to throw this lifeline to a person in the water.

"We're often on the beach and by other waterways



throughout their day-to-day shifts," said Brian Eagar, Code Compliance Officer. "The rescue disc and inflatable life vest are valuable pieces of life-saving equipment that can assist in saving a distressed swimmer. Having this equipment helps us to be ready if any type of water-related incident occurs around or nearby us."

Code Compliance Officers were also issued first responder trauma kits that include a tourniquet, an emergency trauma dressing, a bleeding control dressing, two chest seals and a pair of rubber gloves.

"It is important to outfit our Code Compliance Officers with this equipment as they are routinely interacting with the public and driving around our community. Should there be an incident like a traffic crash, boat accident or some other emergency that we roll up on, we're now prepared to offer immediate life care measures that we

were not able to do before. It's our hope that the community recognizes that we're more than an enforcement arm of the city and that we can also be of assistance in someone's time of critical need," said Troy Williams, Code Compliance Director.

The Code Compliance Officers were also issued the life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug, Narcan, in the event they're called to a scene where it's needed.

"We began issuing this life-saving drug to our Code Compliance Officers due to their frequency of contact with the public. It is well known the United States suffers from an opioid epidemic and we would be naïve to think that with as many visitors that frequent

our great city that an overdose could not happen here. Narcan works to reverse the effects of a life-threatening opioid overdose or suspected opioid overdose. Again, we want to be able to provide an increased level of service to our community, both residents and visitors," said Williams.

Finally, the Code Compliance Officers were issued professional Big Easy brand "lock-out" kits.

"All the officers have these kits in their duty vehicles," said Brian Davis, Deputy Code Director. "These kits are of great importance when considering instances where a pet or, heaven forbid a child, is accidentally locked in a car."

The Code Compliance Department aims to be much more than enforcing ordinances and writing citations. Williams said,

"As we see it, part of our job is to avail ourselves of tools and equipment that better serve the whole community and create an atmosphere of public trust, transparency and accountability."

Although there are new faces, new equipment and new services offered, the hometown community approach is at the forefront of all they do. Within a week of acquiring the lockout tool, Code assisted a local resident who had locked her car keys in her vehicle while she was at work.

The City is holding a Code Compliance Workshop Monday, October 23 at 6 p.m. in the Annex. The workshop is open to the public and will offer the opportunity to meet with Code staff and ask any questions.









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Inspect What You Expect. Home Inspections—Buyer or a Seller?



BY GAIL PELTO

Home inspections are one of the privileges that a home buyer has when purchasing a home and are initiated once you have a contract in place. There are two purposes to have them done: one is to let you know what you are buying and the second is to find out if there are any issues that need to be addressed before you close and take possession of the home. There are many types of inspections. The two most common when purchasing a home are a Property Inspection and a WDO inspection:

Property inspection – the inspector conducts a thorough review of the home’s most important components i.e., structure, HVAC, plumbing, roof, electrical system. If they find any issues, they will point them out or recommend that a licensed professional do further investigation. They can also do a wind mitigation report which gives more detail about how the roof was installed and constructed; consequently, the wind mitigation report may result in some homeowner’s insurance benefits. My recommendation: **DO NOT WAIVE THE PROPERTY INSPECTION**, even if the home is newly built. Keep in mind that if you’re buying a “used” home, the inspector will most likely find items that are not up to today’s building codes. That’s normal. Also, know every item on the inspection report does not always contractually need to be repaired or replaced.

WDO Inspection – Wood Destroying Organisms, i.e., ter-

mites. We want your home to be pest free (and if financing, so does your lender!).

Mold inspection – Checks for water intrusion and mold. Particularly important if there’s been water intrusion, if mold remediation has taken place, if there are cracks in stucco, if something came up in the property inspection that warrants further investigation, etc.

Septic inspection – Sometimes buyers get a septic system inspection, sometimes not. It’s recommended if the property has a system that’s older and hasn’t been inspected in several years, and/or if there’s a problem flushing commodes or running water.

Foundation inspection – definitely recommended if you or the property inspector suspects an issue with the foundation.

Pool inspection – To make sure there’s no evidence of leaks, if all the equipment is in working order, etc.

Why should Sellers get an

inspection done? Sellers often lose out, because things could have been prevented that either delayed or jeopardized the sale of their home. So, I recommend that you get a Property Inspection to mitigate what you can as early as you can in the sales process. If you have a home that you are putting on the market for sale, then get an inspection done beforehand. First, it allows you to know up front what needs to be repaired or replaced. Second, if you’re handy, you just might be able to fix some of the items yourself which can save you money. Once you go under contract, anything that needs to be repaired/replaced by you now, contractually, has to be completed by a “licensed professional” (electrician, plumber, etc.).

Besides the list above, there are other inspections you can have done and the inspections you should consider having done all depend on the house you’re buying or selling. For more information, consult with



your real estate agent (ME!). Remember, inspect what you expect, and email me if you you’d like a pre-inspection checklist or list of local inspectors. I’m here to help: gail.pelto@gmail.com.

Gail Pelto is a Board Member with The Rotary Club of Destin and the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation—and yes, a powerful, full-time real estate agent with Keller Williams Realty Success Realty. Call her with any real estate questions you have, and she’ll guide you in the right direction. Call her direct at 850-374-0454 or email to Gail.Pelto@kw.com. Want to know what the value of your property is today? Go to www.DestinAgent.com.



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Insights for Investors: The Levers that Drive the Economy, Markets and Rates



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

This month we will do a review of the various levers – be those government, business or consumer that impact economic activity, the markets – stock, bond and money markets, and the cost of borrowing and the return when lending (bonds, CDs, money markets). A lever in the economy can have an impact on its own; or the collection of levers can have an even more significant impact.

Let's start with the **injection of money into the economy** during the pandemic. There was quite a lot of that. The U.S. government passed record spending bills and the Federal Reserve created massive amounts of money. Just a few short years later, we are still feeling the impact in that there is a significant excess of money out there, wherever that might be. That may have come to an end. Bloomberg notes that other than the wealthiest 20% of Americans, people in this country have run out of excess savings. That lever – stimulus by the Fed - in other words, may have dissipated. On its own that provided for a lot of money that for a while (due to the pandemic) was chasing too few goods and proved to be inflationary. And the government has spent the last year and a half trying to reduce inflation.

Next, energy prices, most notably the cost of crude oil, are a significant lever as well. Crude prices have climbed over 30% since June of this year. That could have an impact on inflation over the next few months, and perhaps the slowing of liquidity (cash) might balance that out. Only time will tell.

Deficit spending. Like it or not, when the U.S. government spends or overspends, that injects

a form of stimulus in the economy. That lever has an impact in several areas, however. One, it increases economic activity, but it also drives up the U.S. debt and makes the government compete for borrowing - potentially driving borrowing interest rates up. A potential effect is that this slows economic activity because private borrowing goes down and the economy slows down.

The federal budget. Two-thirds of the annual budget is made up of mandatory spending; Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid and other entitlements. As that is required spending it becomes a lever because it means the government has less flexibility on where it spends money. There is also the interest that the U.S. Treasury must pay on outstanding debt; that number is approaching the same amount that is spent on Defense. Interest paid is a lever because once again the U.S. government must compete for money thus driving rates up, which has the potential impact of driving economic activity down. The rise in longer-term (10-30 years) bonds recently helps explain that.

Social Security is becoming a growing source of income for many retired Americans. The number receiving benefits is now just shy of 70 million people. Social Security gets income from payroll taxes (individuals pay about 6.2% from their paychecks and their employer matches that). SS also gets income from the approximate \$3 trillion in government securities that it owns (as of 2022 and with obligations of \$6 trillion). It also gets income when Social Security benefits become taxable (about 50% of recipients pay taxes on their Social Security income). Whether or not benefits per recipient rise or fall, the sheer number of recipients is growing as the number of Americans over 65 increases. We can consider this another lever and its impact is seen on economic activity as well.

Rising long-term rates have an impact as well. For most of the past 18 months, interest rate increases were mainly at the short end of the yield curve (short maturities of 0 to 2 years). We are now seeing an increased supply of U.S. Treasuries and

when supply goes up, prices usually go down. When prices for bonds go down, their yields go up. Result: the lever of rising rates impacts stocks – mainly growth-oriented or low-dividend stocks – the Technology Sector as an example – means institutional investors might sell growth stocks and invest in longer-term higher-yielding bonds. That impact was what explained some of the decline in growth and Tech sector stocks in September.

Real estate. We will start with housing. The higher yields have resulted in higher mortgage rates hence the slowdown in buying of new homes (existing or new construction). Many Americans who have locked in a low rate on their mortgages are reluctant to sell (despite their gains on their property) because that will push them into a higher-rate mortgage. Impact of the lever – fewer existing homes for sale. Add to it that the growth of new households continues (the U.S. population is expanding by more than 100k per month) and more people need and want homes. That has increased the demand for rental units for both homes and apartments. The Consumer Price Index includes the cost of shelter as its biggest component so we can see how that lever impacts inflation. There is also the lingering unknown of what the multi-trillion-dollar market of commercial real estate refinancing could have on the economy. This debt, which starts coming due at an accelerated rate over the next few years is mainly held by regional banks (vs. larger national or smaller local community banks). That lever could impact the banking sector and its ability to lend but only time will tell if that lever has a significant impact.

September and October have, over time, proven to be more volatile for investors and the exact reasoning isn't really known. Is it a lever or more part of the reality of long-term investing? Regardless, some investors will chase returns and make short-term decisions even if they have long-term horizons. Many feel frustrated as perhaps not having owned the so-called super seven stocks which make up most of the market return year to date.

We have seen over time that the tortoise tends to outperform the hare but that – FOMO, or fear of missing out, is a lever as well.

We believe that strategy is defined by goal, time frame and most importantly, comfort level (the sleep-at-night factor). And of course, a bit of patience. The ultimate lever for an investor or saver is all these things combined.

The U.S. dollar. Hardly a day goes by when we are not bombarded by ads, politicians or talk show hosts who talk about the decline of the U.S. dollar. There is fear that other countries will unite to bring about a new world currency or that foreign banks and governments will stop buying U.S. Treasuries. The reality, as of this writing, is that the U.S. dollar is up in value by over 2% year to date. 80% of world commerce and 60% of foreign central bank reserves are in the U.S. dollars. The dollar is always being challenged and is no stranger to the consistency of that challenge. The lever of the strength of the dollar can be seen in that it acts as a counterweight to inflation.

The size of the Federal Reserve balance sheet. That

is the weekly reported statement of its assets and liabilities. In 2020 the Fed doubled the balance sheet to almost \$9 trillion dollars. It did that by creating money, which it can do, and buying bonds with it. Thus, it injected money into the economy. That lever cannot be understated. The balance sheet has had two growth spurts in the last 20 years, once following the financial crisis circa 2008 and most recently during 2020 as the pandemic took hold. That lever released liquidity and stimulus which many argue staved off an economic depression. The Fed is slowly reducing that balance sheet and is doing so by letting bonds it owns mature and not renewing them. They are not selling bonds as that lever could be dramatic on bond values and borrowing costs. That slow draw-down could take several years, and the impact of the lever is just that: liquidity. Some might argue that has helped with the so-called soft landing in the economy.

Productivity. The U.S. and the world rely upon productivity for increasing revenues, maintaining, or lowering the cost to

Continued on page 21

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Allison Fingall, 37, University Lending Group - Niceville
 Allison Morris, 38, We Reign Sickle Cell Corporation
 Alysson Wrann, 35, Smileology Dentistry
 Ashlee Olbricht (Leppert), 38, Healing the Hurricane Inspirational Life Coaching

Atiya Blackwell, 33, Noire. Real Estate
 Aubrey Claxton, 33, Boys & Girls Clubs of The Emerald Coast
 Aubrey Robbie, 26, United Way Emerald Coast
 Bekah Manley, 27, Corcoran Reverie



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Fall 2023 Class topics include:

The Pacific Air War (Zoom): A fast-paced look at the major events and leaps in technology that framed aerial warfare in the Pacific during WWII.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping (In-person): Any landscape can be Florida-friendly. This class will cover nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles, and give learners an opportunity to observe Florida-friendly and native plants in Walton County landscapes.

Tech Trends: ChatGPT and AI (Zoom): Learn about ChatGPT, an AI chatbot that uses natural language processing to create humanlike conversational dialogue. How does this impact business, social and personal interactions? Learn about this cutting-edge technology.

Magic of Memoir (Zoom): Review the essential elements of good writing, then move on to memoir structure, form and style. Students will begin work on their own opus, progressing in short form from rough draft through to final edits.

Florida Wildlife for Newcomers (In-person): Learn about common wildlife found in Florida communities. Wildlife conservation principles, basic biology, and best practices for protecting people, pets and property.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Discover Maritimes Coastal Wonders featuring Cabot Trail, Aug. 11–24, 2024
- OLLI Study Abroad Paris and Southern France with Dr. Arleen Pabon, May 24–June 8, 2024

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 Cali Hlavac, 38, To Do In Destin
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 CJ Davis, 32, Step One Automotive Group and 1Shot Creations
 Daniel Anderson, 35, Eglin Federal Credit Union
 Hannah Cobb, 30, Salt Water Vacations
 Harley Peters, 28, Emerald Coast Science Center
 Hope Finch, 33, Bridgeway Center, Inc.
 J. Clint Hill, 33, The Turf Tailors Lawn Care and Landscaping
 John Emsing, 31, Florida SBDC at UWF
 Jonathan Slater, 33, BayView Private Wealth
 Kameko McGuire, 40, New Hope Mental Health and Wellness
 Kate MacMillan, 35, Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation
 Katie Rose Robison, 35, LiveOak Fiber
 Kayla O'Leary, 29, Waypoint Title, LLC
 Kevin Schmidt, 36, Books By Schmidt, Inc. Be My Shopper, Kombi Keg Florida
 Kristina Passenier, 35, Beast Code
 Kyle Corbitt, 39, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
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 Matthew Hawley, 36, Okaloosa County EMS
 McKenzie Burleigh, 37, Rowland Publishing, Inc.
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 Nickie Cobble, 23, Honor Processing
 Rosalyn Wik, 37, Shelter House
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 Sierra Elliott, 29, Hurlburt Field SAPR Team
 Tiffany Orner, 40, Forever Warriors

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Decorating your Home for the Fall



BY KIM SCHNEIDER,
COASTAL DESIGN BY KIM

Fall marks the transition from summer to winter and with any luck, it will bring us some cooler temperatures. Whimsical Pumpkins on the porch, wreaths draped with autumn leaves, and a chunky throw adorning the sofa are all classic fall favorites. Below are a few ways you can decorate your home for the fall season with a twist on the classics.

Porch Scapes – Create holiday curb appeal with a porch scape. You can decorate with pumpkins and gourds in various sizes, corn stalks, potted mums, sunflowers or magnolias, bails of hay to create height variances, battery-operated lanterns and other seasonal props. This idea works even if you don't have a porch, simply decorate the walkway up to your front door or if you have double-doors stage your porch scape in the corner of the door you don't utilize.

Fall Colors – We're familiar with the standard orange, yellow and red colors that are used for fall, but this year try utilizing natural, rich tones like shades of brown and deep greens. Add in a few blues and creams as a nod to where we live. While these colors may not be your traditional fall colors they will



deliver a pop of sophistication to your space without overpowering it. However, if you prefer using the standard fall colors, by all means, do so but try incorporating a few other colors like the white, off-white or gray-ish fairytale pumpkins and a few brown and dark green leaves. I'm pretty sure you'll love the outcome.

Textured Fabrics – For a cozy feel, layer chunky cable knit or boucle throws, and textured and velvet pillows to your favorite chair or sofa. Adding a combination of any of these chunky, textured fabrics will quickly transform any space into a warm welcome feeling. For a less traditional color scheme try using muted plaids like a lavender and cream pillow with a solid aubergine throw or a coastal blue-green and cream throw with a jade or evergreen pillow.

Patterns with a Pop – Using bold colors and fun patterns shows off your personality and

adds life to any space. Paint an accent wall in a bold color or add a fun patterned rug or pillows to a room. You don't have to invest a lot of money in these items since they will be used for a short period of time, but they sure add an unexpected "pop" while on show.

Be Entertainment Ready – Fall is a perfect time to gather with friends and family before we're inundated with a hectic holiday schedule. Using candles

or essential oils in a fall scent provides an instant feel of coziness. Pre-set your dining room table with linens, fall foliage and candles, but I suggest you use unscented candles when eating. Adding a fall-colored hand towel and scented hand soap quickly transforms your powder room too.

While our weather isn't always fall-friendly, we can still create a fall atmosphere despite our temperatures. When you

choose to decorate for fall is totally up to you, but I like to start transitioning my home early so I can enjoy the fall decor before jumping into Christmas (it's the Friday after Thanksgiving for me). Contact Coastal Design by Kim at (850) 904-6622 with all of your holiday décor needs or if you have a design project that you'd like to get started. We're here to help YOU with all of your interior design needs. www.coastaldesignbykim.com.

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- Furniture Selection
- Furniture Reupholstery
- Art & Accessory Selection



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INSIGHTS

continued from page 19

produce a unit of a good or a service. Productivity, at least in the U.S., despite inflation and rising rates has been increasing. The impact of that lever is significant in that it could lead to higher earnings and hence more growth for many U.S. companies.

Lastly, **artificial intelligence**. As we have noted before, AI has the potential to impact productivity and contribute to economic growth across just about every sector of the economy.

Diversification and asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Holding investments for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome.

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

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There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk, and unique tax consequences. To learn more about these risks and the suitability of these bonds for you, please contact our office.






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Travel is Back! Switzerland Anyone?



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 trav-

eler'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-10 are planning a dream vaca-



tion 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 an adventure in Switzerland. You can travel along the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland and enjoy some of the best scenic train rides in the world! You'll be sipping a cappuccino next to a palm tree and a few hours later find yourself on top of a glacier. Admire one of the most famous mountains

in the world, the Matterhorn. In cosmopolitan Geneva, view the Alps towering over Lake Geneva. We can arrange your only-in-Switzerland activities like assembling your own Swiss watch and a special tour of Swiss chocolate shops. Enter Interlaken to hike the trails of the Bernese Oberland, skim over Lake Brienz where waterfalls roar and float over the crystal-line waters of Lake Thun. As you ascend the gloriously scenic route to Jungfrauoch – top of Europe – you'll immediately earn bragging rights for reaching the highest railroad station in Europe. See the whole world anew as you stand 11,333 feet high in the bracing air while overlooking Europe's longest glacier. Uncover 2,000 years of history in Zurich's classic Old Town and sparkling Lake Zurich. And there's still Lausanne, Ticino, Zermatt and the Glacier Express to discover and explore!

I can't think of a better way to meet some of my readers than on one of our amazing hosted trips.

Thanks for 'Travelin' with JoDell!

CENTURY 21
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Golf Series: Mattie's Legacy Lives On at Kelly Plantation



BY BARBARA PALMGREN

There's a street in Kelly Plantation called "Mattie's Way." It was named after the late Mattie Kelly, whose Irish and southern roots strongly influenced a scenic subdivision with a championship golf course, equestrian center, nature-centered walkways and jogging trails that included a 225-acre nature preserve. Mattie Kelly owned the land and didn't sell it until she found developers she trusted to plan the community in her name and with her vision.

Unfortunately, within the first few months of beginning the project, Mattie's life was cut short at only 80 years of age. But her dream continued in 1992 with gracious homes, manicured lawns and community covenants to insure a picture-perfect postcard community. Kelly Plantation Golf Club, the crown jewel in the middle of stunning scenery and designer homes, was fashioned by Fred Couples and Gene Bates. In the early 19th century, the land was part of a large turpentine industry with towering pines along miles of waterfront and intricate bayous. Kelly Plantation Golf Club was built along miles of panoramic views of Choctawhatchee Bay with 7,000 yards of contoured greens, wide manicured fairways, hazards and sand traps.

Beyond the golf course itself, the large clubhouse offers

diverse menu options to be enjoyed in the clubhouse or on the covered veranda overlooking a beautiful lake with views of the 9th and 18th greens. I remember attending the Blount-Bowden Scholarship award event for local college scholarship winners held one evening at Kelly Plantation Golf Club. Our granddaughter was awarded one of the scholarships. The evening was staged beautifully with large tents framing the veranda and a great sound system for Bobby Bowden to speak and present awards after a delicious meal.

But, let's talk golf. This semi-private 18-hole golf course, nestled in the heart of Destin, is one of the area's premium golf experiences. The course stretches 7,099 yards which is a serious driving test for long hitters. Novice golfers enjoy the forward tees with easier layout and scenic appeal. Hole number 4 captivates with a panoramic view of Choctawhatchee Bay. Native flora such as magnolias and palmettos add to the beauty. Other lakes and sand traps often await an errant golf shot. So, the golfer should take ample precautions and keep drives safely in the manicured fairways.

Carts are GPS-equipped, so there is no excuse not to know accurate yardage. The challenge is to execute the perfect golf shot to be on a green in regulation. Prior to teeing off on hole number 1, a golfer can practice at the driving range, and chip and putt around practice bunkers and a lush practice green. Large bins of cold apples await golfers, so vitamins as well as liquid refreshment provide extra energy when needed.

In addition to the main clubhouse, there is also an Owners' Club House. It has a large patio deck, grill, pool and kids' playground. The Club House is the heart of Kelly Plantation's an-



nual social events in addition to the Board and Town Hall meetings throughout the year.

Golf course manager John Townsend, who began his career in various golf management positions for courses both in Georgia and in the Jacksonville and Tallahassee areas, considers Kelly Plantation the pinnacle of golf courses. Graduating from Valdosta State in the late 90's with a degree in sports medicine, John accepted a unique golf management position and found that golf management was what he truly enjoyed. Now, assisted by Robert Whitt, head golf professional, John tells us that the positive post-pandemic numbers for golfers playing 18 holes at Kelly Plantation has continued with tee times costing between \$189 and \$129 for an 18-hole round of golf (depending on time of day.) Hole number 7 is John's favorite, because there are two angles or options from the tee box.

Kelly Plantation gives back to the community with at least several charity tournaments. They take pride in hosting two annual tournaments, one for Children in Crisis and one for the Children's Advocacy Center.

So, would Mattie be pleased if she looked down from the

heavens today at her vision for the old turpentine industry? I can imagine her bright, smiling eyes and sense she would be thrilled with the gated community and the clubhouse at the center of her dream. Perhaps she might be singing,

*"When Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure, 'tis like a morn' in spring
In the lilt of golfers' laughter
You can hear the songbirds sing
When golf strokes are rewarded
With pars and birdies, too.
Yes, my course will make you happy,
It may steal your heart away."*

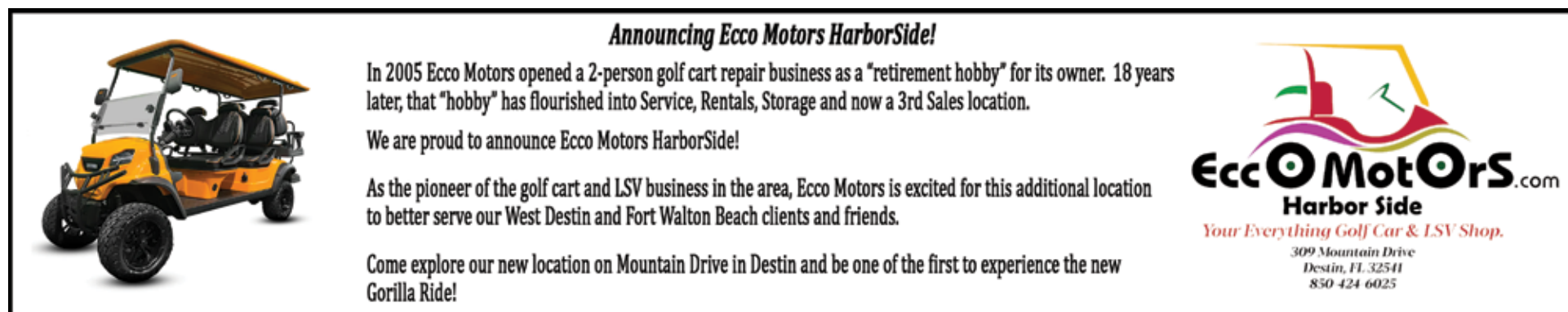


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Emerald Coast Classic Tickets on Sale

Tickets for the 9th annual Emerald Coast Classic college basketball tournament, presented by Global Sports, are on sale on the official tournament website www.emeraldcoastclassic.com. Tickets start at \$20 per session with each session having two games.

The Emerald Coast Classic will be played Thanksgiving weekend Nov. 24-25 at Raider Arena on the campus of Northwest Florida State College.

Alabama will face Ohio State in a semifinal round game at 6 p.m. central time on Friday, Nov. 24, while Oregon will play Santa Clara at 8:30 p.m. The

third-place game will be played at 3 p.m. on Saturday Nov. 25 with the championship game scheduled for a 6 p.m. tip off on that Saturday.

Alabama was ranked No. 1 in the final Associated Press basketball poll, posting a 31-6 record while winning both the SEC regular-season and post-season tournament titles. Under the guidance of coach Nate Oats, Alabama was the top overall seed in the 2023 NCAA Tournament, while advancing to its ninth Sweet 16 Tournament appearance in school history.

Oregon advanced to the



quarterfinal round of the 2023 NIT en route to a 21-16 record. The Ducks have won 20 or more games in each of Dana Altman's 13 seasons as head coach, advancing to the 2017

NCAA Final Four.

Ohio State went 16-19 in 2022-23 and was ranked No. 52 in the final NET rankings.

Santa Clara had a 23-10 record last year — the most reg-

ular season wins at the school since the 1968-69 season — while advancing to the NIT.

Other games at Northwest Florida State College on Friday Nov. 24 have Mercer playing Tennessee State at 11 a.m., while Southeastern Louisiana meets Western Michigan at 1:30 p.m. These teams will play their second game Nov. 25 with tip offs at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

"We're excited about the rich tradition of this year's tournament field," said tournament director Maury Hanks, chief executive officer of Global Sports. "We continue to strive to bring the best college basketball teams possible to the Emerald Coast of Florida."

Global Sports has produced 52 multi-team college basketball tournaments since 2007.



NAVY VET

continued from page 10

Shayla in Power Rangers: Wild Force. "When I moved from LA, I wondered, what do I do now?" says Ann Marie. "All I'd ever done through life is act. So I started teaching. I like to help the next generation of actors along this great path." Ann Marie liked Kevin's voice, but saw greater things for him. "I said, why don't we put him on camera?"

Six weeks later, Kevin was cast in the movie "Atlantic Rim" as an extra. Ann Marie was the casting director and fellow actor Steve Marlow said he liked Kevin's voice, which earned Kevin an invitation to her open call designed to meet new talent. Local voice actor Johnny Alexander brought his boom box and they played Kevin's demo. She signed him on the spot. So far, Kevin has had roles in about 30 movies, including seven as the lead actor. He has completed more than 150 voice-over projects as well.

One of his proudest voice-over gigs was as a volunteer for WUWF 88.1's Sightline program.

"We read stories — cold, no rehearsal — from the Pensacola News Journal to our blind and visually impaired audience," he says. "I also narrated 55 children's books for WUWF's 'The Children's Hour.' In nine years, I logged a total of 770 volun-



teer hours with WUWF. I admit to being proud of that. Volunteering at WUWF was a way I found to give back to the community for all the good fortune I've had in my life."

Later, he saw an ad on Facebook for automated recording — dubbing — working with award-winning director Benh Zeiten, who won an Oscar for "Beasts of the Southern Wild." "He was the nicest, sweetest guy," Kevin remembers. One of Kevin's favorite roles was that of Mr. X in a short indie film titled "X's and O's." An actress played Mrs. O in the film, which won the audience award at the 2015 Kite Film Festival in Destin. "It was very good exposure," he says.

While acting looks easy, sometimes it's difficult. Kevin's toughest role was in a series out of Milton called "Kookville." "I got two days' notice," Kevin said. "An actor had dropped out and I got his role."

On top of that, he says, "The

script was so wordy, there was so much to say. It was hard for me to retain all the lines."

What does the future look like for Kevin?

"I hope to keep working," he says. "As you get older, parts are few and far between on camera, but voice is alive and well." To that

end, he has acted in several audio drama series, the newest of which is "The East Haven Eight." "All I have to do is get the scripts, do my lines and send it in," Kevin says. The series is about eight teens who, caught in an exploding building, develop superpowers. He plays the hard-boiled news reporter constantly grilling the kids about their powers.

He's also signed for an upcoming local documentary about a man who helps people. He's not well-to-do, but has made helping others his life work.

It's been an interesting trip for Kevin Gaddie, from two decades as a Navy journalist to voice-over actor to the silver screen. But it's not over yet. "I'd like to say I'm thankful and humble for all the good fortune I've had in film and voice-over in these last 10 years," he says. "I wish I had found this years ago, but it's not too late."

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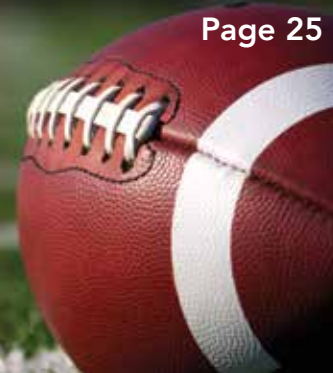
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2023 Football Guide

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



BY SCOTT MILLER

With the first month or so of the 2023 College Football season in the books, we're starting to see who's who this season.

There are still a number of teams which are undefeated and right where we expected them to be such as Georgia and Ohio State, for example. And there are also quite a few other teams, who surprisingly, perhaps, also still sit undefeated such as Florida St., Miami (FL), North Carolina, Louisville, Kentucky, Missouri, Michigan and Penn State, to name a few which are a just

Best Places to Watch Your Favorite Teams

plain fun to watch.

I can't wait to see what October brings. For football fans here in Destin, there are so many great places to enjoy the games right here in our own backyard. There's spots full of big screen TVs and diehard fans where we can gather to watch our favorite teams play while enjoying some really great food and drinks, too. Football season was made for hanging out with good friends and making new ones, too. Home field advantage goes a long way. So, here's a few of my favorite "home field venues" to check out and enjoy all month long. Whether you cheer War Eagle, Roll Tide or We are... Penn State, one thing's for sure. There's no better place to be then right here in Destin.

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 Harbor. 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!

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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.

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Austons98.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

Continued on page 28

AJ's FOOTBALL IS BACK!

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& COLLEGE GAMEPLAN

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MENUS AT EACH LOCATION

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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	Oct 7	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Alabama	@Texas A&M	ARK	TENN	OPEN	LSU	@UK	UT CHAT	@AUB
Arkansas	@OLE MISS	@BAMA	MISS ST.	OPEN	@FLA	AUBURN	FL INT	MIZZOU
Auburn	OPEN	@LSU	OLE MISS	MISS ST.	@VANDY	@ARK	N MEX ST	BAMA
Florida	VANDY	@S CAR	OPEN	UGA	ARK	@LSU	@MIZZOU	FSU
Georgia	UK	VANDY	OPEN	UF	MIZZOU	OLE MISS	@TENN	@GA TECH
Kentucky	@UGA	MIZZOU	OPEN	TENN	@MISS ST	BAMA	@SC	@L'VILLE
LSU	@MIZZOU	AUB	ARMY	OPEN	@BAMA	FLA	GA ST	Texas A&M
MSU	W MICH	OPEN	@ARK	@AUB	KY	@Texas A&M	So MISS	OLE MISS 9/23
Missouri	LSU	@UK	S CAR	OPEN	@GA	TENN	FLA	@ARK
Ole Miss	ARK	OPEN	@AUB	VANDY	Texas A&M	@GA	UL-MONROE	@MISS ST
SC	OPEN	FLA	@MIZZOU	@Texas A&M	JAX ST	VANDY	UK	CLEMSON
Tenn	OPEN	Texas A&M	@BAMA	@UK	YUCONN	@MIZZOU	UGA	VANDY
TX A&M	BAMA	@TENN	OPEN	S CAR	@Ole Miss	MISS ST	Abilene Christ	@LSU
VAN	@FLA	UGA	OPEN	@OLE MISS	AUB	@S CAR	OPEN	@TENN

ACC	Oct 7	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Boston C	@ARMY	OPEN	@Ga Tech	YUKON	@SYR 11/3	V TECH	@PITT 11/16	MIAMI 11/24
Clemson	WAKE	OPEN	MIAMI	@NC ST	ND	GA TECH	N CAR	@S CAR
Duke	OPEN	NC State	@FSU	@L'VILLE	WAKE 11/2	@NC	@VIR	PITT
Florida St	VA TECH	SYR	DUKE	@WAKE	@PITT	MIAMI	N ALA	@FLA
Ga Tech	@MIAMI	OPEN	BC	NC	@VIR	@CLEMSON	SYR	UGA
Louisville	ND	@PITT	OPEN	DUKE	VA TECH	VIR 11/9	@MIAMI	KY
Miami	GA TECH	@NC	CLEMSON	VIR	@NC ST	@FSU	L'VILLE	BC
NC	SYR	MIAMI	VIR	@GA TECH	CAMPBELL	DUKE	@CLEMSON	@NC ST
NC State	MARSHALL	@DUKE	OPEN	CLEMSON	MIAMI	@Wake	@VA TECH	NC
Pitt	OPEN	L'VILLE	@WAKE	@ND	FSU	@SYR	@BC 11/16	DUKE
Syracuse	@NC	@FSU	OPEN	VA Tech10/26	BC 11/3	PITT	@GA TECH	WAKE
Virginia	WM & MARY	OPEN	@NC	@MIAMI	GA TECH	@L'VILLE 11/9	DUKE	VA TECH
Va Tech	PITT	WAKE	OPEN	SYR 10/26	@L'VILLE	@BC	NC ST	@VIR
WAKE	@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 5

Thursday, October 5

Chicago Bears at Washington Commanders, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, October 8

Jacksonville Jaguars at Buffalo Bills (London), 8:30 a.m., NFL Network
Houston Texans at Atlanta Falcons, Noon, Fox
Carolina Panthers at Detroit Lions, Noon, Fox
Tennessee Titans at Indianapolis Colts, Noon, CBS
New York Giants at Miami Dolphins, Noon, Fox

New Orleans Saints at New England Patriots, Noon, CBS
Baltimore Ravens at Pittsburgh Steelers, Noon, CBS
Cincinnati Bengals at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m., Fox
Philadelphia Eagles at Los Angeles Rams, 3:05 p.m., Fox
New York Jets at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Kansas City Chiefs at Minnesota Vikings, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Dallas Cowboys at San Francisco 49ers, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, October 9

Green Bay Packers at Las Vegas Raiders, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Bye week: Cleveland Browns, Los Angeles Chargers, Seattle Seahawks, Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Week 6

Thursday, October 12

Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, October 15

Baltimore Ravens at Tennessee Titans (London), 8:30 a.m., NFL Network
Washington Commanders at Atlanta Falcons, Noon, CBS
Minnesota Vikings at Chicago Bears, Noon, Fox
Seattle Seahawks at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon, CBS
San Francisco 49ers, at Cleveland Browns, Noon, Fox
New Orleans Saints at Houston Texans, Noon, Fox
Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars, Noon, CBS
Carolina Panthers at Miami Dolphins, Noon, CBS
Detroit Lions at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon, Fox
New England Patriots at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m., CBS
Arizona Cardinals at Los Angeles Rams, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Philadelphia Eagles at New York Jets, 3:25 p.m., Fox
New York Giants at Buffalo Bills, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, October 16

Dallas Cowboys at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Bye week: Green Bay Packers, Pittsburgh Steelers

Week 7

Thursday, October 19

Jacksonville Jaguars at New Orleans Saints, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, October 22

Detroit Lions at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, Fox
Las Vegas Raiders at Chicago Bears, Noon, Fox
Cleveland Browns at Indianapolis Colts, Noon, CBS



Buffalo Bills at New England Patriots, Noon, CBS
Washington Commanders at New York Giants, Noon, CBS
Atlanta Falcons at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon, Fox
Pittsburgh Steelers at Los Angeles Rams, 3:05 p.m., Fox
Arizona Cardinals at Seattle Seahawks, 3:05 p.m., Fox
Green Bay Packers at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Los Angeles Chargers at Kansas City Chiefs, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Miami Dolphins at Philadelphia Eagles, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, October 23

San Francisco 49ers at Minnesota Vikings, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Bye week: Carolina Panthers, Cincinnati Bengals, Dallas Cowboys, Houston Texans, New York Jets, Tennessee Titans

Week 8

Thursday, October 26

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Buffalo Bills, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, October 29

Houston Texans at Carolina Panthers, Noon, Fox
Los Angeles Rams at Dallas Cowboys, Noon, Fox
Minnesota Vikings at Green Bay Packers, Noon, Fox
New Orleans Saints at Indianapolis Colts, Noon, Fox
New England Patriots at Miami Dolphins, Noon, CBS
New York Jets at New York Giants, Noon, CBS
Jacksonville Jaguars at Pittsburgh Steelers, Noon, CBS
Atlanta Falcons at Tennessee Titans, Noon, CBS
Philadelphia Eagles at Washington Commanders, Noon, Fox
Cleveland Browns at Seattle Seahawks, 3:05 p.m., Fox
Baltimore Ravens at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Kansas City Chiefs at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Cincinnati Bengals at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m., CBS
Chicago Bears at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, October 30

Las Vegas Raiders at Detroit Lions, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

Week 9

Thursday, November 2

Tennessee Titans at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:15 p.m., Prime Video

Sunday, November 5

Miami Dolphins at Kansas City Chiefs (Frankfurt), 8:30 a.m., NFL Network
Minnesota Vikings at Atlanta Falcons, Noon, Fox

Seattle Seahawks at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, CBS
Arizona Cardinals at Cleveland Browns, Noon, CBS
Los Angeles Rams at Green Bay Packers, Noon, Fox
Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Houston Texans, Noon, CBS
Washington Commanders at New England Patriots, Noon, Fox

Chicago Bears at New Orleans Saints, Noon, CBS
Indianapolis Colts at Carolina Panthers, 3:05 p.m., CBS
New York Giants at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Dallas Cowboys at Philadelphia Eagles, 3:25 p.m., Fox
Buffalo Bills at Cincinnati Bengals, 7:20 p.m., NBC

Monday, November 6

Los Angeles Chargers at New York Jets, 7:15 p.m., ESPN
Bye week: Denver Broncos, Detroit Lions, Jacksonville Jaguars, San Francisco 49ers



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Open 7 Days a Week
11 AM - 9 PM

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Home of the 102 ft. bar including 32 beers on draft!

HAPPY HOUR!
3-6 pm Daily

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EARLY BIRD DINNER SPECIALS
Mon.-Fri. 4-6 pm

Destin Harbor

Live Music on the Docks

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

BEST PLACES

continued from page 25

making oysters a delicacy. Boat-house'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 Boat-house hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on Facebook for updates.

(850) 837-3645

288-B Harbor Blvd., Destin
Boathouseoysterbardestin.com**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

On the Harbor in Destin,
172 Harbor Blvd.
tailfinsdestin.com

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 connec-

tions 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 6 / Saturday 10-7**Kentucky @ Georgia 6 pm ESPN
Alabama @ Texas A&M 2:30 pm
CBSLSU @ Missouri 11 am ESPN
Maryland @ Ohio St 11 am FOX
Michigan @ Minnesota 6:30 pm NBC
Virginia Tech @ Fla St 2:30 pm ABC
Wake Forest @ Clemson 2:30 pm.

ACCN

Notre Dame @ Louisville 6:30 pm ABC

Week 7 / Saturday 10-14Auburn @ LSU TBD
UMass @ Penn St 2:30 pm
Missouri @ Kentucky TBD
USC @ Notre Dame 6:30 pm MBC
Syracuse @ Florida St TBD
Indiana @ Michigan TBD
Ohio St. @ Purdue TBD
Texas A&M @ Tennessee TBD
Georgia @ Vanderbilt TBD
Arkansas @ Alabama TBD**Week 8 / Saturday 10/21**Mississippi @ Auburn TBD
Penn St @ Ohio St TBD
Duke @ Florida St TBD
Clemson @ Miami (FL) TBD
Tennessee @ Alabama TBD
Michigan @ Michigan St TBD
UCF @ Oklahoma TBD**Week 9 / Saturday 10/28**Mississippi @ Auburn TBD
Indiana @ Penn St TBD
Georgia @ Kentucky 2:30 pm CBS
Florida St. @ Wake Forest TBD
Ohio St @ Wisconsin TBD
N Carolina @ Georgia Tech TBD
Oklahoma @ Kansas TBD
Tennessee @ Kentucky TBD
BYU @ Texas TBD**Week 10 / Saturday 11/4**Missouri @ Georgia TBD
LSU @ Alabama TBD
Auburn @ Vanderbilt TBD
Texas A&M @ Mississippi TBD
Penn St @ Maryland TBD
Notre Dame @ Clemson TBD
Washington @ USC TBD
Kentucky @ Mississippi St TBD

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BOATHOUSE

OYSTER BAR

A Locals Favorite For Over 30 Years!



LIVE MUSIC!

Mondays:	4pm: Cole Jordan 8pm: Roshambo
Tuesdays:	4pm: Zach Renzi 8pm: Austin Jennings
Wednesdays:	4pm: Hunter & Tony 8pm: Smoke Show
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
Lunch Specials M-F for \$9.99
Slacker Sunday Oyster Brunch 11 am

288 Harbor Blvd, Destin
(850) 837-3645

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BoathouseOysterBar
www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com




What's Your Fudpucker's Story?

Spanning a remarkable 42-year history, Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill is a treasure trove of stories. Whether it's stories of love at first sight, exuberant nights spent dancing with lifelong friends, celebrations that turned into marriage proposals, or even the heart-breaking episodes that accompany life's twists and turns—everyone has a Fudpucker's story to tell.

Long-time residents, vacationers, and even passersby in the Emerald Coast area are likely to share a memorable experience connected to this iconic location.

My Story

My own Fudpucker's journey began back in 1992 and it still continues to unfold today. For those who recall the vibrant '90s, Fudpucker's was the go-to spot for electrifying late-night escapades. Both The Big Deck and the Down Under Bar teemed with activity; the drinks were potent, the atmosphere electric, and the company always enjoyable.

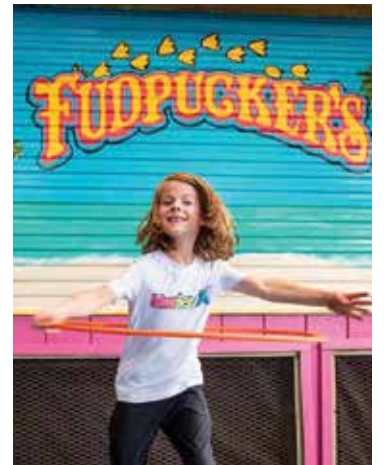
Fudpucker's was the epicenter for events, hosting everything from sizzling bikini contests to unbeatable "\$2 Anything" drink specials. Top-tier bands like Miss Demeanor and Black Eyed Blonde often graced the stage.

In a twist of fate that still warms my heart, it was at Fudpucker's where I had my first date with the woman who would become my wife—a marriage that's been going strong for a quarter-century. Our family's legacy with Fudpucker's has come full circle; all my children had their first jobs there, and I've proudly been part of the Fudpucker's team for nine seasons myself.

The Gulf Coast's Story

Over its 42-year existence, Fudpucker's has woven itself into the very fabric of the Gulf Coast community. Starting as a snack bar at Nighttown to its original beachside location along Scenic Highway 98 and the distinctive settings on Okaloosa Island, South Walton County and in Destin, Fudpucker's stands as a stalwart symbol of the vibrant destination that is the Emerald Coast.

The legendary green doors



of Fudpucker's have welcomed countless visitors, offering some of the best food and fun the area has to offer. The venue's transformation from a late-night bar to a family-friendly dining and entertainment complex—complete with Northwest Florida's only Alligator Park—ensures that it continues to cater to a diverse crowd.

Father Fud, the whimsical and ever-entertaining patriarch of Fudpucker's, often jests, "Fudpucker's has served so many people that there's likely a World Famous Fudpucker T-shirt in every corner of the globe!" While this might be an exaggeration, the sentiment holds true. Visitors enjoy their time at Fudpucker's so much that they often want to take a slice of that experience home with them, typically in the form of one of their best-selling t-shirts, with the catchy slogan: "Ya Ain't Been Pucked, Till Ya Been Fudpucked."

Patron's Stories

Two particular stories stand out for me. The first involves a couple celebrating their 15th anniversary at Fudpucker's. I was utterly astonished when they revealed they had commemorated every single anniversary with a special dinner at Fudpucker's since their wedding day.

The second one concerns a long-standing tradition of signing the walls at Fudpucker's. I once helped a large family find a marker for their young children to add their signatures beside those of relatives whose inked contributions spanned two decades. This tradition is more than ink on the wall—it's a testament to generations of cherished family moments.

These compelling tales encapsulate Fudpucker's undeniable "X-Factor." They represent the myriad memories forged within these walls—whether

it's the thrill of holding an alligator for the first time, the joy of sharing this unique spot with friends and family, or even the simple act of inscribing your name alongside countless others on the walls of Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill.

Your Story

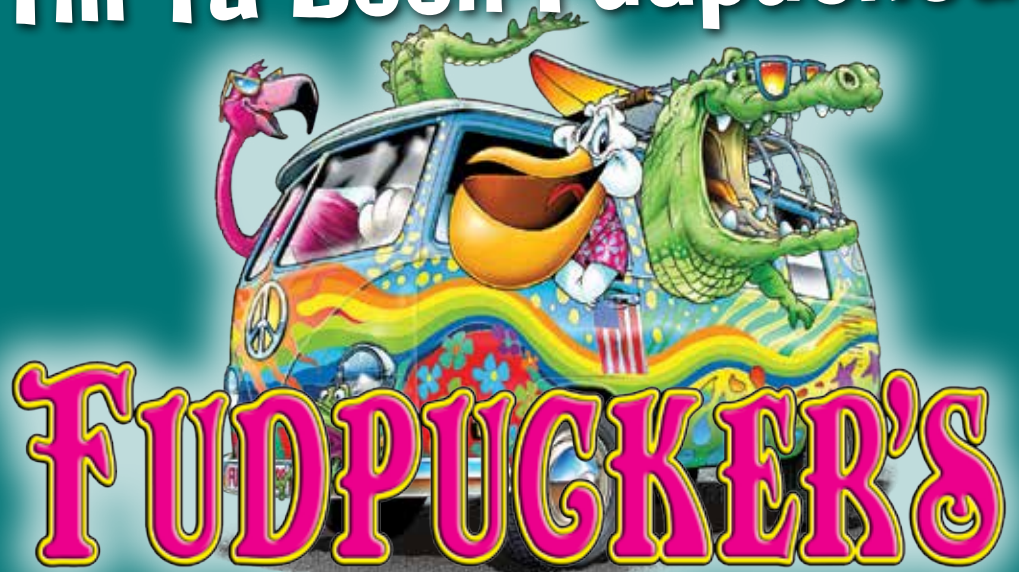
If you haven't been to Fudpucker's in a while, stop on by and enjoy what the visitors to Destin enjoy. Bring your family, eat some food, have some fun, and see some gators! And don't forget to leave your mark on the walls at Fudpucker's.

So, Fudpucker's has a story. What's yours?

Visit us at 20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy. in Destin. Visit us on the web at www.Fudpucker.com.

FREE ADMISSION TO FUDPUCKER'S GATOR BEACH

"Ya Aint Been Pucked,
Till Ya Been Fudpucked"



FUDPUCKER'S

Beachside Bar & Grill

GREAT FOOD & DRINKS
ALLIGATORS
WORLD FAMOUS T-SHIRTS

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DESTIN (850) 654-4200 | FUDPUCKER.COM | #FUDPUCKER

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
emerladcoastoliveoil.com

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill in Destin has been locally owned and operated since inception in 1982. Fudpucker's restaurant stands out by being dedicated to its owners' three favorite "F" words: Food, Fun and Family. And, you can be assured that there's plenty of each when you visit Fudpucker's restaurant in Destin. Fudpucker's is not just a restaurant, it's not just a bar, and it's certainly not just a "tourist" place – it's a one-of-a-kind entertainment experience, and one that can be enjoyed by kids and families of all ages.

(850) 654-4200
20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy.
Destin
fudpucker.com

Lady Ray's Culinary Delights

Your local, fast casual Bakery, Cafe 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

By popular demand, Oktober FondueFest is Back! Cheese, bier, friends...what more do you need? For a limited time, we're celebrating all three during our national Oktober FondueFest.

Our \$44 per person limited-time three-course experience starts off with Bavarian Beer Cheese Fondue, featuring a whole new way to dip hot-off-the-grill bratwurst and braised short rib. Enjoy a salad and Black Forest Chocolate Fondue, and add a Sam Adams Octoberfest beer, new Oktoberfest-inspired cocktails, or a glass of German wine, for an Oktoberfest celebration you won't forget. Calling all fondue and "bier" lovers...make your reservations now! No passport

Continued on next page

LADY RAY'S
CULINARY DELIGHTS
BAKERY, CAFE, CAKE BOUTIQUE

Lady Ray's
PASTRY BAR

- Baked Goods
- Pastries
- Coffee
- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Sunday Brunch
- Pastry Bar
- Mobile Pastry Bar
- Libations
- Couture Cakes
- Special Event Catering
- Boutique

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(850) 269-0763

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Learn More

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Premium Olive Oils - Aged Balsamic Vinegars
Specialty Goods



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

Ovide At Hotel Effie Launches New Menus

The New Menus Feature Fresh, In-Season Ingredients Inspired by Florida's Gulf Coast

Ovide, the signature restaurant at Hotel Effie at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, has launched new breakfast, brunch and dinner menus highlighting the flavors of the Gulf Coast and the freshest, in-season ingredients. All menus include ample vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options. Located steps from The Village of Baytowne Wharf, Hotel Effie's signature restaurant Ovide embraces the local food and cherished flavors of the Gulf Coast and presents them with a sophisticated and refreshing style. "We work closely with regional farmers and vendors to ensure we incorporate the freshest, most sustainable ingredients into our plates," said Hotel Effie's general manager Jim Marino.



PHOTO CREDIT HOTEL EFFIE

For breakfast (Mon.-Fri. 7-11 a.m.), starters include the Summer Fruit Plate featuring berries, melons and dragon fruit; fan-favorite house-made Effie's Biscuits and Steel-Cut Oats with brown sugar, granola and blueberries. "From the Griddle" options include Brioche French Toast topped with bananas Foster and candied pecans, and

Buttermilk Pancakes topped with vanilla whipped ricotta, blueberries and maple syrup.

"From the Farm" break-

fast plates include Two Farm-Fresh Eggs, breakfast potatoes, a choice of meat and toast or Effie's biscuit; Summer Quiche made with zucchini, yellow squash, marinated tomatoes and feta and served with breakfast potatoes; Eggs Benedict and 3-Egg Omelet with choice of three ingredients and toast.

Breakfast "Specialties" include Biscuits and Gravy, Effie's house-made biscuits topped with sausage gravy and sunny-side eggs; Avocado Toast, sourdough topped with feta cheese, heirloom tomatoes, pickled red onions, avocado mash and pepitas; Toasted Bagel with Lox, a Black Bear sesame bagel topped with

whipped cream cheese, pickled shallots, capers and cucumber; Ovide BLT; Shrimp and Grits; and Corned Beef Hash. Diners can also choose the Full Gulf Breakfast (includes a fruit plate, any entrée (excluding Lump Crab Benedict and Shrimp and

Continued on page 46

DESTIN DINING

continued from previous page

required. Mondays through Thursdays only.

Daily for lunch, enjoy several fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées, salads and unforgettable desserts. There's also "fast fondues" and one-course fondues with cheese, salad, entrée or chocolate. All of your favorite Fondue items are now available for lunch!

www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl/oktober-fondue-fest-menu.aspx

(850) 269-2227

11394 US-Hwy. 98

Miramar Beach

www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl

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 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

Ice Creamery & Candy Kitchen
 535 U.S. 98 West, Destin • Next to Beach Camp Brewpub

Authentic Candy & Ice Cream Store for Kids & Adults, Making Candies, Hand Dipped Chocolates and Ice Cream on site

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NOW OPEN IN DESTIN!



Melting Pot

11394 US-98 W, Destin

(850) 269-2227

meltingpot.com

 Off the Hook

75th Annual Destin Fishing Rodeo Events

Come to the docks for the best spectator sport this time of year! On any given day in October, anywhere from 250 to 1500 folks show up behind A.J.'s Seafood & Oyster Bar to see what is being brought to the scales. Let word get out that there is a rodeo record, a shark or a giant Grouper or Tuna being brought

to the scales and it's standing room only as spectator's clamor for a close up look at a massive fish!

But the Rodeo is more than a fishing tournament—it's a chance to meet up with old friends on the docks or mingle and make new ones. Witness some of the most beautiful

sunsets you could only imagine each evening on the Harbor as you watch the boats come in with their catches at the scales. Taste some of the local cuisine right off the grill or listen to some of the local artists playing right down on the docks — even after the scales close at 7 p.m.

Stroll from one end of Har-



THE LARGEST & LONGEST FISHING COMPETITION IN THE COUNTRY
EVERY DAY IN OCTOBER • WEIGH-INS DAILY AT AJS 10A — 7P
NUMEROUS AWARDS FOR ANGLERS OF ALL-AGES
destinfishingrodeo.org

bor to the other on Destin's boardwalk that takes you right along the water front and an opportunity to see those fish first hand as they come off the boats. Buy and take home the newest in Rodeo wear from short-sleeve to long-sleeve T's, jackets and even a cap or two. See that youngster when he comes in with his first fish and see his smile widen when he gets a free rod and reel along with a certificate. Have your photo taken with Miss Destin or listen to weighmaster Bruce Cheves spin another fish tale.

This is just a sampling of all that the Rodeo is. So, come on down and give it a chance. You're sure to get hooked!

Rodeo Events

75th Annual Destin Fishing Rodeo (October 1st - 31st)

Join the 75th Annual Destin Fishing Rodeo. Weigh-Ins are everyday behind A.J.'s from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

45th Annual Destin Seafood Festival (October 6th, 7th, & 8th).

Live music on multiple stages all three days of the event! Admission is FREE. Good times — Priceless!

Destin 5K Rodeo Run (Sunday, October 8th)

Starts at the picturesque Clement Taylor Park on the beautiful Choctawhatchee Bay, meanders through historic Destin neighborhoods and ends back at the park. Proceeds benefit the Miss Destin Scholarship Fund. Contact kimmymeyers@

yahoo.com for more information or register online at www.active.com.

Kids Fall Movie Festival (Monday, October 9th)

School is out and A.J.'s will be showing a FREE movie on the famous JumboTron! Kids will be treated to hot dogs, popcorn and snow cones! For more details, visit www.ajsdestin.com.

Bruce Cheves Day (Monday, October 16th)

Celebrate the day the City of Destin has declared BRUCE CHEVES DAY at the docks! The weighmaster will be holding court (not in court!) and telling his best tales.

Ringing of the Bell (Monday, October 16th)

Each year 5 p.m. on Bruce Cheves Day, the Rodeo celebrates the lives and legends of those we lost this year.

Larry Hatchett Fishing Foundation Day (Saturday, October 21st)

Each October, The Larry Hatchett Fishing Foundation brings in children from foster situations to fish and learn about marine habitats and environmental awareness.

Halloween on the Harbor! (Tuesday, October 31st)

Wear your costume and join rodeo captains, anglers, rodeo judges, Miss Destin and volunteers to be a part of the largest Halloween Party in Destin.

Continued on next page

Stinky's Fall Fishing Tournament Celebrates 10 Years with Big Changes



For a decade, Stinky's has been the host of two fishing tournaments; one in the spring and one in the fall. The Stinky's Fall Pompano Beach to Bay Grand Slam Fishing Tournament will be held from October 1 through October 28. The tournament has a new name and some of the rules have changed. Most notable is the addition of pompano. By adding pompano and requiring one of the three fish to be speckled trout, the tournament originator hopes to garner more angler participation and assure the Choctawhatchee Bay remains a part of the fishing experience. The aggregate weight of three fish caught determines the winner. Anglers will be fishing for trout, redfish, whiting, and pompano.

"Our team works hard to host two of the most competitive annual fishing tournaments in Wal-

ton County. We are honored to facilitate events that highlight our precious natural resources. Both fall and spring tournaments are fun for all skill levels of anglers, but the unique length of our tournaments make them a challenge for professionals, and fishing enthusiasts alike," said Chef Jim Richard, tournament originator and Stinky's Fish Camp owner.

The purse for the annual

tournament was over \$4500 in cash and prizes in 2022. The tournament purse is a combination of sponsorships and donations. This year, the tournament purse is expected to exceed past prizes. "We could not do this without our sponsors. Year after year they return, and most of our sponsors choose to support both tournaments. Growing the tournament means we must grow the purse," says Chef Jim Richard.

Local broker and owner of Mainsail Realty Company, Clayton Bonjean, took the tournament championship title last year. "This tournament made me a better fisherman because I had to change the way I fish to catch a flounder. I wake up before dawn to go fishing. It is a time of day where my real estate clients aren't calling and it doesn't interfere with my family time. It's a peaceful start of my day and it is the best time for fishing," says Bonjean.

To learn about tournament rules and to register for the tournament visit www.stinkysbaitshop.com. On the website, you can also find information about the 17th Annual Spring Pompano Fishing Tournament. Follow tournament progress at Stinky's Bait Shack on Instagram @stinkysbaitshop and Facebook @stinkysbaitshack and visit their website at www.stinkysbaitshop.com.

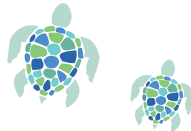
RODEO

continued from previous page

**November 2023
75th Annual Destin Fishing Rodeo Awards (Sunday, November 5th)**

At 4 p.m., the lucky anglers, captains and mates will be given their prizes in a festive, fun, casual gathering downstairs at A.J.'s!

For more information on these events please visit the rodeo website at www.destinfishingrodeo.org or A.J.'s at www.ajsdestin.com



Watch Season 4
South Walton Fishing Adventures
Filmed in Walton County

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 Off the Hook

Underwater Museum of Art Receives Prestigious Award

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) in partnership with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA) announced that the Underwater Museum of Art (UMA) recently received the 2023 CODAAward for Collaboration of the Year!

CODAAwards: Collaboration of Design + Art recognizes outstanding projects that integrate commissioned art into interior, architectural or public spaces. The 11th annual international design competition recently announced winners across 10 categories, as well as two People's Choice Award winners and a new Collaboration Award. This year's 411 submissions came from 24 countries throughout the globe, celebrat-



The Seed & The Sea by Davide Galbiati (Valreas, France)
PHOTO BY SPRING RUN MEDIA

project that demonstrates the importance of the collaborative process among creative teams, commissioners and industry resources. Toni Sikes, CEO of CODAworx states that "The Collaboration of the Year Award recognizes the collective imagination of many professionals who work together to create spaces that are transformed through artwork. The end result is pure magic." Information on the 2023 CODAAwards is available on CODAworx.com.

Named by TIME Magazine as one of 100 of the "World's Greatest Places," the UMA is the first and only permanent underwater sculpture museum in the U.S. and is located less than one mile off the coast of Grayton Beach State Park.

ing innovation and artistic excellence.

This year, a new award was added for the first time. Titled the Collaboration of the Year Award, this honor goes to the

Part of the CAA's Art In Public Spaces program, the UMA also augments SWARA's mission of creating marine habitat and expanding fishery populations while providing enhanced cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of Walton County residents, including students and visitors.

The first phase of the UMA project included seven pieces of sculpture installed in June 2018 and the fifth installation occurred in July 2023, bringing the total number of UMA sculptures to 40.

Learn more about the project, see photos and video of the previous installations at UMA-FL.org.

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What's Your Body Telling You?



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

You're moving through life, checking off your list, achieving, getting kids to activities, contributing to the community, and working. You're so busy you don't notice when a stomachache becomes the norm, tightness in your chest becomes more continuous, and tension in your body leaves you with unexplained aches and pains regularly. While all physical symptoms are not necessarily a result of emotions, all emotions are expressed physically through the body. Your mind, thoughts, feelings and spiritual life are all deeply connected to your physical experience in your body. When you view your body as separate from your inner emotional life, you're blocking an important avenue for self-awareness and personal growth.

American culture encourages people to wear busyness and stress as badges of honor resulting in the ignoring of our body's subtle and moderate messages regarding what needs internal attention. When we don't listen to its earlier messages, the body

begins to yell louder and louder until we begin to listen and tend to our daily stress and emotions. People begin to get increased headaches, stomach problems, chronic pain, skin irritations and hives, irritability, depression symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and other medically unexplained ailments in connection with ignoring messages from the body.

Your body may use physical sensations to tell you things like you're overwhelmed, it's time to rest, slow your pace, set a boundary, reduce commitments, tend to your relationships, nourish yourself more intentionally, prioritize sleep, say "no" more often, make a new friend, make a doctor appointment, ask for help, play more, prioritize fun. When you don't make time to listen, you're missing wisdom that can bring more health and balance to your life. So, you want the wisdom your body is trying to share, but how are you supposed to listen?

5 Ways to Listen to Your Body

1. Slow down and breathe.

Try stopping 3x per day to do 2 minutes of deep breathing which is about 20 slow breaths. While breathing, intentionally notice where you are holding tension or discomfort in your body. Think about releasing the tension while

you breathe and make note of patterns as you breathe over days and weeks. Try adding reminders in your phone for breathing time for the first 4 weeks of practicing deep breathing.

2. Determine your baseline for stress and calm.

When you practice deep breathing, notice the difference between how your body feels when you are under stress and when you find a space of calm. Notice how your breathing is different, notice how tension in your body is different, notice how your thoughts are different, notice how your energy level is different, notice how your body temperature is different. Note the differences so you can check in with yourself daily and become more familiar with the physical sensations that occur when you are moving into a stressed state.

3. Study how your body expresses emotion.

Notice discomfort in your body such as tension, aches, sweating, change in heart rate, tingling, or itching. Try matching your physical experiences to feeling words. For example, when I feel happy, I smile, have

stomach butterflies, my limbs feel light, I have high energy. When I feel angry, I clench my jaws, feel hot, sweat increases, my tone of voice becomes abrupt.

Naming your physical sensations with feeling words guides you to more insight.

4. Match your feeling word to a thought or external circumstance.

Explore what thoughts or situations may have preceded the feeling. For example, I felt happy when my husband surprised me with cake for no reason. I felt angry when I was thinking about a past time when a friend talked about me behind my back. Think about how the experiences or thoughts connect with the feelings and what that might mean for you on a deeper level.

5. Determine what wise action might be needed

based on insight gathered from listening to your body.

Feelings and bodily sensations may indicate it's time for: a conversation, a change of pace, a change in self-care, a different relationship boundary, a different bedtime, a healthier coping tool, facing issues rather than avoiding, more information, increasing support.

Listening to your body is a practice that is developed over weeks and months of slowing, attending, and repeating. Be kind to yourself as you practice. Connect with us along your journey for additional counseling or coaching support at journeybravely.com.





Stephenie Craig, LCSW
Therapist
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 Wellness



Grounding - Why Should You Be Doing It?

By KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT,
HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

Back in the early eighties, there was a really cool eatery/bar off one of the side streets just outside downtown Denver. They had these thin black cyl-

inders hanging from the ceiling spaced every few feet. I inquired as to what they were and discovered they dispersed negative ions which calms the patrons. My response was hmmm.

Fast forward to our current day and the practice of grounding is becoming more mainstream for the benefits it claims. My search into the why and how of this practice took me down the road of physics, geophysics and quantum physics. These areas are definitely outside my wheelhouse but proved to hold the answers I was looking for.

In physics, grounding is the process of restoring the electrical connection with the earth. The earth can serve as an electron donor as needed because of its ability to disperse charge, positive and negative, and not just as an electron acceptor as in a lightning rod. Our air is an insulator and the human body is conductive. That's why we are more susceptible to being shocked if we're in the open during a lightning storm.

The electricity produced in our bodies is what allows the synapses, signals and even our heartbeats to occur. It's what allows us to bend our joints, open a jar or have a thought. Everything in creation is made up of atoms which are made up of protons (+ charge), electrons (- charge) and neutrons (neutral). Negativity is the natural resting state of our cells. It's related to a slight imbalance between charged atoms located inside and outside the cell. These atoms are called ions. It's a state of being that scientists call the resting membrane potential (RMP).

Now we can move on to oxidative stress, which is caused by free radicals. Electrons want to be in pairs. If they aren't, these molecules with unpaired electrons try their hardest to solve that problem which leads to reactions that cause oxidative



stress and this process can result in inflammation. Inflammation is believed to be the cause of all disease.

Enter antioxidants. These kiddos don't mind helping out. They will either donate or take an electron in order to pair them up. This helps to neutralize these free radicals so they can be safely eliminated from the body.

In the quantum physics realm, they have discovered something interesting with trees. As trees grow, their roots spread outward vs. downward. In the forest, the trees' roots intertwine. Messages pass through this root system. If a tree is under stress, it sends out a signal and the healthy trees will send that tree some of their nutrients. I'm telling this story because there is a connection in creation. We have plants that can mend, nourish, calm and heal. All life uses electricity to communicate. I'm sure I'm not even touching the surface of this vast science. Luckily, we don't need to fully understand the science in order to benefit from its implications.

Now that we have a better scientific understanding of the

electrical processes which, by the way, is not exhaustive (thank goodness!) we can get back to grounding.

This practice can help regulate these electrical systems in our body. It is accomplished by connecting the skin to the ground. Try gardening without gloves and getting your hands in the dirt or the more common way, going barefoot and walking or standing in the sand, dirt, grass, water or rocks. In other words, get skin in direct contact with the natural ground. 10-30 minutes daily can have the following benefits:

- Improved blood flow, mood, wound health, physical and immune functions, energy and sleep quality
- Increased heart rate variability, post-exertion muscle soreness, pain, inflammation, autoimmune signaling, stress
- Reduced fatigue and tiredness

So, wander around your yard while drinking a cup of tea or coffee, walk the beach, or find another way to spend time letting nature share its benefits. Here's to Health!

Reach Kay Leaman at succeed.hdhl@gmail.com.



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BY KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER,
BEVERLY HILLS DAY SPA

Self-Care is more than what we commonly refer to it as. Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being—emotionally, mentally, financially, physically, socially and spiritually. So, live intentionally!

Self-Care Corner: Facing the Fall

Emotional/Mental

Acknowledge the power you have in your mind. Practice journaling, meditation, reflection, saying "No." Read or watch something funny. Listen to music. Color with crayons.

Financial

Start where you are — any amount of savings can make a difference! Budget (review bills), plan for the future, know your credit score. Set goals: Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term — and stick to them.

Physical

Use food as a tool for healing

and energy, not comfort. Move your body. Exercise to keep your body healthy and strong. Sleep and allow your body to REST. Walk outdoors and enjoy nature.

Social

Make a list of things you like to do that are only about YOU. Spend time reconnecting with friends and family. Follow through with the commitments you make to yourself. Turn off all electronics just for a while.

Spiritual

Connect with the power that is within you. Read uplifting text, pray, meditate, rest, have

quiet time. Attend religious services to connect with others.

Self-Care is a priority and necessity—not a luxury. Take time to enjoy some self-care at Beverly Hills Day Spa! Fall is a great time of year to take a break,

rest and relax with an afternoon of pampering. Visit www.beverlyhillspaspa.com or call me at (850) 654-8544 to book. 114 Palmetto Dr., Suite 6, Destin, 32541, on Tuesday – Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.



Dr. Richard Chern, M.D.

We've been providing hormone therapy for over 10 years. In that time thousands of patients have received bio-identical pellet therapy and we are one of the largest and longest-running bio-identical hormone pellet therapy clinics in the Southeast. I've seen so many lives change for the better with bio-identical pellet therapy.

As we age hormone levels decrease and this is normal but I see it occurring at different rates for different people. I have patients in their seventies with untreated natural testosterone levels in the 900's. These patients spend most of their time outside the U.S. eating clean foods and staying amazingly active. Unfortunately, that's not how most of us live.

I believe because of our lifestyles, exposures, food, and activity levels, our hormones begin falling much sooner than they should. Many people have the idea that hormones are only for sexual function but our patients will even tell you this is just one of the many positive effects of bio-identical hormones. Mood and outlook improves, relationships with spouses, family members, and coworkers improve, sleep improves, stress reduces

It's Time to Take Care of Yourself

and so much more. You are more understanding of others, more forgiving, more loving.

This doesn't even touch on the health benefits. Unfortunately, many doctors will tell you hormone therapy is not safe, not proven, and may cause cancer or some other harm. I was taught the same way. Unfortunately, these doctors are just wrong. They fail to keep up with the medical literature and are unable to consider the possibility that medicine has evolved over the last 50 years. Even the American Heart Association changes blood pressure treatment guidelines every couple of years. It's unfortunate because when doctors disagree it causes confusion and fear in patients.

We do have patients in their 20s, but I always say if you are over 40 you should have already seen me. That's when I got treated and it was a life-changing event that has made me happier and healthier than I have ever been in my life.

If you struggle with motivation, mood swings, irritability, fatigue, or just don't feel like you're at your optimum then it's time to take care of yourself. Come get your labs done and let us talk to you about how bio-identical hormone therapy can help different aspects of your life and health. I hope to see you soon.

Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. provides hormone therapy to men and women from across the country. He is also on staff at BioTE Medical and teaches

hormone therapy to new providers including providers right here in our local area. Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. treats countless doctors, medical providers, and first responders in the area as well. He is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country right here in Miramar Beach. Call Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. today for an appointment at The Hormone Restoration Center at 850-837-1271.

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 Environment



Does Your Home Sweat?

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



By CHRIS BALZER, ECES

When I conduct insulation inspections in attics, I normally come out with sweat on my forehead and sometimes, depending

on the inspection and time of year, I am completely drenched. This is normal and we all sweat to keep our bodies cool. When our home sweats, that's normally an indication of a problem.

Receiving calls from concerned homeowners about sweating vents and equipment is common at ECES. There can be many factors which cause condensation in the home; ultimately it is the dew point in the home and our attics. Dew point defines the point at which air will become saturated and condense. Simply, the air can't hold any more moisture and creates dew. So, why do I have moisture on my vents? Ductwork is a system or network of ducts which bring cool air to the different rooms and living areas of our homes. When heating and cooling companies install the air ducts in a home, the contractors are working with many separate pieces. While the workers strive to connect each piece as tightly and securely as possible, leaks and gaps in the ducts might still occur. This can happen in new and older homes. When these gaps and leaks occur, the conditioned air leaks out into our attics. A typical home can experience close to 20% of conditioned air

loss from leaking ducts. If the leaks are big enough, even more loss can occur costing you money and comfort. One common problem when ducts and vents are not sealed properly is condensation or sweating. These tiny drops build up around and on the vents causing issues, like mold.

Another problem we come across is cracked seals and loose boots. Maybe you had a security system installed or needed cable ran into a room which wasn't wired. Most of the time you need a technician to go in the attic and navigate in a hot, hard to walk around, dark area while performing these services.

Ductwork tends to run in the same places these wires need to be ran and sometimes ductwork is used as railing or support by the technician so they don't end up putting their foot through the ceiling. Putting pressure on ductwork can cause loose boots around vents and cracked seams. These are less common, but do happen and unfortunately are unseen because they happen in the attic. More common is that over time, our seams, connectors, tape and vent boxes fail over time due to the harsh environment they are in. Failing tape is most common. The duct tape, which was used, becomes brittle and can no longer keep a tight seal. Good news is that repairing these leaks is a simple one. Foil tape, expandable foam and mastic (which are a type of paste applied to seams when foil tape can't seal) is used to reseal these leaks keeping the conditioned air flowing for years to come. We tend to forget how important these systems really are and how important it is to maintain them. It is always a great idea to schedule an inspection and improve the efficiency of our largest investment, our homes.

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



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Leading with Excellence: How a Leadership Coach Can Skyrocket Your Capabilities

BY BILL MASON

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, successful leaders understand that the path to greatness need not be a solitary effort. The adage, “It’s lonely at the top,” does not have to be your reality. Engage a leadership coach and discover a part-

ner committed to your success, an ally who can unlock your full potential, and a faithful guide by your side.

Leadership coaching is not just a buzzword in the corporate world—it’s a game-changer. It is the secret weapon employed by the world’s most successful leaders to drive their businesses forward. A leadership coach provides unique insights and expert guidance, propelling you to new heights in your professional development.

Coaches offer an invaluable external perspective, helping

you identify blind spots and fine-tune your strategy. They provide objective feedback, helping you to understand your strengths and areas for improvement. This clarity allows you to build a robust leadership style that is uniquely yours, fostering confidence and promoting exceptional decision-making.

Moreover, leadership coaches can help you navigate the complexities of team dynamics, fostering a harmonious and collaborative working environment. They can assist you in driving your team to peak performance,

contributing to the bottom line and ensuring long-term success.

Investing in a leadership coach is investing in your future. It’s about acknowledging that even the best can become better. It’s about refusing to settle for mediocrity and, instead, striving for excellence. As the renowned motivational speaker, Les Brown, once said, “You cannot see the picture when you are in the frame.” A leadership coach gives you that all-important wider perspective.

So, are you ready to unlock your leadership potential and

ascend to new levels of excellence? Are you prepared to invest in yourself and your team’s future success? If the answer is yes, it’s time to engage a leadership coach. Commit to your growth journey today and watch how a leadership coach can skyrocket your capabilities. Want to get started today? Let’s connect to help you lift the lid on your leadership potential. Connect with me at (850) 855-3430 or email bill@rocketfuelcoach.com.

NWFSC Raider Village A New Era for Campus Housing

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Decades ago, Jay Odom started his academic journey at what was then called Okaloosa Walton Junior College in a Volkswagen with no reverse. Fast forward to today, and he is helping to pave the way for a state-of-the-art student housing facility named Raider Village at Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC). This addition will not only change the landscape, but also will impact the student body in unimaginable ways.

In a groundbreaking ceremony teeming with anticipation and enthusiasm, NWFSC commemorated the commencement of construction for Raider Village. This marks a transformative moment in the college’s history as it embarks on providing its first-ever on-campus student housing.

Dr. Devin Stephenson, NWFSC President, led the ceremony, echoing gratitude for the collaborations that have made the project possible. “This col-



lege has been incredibly blessed with opportunity, funding, great leadership and passionate students,” he said. “Today, we’re building for the decades to come.”

Jay and The Jay Odom Group deserve special mention among the contributors. Not only did they design the buildings, but they will also build, own and manage Raider Village. Dr. Stephenson highlighted Jay’s deep roots in the institution and immense contributions to the Niceville community. “It’s unbelievable how this [campus]

has evolved and grown since I was here,” Jay reflected.

The residential facility will be a game-changer for NWFSC. It bolsters academic performance and retention, infusing an engaging campus life. The college anticipates Raider Village as a significant draw for potential athletes, setting the highest standards for sporting excellence even higher.

The first phase of Raider Village will provide 192 beds equipped with modern amenities to cater to students’ needs. Plans reveal that each unit will comprise four bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, complemented by a kitchen, living area and laundry facilities. Common areas designed for community building will be prevalent throughout.

Expected to be operational by Spring 2025, the three-story building will proudly stand at the front of the 264-acre cam-

Continued on page 46

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 Business

Meet Madame Director Paula Hilton

20 Years Down the Line, This Mystery Train Shows No Signs of Slowing Down

By Christopher Manson

In the interest of full disclosure, I have been involved as an actor, stage manager and errand boy with the local comedy troupe Act4Mystery since 2005. Paula Hilton founded the troupe in 2003 and, upon my joining two years later, they started to get really good.

Ms. Hilton is the group's writer, director and occasional actress. She is referred to affectionately by her actors as "Madam Director." "When I started this, I didn't know how much work would go into it, even just one production – getting everything organized and agreed upon with the venues, as well as dealing with the actors' schedules and personal problems."

For Ms. Hilton, the last two decades have been a learning experience, "but it hasn't taken away my enjoyment and love of this. If I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't be doing it, because it's so hard.

"And I couldn't do it without help. In the beginning, my mom did all the sewing, my daughter Rochelle acted in the shows, and my dad built props." Rochelle is also the group's choreographer and ran the group when Ms. Hilton lived in Gainesville to undergo cancer treatment in 2006 and 2007. Ms. Hilton's youngest daughter, Jessika, has acted in a handful of shows, too.

Prior to moving to Fort Walton Beach, Ms. Hilton lived in California and acted in murder mystery productions. "I was per-

forming someone else's shows, and then I decided to write one. I presented it to my director, and she made some suggestions – trimming dialogue, that was something I had to learn.

"When I moved here, there wasn't a murder mystery company as far as I knew. I felt like it would be something different and that it could benefit the community."

She talked her sister, Dr. Julie McNabb, into letting her put on her first show for the nonprofit Horizons (now the Arc of the Emerald Coast), where Dr. McNabb served as CEO. That first show, "Peace, Love and Murder," encouraged the audience to dress up in their best hippie duds and sold out two nights in a row.

"I didn't have any actors, but several people on the Horizons board were actors or knew somebody that acted," says Ms. Hilton. "That first show had seven actors, and I used some of them for other fundraisers." Act4Mystery performed its first public show at the now-defunct Summerhouse restaurant.

Cast members have come and gone, but some have stuck around for as long as Kenan Thompson has been on SNL. "Kay Yarbrough, who was on the Horizons board at the time, acted in the first show and is still with us." Joe Chase, a Stage Crafters veteran, and the multi-talented Cynthia Bergquist have been an integral part of the troupe for nearly as long.



Bill Hembree, actor, with Paula Hilton, founder Act4Mystery



Chris Manson performing a private show

When Ms. Hilton first held auditions, she put a notice in the local newspaper. One notable, Michelle Dellafave, called and said she was interested. "I asked if she had any experience, and she said, 'Well, I was on the Dean Martin TV show and toured with Bob Hope...'" She was great." Ms. Dellafave currently lives in New York and continues to perform.

The Act4Mystery founder has written 38 shows, the most recent being 2022's "Murder on a Ghost Walk." "I try to write one show a year, but I haven't been able to in 2023," she says. "We've been very busy. We did three performances of three different shows in August and I had to bring in new people. So, we had to have about four rehearsals for each of those."

Ms. Hilton does have several "note files" for new shows kick-

ing around, but hasn't been able to write due to her full-time job and some time-consuming family health issues.

The only thing that almost derailed this mystery train in the last 20 years was – you guessed it – COVID. "We didn't perform for 14 months," she says. "My scripts are licensed all over the world, and none of those groups were performing either. I think I only wrote one show and cleaned up some of the older ones."

But, let's focus on the highlights. "The performances are always wonderful," says Ms. Hilton. "There have been a ton of clients I've enjoyed working for, and I just loved our annual awards parties. Recognizing you guys and your hard work, dressing up, handing out trophies... We did the last one right before

COVID, and I hate to say no to doing another one."

This fall, Act4Mystery has some private parties lined up which, Ms. Hilton says, are always a blast. The troupe has performed in a variety of venues, including intimate living rooms, a backyard tent, a train in Milton and the Air Force Armament Museum.

This month, you can catch "Killer in the Kitchen" – an elaborate cooking show spoof – at 790 in Destin (Thursday, Oct. 19) and the board game-inspired "Murder Without a Clue" at Samuel's Roadhouse in Crestview (Saturday, Oct. 28).

"I love writing the shows and then watching my characters come to life," she says. "And when the audience laughs at something I've written, that's mind-boggling sometimes."



Sean of the South

BY SEAN DIETRICH

I am a dropout. I grew up pretty hard. I am an educational failure. I had few academic opportunities. As a result, I am a very slow reader, and an even worse speller.

This is because, after my father died, my family hit rock bottom. My mother cleaned houses for a living, and worked in fast food. I, my ownself, dropped out of school and got my first job at age 14, hanging drywall.

Later, I would install tile and wood floors. I hung commercial roofing and seamless gutter. I had other ignoble occupations, too. I scooped ice cream. I was a telemarketer for exactly 13 hours.

In the evenings, for extra cash, I played music at local bars where overserved people two-stepped and showed their appreciation by lobbing bottles at the piano player.

I wasn't particularly talented. I owned a guitar. I had a cheap piano my father bought from the classified section. I had long hair. Nobody wanted their daughter to date me.

But something about the communal glow of a beer joint changed me. I've had some powerfully good memories in dim rooms with clinking glassware.

When I was 16, I spent my birthday playing "Faded Love" in a joint on the Alabama state line. The bartender, Wanda, asked if I wanted a beer. Wanda was five foot, even, and had a voice like a pack of filtered menthols.

I told Wanda, without hesitation, yes, I did want a beer. So Wanda opened a PBR and poured three fingers of the golden nectar into a tumbler.

"Happy birthday," she said. "You'll have to wait until you're 21 to get the rest."

Whereupon she ceremoniously finished the bottle.

I also played piano in church, and at every Baptist function including fifth-Sunday sings, Decoration Day potlucks, and VBS. Most Baptists turned a blind eye to my nocturnal habits.

I attended community college as a 30-year-old man. I rectified my high-school misgivings. And I learned how to spel pretty good.

And somehow, here I am. I have an overbite, red hair, and a list of bad habits which



causes fundamentalists to send me emails with subject lines that read: "Will I spend eternity without you, Sean?"

But there were a few people who have consistently believed in me. Namely, my wife. And my mother. My sister. My friends, who are too numerous to list.

And in a few days, the Grand Ole Opry will be releasing my first album. In a few days, I will be performing selections from this album on the Opry stage, on the air.

I'm not even sure what this means, since none of this feels real. But I'm telling you about all this because, I suppose, I still can't believe it.

Even so, my first Opry album single "dropped" yesterday, on my father's birthday. I don't know what "dropped" means.

But I know that this is something my old man would have loved.

My father was an avid Opry listener, and often swore that if he ever met Minnie Pearl in person, he would either propose marriage or, at the very least, a scandalous love affair.

I can also tell you that my first album was not recorded in a fancy studio with world-famous sound engineers named "Pootie Tang" running the mixing board. This album was recorded by me, in a rustic cabin, on Lake Martin, with cheap equipment.

There were quilts on the walls, to deaden the sound. The way all the professionals do it. My best good friend, Aaron Peters, played fiddle. We played antique music. There were

empty Ovaltine bottles strewn around the cabin.

And a blue heron visited the lakeside dock every night after recording, to flap its wings and say hello.

Sometimes at night, after recording, I would lie in bed and wonder if prayers can travel backward in time. If they can, I continue to pray that a young 14-year-old, redheaded, con-

struction-working musician will just hold on.

Because one day, in the year 2023, even though he is much older than most Opry walk-ons; even though he feels like a consummate failure; even though he can't spell worth a shuck; that little boy will not be able to believe what I just wrote.

I know I can't.

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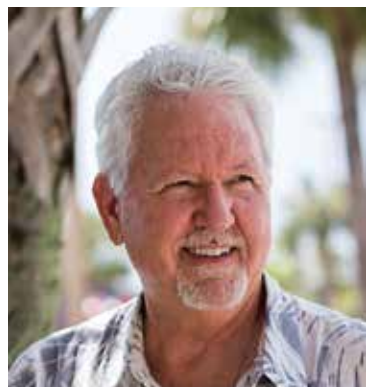
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A Pastor's Ponderings: The Man Who Didn't Care



By PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores."

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'"

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad

things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'" Luke 16:19-26

Charles Sheldon tells the story in his classic novel, "In His Steps," about a young pastor walking to his church early one cold Sunday morning. As he approaches the white-steepled church in the center of their village, the sight of a homeless man sleeping on the front lawn of the church disturbs him.

The pastor hurries by the man with the vague hope that the vagrant will be gone by the time the members arrive. In a hurry to fulfill his duties, he turns on the lights and fires up the heat.

The people arrive, and the pastor ascends the pulpit to begin the service. A moment later, the homeless man shuffles in the back door. He plops in the last row, a rumpled mess, as people move away from his smell.

Later, as the pastor closes in prayer, he notices the man slip out the door. The people then greet the pastor at the door and congratulate him on his fine message. Finally, after locking up the church, the reverend turns to walk home and discov-

ers the man asleep again on the lawn.

The pastor can't take it anymore, so he approaches the bedraggled figure and shakes him. "Wake up! You can't sleep here. Move on."

The man doesn't stir, so he rousts him again in utter frustration, "Get up and go!" It's then he realizes the man is dead.

Stunned, the pastor staggers backward. "Oh no, my message was the last words he heard. Was he ready to meet the Lord?"

"Lord, did we show him your love?" He cries out in his heart.

No one had taken the time to talk with the homeless man.

God feels the sorrow of hurting people, even when we don't. It is the driving passion moving him toward each of us. The Lord feels human pain.

Christ gravitates toward grieving, sick, and poor people. It also moves Him toward us. Compassion is Jesus repeatedly reflected toward the hurting. Written into the DNA of Christians everywhere, this emotion moves us as well. Too often, selfishness is the roadblock that derails kindheartedness.

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus paints the picture of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man basks in the sunlight of luxury. Meanwhile, poor Lazarus suffers at the gate with only dogs to

lick the pus from his sores.

This contrast between the wealthy and the deprived is glaring. As the story unfolds, both characters die and arrive in vastly different eternal dwellings. The rich man enters hell with all of its torments, not the least of which is the ability to see Lazarus and those who have entered paradise in the "bosom of Abraham."

There are two distinct realms of life after death. Jesus leaves no space for evading the ultimate reality of heaven or hell. Our destiny is determined by our faith and how we act upon that belief.

This parable forces us to look beyond this life to see the inseparable link between life now and how we spend eternity. Death is not an ending, but the transition to eternal life. The story is both a harsh warning and a harbinger of hope as the question lingers, "Where will we spend eternity?"

Lazarus did not go to paradise because he was poor, nor did the rich man go to hell because he was wealthy. What happened to their souls during

their lives?

In this passage, there was not a word of anger, resentment, or despair from Lazarus. He found comfort and life eternal in the arms of God.

In contrast, the rich man bathed in contentment, never noticing the starving beggar at his gate. His heart remained untouched by the mercy of God. Callous disregard for Lazarus was the shovel that dug the great chasm. His sin was not noticing the pain of others.

Christ is calling us to give compassion toward the poor. Jesus is always pro-people. We should ache with the hurting and grieve for the less fortunate.

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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LOCASH: From the Studio to Your Playlist to the MKAF Stage

One of Country's Hottest Duos Brings Their Party to the Salt Water Music Fest

INTERVIEWED BY WILL ESTELL, SEPTEMBER, 2023

If you're a fan of high-energy rocking country, combined with catchy songwriting and the remarkable stage presence that goes with great live entertainment, then you're probably already familiar with LOCASH and the success this duo has garnered over the past decade-and-a-half in the ever-competitive world of country hitmakers.

LOCASH was originally formed back in 2006 by singer-songwriters Chris Lucas and Preston Brust who had each headed to Nashville to pursue their dreams of making a living writing and performing country music. Jump ahead 17 years and lots of time in the studio, on the road and on the stage, and they're established family men as well. Chris, a native of Baltimore, Md., along with his wife, Kaitlyn, and their three children call Tampa home, while Preston, originally from Kokomo, Ind., and his wife, Kristen, and three children reside in the Nashville area.

The duo has had an impressive share of cuts turned hits, both recorded by LOCASH and those performed by other well-known country artists; like the number one, "You Gonna Fly," written by LOCASH and Cadillac Three's Jaren Johnson, and performed by Keith Urban. The duo, along with close musical friends Chris Janson and Danny Myrick, also wrote Tim McGraw's, "Truck Yeah." But they've charted their own country hits, too, like their Platinum breakout "I Love This Life," and their number one Gold hits, "I Know Somebody" and "One Big Country Song."

As a duo they've earned eight charting singles, cut three studio albums and garnered over 820 million global on-demand streams. LOCASH has also received a healthy dose of acknowledgements and accolades, including a recent Vocal Duo of the Year nomination at the 56th Annual CMA Awards.

As a fan of LOCASH's writing and ability to work the crowd, I've seen the duo perform live, and I can tell you that

you don't want to miss their upcoming headlining performance as part of Mattie Kelly Art Foundation's inaugural, three-day Salt Water Music Festival, happening October 12-14. It also includes performances by the talented Macy Gray, as well as top Nashville singer-songwriters, Ben Burgess, Josh Miranda, Jared Mullins, Jordan Minton and Jordan Reynolds.

I sat down with Chris and Preston to find out a little more about their thoughts on everything from the ever-changing music industry, their patriotism, being named honorary guardians of Space Force, and their love of our beautiful beach towns.

Both of you have been very vocal about being strong supporters of our military, showing your patriotism by traveling abroad many times to perform at U.S. bases around the world. What transpired to cause LOCASH to be so passionate about our country and the men and women that defend it?

Chris: Preston has a brother that was in the Air Force, and my dad was in the Army, and my great granddad was in the Army. In fact, he actually rode with Teddy Roosevelt, as one of the Rough Riders, which was awesome. With that background, when me and Preston got together we just said, "We've got to do something to support our men and women in uniform." They mean the world to us, and we couldn't do what we do without the freedoms we have because of our military.

I'm sure seeing what you two have seen in your travels to perform to our troops in other parts of the world really paints a clearer picture of how good we all have it in this great country.

Preston: Yeah, traveling to some of those bases to perform, and seeing other parts of the world, then comparing the freedoms we have, really puts it in perspective. When you get back in the states and think about how different it is at home, it's just an awesome feeling, you know. That's one of the reasons we wrote, "Three Favorite Colors." We wanted to stand proud and say how we feel about our

freedoms and those who make them possible.

Speaking of military, you guys were recently named Honorary Guardians of U.S. Space Force. Tell me about that and how that came to be. Were either of you space fanatics?

Chris: Yeah, man, I mean for years, when we were on the road, I used to go on Space.com all the time. I mean, no joke, I was literally into what asteroids were close, what satellites were going up. It just all really intrigued me.

Preston: He was on Space.com, and I was on Playboy.com [laughing, jokingly]. Really, with all the military stuff we were doing, General Whiting just asked us to get involved, after President Trump started Space Force [in 2020], a lot of people joked about it, and no one seemed to know what Space Force was or what they did. So, we got involved and started helping to spread the word, and they made us Honorary Guardians. I mean who else would you want to protect the world, but LOCASH? [laughing]

You guys have had success both as performers of your own songs, and as



PHOTO BY CAL + ALY

songwriters for other hits like Keith Urban's "You Gonna Fly" and McGraw's "Truck Yeah." I've seen you perform live and you really bring it. But, what is your favorite side of it, writing or performing, or do you like both equally?

Preston: I think it's pretty equal for us. Just being on stage and giving those people 45 or 75 or 90 minutes and reaching those people live is just fun. When I see one little kid, just screaming out the song lyrics at the top of his lungs, that's when

I know we've done something right.

Chris: Like with the song, "I Love This Life," when we are up there playing that and you see people singing along, and you know they know the words, because that song has impacted them in a positive way, there's no better feeling than that.

What's your favorite LOCASH song you've written?

Chris: It's probably, "I Love This Life," because, you know, it was our first one to go up the charts, and you never forget your first. That song felt like the little train that could. It just kept climbing the charts. It was just cool to watch music do what it's supposed to do. Just for two guys who've worked so hard to get to that moment, and then to watch it happen... I love this life, for sure.

What about a favorite song the two of you have written for another artist?

Preston: You gotta love [Tim] McGraw's "Truck Yeah," and "You Gonna Fly" [performed by Keith Urban]. There's actually some songs

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 Arts & Music

MKAF

continued from page 3

ly to instill a love of the arts in the future of our communities. What better place than MKAF's Festival of the Arts to introduce the younger members of your family to a love of arts, music and community?

It doesn't stop there! MKAF members and the community are invited to join in on more amazing entertainment and fun from small intimate concerts in area listening rooms to MKAF's annual Wine Walkabout at Destin's Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, to the coming inaugural Salt Water Music Fest, bringing three days of music and fun to MKAF's Arts Village October 12-14th.

Salt Water Music Fest

If you're a fan of live music and lots of fun, you will certainly want to grab your three-day tickets or VIP table for the inaugural Salt Water Music Fest, presented by MKAF and Salt Water Vacations.

The spectacular festival takes place at MKAF's Arts Village in the heart of Destin, and brings internationally renowned headliners: Grammy winning R&B

sensation Macy Gray and CMA nominated country hitmakers LOCASH, as well as six other hit Nashville songwriters to MKAF's Dugas Pavilion stage for what is sure to be a fun-filled celebration of music across multiple genres.

With hits like "I Try," "Sweet Baby," "Beauty in the World," "Still," and "Why Don't You Call Me," you're sure to enjoy a night of reminiscent musical fun, moving to the tunes of Macy Gray, just as country fans are sure to sing along to LOCASH staples like "I Love This Life," "I Know Somebody," the band's remarkably popular 2023 patriotic hit, "Three Favorite Colors," and the chart-topping, "You Gonna Fly" written by LOCASH'S Chris Lucas and Preston Brust for Keith Urban.

The festival and ticket proceeds will further support and grow awareness for MKAF's outreach to our communities, schools, veterans and residents of these coastal communities.

As if that's not enough music, MKAF has also added to its 2023 fall season two, new MKAF Unplugged live concerts! These popular listening-room style concerts will

showcase singer-songwriters, solo artists, musicians, duos and small bands performing for limited numbers of attendees in intimate acoustic sets. The two upcoming fall concerts include American country music singer-songwriter Erin Enderlin on Sunday, Oct. 25, and the country rock duo, Capps & Hughes on Sunday, Nov. 1st. Both limited availability events take place on Henderson Beach Resort's Sunset Terrace in Destin. These particular concerts are a remarkable value, as they are offered as a bundle for only \$75. Tickets also include complimentary valet service, light bites and a cash bar.

MKAF's CEO, fearless leader, and champion of the arts Demetrius Fuller, had this to say about the addition of the new Unplugged Series: "Our first Unplugged benefit concert last June featuring Adam Ezra and Corrina Smith was so well received that we partnered with our friends at the Henderson to add these acoustic sets. With limited seats on a terrace, overlooking beautiful Henderson Beach State Park and the Gulf at sunset, this is a wonderful way to gather with friends to experi-

ence live music, a cocktail and delicious food. It's literally the magic memorable evenings are made from."

Whichever MKAF events you choose to attend and support this fall, one thing is for sure: By being a member of, or simply an attending supporter of Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's growing number of artful community events, you will be doing so much more than enriching your own life through contact with the organization's art, music, and outreach programs. You will quite literally be making a lifelong difference in the lives of others. How's that for having your proverbial cake and eating it too?

For more information, including tickets to any of the array of MKAF events, Salt Water Music Fest, and to become a MKAF member and take advantage of their corporate sponsorship opportunities, visit MKAF.org

Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur and coastal real estate professional with more than 600 published magazine features in an array of genres, from celebrity interviews to travel and tourism to automobiles



Will Estell, his wife, ABC 3 news anchor, Laura Hussey, and Tommy Shaw of Styx

and real estate. During the past 25 years, Will has been instrumental in founding and co-founding 12 new magazines from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others. Originally from the backwoods of rural Ripley, Mississippi, Will is a father of three who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his wife, ABC 3 news anchor, Laura Hussey. Will is a regular contributor to Life Media and numerous other publications, as well as a member of the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's board of directors.





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We Hope You Get Butterflies

BY ANNA FISHER, EMERALD COAST THEATRE CO.

My Dad took me to see Camelot when I was around 12 years old. It was my very first experience seeing a live performance, and I remember walking up the steps at the Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium with such excitement that I had butterflies. We had the honor of escorting none other than Mrs. Mattie Kelly herself that day, as she was one of my Dad's clients at his brokerage firm.

Oh, the music, the lights, the

voices, the costumes! Guinevere was so beautiful with her long flowing locks and shimmering gowns and I was in awe of the spectacle of everything. My only other experience with a musical was catching a rerun of Grease 2 on TV whenever I got really lucky. But this live performance feeling was different. It had texture and weight; it was fully immersive and glowing, like an intense sunset that washes over everything in its path.

The power of that live performance never left me. I still

feel the magic of it every time I watch a new cast thrill our audience with everything they've got. The most rewarding moments of all happen when I get to watch children experience that magic for the first time at ECTC.

We are bringing **Junie B. Jones the Musical** to life on stage this October and I am so excited to have multiple schools attending on field trips, as well as our offerings to the general community. Aside from the boost that live theatre gives

students in every area of education, it gives space for kids to imagine and dream, just like I did so many years ago.

We have something inspiring for the adults in October as well. **Me and My Gal: A Musical Tribute to Judy and Gene** is a joyous walk down memory lane with such songs as "Singin' in the Rain" and "Get Happy." Like putting your toes in the sugar white sand, attending a live performance is one of the best reset buttons we can employ in this technology age. I

turn off my phone, take a deep breath, and just feel all of the music, dance and life that is being played out before me.

Whether you're attending Junie B. Jones, Me and My Gal, or any of the multiple productions we offer throughout the year, I hope you get those same butterflies of excitement and anticipation as you walk up the steps to ECTC. Come join us in real life and real time to experience the magic of that reset for yourself.

LO CASH

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we've written that haven't even gotten picked up yet that I probably love even more than either one of those.

I've asked multiple long-time artists I interview—from the iconic Jimmy Buffett to Kenny Chesney to STYX to Alan Jackson and Sara Evans—this same question: In the time you've been in the industry, how have you seen it change, and what do you see coming for the future of music and how you as artists navigate this ever-changing landscape?

Preston: I tell you, Will, there's been a ton of changes, and it's easy sometimes to get discouraged. Because sometimes the music industry changes so quickly that you have to adjust your next move, whether it's methodically, touring, business wise or even social media. I mean, I remember when MySpace was a thing, then sitting down and starting our first Facebook page, and realizing we could have a music Facebook page, too. And just when you have watched all those things evolve, and start to get used to where it's headed, streaming comes along, and it's like, boom! Now it's not just about country radio, it's about all the streamers you have to reach: Spotify, Pandora, Apple—all of these outlets where people are consuming music. So, now even that is beginning to change. One thing I love about Chris and me, is that we've always kinda been able to adjust, and move with the industry. I see really cool things coming. I mean, we just did a show in California a couple weeks ago, for a company called HitKor. It was a really cool thing, because we were able



PHOTO BY DAVID MCCLISTER

to do a live show on stage, while also performing globally, online. Fans just pay one ticket price and they can watch from home anywhere in the world! HitKor is making that record live, and then it can be used on radio, on streamers and other places too. So, it's amazing how people are learning to adapt and share music in the industry. Back when we started in '06, people couldn't wait to get an album out, and now you don't even need an album—a lot of times it's just a song. And now sometimes it's not even a whole song. Trending sounds are becoming wildly popular online.

As for projects beyond the music, tell me a little about the new 'I Love This Life' podcast you guys have launched. You have mentioned it's going to be no-holds-barred conversations, and you promise to keep it raw and real. What does that entail and how did the podcast come to be?

Preston: Man, one of my favorite things about our career is the stories. The places we've been and the things we've done, like "Remember that time we

did this or that?" We'll be sitting on the bus and telling stories

and we get to laughing and we always say, "Man, no one would ever believe that if we told that story." So, we just decided to start telling those stories, because that's what life is about. It's about looking forward to things, but also reliving some of those fun moments and stories from the past. [Fans can find LOCASH's I Love This Life podcast on YouTube and Apple.]

I know you guys have played quite often along the beach communities of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, including shows in Fort Walton Beach to playing Gulf Coast Jam in PCB. What are your thoughts on the area? Have you also vacationed here over the years?

Chris: We definitely have

vacationed there with our families. Even recently when we played in Fort Walton [The Block], we stayed an extra couple of days. We were staying in Destin last time. I love Destin. The Emerald Coast is just beautiful, and this time, the family is going to be there. We love playing there. It's great to look at the water, and jump in before jumping on stage. And especially with the military bases being there, it's a wonderful place for us to play.

For more information, and tickets, to LOCASH's upcoming performance as part of Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Salt Water Music Fest, visit MKAF.org.



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BY PATRICIA LEE, OWNER
DESTINITES.COM

This month marks the five-year anniversary of our Destinites private Facebook group (www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinites) for locals and property owners. Membership is currently at 8700+ and we keep

Ask Destinites: Destinites Mark 5-Year Group Anniversary

a pending list to join between one to 200 requests. If you are waiting to be accepted, please be patient. We do our best to ensure the quality of the group and vetting some members can take a little longer than others.

Our Destinites Facebook group does have some rules, but those rules help keep down the drama. For example, Rule #1: Be Kind. "Always be respectful in your posts and post replies. No demeaning remarks toward members, community leaders, vaca property owners, businesses or their owners." We are not

by any means the only group with this type of "Be Kind" rule, but we are one of few who actually do enforce it. With 95% of our membership being people who are invited by a current member and that number consistently growing, we must be doing something right.

We go out of our way to make the Destinites group a happy and helpful place. You will see all kinds of discussions in our group but the main premise is that we're about people helping each other. It's locals coming together, making new friends and being supportive. If you are in need of immediate help for some reason, you can post in the group and someone will always reach out. Over the years, I have seen some pretty serious situations get resolved because of some incredibly caring people in this community. I,

myself, have posted on behalf of others at times, because maybe that person needed to remain anonymous. All kinds of things go on behind the scenes when you have a community group. I never know from one day to the next who may reach out or what their need will be but my door is always open.

Destinites also has a website at www.Destinites.com with a local business directory. We call these businesses our sponsors and any listed there have the bonus of advertising in our group. Many of our sponsors are incredibly generous, as they offer special discounts to our members or offer their products or services as giveaway prizes when we have a meet-n-greet party. I am proud to count this Destin Life newspaper as one of our sponsors. Lori Smith, the publisher, offered a quarter-page

ad spot at our party last month and the recipient was overjoyed! I also want to thank her for allowing me this spot every month to let the Destinites' voices be heard on various issues. You are appreciated!

I want to take a moment and say thank you to my other admin, moderators, city/county council members, the mayor and other community leaders, and last but not least, all the members for participating with the group and being so supportive of my efforts toward the community. To the many who "have my back" and look out for the group, you are beyond appreciated. I pray over the group every day that Father God will help it reach all who need it and serve a purpose that will glorify Him.

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OVIDE

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Grits), bloody mary or mimosa, and coffee or tea. A limited kids menu is also available.

The brunch menu (Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.) features many plates from the breakfast menu, plus special brunch items including starters such as the Coconut Chia Seed Parfait; Shrimp Cocktail; Emerald Coast Smoked Fish Dip; and Deviled Eggs.

A brunch-only "Specialty" is the Steak & Eggs, a New York strip steak served with grilled tomatoes, chimichurri, eggs over-easy, toasted sourdough and breakfast potatoes. A brunch-only "From the Farm" dish is the Crab Cake Benedict.

There are also several salad and sandwich options. The Grand Sandestin Brunch includes a fruit plate, any entrée (exclusions apply), bloody mary or mimosa, and coffee or tea.

Ovide's new dinner menu (Sun. - Thurs. 5-9 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 5-10 p.m.) includes a selection of "Snacks" including Pimento Cheese; Spinach & Artichoke Dip; Crispy Pork Ribs; and Beef Tartare. Soup and salad options include She-Crab Soup.

The dinner menu also features several Raw Bar options including Half-Shell Oysters; Classic Oysters Rockefeller; and a Seafood Platter (market price), with half-shell oysters, shrimp cocktail, smoked fish dip, snapper ceviche and crab claws. For

the main course, options include Pappardelle; Grouper; Crispy Skin Snapper; Low Country Boil; and Crispy Half Chicken. Grilled options include the Berkshire Pork Chop; and Prime 16-ounce Boneless Rib-Eye.

Dinner sides include Goat Cheese Corn Casserole with goat cheese feta, peppadew and cilantro lime aioli; Charred Broccolini with jalapeno maple and lemon; Southern Collard Greens; Smoked Turkey; Whipped Potatoes with boursin cheese; and Potato Croquettes served with Effie's sauce.

Ovide is located at Hotel Effie, 1 Grand Sandestin Blvd. in Miramar Beach. Make reservations at www.hoteleffie.com/dining/ovide.

NWFSC

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pus, seamlessly aligning with the existing brick architectural theme.

Beyond the brick-and-mortar, the project stands as a testament to the spirit of collaboration. The combined efforts of The Jay Odom Group, the NWFSC Foundation and Community Bank of Mississippi have been instrumental. Dr. Stephenson highlighted the unwavering

commitment and financial support of the NWFSC Foundation and recognized Jonathan Ochs, Vice-Chair of the Foundation Board, for his indispensable role as the liaison.

Reflecting on his journey, Jay mused about the past, "From where I sat then in the 1970s to now, I did not have the vision at that time to know that I'd be here today being able to contribute to the community." But he has, and Raider Village stands as a beacon of progress and

promise, ensuring that future generations will benefit from a world-class facility.

In the words of Dr. Stephenson, this groundbreaking event is not just about laying the foundation for a building. It's about laying the foundation for the future of NWFSC and the thousands of students it will nurture.

May I add one last caveat? I am another one of the many proud alumni of Okaloosa Walton Junior College—now, Northwest Florida State College.

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