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DESTIN Life

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Local Wellness Center Raises the Bar...Again

High Performance Lab Completes a Wellness Trifecta

BY LORI LEATH SMITH,
PUBLISHER

Your local wellness center, CRYO850, recently added a state-of-the-art Performance Lab to its already robust arsenal of offerings for local athletes, fitness professionals, military personnel, coaches, exercise enthusiasts and those, like me, simply wanting to keep their bodies as healthy and in shape as possible, while managing pain without drugs.

CRYO850 Performance and Recovery came to Destin in 2019 offering drug-free technology for healing and recovery. Though the name has a focus on cold, the center started with a line-up of Hyper-Wellness services including Red Light Therapy, Infrared Sauna, Vibration Plates and Compression Therapy. The concept quickly took off and local trainers, coaches, athletes and health care providers began not only using its services, but also rec-



ommending CRYO850 for adjunct therapy to enhance performance and expedite healing. People of all ages in our community found refuge for the management of pain and disease, post-surgery recovery, anti-aging, weight loss and skin care.

As the center grew, CRYO850 owner, Amy Miligan, saw a need to add new services to increase the offering. Pagani Muscle Recovery became popular for muscle relief and the Cocoon Sauna Pod for muscle relaxation, lymphatic drainage, circulation and weight loss. Esthetic services were added including a Cryo Facial and Pagani Detox Fat Freezing, an all-natural method of eliminating subcutaneous fat to cleanse the body of toxins and address stubborn areas such as the stomach, love handles,

CRYO850
continued on page 31



Gulfarium is Making a Splash!



BY MEGAN TRAINER

You won't want to miss all the excitement at Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park this year! Located on Okaloosa Island, the Gulfarium recently unveiled its new Dolphin Oasis, an exciting new addition

GULFARIUM
continued on page 2



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Community

GULFARIUM

continued from page 1

which sets a new benchmark for marine life experiences. Further, this announcement was accompanied by news of an upcoming renovation to welcome manatee rehabilitation and the launch of "C.A.R.E. on the Coast," an event championing sea turtle conservation. These developments represent significant strides in the park's ongoing commitment to the preservation and education of marine life, promising enriching encounters for all visitors.

Dolphin Oasis

Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park was excited to inaugurate its highly anticipated Dolphin Oasis during a momentous ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 8, 2024. The event marked a significant milestone for the renowned marine park and the region's attractions, drawing esteemed guests including local dignitaries, politicians and business leaders.

Spanning 2.2 acres of sandy dunes and palms along the picturesque emerald waters of the Florida Gulf Coast, Dolphin Oasis reflects Gulfarium's com-



mitment to animal welfare, conservation education and visitor experience. With a \$30 million investment, the expansion comprises three large interconnected habitats and three husbandry habitats, totaling over one million gallons of Gulf saltwater. The immersive, natural-themed experience embodies the beauty of the Emerald Coast.

The grandstand seating for 480 guests and a 27-foot acrylic split-level viewing area in the exhibit habitat offer unparalleled opportunities to witness the beauty of dolphins up close. Moreover, the habitat is designed to serve as a future nursery for dolphin calves, enriching the park's offerings. The new habitat

also allows guests to get up close and personal with the dolphins during exclusive encounter opportunities.

Manatees, Coming This Fall

Patrick Berry, CEO of Gulfarium, announced during the ceremony a multi-million-dollar renovation of the original 300,000-gallon dolphin habitat to accommodate manatee rehabilitation patients as part of the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP). This initiative underscores Gulfarium's dedication to marine life conservation, with plans to welcome manatees in need beginning fall of 2024.



C.A.R.E. ON THE COAST: An Event for a Cause

Saturday, May 4 | 3:30 - 7 p.m. | Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park, Okaloosa Island

Additionally, Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park is excited to introduce "C.A.R.E. on the Coast," a new event dedicated to supporting sea turtle conservation through the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center. Scheduled for

May 4, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., the event promises an immersive experience into sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation and release efforts.

Highlights of "C.A.R.E. on the Coast" include a private dolphin presentation at the NEW Dolphin oasis, live music, an in-depth look at the C.A.R.E. Center and its current patients, food and beverage vendors, conservation-based vendors, silent auctions and raffles. Early registration discounts of 25% are available until May 1 with code EARLYTURTLE, ensuring participation in this celebration of marine life conservation.

Tickets for C.A.R.E. on the Coast are on sale now at Gulfarium.com, with limited availability. Join others on the beautiful Emerald Coast for an evening filled with education, entertainment and a shared commitment to safeguarding our marine ecosystems.

For more information and ticket purchases, visit www.gulfarium.com/careonthecoast.

Follow Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park and Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center on Facebook and Instagram for event updates and marine conservation news.

C.A.R.E. on the COAST

SATURDAY MAY 4, 2024 3:30 PM | GULFARIUM MARINE ADVENTURE PARK

Help us save our local sea turtles at this exciting, family-friendly event!

- Live music
In-depth look at the C.A.R.E. Center
Dolphin presentation
Silent auction and raffles



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SCAN TO BUY TICKETS NOW THIS EVENT WILL SELL OUT!



www.gulfarium.com/careonthecoast

Impact100: Aid Multiplied by Collective Giving

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

When Joni Wallace, the current President of Impact100 of Northwest Florida, thinks about the hope this organization can bring to our community, it comes down to this: Multiply success by collective giving.

The goal in 2024 is for Impact100 NWF to have 500 members by April 30th, all paying a \$1000 membership, to change the trajectory of a non-profit in each of these five key areas:

- Arts and Culture
- Education
- Environment, Recreation, and Preservation
- Family
- Health and Wellness

With 500 members, it means that a \$100,000 grant can be given to five non-profit organizations that will multiply the health of the community it serves in ways that will have generational impact. As Joni points out, “You could certainly write a check for \$1000 and give it to a non-profit who would certainly appreciate it and use it. But when you give \$100,000 as a collective gift, that is what takes a nonprofit to the

next level. It’s transformational, no matter how transformational is defined. \$100,000 is a big investment.”

The local chapter started in 2012 with 12 women from both Okaloosa and Walton counties. They dreamed about the changes that could happen when this level of generosity is given to local nonprofits and decided they wanted to be part of this international movement. Its mission: To be a collective force for good; uniting and empowering women to give together, creating transformational impact, locally and globally.

One such recipient in 2023 was the EOD Warrior Foundation under the Health and Wellness category. They strive to support the quality of life and reduce the challenges that come from volunteering to take on one of the most dangerous jobs in the military, the safe disarming and disposal of bombs and other explosives. EODWF recognizes that members of the Special Forces have the highest rate of suicide and mental health struggles that can lead to phys-



ical and familial instability. The grant from Impact100 NWF allowed them to expand their care by directly affecting two critical parts: Updating and renovating the EODWF building and expanding existing support as well as creating new programmatic support.

It’s not just locally started non-profits who benefit. Even more well-known international organizations who want to serve locally, such as The Salvation Army, applied to Impact100 under the “Family” category. With its grant, The Salvation Army bought a disaster response vehicle and went to Northern Florida

after Hurricane Idalia, serving 500 meals per sitting. The truck was equipped with Starlink, and it gave those who were affected a chance to reach out to family, offering some peace of mind during a devastating time. The truck doesn’t just operate during natural disasters. Every week, the truck goes to Crestview on Tuesdays to feed the hungry, a day when meals aren’t so readily available.

Both of these programs would have been impossible to grow with a single \$1000 donation, and it would have delayed critical services as funds were gathered. However, with 100

people linking arms in each of these categories, members of our military and those who face food insecurity are already feeling the benefits of these grants.

Impact100 is also designed to vet those who are seeking a grant to ensure the money is used as outlined in the proposal. “Any organization has to be a 501c3 for at least two years upon application. So, there’s some financial history that can be reviewed. We also need them to be registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture which provides the license to solicit contributions.

Continued on page 20

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Community

11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest Returns to Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort

Get ready to indulge in the ultimate fiesta experience as the 11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest returns for another unforgettable celebration of Tequila Love! Established as the second longest running Tequila & Taco Fest in the U.S., Tequila & Taco Fest promises an unparalleled culinary adventure coupled with live music, family-friendly activities and thrilling competitions. Spanning across three exciting days from May 10th to May 12th, Tequila & Taco Fest offers a diverse array of attractions to delight attendees of all ages.



unavailable in the main festival area.

Farewell Brunch: Wrap up the festivities on Sunday, May 12th, with the Bye Bye Brunch at the Beach House overlooking the Gulf of Mexico from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Indulge in delicious brunch fare while bidding farewell to another unforgettable Tequila & Taco Fest weekend.

Kick-off Party: The festivities commence with the electrifying Brews, Blues & BBQ Kick-off Party on Friday, May 10th, hosted by Sandestin® Beer, Buffalo Chip Bourbon and Black Sheep Tequila (voted the best tequila in the world) at the popular Marina Bar in Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort® at the Baytowne Marina overlooking the Choctawhatchee

Bay. Revelers can dive headfirst into the festive spirit, live blues music, tantalizing BBQ, and an array of refreshing brews. This weekend isn't always about Tacos!

Main Event: Taco Extravaganza unfolds on Saturday, May 11th, at the iconic Village of Baytowne Wharf, transforming the picturesque locale into a taco lover's paradise. With an

impressive lineup on Saturday, May 11th from 1 to 4 p.m., the main event takes center stage. With 25 plus taco vendors competing for the esteemed title of "Best Taco in Northwest Florida" and a grand prize of \$2,500 for first place, attendees are in for a culinary delight. The festival will also host Best Margarita Competition, vying for the coveted title and bragging rights. Aficionados of Mexico's famed

spirit can rejoice as they explore the 25 tequila tents and an assortment of imported beers from South America. Families can enjoy kid-friendly activities including face painting, live music and even a Chihuahua Beauty Pageant. For those seeking a VIP experience, the exclusive VIP area at Landshark Bar and Grill will feature the finest tequila, courtesy of Black Sheep Tequila, and exotic tacos that are

Don't miss out on the 11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest, a celebration of flavor, culture and community in the heart of Sandestin®. Secure your spot today! Purchase tickets online at www.efestevents.com. A portion of the proceeds will benefit two worthy causes: the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and the Sandestin® Foundation for Kids, making every taco and tequila sip count towards a greater good.



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Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

"Reel Talk" from the City of Destin

Annexation: Added Benefits for All

By TAMARA LEIGH YOUNG, PHD, PUBLIC INFORMATION DIRECTOR FOR THE WORLD'S LUCKIEST FISHING VILLAGE

It's time for more "reel" talk from the Mayor and me. This time, the City of Destin's Mayor, Bobby Wagner, and I discussed annexation and shared resources.

TY: Annexation is a popular topic right now, and it's multi-faceted. What's the overarching goal?

BW: Our vision with annexation is all about knitting closer bonds between the City and our neighboring communities and unincorporated Destinites. We're not just talking about lines on a map; we're dreaming of a future where we share resources, ideas and a sense of belonging. Together we can enhance public services, infrastructure, and overall quality of life while respecting the unique characteristics and desires of each community.

TY: Given the complexity of the topic, I know you're planning to speak at various HOA meetings and offer presentations

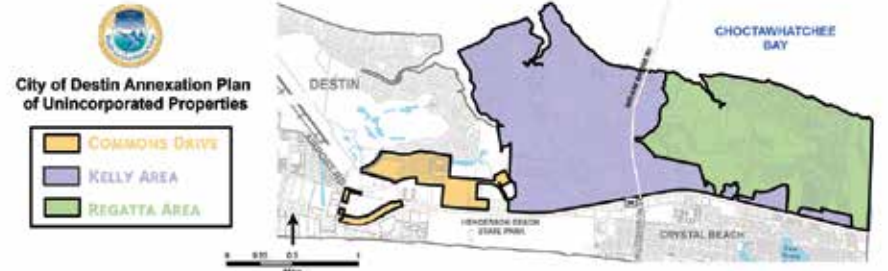
to boards and any guests in attendance.

BW: I'm putting the finishing touches on a series of tailor-made presentations, each one crafted with a specific community or HOA in mind.

It's important to me that every presentation feels personal, like a conversation with neighbors, because that's exactly what we are—neighbors.

TY: There's a long list of potential benefits that come with annexation.

BW: Yes, annexation can enhance public services such as better road maintenance and underground utilities, local



perks like free parking and boat launches and access to city recreational programs. It also often means inclusion in city planning and development processes, giving residents a voice in future growth and improvements.

TY: The largest area of concern seems to stem from individuals worried their taxes might increase.

BW: While it's possible that

property taxes might increase to align with City rates, it's important to consider the broader scope of services and benefits that come with being part of the City. We aim to provide a detailed breakdown of how any potential tax changes can be offset with local perks while those dollars will be used to benefit the community we all live in.

TY: People here take great pride in the uniqueness of their particular housing area. Will they be able to maintain that identity post-annexation?

BW: Absolutely. We recognize the importance of preserving the unique character and values of each community. Our approach to annexation involves working closely with residents and local leaders to ensure that growth and integration respect and reflect the community's heritage and vision. I hope people bring their questions and concerns to the HOA meetings or reach out directly to us. We're committed to making this process as inclusive and transparent as possible.

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PHASE 7A LOT 130 ON YEARLING COURT
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 Community

Trends & Treasures!



Newness of Spring Brings New Performance Center CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center

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cide which shape, color and size suits you best. Owner Ashleigh Woolly specializes in diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry pieces, and the Beyond Measure Jewelers' showroom at City Market is full of diamond and gemstone bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. Ashleigh is passionate about exquisite and custom-designed jewelry and selling it. She especially has a heart for selling engagement rings, wedding bands and working with couples, because "it is truly special to help people celebrate one of the biggest moments of their lives. Beyond Measure designs hundreds of custom projects. Whether it's an engagement, wedding or special occasion, you can trust your custom project to Beyond Measure. No matter what your taste, expect to be amazed. At Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting.

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"We hired Brian to help us navigate 30A's tough real estate market. He has serious negotiating skills and expertise. Because of his efforts and strategies that he details in his book, we quickly sold our Destin home and bought a 30A beach front home, below asking price," said client, A. Albright.

Destin Life readers can get a FREE copy of the book, for a limited time, by emailing Brian@BeOnTheCoast.com

or give him a call at (850) 739-3800.

Welcome Spring with All Things Monogrammed! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

Warmer weather is here and saying WELCOME! Yes! It's time to think about decorating your home for spring and summer, especially your front door where guests get their first impression, especially your front door. So, welcome them in Southern style with a wooden monogram. Contemporary couples use a combined monogram, while traditional folks use the initials of the lady of house. The monogram can be painted different colors and customized to your preference! Frill Seekers also has you covered for spring-themed custom gifts for new parents, grandparents and teachers for the end of the year. All say Frill Seekers Gifts is THE place to go for fun and exciting spring custom offerings. There's so much...from cups, napkins, koozies and stir sticks to invitations, stationery, programs and placards. How about a shatterproof cup for a new Destin beach house to showcase the homeowner's monogram? Be assured...Frill Seekers has something to fit your taste and budget for your house warming, wedding, bridal shower, Girl's Trip, birthday, baby shower, graduation, anniversary, party or simple formal dinner party – If it's personalized, it's from Frill Seekers!

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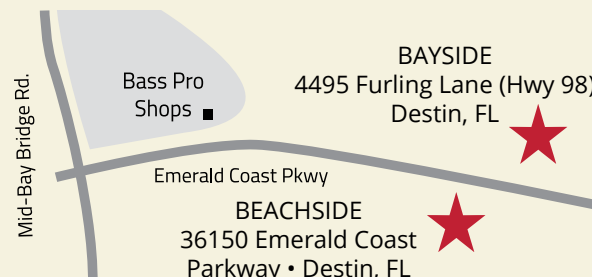


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Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! APRIL 2024

..... 4
Trivia | 6pm | The Island FWB
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
..... 5
Locals on the Harbor | 5pm | Boat-house Oyster Bar
..... 6
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
..... 7
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 8
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 9
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
..... 10
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 11
Sandestin Wine Festival Grand Tasting | 5pm-8pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 12
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale
..... 13
ONE Run 5K benefitting Emerald Coast Autism | 8am | Northwest Florida State College Niceville
..... 14
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 15
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 16
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
..... 17
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 18
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 19
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
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Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 21
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 22
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 23
Volunteer Celebration | 4:30pm | United Way Emerald Coast
..... 24
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 25
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | 5pm-7pm | Grand Boulevard
..... 26
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 27
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 28
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 29
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 30
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB



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Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 18
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 19
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 20
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 21
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 22
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 23
Volunteer Celebration | 4:30pm | United Way Emerald Coast
..... 24
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 25
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | 5pm-7pm | Grand Boulevard
..... 26
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 27
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 28
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 29
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 30
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB

..... 14
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 15
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 16
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
..... 17
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
..... 18
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
..... 19
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
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Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
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Volunteer Celebration | 4:30pm | United Way Emerald Coast
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..... 26
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 27
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
..... 28
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
..... 29
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 30
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB

Construction Junction | 10am | NWFL Fairgrounds
International Festival | 11am-7pm | The Landing FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 21
Moon Crush Pink Moon Concerts | Seascape Resort
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
..... 22
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Run Destin Night | 5:45pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Music Bingo | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
..... 23
Volunteer Celebration | 4:30pm | United Way Emerald Coast
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Chicago | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville
..... 24
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay
Top Golf Social Club | 6pm | City Food Hall Destin
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | 5pm-7pm | Grand Boulevard
ECBGFK Kick Off Party | 5:30pm-8:30pm | Legendary Yacht Club
Trivia | 6pm | The Island FWB
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Spill The Tea: Open Poetry Night | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe
..... 25
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Festival | 5pm-7pm | Grand Boulevard
ECBGFK Kick Off Party | 5:30pm-8:30pm | Legendary Yacht Club
Trivia | 6pm | The Island FWB
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Spill The Tea: Open Poetry Night | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios & Sound Cafe

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 26
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Fest VIP Kick Off Event Tasting | 4pm-6pm | Grand Boulevard
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
South Walton Food & Wine Fest Craft Beer & Spirits Jam | 5:30pm-8:30pm | Grand Boulevard
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac
..... 27
Destin Charity Wine Auction Weekend
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Saturday in the Park | 10am | Heritage Museum | Val'p
Farmers Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale
Garden Party Tour | 9:30am-12pm | Destin Library
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Fest Grand Tasting | 3pm-6pm | Grand Boulevard
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
..... 28
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
South Walton Beaches Food & Wine Fest Grand Tasting | 1pm-4pm | Grand Boulevard
..... 29
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Run Destin Night | 5:45pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Music Bingo | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
..... 30
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Save the Date | May 9
67th Annual Blessing of the Fleet
Prayer Service 4pm | Fleet Blessing 5:15pm
Destin Fishing Fleet Behind Brotula's - Destin Harbor

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Banking That Matters: Coming Together for Our Heroes

The employees of First National Bank couldn't be prouder to support the bank's initiative, the "Kindness Cards for Silent Heroes" campaign. This initiative holds a special place in many team members' hearts, especially First National Bank Miramar Beach Team Member Wendy Baggett, considering her son's current military service.

First National Bank's core values extend beyond banking to making a positive impact on the community. That's why launching this campaign to recognize and appreciate the often-unsung heroes who keep our community safe—our first responders, 911 operators and members of our fire and police departments—resonated with our team.

and actively supports initiatives like the "Kindness Cards for Silent Heroes" campaign. This campaign is more than just sending cards – it's about com-

ing together as a team to make a meaningful difference in our community. It's about recognizing those who often go unnoticed and showing them they

are valued and appreciated," continued Wendy.

"I'm excited to be a part of this initiative, and I'm confident that, together, we are making

a real impact. It's banking that matters—to our community, to our silent heroes and to me and my family," said Wendy.



"As a parent of a son serving in the military, I deeply understand the importance of our military personnel being able to access their accounts seamlessly, regardless of their location. First National Bank's unwavering support for our First Responders and Military through initiatives like the Kindness Cards for Silent Heroes truly resonates with me and my family. The gesture of sending hand-written cards to those who sacrifice so much embodies the essence of Banking That Matters to us."
#BankingThatMatters #FNBMiramar

Wendy Baggett



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 Community

Tip a Glass at the 37th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival!

Thursday, April 11th – Sunday, April 14th | Friday 5-8 p.m. and Saturday 1-4 p.m. | The Village of Baytowne Wharf

The 37th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival, voted “Best Event” by Visit South Walton and known as the “Kentucky Derby of Wine Festivals,” will run Thursday, April 11, through Sunday, April 14th at The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin.

The main events, the Grand Wine Tastings, Friday, 5-8 p.m., and Saturday, 1-4 p.m., showcase more than 500 domestic and international wines throughout the weekend. Patrons will have the opportunity to talk to vineyard owners and wine makers about their favorite appellations in all varieties, styles and price ranges, and perhaps try something new. A gourmet experience, courtesy of some of the best chefs on the Emerald Coast from popular local restaurants, will pair delectable bite-sized appetizers with their current glass selections – the Savor South Walton experience. A festival favorite, the Bubbly & Boozy tent, returns to the Grand Sandestin Lawn, featuring bubbles and specialty



liquors. Local and regional music also set the vibe for fun days of discovery.

All ranges of knowledge are encouraged to attend – wine novices to aficionados alike. Festival goers can taste wines from a comprehensive selection from all major producing countries in all varieties, styles and price ranges. Ticket holders also receive a beautiful Riedel glass etched to commemorate each year's event for their tastings.



Presented by Hotel Effie and Spa Lilliana, a featured event, Seas The Day on Saturday, April 13 from 9-11 a.m., will rejuvenate patrons' bodies and minds with a special beachside yoga session, followed by mimosas to get in the spirit for a day of discovery at the Grand Tasting.

So Much Fun in Spring at Baytowne Wharf!

April Wednesday Night Concerts - Tribute Series Wednesdays, April 3-24, 7-9 p.m.

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

- April 3: That Arena Rock Show- 70s & 80s Rock Tributes
 - April 10: Boys In The Band- The Alabama Tribute
 - April 17: Wildflowers- Tribute to Tom Petty
 - April 24: Ron Adams- Tribute to Elvis & Johnny Cash
- FREE to attend.

Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, April 18, 5-7 p.m.

Join The Village of Bay-

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

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

The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf

Come shop with local farmers, bakers, local fresh seafood and gourmet, beef, local honey, fresh pressed juices and much more all year long, 8 a.m.-Noon, Saturdays.

Don't forget to tune in on Beach TV to watch all that's going on in The Village of Baytowne Wharf LIVE!

SAVE THE DATE! Tequila & Taco Fest Friday, May 10, 6-9 p.m. Saturday, May 11 | 1-4 p.m. Sunday, May 12 | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tequila and Tacos Anyone? This May, the Village of Bay-



towne Wharf will come alive with local restaurants and food trucks competing for the Best Taco on The Emerald Coast with a first-place prize of \$2,500 – and you will have a say in the People's Choice Award! Sample many types of Tequilas and Margaritas from Blancos, Reposados, Anjeos and even Mezcal while indulging in some of the area's best tacos. For tickets: www.efestevents.com



Events Around Town

MKAF Showcases A Range of Music at 2024 Concerts in The Village

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's (MKAF) Concerts in the Village, the area's first live concert series, is held each spring on Thursday evenings at the MKAF Dugas Pavilion in Destin. This year's 29th annual family-friendly series runs from April 4 to June 6. The 10-concert live music series features premier regional and national musicians and bands performing everything from rhythm & blues, classic and hard rock to disco to modern pop.

Upcoming Concerts:

April 11 features Wendy Moten from The Voice! Hailing from Memphis, Wendy Moten is an American R&B-infused pop singer based in Nashville. Best known for the UK hit Come In Out of the Rain, Moten has released major-label solo records, achieved international hits, and toured extensively. At 56, she took a bold step, entering The Voice and finishing as the runner-up. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty military in advance.

April 18 Black Jacket Sym-



phony presents Prince's Purple Rain. Relive the awesome '80s and celebrate the 40th anniversary of Prince's most celebrated album from start to finish. Dance to hits like Purple Rain, When Dove's Cry, I Would Die 4 U while experiencing a visual feast of rock and roll magic. Doors open at 6 p.m. and concerts start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military in advance.

April 25 get ready to chart your course to set sail for concert fun with Yacht Rock Re-

vue. These top-notch musicians who have rocked onstage with John Oates, Eddie Money and now headline sold-out shows,

personify the smooth sounds of West Coast '70s and '80s. Doors open at 6 p.m. and concerts start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military in advance.

May 2 The Mulligans perform everyone's rock 'n roll favorites. The diversified song list of this seasoned six-member Emerald Coast-based band founded by Edwin Watts includes The Beatles, Tom Petty, Eric Clapton, Elvis, the Eagles, Bee Gees, the Ventures, Rolling Stones, Buddy Holly, The Monkees, Roy Orbison, Moody Blues, Young Rascals, Billy Joel, The Outsiders and many others. Doors open at 6 p.m. and concerts start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty

military.

Gates open at 6 p.m. with concerts beginning at 7 p.m. for this come-as-you-are family-friendly outdoor concert series. Bring a lawn chair, picnic, wine, or purchase food and beverages on-site prepared by featured restaurants and food trucks. A drawing will be held at each concert to award valuable raffle prizes donated by local businesses.

Proceeds fund MKAF's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs through ArtsReach serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and through MKAF's

Continued on page 45

White Sands Gala

May 18 | Event Sponsorship

We are honored to celebrate the paradise we call home while giving back to local charities, the Jackson Fund and Bundle of Hope Adoption & Family Services. Through the White Sands Gala, we hope to unite our community in a summer kickoff, while making a meaningful impact. With the support of Carrot Top Designs, who has generously partnered to host the event in its beautiful showroom as well as many generous friends such as you, we feel we can ignite the spirit of summer and spread benevolence far beyond this inaugural event.

We will be celebrating with our friends and neighbors at The White Sands Gala on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Sponsorship packages offer VIP entry, VIP parking, early access to the Popup Selfie sta-

tions, just for fun Poker game and an open bar. Please consider supporting us as one of the Gala Sponsorship Partners, and save the date for this exciting event.

With Gratitude,
Jennifer Board-Board President White Sands Gala, Beverly McManus-Sponsorship Chair and Deb Johnson-Treasurer. For more information, visit whitesandsgala.com, call (615) 293-5812 or email info@whitesandsgala.com.



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May 18th 2024
6:30 to 10:00 PM
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and Bundle of
Hope Adoption
and Family Services

@thewhitesandsgala
Tickets: Eventbrite.com

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whitesandsgala.com

Community

Get Ready for the Annual Paddle at the Park!

The 12th Annual Paddle at the Park, sponsored by HCA Florida Destin Emergency, will take place in the Gulf of Mexico behind The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island, Saturday, May 11. It features 1- and 3-mile recreational races, a 6-mile elite race and a kids' fun out-and-back paddle, to be followed by awards. Kayaks and inflatables are welcome, too.

Registration is now open on Paddleguru.com (<https://paddleguru.com/races/12thAnnualPaddleatthePark>)

Race Start Times

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

Awards

Awards will be presented directly following the last race to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place overall winners, as well as the 1st place winner for 50+ in the following categories:

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

3-Mile Recreational - Men's Displacement, Women's Displacement, Men's Surfstyle, Women's Surfstyle, Men's Other*, Women's Other*

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

*The Other category includes kayaks and outrigger canoes.

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



tin SUP Cup. The overall top male and female in the 1-Mile, 3-Mile, and 6-Mile races will also win some awesome BOTE lifestyle products and gift cards from Saltwater Restaurants!

The top boy and girl in the Kids Fun Paddle will win a BOTE Youth t-shirt and hat.

Registration

Registration is now open at <https://paddleguru.com/races/12thAnnualPaddleatthePark>. Pricing is as follows:

1-Mile Beginner - \$45 until May 10 / \$55 on May 11

3-Mile Recreational - \$50 until May 10 / \$60 on May 11

6-Mile Elite - \$65 until May 10 / \$75 on May 11

Kids' Fun Race - \$12 (This price does not include a race shirt.)

Race Packet Pickup

Packets are available for pickup at the Destin Chamber, located at 4484 Legendary Drive, Suite A, in Destin, on Friday, May 10, from 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. They may be picked up at

the Racer Welcome Party and on the day of the race beginning at 7 a.m., at The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island.

Sponsorships

Additional sponsorships are available! Contact Gretchen at (850) 837-6241, email membership@DestinChamber.com for details.

The Destin Chamber thanks its race partners BOTE and The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island; title sponsor HCA Florida Destin Emergency; platinum sponsor Destin - Fort Walton Beach; silver sponsor Eglin Federal Credit Union; bronze sponsor The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach; and media sponsor Destin Life!

12th Annual Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash

The Rotary Club of Destin will host its Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash Charity Fundraiser at The Towne Centre at Seascapes with co-host, Mezcal Mexican Grill on Friday, May 17 from 5:30 until 9 p.m.

This fundraiser is designed to help further education and help eradicate hunger by supporting the Destin Rotary Club Scholarship Fund and local families in need. Since 1979, The Rotary Club of Destin has served our

community through charitable, educational and humanitarian projects.

The Rotary Club of Destin is known for serving up the best Cajun crawfish, libations and live music. Back by popu-



lar demand is Fais Do-Do Band performing its unique genre of zydeco music. Integrating a

blend of R&B, soul, brass band, reggae, hip hop, ska, rock and Afro-Caribbean, you are guaranteed to be dancing! You can also enter an incredible raffle drawing and/or participate in a silent auction for themed packages, and a bourbon pull — all to help fund the growing needs of the club's charitable causes and make a difference in our

Continued on next page

Paddle at the Park
Sponsored by
HCA Florida Destin Emergency

Saturday, May 11 | 9 a.m.
The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

HCA Florida Destin Emergency | BOTE | BOARDWALK | Eglin Federal Credit Union | DESTIN Life | Destin Chamber | The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach

PaddleAtThePark.com | (850) 837-6241

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EVENT SPONSORS

Wine Fests on Tap!

Sandestin Wine Festival April 11-14

The 37th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival at the Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort will take place April 11-14, 2024. Topping area polls as a must-experience event, this beloved festival offers four full days of unique events including wine dinners with celebrity chefs, yoga, live music, interactive experiences, culinary tents, and of course wine tastings.

The event is the most established and continuously running wine festival on the Gulf coast and known as the “Kentucky Derby of Wine Festivals.” Always a picture perfect event complete with white tents, grand wine tastings, culinary experiences and live music.

Tickets, schedule and more information: www.sandestin-winefestival.com.



The Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction April 26-28

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) presents the 19th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction April 26-28 to benefit children in need in Northwest Florida through the Foundation’s 17 partner children’s charities. In 2023, DCWAF donated \$3.4 million to charity following one of its most successful auctions to date.

This year’s auction will feature an impressive line-up of celebrity chefs and vintners from throughout the world, hosted by

philanthropic couples within the local community.

Presented by the Jumonville Family, expect a weekend filled with exclusive wines and excellent food from a variety of celebrity chefs beginning Friday, April 26 with the patron dinner experience. Each dinner features a nationally recognized chef paired with world-class vintners.

The Destin Charity Wine Auction is the main event of the weekend at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 27 held under an air-conditioned tent at Grand Boulevard Sandestin Town Center and will feature distinctive wines from internationally acclaimed vintners poured and paired with cuisine curated by a selection of the area’s top restaurants. The event culminates with a high-energy, live auction boasting rare and distinctive wines, spectacular trips and other incredible one-of-a-kind items.

Hosted in conjunction with the South Walton Beaches Wine and Food Festival in Grand Boulevard Sandestin Town Center the same weekend, the Festival will showcase hundreds of premium wines along with a diverse selection of spirits and culinary creations. Auction attendees also have access to South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival’s Grand Tasting on Sunday, April 30 at 1 p.m. Patron packages: dcwaf.org/tickets.

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival April 25-28

A dazzling roster of celebrity winemakers, mixologists, and chefs will converge April 25 – 28, 2024 for the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival in Grand Boulevard Town Center to wine, dine, educate and entertain guests as part of the four-day celebration of wine, spirits, food, music, fun and goodwill.

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival festival features a stunning showcase of some of the best wines in the world. Celebrity wine producers and chefs present fine wine and food pairings from the world’s most famous appellations. The Willamette Valley Wineries Association will be featured in 2024 and more than a dozen of their noted winemakers and winery VIPs will participate in the festival. The Culinary Village offers a sumptuous array of foods to taste, wines to pair, as well as wine and food tasting seminars.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.SoWalWine.com.

The event is a major fundraiser for Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, which benefits children in need in Northwest Florida. To learn more about this worthy foundation, visit DCWAF.org.

ROTARY

continued from previous page

community.

Suitable for families of all ages and open to the public, Destin Rotary volunteers will dish up fresh crawfish from Louisiana with the traditional potatoes, sausage and corn on the cob. For kids and those who don’t crave crawfish, there will also be grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken available.

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

The Towne Centre at Sea-

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

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

The Rotary Club of Destin represents more than 60 business women and men who are committed to “Service Above Self” and whose mission is to positively change lives through service... across the street and around the world with emphasis on eradicating hunger and supporting education in our community and internationally. The Rotary Club of Destin meets every Tuesday at 7:15 a.m. at Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club. The Rotary Club of Destin “Sunset Club” meets on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. at 790 Restaurant.

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APRIL 25-28, 2024

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Friday • **VIP Wine Tasting Kick-Off** • 4pm–6pm
Friday • **Craft Beer & Spirits Jam** • 5:30pm–8pm
Saturday • **Grand Tasting** • 3pm–6pm ***NEW TIME***
Sunday • **Grand Tasting** • 1pm–4pm

Attendees enjoy such attractions as Spirits Activations, Savor South Walton Culinary Village with Champagne Walk-About, Nosh Pavilions, Tasting Seminars, Craft Beer & Spirits Jam, live entertainment and more than 600 wines poured by knowledgeable wine industry insiders.

Visit SOWALWINE.COM to purchase tickets!

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 Community

The Magic Ingredients of The Boys & Girls Club

By LISA WOODRUM

The atmosphere was electric as I entered the gymnasium: confetti falling from above, balloons floating around, popping, the smell of pizza, rousing music resounding above the din of laughter and chatter of young and old! Youth were running about, others playing foosball, hoops and presenters at their stations ready to enthusiastically share their Club theme and expertise on their subjects.

It certainly was a great reason for this celebratory atmosphere at the Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast (BGCEC). The ribbon was just cut at the front door of the Jacobe Turner Teen Center (hosted by the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce). This act initiated a



Layna McBride & Sebastian McDonald — Robotics



Clayton Goehl, Dewayne Dixon, Sherman Cain, Jonathan Hamilton — Manhood Club



Taylor Davis & Danica Fears — Smart Girls Club



Elizabeth Jackson — Community Club

new season of serving the community's youth with their Grand Re-opening—a new beginning with a name that honors a youth from the recent past. Jacobe Turner's life modeled and exemplified the values espoused at BGCEC. He was a longtime member who was their 2019 Organizational Youth of the Year.

He tragically lost his life in a car accident in 2020. His life and legacy are appropriately commemorated through this organization.

While I spoke with the youth, they each referred to the center's prior rundown condition, but then gleamed as they expressed



Madison Turner — Art Club



Layna McBride — Career Club

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pride in the facility's upgrade and new face.

The mission of the BGCEC is: "To enable all young people, especially those that need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens." It is evident that the staff and volunteers of this organization have successfully taught this as I spoke to the youth.

Shervin Rassa, the Chief Executive Officer shared, "I am a firm believer that our magic ingredient in our Boys and Girls Club mission is the amazing, informal mentorship young people get from dynamic and caring adults."

Here are samples of a few Clubs they offer:

Passport to Manhood Club: Jonathan Hamilton and Dwayne Dixon shared they learn maturity, responsibility, respect for elders and all individuals. Smart Girls: Taylor Davis and Danica Fears spoke of learning self-esteem, healthy relationships and nutrition. They said they now felt more confident about their futures.

Robotics: Sebastian McDonald and Layna McBride explained the cooperation of two groups to successfully have fully functional robots, of which they take to competitions! Good Luck!

Career Fields: Layna McBride recounted her experience with Old Navy guest instructors teaching interviewing skills, cashiering, etc. They also learn of

(in part) budgeting, public speaking, etiquette and networking.

Some outstanding qualities I noted in the youth as I spoke with them were articulate, knowledgeable, leaders, mature, authentic, enthusiastic, confident and exemplary, to name a few descriptive words. I am confident each has a bright future!

The BGCEC is positioning itself in this new chapter to once again serve many more teenagers. They can't do it alone. BGCEC welcomes new volunteers, mentors and potential staff candidates to apply online. If it is in your heart to partner with them, visit the website at <https://emeraldcoastbgc.org/> to inquire as well as learn the history and details of the organization.

The new face lift could not have happened without Florida Power & Light and the ALL Sports Association, Inc. Thank you for your generosity!

As one would expect, to continue with their mission, funds continue to be needed and welcome. There are upcoming fundraisers you can enjoy attending while contributing to a very worthy cause, such as the Bowling Tournament, Saturday, April 13. Tickets are \$160 per four-person team; FWB Bowling Center, 745 Beal Parkway. View all the events and purchase tickets at <https://www.facebook.com/BGCEC/>.



Forever Warriors Brings Help and Hope to Northwest Florida's Military Families and Veterans

BY WILL ESTELL

Forever Warriors is a Florida private charitable organization, established in 2021, and made possible by the generosity of Northwest Florida based Step One Automotive Group. The primary focus of Forever Warriors is to better equip current and past military members, and their family members, with an array of tools meant to aid them in their lives outside of, and beyond, their military roles.

Though most of us as residents of these beautiful coastal communities realize we have a large military population across our immediate five county area (which serves as home to numerous military families from every U.S. military branch), what we may not often consider is the hardships and trying times that many of these men, women and families go through—financially and otherwise—both during their time of service and especially when transitioning into civilian life afterward.

I spoke with Tiffany Orner, Military Engagement Manager of Forever Warriors, as well as Greg Lambert, the organization's Logistics Support Leader, to find out a little more about what makes this foundation tick and just how determined they both are to find and provide the help necessary for the men, women and families they serve.

Tiffany is passionate about the organization's pillars. Transition, sustainment, mental health and community immersion are the reason Forever Warriors was born—brought into existence to fill a need to lighten these burdens and circumvent the stigma that often surrounds a military family having to seek help. "As an organization, Forever Warriors realizes that our military heroes often face post service challenges in obtaining the necessary requirements to transition into the civilian workforce," Tiffany said.

Tiffany says she felt a calling to make a difference for others because of her personal experience coming out of her past military service. "I had a ridiculously tough time, both during and after my service to our country. I am determined to ensure no service member ever feels the way

I did. I am thankful for the opportunity to be the change that's so desperately needed in our local military community. I won't stop until EVERY veteran wants for nothing; and that starts with supporting those still serving in America's military," she said.

Forever Warriors works to multiply the awareness of the number of current community-based and military programs in place for this segment and to make navigating the road to help much more efficient. Additionally, Tiffany and Greg talked about the importance of making members of our coastal community more aware of deficits in the aid this segment of our population might need. All in hopes of uniting to create new ways to best help this ever-growing group of Northwest Florida Gulf Coast families. "Less than 1% of Americans serve in the military. We have to set the standard and have each other's backs. We are Vets helping our brothers and sisters that have and continue to serve," said Greg.

Through their connection and close-knit work alongside other local, state and federal agencies, Tiffany, Greg and the volunteers and partner companies of Forever Warriors are often able to help secure resources from companies and private stakeholders, that are driven and dedicated to serving those who have served our country. In many instances these are companies who are owned or managed by prior service members; thus they see and understand the need they are helping to fill.

By bridging this gap to civilian life and introducing this population of our neighbors to resources and opportunities, Forever Warriors makes it possible for these families to experience a faster, smoother and less burdened transition to the world many of us live in yet take for granted.

As part of their mission statement, Forever Warriors states that their pillars of success are built on compassionate empathy, unyielding integrity, unwavering unity and shared humility and respect. These strong values are the determining strength behind the organization's support for

the military community they serve, and through this service they hope to enlighten and educate all of us as to the importance of doing our part to support Forever Warriors' endeavor.

Remember, real compassionate empathy is more than a mere acknowledgement of what someone else might be experiencing. It goes beyond walking in another's shoes; it entails walking beside them in order to lift their burden, help carry their load and best ready them to build a better tomorrow.

For those of you interested in being a part of the upcoming events of this life-changing organization, Forever Warriors, in conjunction with the generous support of Step One Automotive Group, invite you to come out and be a part of one of these events:

April 13: The Savage Loop: 42 Mile Ultra Marathon, Across five cities and one Air Force Base

Expectation: Conceived by local Green Berets to support terminally ill children and local Gold Star Families, this grueling challenge is anticipated to attract over 500 participants.

April 20: FWB Chamber Military Appreciation Day, The Landing

Expectation: A celebration of local military members with free activities and services, expected to draw 4,000 attendees in a grand gesture of appreciation.

May 3: Commando Games, Hurlburt Field

Expectation: Focused on active duty military retention efforts, this event is projected to attract over 1,000 participants.

May 4: Operation Battle Laugh in partnership with Barracks Legend Foundation, The Island

Expectation: A night of laughter and camaraderie, supporting military and military family retention efforts with an expected attendance of approximately 350.

May 11: 6th RTB Open House, Onsite at 6th RTB

Expectation: Showcasing Army activities in the swamp, this open house aims to connect the community with military efforts, expecting 2,000 attendees.

June 21: Air Force/Space



Force Silkies Swear In, DOD Beach

Expectation: Swearing in of Panhandle Future Air Force and Space Force Members followed by a day on the Gulf to include Veteran Owned food trucks, VSO's MSO's and other Military Focused Partners with an expected attendance of approximately 200+ Airman, Guardians and their families.

June 28: Freedom Fest, Hurlburt Field

Expectation: A celebration of freedom and support for military and military family retention efforts, anticipating 3,000 attendees.

For more information about supporting Forever Warriors and attending these activities, visit <https://www.forever-warriors.org>.

Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur and real estate professional with over 600 published magazine features in an array of publications from tourism, real estate, and automobile editorials to celebrity interview cover features. Will Estell is the chief creative officer of Estell Hussey Media, LLC, and over the past 26 years has been instrumental in co-founding 12 new magazine titles, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others, both locally and for nationally sold newsstand titles. Originally from the backwoods of rural Mississippi, Will is a father of three who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his wife, WEAR ABC 3 Pensacola news anchor, Laura Hussey-Estell. Will is a regular contributor and media consultant to Life Media's family of publications.

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Covering Your Assets



By JULIE A. MARTIN

Insurance is everywhere, and there are so many different kinds, it gets confusing. What kind of coverage are you supposed to have to cover your homes, cars, boats and other fun things that you and your family use? Is it Property Insurance or Casualty Insurance?

The answer is both. **Property Insurance** covers your homes, your condos, your furniture, electronics and all the things you use in your home that is not permanently attached to

your home. **Casualty Insurance** usually refers to the items that move, such as your cars, motorcycles, boats and jet skis.

Both Property insurance and Casualty insurance include coverage for your covered items as well as liability. The liability coverage levels may go as high as 500K on a single policy. When you feel it isn't enough to protect you and your family, there is the Umbrella policy.

Umbrella policies include coverage for liability losses over and above what your primary



underlying policies would pay. For instance, if you are playing golf and you accidentally hit someone in the head with a golf ball, that person can sue you if they are hurt, even if you yelled "Fore." The incident would need to be sudden and accidental in nature, as no intentional acts are covered.

The umbrella policy covers in levels from \$1M to 5M, with requirements to maintain a minimum level of liability on the underlying policies for auto, boat, etc. of 250/500 Bodily Injury Liability and 100K Property Damage Liability. The minimum underlying liability requirement for home insurance or any property policies the umbrella covers would be 300K.

It is a common misconception that if someone has an

umbrella policy, that its primary function is to pay out what is demanded. That is not how this works. The umbrella policy acts to defend its policyholder and attempt to keep the client from financial ruin. Many standard carriers offer umbrella coverage, and it is even possible to bundle your auto insurance with your umbrella in many cases for an extra multi-policy discount.

If you have more than one home, two cars and even one toy, whether it's a motorcycle, boat or wave runner, it would be a good idea for you to have an umbrella to cover excess liability over all of your assets. Speaking with an independent agent to find out what kind of coverage is right for you will give you the peace of mind in knowing that there are no coverage gaps. And you can live your life not worrying about your insurance!

Covering your assets is only a phone call away. For more, contact me, Client Advocate at Abora Insurance Group, at 1-800-494-1333, Julie@GetAbora.com or visit www.GetAbora.com.

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New Golf Event to Forge Community Partnerships

By DOUGLAS J. BARTELS

A long-standing sense of community drives local parish church and the Knights of Columbus to use golf as a vehicle to help meet the many needs in South Walton County. The members of Saint Rita's Church of Freeport and their local Knights of Columbus (St. Joseph the Workman Council 17689) recently created the Golf Knights of Columbus charity event in an effort to partner with the community in providing mission support to three local organizations delivering compassion and care services to those throughout the area who need it. Tom Snipes, the event chairperson, likes to speak of the charities as "mission partners," highlighting the true nature of the relationship, people from different aspects of South Walton working together for the common good of meeting the needs of others.

The first annual Golf Knights of Columbus event is slated for April 27, with play and other exciting activities to be held at The

Links at Sandestin—registration opening at 8 a.m. and shotgun start at 10 a.m. Mr. Snipes could not be happier with the way the event is coming together, enthusiastically stating, "I'm elated, over the moon actually," further relating how pleased he is with the event's reception to date from community partners and players already involved. Adding to that, many community sponsorships and contributions have been provided by local families and businesses as partners helping to ensure greater success for both the event and, ultimately, the mission partners.

Mission partners include the Point Washington Medical Clinic, Healing Paws for Warriors and Caring and Sharing of South Walton. Each are committed to meeting various needs of those living throughout the area. All event proceeds will benefit the mission partners, furthering their efforts. Many event sponsorships, in-kind donations

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BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

The first quarter of 2024 is already behind us, and the markets have had some interesting results. The S&P 500 as of this writing was up over 10%; the Dow is up over 5%. Bonds, based upon the bellwether 10-year U.S. Treasury have declined in price (which means they increased in yield) by about 2.5%. The stock market is made up of 11 sectors and every sector was positive except for real estate (which is mainly real estate investment trusts and real estate firms). Communication Services was the leader, with an almost 16% return (examples of stocks in that sector are Google, Facebook, Netflix, Disney, the phone companies such as AT&T, Verizon and T Mobile among others). Technology, Industrials, Energy and Financials all had double digit returns for the quarter as well.

Oil prices were up over 13% and gold was up over 5%. The U.S. dollar, to the amazement of many was up over 2% after having a similar return for all of 2023. Japan was the leading international market with a re-

turn of over 11% year to date. A stronger dollar tends to work against international equities, but such was not the case for many international markets, Japan in particular.

Mortgage rates averaged close to 7% which is interesting because despite the perception that mortgage rates are quite high, that is less than the average rate for the past 50 years. Rates did reach an all-time low in the early 2020s. So, many homebuyers understandably have that concern. There has been so much liquidity (money available) for the past few years that it increased demand and thus prices substantially. The demand for housing, particularly first-time homebuyers continue to grow, and an outstanding question is if the current rate of construction is meeting the demand.

What about interest rates, particularly where the Federal Reserve is concerned? The Fed has held its short term (overnight rate) to 5.25-5.50% although pointed out in its March meeting that they foresee up to three rate cuts in 2024. Short term rates (one year or less CDs, money market mutual funds) continue to pay approximately 5%. By contrast the 10-year US Treasury pays approximately 4.25%. The longest-term U.S. Treasury pays approximately the same. The question on many minds is how long will the low

to no risk rate be in favor? Enter the Federal Reserve dot plot, or where rates are expected to be and by when. Currently the dot plot puts the overnight rate at 4.5 to 4.75% by year end. It is much harder to ascertain what long term rates will do so watching the 10-year US Treasury (which many banks use to price mortgages and other loans) makes most sense to us. There is a lot in the financial media regarding the longer-term dot plot, perhaps as low as 3.5% by 2025 as noted on Bloomberg Wall Street Week this past week.

When the market has a strong return, particularly over an increasing period, many people begin to think about valuations. In other words, is the market getting more expensive relative to earnings. That seems to be the case as the price of stocks to earnings is near an all-time high. Earnings have been growing year over with the S&P averaging close to 12%. Its 10-year average earnings growth rate has been about 8.4%. Stocks typically follow earnings. What might be fueling that? There are several things: Innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), the growth in energy demand, productivity gains, efficiency gains, a strong dollar and finally, the rate of inflation continued to decrease.

A few key points for investors bear repeating: Timing the market is next to impossible. They

don't ring a bell at the top and they don't ring a bell at the bottom. FOMO, or fear of missing out can consume anyone but it is not an emotion that serves investors. Know what you own, why you own it, where you own it and for how long do you need or want to own it. Asset allocation should be based upon the three keys of investment objection, risk tolerance and time frame.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA), commonly known as "The Dow," is an index representing 30 stocks of companies maintained and reviewed by the editors of the Wall Street Journal. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market. U.S. government bonds and treasury bills are guaranteed by the U.S. government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. U.S. government bonds are issued and guaranteed as to the timely payment of principal and interest by the federal government. Investing in oil

involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors. International investing involves special risks, including currency fluctuations, differing financial accounting standards, and possible political and economic volatility.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management/ Raymond James, with the main office located at The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd., Destin, 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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Insights for Investors: Financial News for the First Quarter

ECAR Celebrates NAR® RPAC Hall of Fame Inductees

The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) is honoring three Emerald Coast Association of REALTORS® (ECAR) past Presidents with membership in the 2023 REALTOR® Party (RPAC) Hall of Fame. Past ECAR Presidents Robert "Bob" Hudgens (2001), Mary Anne Windes (2010) and Cathy Alley (2016) will be inducted into the NAR 2023 RPAC Hall of Fame at the REALTORS® Legislative Meetings in Washington D.C. this May. The RPAC Hall of Fame recognizes dedicated members who have made a significant commitment to RPAC over the years by in-

vesting an aggregate lifetime amount of at least \$25,000. Among the Hall of Fame benefits are name plaques on the RPAC Hall of Fame wall located on NAR's Washington, D.C. building rooftop. "Cathy, Mary Anne, and Bob's unwavering commitment to RPAC underscores the vital role REALTORS® play in shaping policies that safeguard property interests and promote thriving communities," commented 2024 ECAR President Keith Wood. He continued, "This honor is a testament to their dedication and service to our industry and the communities we serve." RPAC is a volun-

tary political action committee whose membership consists of REALTORS® interested in actively and effectively protecting the real estate industry and the dream of homeownership by participating in government affairs at the local, state and federal levels. RPAC advances public policies and candidates that build strong communities, protect property interests, and promote a vibrant business environment—the only political action committee in the country that is organized by REALTORS® to promote and protect the dream of home-ownership in America.



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 Community

100 Men Who Care Exceeds \$50,000 in Local Donations

100 Men Who Care – Emerald Coast recently exceeded \$50,000 in donations supporting the needs of Okaloosa and Walton County nonprofits with its 2024 first quarter donation and its presentation of more than \$7,800 to One Hopeful Place – a nonprofit meeting the needs of homeless people in our community. “It’s exciting to meet this milestone with our energized and conscientious cadre of community members, meeting the needs of our Walton

and Okaloosa County neighbors,” said Scott Rude, founding member. “From our initial contribution to The C.A.L.M. House of Niceville in November 2021 to our most recent gift to One Hopeful Place, our members have demonstrated a dedication to the betterment of our community. We hope to hit \$100,000 in 2025.”

Since its founding, 100 Men Who Care has additionally contributed to The Crossroads Center, A Bed 4 Me, Defend-



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ers of Freedom, Fresh Start for Children and Families, Healing Hoof Steps, Freedom Life Compass and Children in Crisis.

100 Men Who Care welcomes all community minded

men wishing to make an impact on their neighbors of the Emerald Coast. “Our giving model is ideal for men who want to contribute to their community, but have limited time,” adds Scott. Interested men can reach the chapter by emailing Scott at 100mwcec@gmail.com, visiting the website; 100mwcec.com or messaging the group’s Facebook Page. The next quarterly chapter meeting will be held at the 3rd Planet Brewery on April 22 at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome!

100 Men Who Care – Emerald Coast is a member of 100 Who Care Alliance with more than 700 chapters worldwide. Coining the phrase “The Power of 100,” each chapter meets quarterly, gathering its members at a local venue. Each member contributes \$100 quarterly to a giving pool. Local charities and non-profits then have an opportunity to describe their mission, needs and plans.

IMPACT 100

continued from page 3

They also have to be registered with the Florida Division of Corporations and file their reports regularly with SunBiz. We also ask that they have directors’ and officers’ insurance as well as general liability. We don’t want to fund someone who could get sued and then lose it. If it’s a religious organization, they can’t require that recipients of their services prescribe to their particular faith even if they identify to one in particular. Forcing that would disqualify them from applying for our grant. Same with

mandatory political affiliation.”

If you are an organization ready to make a massive headway for the people you serve, then note that the Letter of Intent deadline is May 15, 2024, and the application deadline is July 15, 2024. Interested nonprofits must submit the letter of intent and meet those qualifications before being given the grant application.

How does membership work for those who want to be part of Impact100 NWF? “Many of our members will write a check and that is the extent of their involvement. That contribution, however, allows them a vote for

the organization they want to offer a grant to. For those who want to get more involved, there are committees under each category and it’s those people who will have a more intimate knowledge of each applicant as they get to know the founders and tour facilities.

“We want members to be able to participate in the nonprofits and activities where they want to see change. Many women join us because they want to make a difference in specific areas like education or environmental preservation. The reason we are promoting membership is each person has one vote for

every \$100,000 that’s available. This means if we don’t have the full amount in each category, members have to vote for the categories they feel most passionate about. With less money available, critical areas will go unserved. Last year we only had four grants to give, so members had to choose the four categories that they wanted to vote in. This is why five grants is so important. We want every category to have a chance to grow.”

With all 500 membership slots filled, exponential good could be injected into Okaloosa and Walton County. Join by April 30th and, together, posi-

tive change will be inevitable.

For additional information on applying for a grant or joining as a member, visit impactnwf.org.

Impact100 has become an international organization since its start in 2001. Its founder, Wendy Steele, launched the organization to activate women through large grants that would make a massive impact. In February of this year, Wendy was named Florida’s honoree for USA TODAY’s Woman of the Year.




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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
Michelle Ruschman
Doug Stauffer
Barbara Palmgren
Bobby Parker
Kalli Abernathy
Douglas Bartles
Will Estell
Megan Trainer
Lisa Woodrum

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Mixing Metals in Your Space Like a Design Pro



BY KIM SCHNEIDER,
COASTAL DESIGN BY KIM

Mixing metals used to be a major faux pas, but not anymore. There are no rules that say every finish has to match. So, here's a suggestion: Don't be overly matchy. For me, the magic happens when you mix metals. It creates visual interest, is more stylish and helps to make your space unique. Below are a few tips to help you pull off a winning combination of metals.

Don't Pick Too Many:

Select one finish to be the star of the show, while the other finish plays a supporting role. If your space is large enough, you can add a third finish. But, you have to use it sparingly. Start by selecting a metal that reflects the overall aesthetic of the room. A good balance is 70/30, meaning 70% of your pieces should be in your dominant metal and 30% should be a supporting role. If you chose three metals, you should follow a 60/25/15 ratio.

Mixing Warm And Cool:

Contrast is key! You can mix a brushed brass (warm) with a polished nickel (cool) or matte black (neutral), brass/



gold (warm) and polished nickel (cool). When you mix metals make sure they don't all have the same finish or they'll compete for attention. The mix of warm and cool along with antiqued, matte, satin, brushed or polished (yes, there are that many finishes to select from) keeps it interesting and allows your eye to move around the room with interest.

Be Deliberate:

When mixing metals, it needs to look intentional. Create harmony by strategically placing your metals throughout the space. For example, in the kitchen you use large matte black pendant lights with gold accents, your sink faucet is polished nickel and your cabinet hardware is gold. The star of your show is your pendant lights (60%), the

supporting actors are the gold hardware (25%) and your polished nickel sink faucet (15%), together creating an intentional, balanced look.

Add Texture To Your Mixed Metal Game:

Texture can make all the difference in a space with mixed metals. For example: In a bedroom, you have a black (matte) iron bed, a gold (polished) chandelier and brass hammered

(textured) lamps. When you combine matte, polished and hammered finishes, it visually creates an inviting space.

Cleaning & Upkeep:

Some metal finishes require more cleaning and upkeep than others. For example: Black shows water spots more than some of the other finishes. Brass tends to tarnish and copper will develop a patina over time. Make sure you read manufacturers clean-

ing recommendations to ensure your purchase will fit into your cleaning routine.

There is a method to the madness of mixing metals and finishes. If you feel daunted by the process, contact Coastal Design by Kim at (850) 904-6622. We can help you achieve a look that compliments your home and is uniquely YOURS. www.coastaldesignbykim.com.

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ter activities in the Destin area. AJ's serves up delicious daily specials, mouth-watering drinks plus entertaining live music daily, all month long. Check out the live music schedule at ajsdestin.com/destin-aj-s-seafood-and-oyster-bar-events-and-music.

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bar, including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England-style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail. With big screen TVs all around, there's no bad seat in the house. So, come by and watch your sports all season long. Happy Hour Specials from Mon.-Fri., 2-5 p.m., \$2 off all bar drinks and Monday-Friday from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. \$3 off a dozen raw oysters. Bucket Specials All day every day. Auston's on 98 is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and features its own "Real

Deal Nashville Hot Sauce." View full menu at austonson98.com.

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



Boathouse Oyster Bar

Oysters, live music and a local vibe, the Boathouse is where the locals go with live music every night all month long. Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked, just the way you like 'em. The first Friday of each month, The Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow Boathouse on Facebook for updates.

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

Café Destin

Looking for dining the entire family can enjoy? Looking for a place to work with free WiFi while enjoying your cup of coffee? For breakfast and lunch, Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples such as pancakes, waffles with

Nutella, omelets, eggs benedict, biscuits and gravy and more. For a lighter take, it also has a variety of fancy toasts (avocado, salmon and more), along with pastries and muffins. For lunch, choose from a variety of burgers, sandwiches and salads. You will love the full-service coffee shop, offering everything from hot or iced fresh, local Amavida coffee to espresso and lattes. And there are diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas, plus a special kids menu. 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

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(850) 460-2210
34940 Emerald Coast Pkwy.
Destin
emeraldcoastoliveoil.com

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill

"Ya Ain't Been Pucked Til Ya Been Fudpucked!" Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill in Destin has been locally owned and

Continued on page 24

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8pm: Smoke Show
- Thursdays:** 4pm: Flash Flood
8pm: Austin Jennings
- Fridays:** 4pm: Jason Findley
8pm: Airavata
- Saturdays:** 12pm: Rotating Spot
4pm: Flash Flood
8pm: Gunner
- Sundays:** 12pm: Rotating Spot
4pm: Shane Curle
8pm: Rotating Spot

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Slacker Sunday Oyster Brunch 11 am

288 Harbor Blvd, Destin
(850) 837-3645

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

Nurturing Culinary Dreams: How Food Halls Empower Local Restaurateurs

BY BOBBY PARKER

In the food scene of Destin, City Food Hall at Destin Commons stands out as a hub of creativity and community spirit. It's more than a cluster of eateries; it's a place where innovation thrives, flavors mingle and aspiring chefs can make their culinary dreams come true. By offering support and exposure City Food Hall doesn't just cater to diners seeking food experiences but also nurtures local chefs on their journey to success.

Central to City Food Hall's mission is the celebration of talent and the fostering of a culinary community. With a lineup that showcases a mix of pros and up and coming stars this food hall provides a platform for chefs to display their talents and imagination. For aspiring restaurateurs it's an opportunity to break into the competitive restaurant scene without obstacles.

A key benefit for emerging chefs at City Food Hall is access to shared resources and infrastruc-



ture. Opening a restaurant demands investment in facilities, equipment and marketing. However, by joining forces with City Food Hall budding entre-

preneurs can overcome many of these hurdles. They have access to an equipped kitchen, a location and an established customer base allowing them to focus

on changing trends.

City Food Hall also plays a role in fostering strong community relationships. Diners are participants in the dining

on improving their skills and perfecting their menu offerings.

Additionally, City Food Hall serves as a platform for creativity and experimentation. With a variety of cuisines in one place chefs are encouraged to push boundaries, try flavor combinations and cater to different tastes and dietary preferences. This setting nurtures innovation while promoting growth as chefs interact directly with diners and can adjust their menus based

experience engaging with chefs by providing feedback and connecting with other foodies. This sense of camaraderie extends to the restaurant owners themselves who benefit from networking opportunities, mentorship and support from their peers.

For aspiring restaurant owners City Food Hall is not just a business opportunity; it is a passion project and the realization of a lifelong dream. City Food Hall supports talents by offering a platform for them to grow and showcase their skills in the culinary scene. This fosters an environment of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. As patrons explore City Food Hall for dining adventures they not only enjoy Destin's delicious flavors, but also play a part in supporting the thriving culinary community that thrives there.

For information on City Food Hall, at Destin Commons please visit CityFoodHall.com.

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Weekly Events

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Military Monday
1st Drink Free + All Day Happy Hour

Run Destin | 5:45 PM
Music Bingo | 6 PM - 8 PM

TUESDAYS

Tequila Tuesday
\$3 Off Tequila Pours + \$6 House Margaritas + \$4 Modelo Bottles

WEDNESDAYS

Whiskey Wednesday
\$3 Off Whiskey & Bourbon Pours + \$8 Whiskey & Bourbon Cocktails
TopGolf Social Club | 6 PM - 8 PM
Enjoy FREE TopGolf, drink specials, competitions, and prizes every Wednesday.

THURSDAYS

Ladies Night
\$5 Tito's Martinis [Lemon Drop, Cosmo, Espresso, & French]
Trivia | 6 PM - 8 PM

HAPPY HOUR | MON-FRI 3 PM - 7PM

No purchase necessary. Coupon cannot be combined with any other promotions or offers. Availability of the TopGolf Swing Suites is first come first served. Coupon must be presented to redeem offer.



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Located at
Destin Commons



DESTIN DINING*continued from page 22*

operated since its inception in 1982. Fudpucker's restaurant stands out by being dedicated to its owners' three favorite "F" words: Food, Fun and Family. Fudpucker's is not just a restaurant, it's not just a bar, it's a one-of-a-kind entertainment

experience, and one that can be enjoyed by locals, kids and families of all ages and all occasions with plenty of fun included!

(850) 654-4200

20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy.

Destin

fudpucker.com**Lady Ray's Culinary Delights**

Spring is in the air at Lady Ray's Culinary Delights! The recently expanded and popular Pastry Bar and culinary brand, "Brother Tim's Sweet Heat Collection" is known for its sweet and savory dishes and spectacular custom cakes as Lady Ray's sets its sights on the late after-

noon/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 Thurs.-Sat. 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! Place your orders now for Spring celebrations and Mother's Day! Email Contact@ladyrays.biz.

833 Harbor Blvd. Unit 19,

Destin

(850) 269-0763

lady-rays-culinary-delights.myshopify.com**Melting Pot Destin**

Bond with the girls and get permanently bonded jewelry at Melting Pot's Ladies Night Out in April! Enjoy delicious fondue from THE Best Fondue Friends Forever Menu, quality time with your besties and a permanent jewelry pop up shop with Terra Handcrafted right inside the restaurant. Every Friday in April is also Double Date night at Melting Pot! Enjoy a 4-course fondue experience for \$50 per person when you have four or more people in your party. Make your reservations and enjoy delicious cheese fondue, premium entree items and decadent chocolate fondue at Melting Pot Double Date Fridays!

Have you heard of the Ultimate Five-Course dining experience at Melting Pot? From birthdays to anniversaries to promotions to new jobs to bachelorette parties to rehearsal dinners to graduations, it's perfect for ANY special occasion. It starts with a Green Goddess Bacon-Stuffed Tomato to awaken the palate. A fresh salad follows the first bite and sets the stage for the three most iconic courses. The third course is what Melting Pot is most known for – its chef-crafted cheese fondue served with fresh produce, bread and NEW! Double Dippers. The fourth course is the most interactive of them all because guests get to cook premium entrées at the table using the fondue pots or a cast iron grill. Last, but certainly not least, is the sparkling chocolate explosion fondue with a variety of delectable morsels for swirling and dunking.

table morsels for swirling and dunking.

(850) 269-2227

11394 US-Hwy. 98

Miramar Beach

www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl**Pecan Jacks**

Destin locals' passion is a wildly popular ice cream and candy store. It's not your chain ice cream store—there's more than 40 flavors of homemade ice cream, with specialties such as Oreo ice cream, Bailey's salted caramel and banana pudding. The Pecan Jacks candy is as singular as its ice cream. It includes Southern praline, Caribbean Rum and lots of brittle. 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. Find Theo the Turtle here, too! Pecan Jacks Ice Cream is sure to add that extra touch of sweetness for all your spring celebrations! And don't forget those gift cards—the sweetest gifts for any occasion!

Hours Noon to 9 p.m. daily.

(850) 427-3080

535 Harbor Blvd. (98 West)

in Destin

www.pecanjacks.com**Tailfins Waterfront Grill**

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 features more than 70 big screen TVs including the new Video Wall upstairs so you can watch all your sports! DAILY CRUISES: Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure! Departures seven days a week

Continued on page 27

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Fudpucker's GatorFest 2024

Saturday May 4th | 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

GatorFest 2024

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill is set to host GatorFest 2024, a spectacular event promising an exhilarating blend of entertainment, education, and gastronomic delights. Scheduled for May 4th, 2024, this four-hour extravaganza at Destin's most family-friendly venue aims to bring together individuals of all ages for an unforgettable experience dedicated to one of nature's most awe-inspiring creatures — the alligator. Festivities go from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



GatorFest Activities

GatorFest 2024 is more than just an event; it's a journey into the heart of Florida's beloved wildlife culture, set against the backdrop of Fudpucker's renowned hospitality. From thrilling Gator Shows that offer an up-close look at these magnificent reptiles to a Gator Tail Cook Off Competition that showcases culinary creativity, the festival is a testament to the diverse attractions that make Fudpucker's a must-visit destination.

The dedicated Kid's Zone is a paradise for young adventurers. Here, children can engage in a variety of activities, from face painting and airbrush art to Gator-themed games, fostering an environment of fun and creativity. Meanwhile, adults can savor Cocktail Tastings, indulge in Hot Sauce Tasting, and enjoy music, ensuring there's something for everyone.

GatorFest Charity Partnership

GatorFest is not just about fun and games. It stands as a beacon of community involvement and environmental conservation. Partnering with Alaqua Animal Refuge, the festival channels its energy into raising awareness and funds for the refuge's mission to rescue and care for animals in need. This collaboration highlights the event's commitment to making a positive impact, offering attendees a chance to contribute to a noble cause while enjoying the festivities.

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill

Fudpucker's itself is a destination that embodies the spirit of family-friendly fun, with its title of "Best Family-Friendly Restaurant" earned through a commitment to providing memorable dining experiences. Gator Beach, dubbed The World's Greatest Alligator Park, allows visitors to interact with these fascinating creatures, offering an educational experience that leaves lasting memories.

The anticipation for GatorFest 2024 reflects a broader community excitement, drawing visitors from across the United States. Known for hosting vibrant events like Teen Night, Kid's Day, the Noon Year's Eve Balloon Drop, Kick-Off Parties for Emerald Coast Volleyball, Jeepalooza, and Jazz Dinner Shows, Fudpucker's continues to be a beacon for family entertainment, making it the perfect venue for GatorFest.

Food, Fun & Gators

GatorFest 2024 promises a day of exhilarating entertainment, delicious food, and a shared commitment to wildlife conservation. By integrating fun with educational and charitable endeavors, the festival not only offers a unique experience but also reinforces the importance of community and environmental stewardship. Mark your calendars and join the celebration at Fudpucker's, where the wild is welcomed, and memories are made.

So, stop by and have some fun at Fud's GatorFest — see you later, alligator!

Visit Fudpucker's in Destin at 20001 Emerald Coast Parkway. Visit on the web at www.FudsGatorFest.com or www.Fudpucker.com.

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GATORFEST
2024
 DESTIN, FL

MAY 4TH, 2024
11AM - 3PM

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WWW.FUDSGATORFEST.COM

We Celebrate with Seagrove Village MarketCafé!

75 Years of Heartwarming Friendship and Cherished Memories

Seagrove Village MarketCafé, a beloved staple of our area's own scenic Highway 30A, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and Bay Life joined into its recent celebration where heart-warming stories and fond memories were told.

it had its beginnings in 1949, and the café has become a nostalgic and cherished destination for locals and visitors alike, offering a taste of deep-fried love and a journey through seven and a half decades of memories.

what would become a beacon of community and culinary in Seagrove Beach. His vision and appreciation for the Gulf-front land inspired the café's inception, which started as a haven for travelers seeking the necessities in a remote, untouched paradise. Ann and George Hartley,

C.H. McGee, known as, "Cube," laid the foundation for



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who purchased the restaurant 25 years ago in 1999, have lovingly preserved its legacy while infusing their own passion and dedication into every aspect of its operation.

The Hartley family have been South Walton locals since 1997 back when only 15-20 full-time elementary school kid families lived on 30A. Just one street over from their family home was the Seagrove Village MarketCafé. While the Hartley home was under construction, George would walk to the market and order a coke. He didn't even realize it had a restaurant in the back for months. Over time, George became a regular in the market, always ordering his favorite, the shrimp po' boy. One afternoon, he overheard the current owner mention that they were ready

to retire. George simply replied, "How much do you want for it?" That one question led to a check and a handshake that would change the course of the Hartley family's future and place them on a culinary journey that has transpired into a 30A legacy.

"When Ann and I decided to purchase the Market in 1999, I honestly didn't know the first thing about owning a restaurant. I just knew that if we had good food and we served people with a smile, we could figure out all the rest," said owner George. "Throughout the years, we have learned a lot of lessons and met some of the most sincere people. They started as customers and employees and have turned into family."

The menu, rooted in Southern tradition, features signature dishes such as the iconic grouper sandwich, which Garden & Gun recognized in its "100 Southern Foods You Must Try Before You Die" list. Guests can also savor po' boy sandwiches, fresh salads and fish tacos.

"Seagrove Village MarketCafé holds a special place in our hearts," says Ann. "We only get one shot to make a lasting impression on our guests, one meal to make it the best they've had all day, and one moment to show them all the love we can give. We're honored to have the opportunity to carry on Cube's legacy and share the love and spirit of Seagrove Beach with each and every guest."

As part of the year-long anniversary celebration, Seagrove Village MarketCafé is introducing a limited-edition, outrageously large specialty sandwich, "The George-normous Po' Boy." This



DOUBLE DATE FRIDAYS
All April Long!

\$50 per person
with 4 or more people

Enjoy a 4-Course Meal for just \$50 a person when you have 4 or more people in your party! Every Friday in April.



Only valid at this location. Cannot be combined with any other offer or promotion. Reservations required.

Continued on next page

DESTIN DINING

continued from page 24

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! 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

Tequila’s story is one of passion, tradition and a dedication to delivering the true essence of Mexican cuisine. As a family-owned business, it takes immense pride in its roots, infusing

every dish with flavors passed down through generations. “We strive to create connections with our customers, making Tequila’s not just a restaurant, but a welcoming hub for the community,” says owner Oni. “Join us in celebrating the rich tapestry of Mexican culinary artistry, where every bite tells a tale of authenticity and love.” 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 – a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes. Celebrate your sweetie this month with 2-for-1 margaritas on Taco Tuesdays! Lunch specials are offered Monday-Friday for \$8.99. You’re sure to find your favorites here.” Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner or call ahead to place your take out and to-go orders.

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SEAGROVE

continued from previous page

creation features fried shrimp, oysters, grouper, andouille sausage, fried pickles, fried onions, hushpuppies, and more, all nestled on a crusty 12-inch roll with coleslaw, tartar sauce and spicy remoulade—a true homage to the flavors of the restaurant. For \$99, it includes an “I conquered

the George-normous” tee shirt.

The Hartleys are also reprinting Junie McGee’s original cookbook available for purchase at the Market and are offering new 75th-anniversary merchandise where locals can get a special red vintage keychain granting them different seasonal deals. Visit www.seagrovevillagemarket.com or follow at @seagrovevillage.

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(850) 269-0763

Scan Here



Learn More

Don't Miss These Upcoming Henderson Events!

Henderson Beach Resort Events

April 7 – Brunch with a View, Rooftop Bar at Henderson Beach Resort

April 14 – Brunch with a View, Rooftop Bar at Henderson Beach Resort

April 21 – Brunch with a View, Rooftop Bar at Henderson Beach Resort

April 28 – Brunch with a View, Rooftop Bar at Henderson Beach Resort

May 12 – Mother’s Day Brunch at Henderson Beach Resort

Wednesday at Beach Walk Café at Henderson Park Inn

April 24 – Wine Down Wednesday at Beach Walk Café at Henderson Park Inn

May 5 – Bubbles and Brunch at Henderson Park Inn

May 12 – Mother’s Day Brunch at Beach Walk Café at Henderson Park Inn

Every Wednesday – Wine down Wednesdays – enjoy 20% off bottles of wine with dinner at Beach Walk Café!

Henderson Beach Resort
Henderson Park Inn
200 Henderson Resort Way,
Destin, FL 32541
HendersonBeachResort.com
HendersonParkInn.com

Henderson Park Inn Events

April 10 – Wine Down Wednesday at Beach Walk Café at Henderson Park Inn

April 17 – Wine Down



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 Off the Hook

Another Year of Favor: Destin Celebrates the 67th Annual Blessing of the Fleet

By LORI LEATH SMITH

We all have reasons why we live in Destin. But, I believe, many are drawn here, because our city is so blessed...After all, it IS known as the “World’s Luckiest Fishing Village.”

Not only a beach destination, our town was founded on fishing! But despite the legendary stories of big catches and heroic fishing, there are also horrendous ones where hope was dim and times were tough. And through it all, we prevail and are still the

World’s Luckiest Fishing Village, with the largest fishing fleet in North America.

As I’ve said before, could it be that because we bless our city, its citizens, our Harbor, businesses, residents, youth and many more each year, that it results in favor for our little paradise? You can ask captains in Destin’s fishing fleet and many will tell you their success rides on prayer. Destin fisherman, locals and area professionals alike will tell you they believe their success rides on

blessings.

That brings us to Destin’s Week of Blessings held each year and is what makes continuing the yearly “blessing of the fleet” tradition so important. Despite having grown and prospered from a fleet of four to five boats more than half a century ago into more than 125 charter-fishing boats today, this one event begun by Destin’s Immanuel Anglican Church will always make it feel like Old Destin, and our lucky fishing village it is best known for.

To further expand the “blessings,” twenty ago, several pastors got together to form the ‘Church of Destin’ as a symbol of unity, crossing denominational barriers and also igniting Destin’s Week of Blessings. As the Blessing of the Fleet grew, so did the hundreds of people, families and businesses in

the area who also wanted to be blessed. And before you knew it, the vision expanded into a full “Week of Blessings” with faith-focused family-oriented activities to bless and support the Destin community. That’s how the Blessing of the Marketplace was born, enabling the “blessing” to impact further to other locals, professionals and visitors, too.

Hundreds of business owners, first responders, industry leaders and representatives gather during the Blessing of the Marketplace at Destin United Methodist Church. Local pastors from various churches representing the collective “Church of Destin” pray over professionals in our community.

Destin’s 67th Annual Blessing of the Fleet will be held on Ascension Day, Thursday, May 9th, at the docks behind Brotula’s Seafood House and Steamer Restaurant on the Destin Harbor. The event begins at 4 p.m. with a Captains’ Worship and Prayer Service. The public is encouraged to attend. Following the service, around 5:15 p.m., local clergy will process to the dock to begin blessing those vessels which have pre-registered followed by Brotula’s Fish Feast for all. (Donations requested.) All commercial fishing, safety and recreational vessels that make their living on the sea are invited to participate. Several local area pastors will gather at the dock and the bless the boats one by one as they proceed in a line down the harbor—praying for safe passage and bountiful catches for the 2024 season.

In 2023, more than 150



fishing boats and vessels were blessed! So, a lot has changed since Destin was a quaint fishing village. And, that’s what makes continuing this unique tradition so special. It serves to remind us of the significant role that fishermen have played and continue to play in our beloved Destin community. As always, Thursday’s Blessing of the Fleet is hosted by Immanuel Anglican Church. Immanuel is excited to team with other area churches who share the vision of preserving Destin’s character as a faith-and-family-oriented community.

To Pre-Register Your Vessel: If you and your vessel make your living on the sea and would like to receive a blessing, please register your watercraft by emailing immanuel@iacdestin.org, or by calling the church at 850-837-6324 with your vessel’s name, captain’s name, mailing address, email address and phone number.

For more information on the Blessing of the Fleet, visit iacdestin.org/special-events/blessing-of-the-fleet, contact Immanuel Anglican Church at immanuel@iacdestin.org or 850-837-6324. Immanuel Anglican Church is located at 250 Indian Bayou Trail in Destin, just north of the Nancy Weidenhamer Dog Park in Destin.

Never doubt that your prayers on behalf of our coveted city are to no avail. We have and continue to witness the blessing of favor in our small paradise. Could it be that Destin has been dubbed the “World’s Luckiest Fishing Village” because, simply, it is SO “blessed?”

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Lionfish Festival: A Dive into Conservation Efforts



BY CALI HLAVAC,
TO DO IN DESTIN

The Emerald Coast of Destin is not just a picturesque backdrop for tourists; it is also a battleground against an invasive species - the lionfish. On May 18-19, 2024, the Lionfish Festival returns to Destin, rallying the community in an ongoing effort to combat this threat to the local marine ecosystem.

First, what is a lionfish? Lionfish, with their striking red and white stripes, are not native to the waters of northwest Florida. Originating from the Indo-Pacific region, they were introduced to the Atlantic Ocean and have since become a formidable invasive species. Their rapid reproduction rate and lack of natural predators have led to a surge in population, wreaking havoc on native fish populations and coral reefs.

The Lionfish Festival is more than just a celebration; it's a call to action. It aims to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of lionfish on the marine environment and promote sustainable solutions. One such solution is lionfish removal through fishing derbies and dives, which are central to the festival's activities.

In 2023, 144 divers in Destin and Fort Walton Beach captured over 24,000 lionfish during the Emerald Coast Open tournament, demonstrating the community's commitment to conservation efforts. This year's pre-tournament is already underway lasting through May 16, and sets the stage for two days of conservation-focused activities—the main tournament May 17-18. Divers have the opportunity to compete for prize money totaling nearly \$100,000 in categories like most lionfish caught and largest and smallest lionfish.

Participants in the Lionfish Festival can expect a diverse range of events, including lionfish hunting tournaments, educational seminars, cooking demonstrations featuring lionfish cuisine, and live music. Local marine biologists and conservationists will lead discussions on the ecological im-



part of lionfish and strategies for their management. Emerald Coast Open Restaurant Week offers the public unique lionfish dishes prepared by chefs at local restaurants. Each evening, a local restaurant serves a unique lionfish dish on their menu. The fish caught pre-tournament are provided to the participating restaurants to serve. Each dish is also judged and the winning chef crowned at the end of the week.

Moreover, the festival provides an opportunity for the community to come together and support local businesses involved in sustainable fishing practices. By promoting the consumption of lionfish as a delicacy, the festival encourages a market-driven approach to

control their population while providing economic opportunities for fishermen.

As visitors immerse themselves in the festivities, they also contribute to a larger conservation effort. Proceeds from the festival support ongoing research and conservation initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact of lionfish on the delicate balance of marine ecosystems.

The Lionfish Festival in Destin is more than just an event; it's a testament to the power of community-driven conservation. By joining forces to combat the invasive lionfish, residents and visitors alike are making a tangible difference in preserving the natural beauty of the Emerald Coast for generations to come.

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Miss Destin 2024 April 27th

Come join the fun, April 27, for the 76th Annual Miss Destin Pageant! Destin's pageant is unique in that it is not a beauty contest; the young lady (high school age) who receives the title of Miss Destin is judged on her grade point average, school and community involvement, personality and communication skills. She serves as a public figure throughout the year, representing Destin at many functions. One of her primary functions is to represent the Destin Fishing Rodeo at weigh-ins every day during the month of October.



Destin resident girls vie for the title of Miss Destin, which among other things provides at least a \$2,000 academic scholarship. Additional scholarship moneys are awarded to runners-up.

Twelve girls are participating this year.

Preceding the actual pageant, contestants will have individual interviews with the pageant judges. This year's Miss Destin Pageant will once again be hosted by Christian Garman, Television Personality and Professor, Department of Communication, University of West Florida.

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Embrace Florida Kids!

A Walk Down Magnolia Lane Tees Up Support for Florida Youth

By KALLI ABERNATHY

Embrace Florida Kids, a nonprofit faith-based organization dedicated to providing homes, healing and hope for

vulnerable children and families across the Florida Panhandle, hosts its first-ever “A Walk Down Magnolia Lane” on Wednesday, April 10 at 5 p.m.

Presented by Shoreline Title, the evening celebrates the world’s greatest golf tournament and benefits vulnerable children in Northwest Florida.

Hosted at the Emerald Coast’s award-winning Regatta Bay Golf & Yacht Club, the event features a tournament-themed menu, golf-related activities with top-tier prizes for the winners, signature cocktails, outstanding company and music by Jacob Mohr. “There is a tremendous need in Northwest Florida for the services we provide for vulnerable children and families,” said Blake Horne, Ph.D., president and CEO, Embrace Florida Kids. “From group homes and foster homes to services like family preservation and crisis prevention, events like A Walk Down Magnolia Lane help close a critical gap by directly supporting our efforts to provide homes, healing and hope.”

Embrace Florida Kids has been operating in Northwest Florida since 1974 and is built on a 134-year foundation of caring for kids. What started as an orphanage in Summerfield, Alabama, in 1890 has grown into two dedicated organizations – Embrace Florida Kids and Embrace Alabama Kids – that serve thousands of children and families across two states. The organization meets kids experiencing neglect, abuse and abandonment where they are and provides them with an individualized support system to help them flourish.

The two branches of the organization are administra-



bers do not include children who exist in homelessness outside the foster care system – and these numbers grow daily.

Funds raised from events like A Walk Down Magnolia Lane support foster parent recruitment, the on-

going operating expenses associated with the Milton Girls Home and the work Embrace Florida Kids is doing to create a residential home for foster care students attending the University of West Florida or Pensacola State College.

A Walk Down Magnolia Lane’s presenting sponsor, Shoreline Title, is joined by Tiger Sponsor Jim Shirley Enterprises; Palmer Sponsors Liufau McCall Insurance Group and Warren Averett; and Hogan Sponsors Abrams & Franklin Families, Abbott Martin Group, Chicken Salad Chick, Coastal Abode, David Ferner MD, PA, First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe, Florida Haus, Hancock Whitney, The Odd Pelican Beer Company, S & S Golden Ventures, Tibbetts Family, Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic, and United Methodist Foundation of Alabama and West Florida.

Currently, there are more children in Northwest Florida who are waiting for a foster family than the number of available licensed foster homes. There are just under 25,000 children in foster care, and less than 5,000 licensed foster homes. If each foster family in Florida took three children, there would still be 10,000 children in the state without a home. But these num-

bers do not include children who exist in homelessness outside the foster care system – and these numbers grow daily. Funds raised from events like A Walk Down Magnolia Lane support foster parent recruitment, the ongoing operating expenses associated with the Milton Girls Home and the work Embrace Florida Kids is doing to create a residential home for foster care students attending the University of West Florida or Pensacola State College.

Tickets can be purchased at embraceflkids.org/wdml. To learn more about A Walk Down Magnolia Lane and Embrace Florida Kids, visit www.EmbraceFLKids.org or follow Embrace Florida Kids on social media at [@EmbraceFLKids](https://www.instagram.com/EmbraceFLKids).



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NEW GOLF EVENT

continued from page 18

and silent auction items have already been provided, further strengthening partnerships between those who live, work and play throughout the Emerald Coast area.

Golfers should expect top-flight treatment on the links with a bounty of things to enjoy, including tasty morsels from food partners Chef’s Bistro 30A and Jackacudas, serving up fairway food fare as golfers play through. Opportunities remain



for partnering through sponsorships, gifts in-kind, donations of silent auction items and direct financial giving.

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CRYO850

continued from page 1

back, arms, neck and thighs.

Fast forward five years and CRYO850 Esthetics has grown into a stand-alone division. Through partnership with Pensacola-based WILD ICE Botanicals, CRYO850 Esthetics now offers a full line of facials using the organic, cold-kept skin care products to further help customers. "It's been such a great partnership," says WILD ICE Owner, Mila Bush. "We've collaborated to develop a full menu of services to serve our customers and grow our respective brands. The Collagen Enhancement Treatment and Collagen Reactivation Programs are local favorites," says CRYO850 Esthetician, Hannah Hunter. "Students love the Teen Facial for acne and inflammation, and the Cinderella Facial is the tourists' choice for beach photos and weddings."

Alongside WILD ICE skin care, additional local brands on the CRYO850 retail shelves include HoneyMed, Earthquake Eddie Bee and Elite Spray Tan. CRYO850 also supports local

businesses and organizations via pop ups, sponsorships and fundraisers. "From inception, CRYO850 has tapped into local communities," says Destin Mayor, Bobby Wagner. "Everyone knows the name CRYO850."

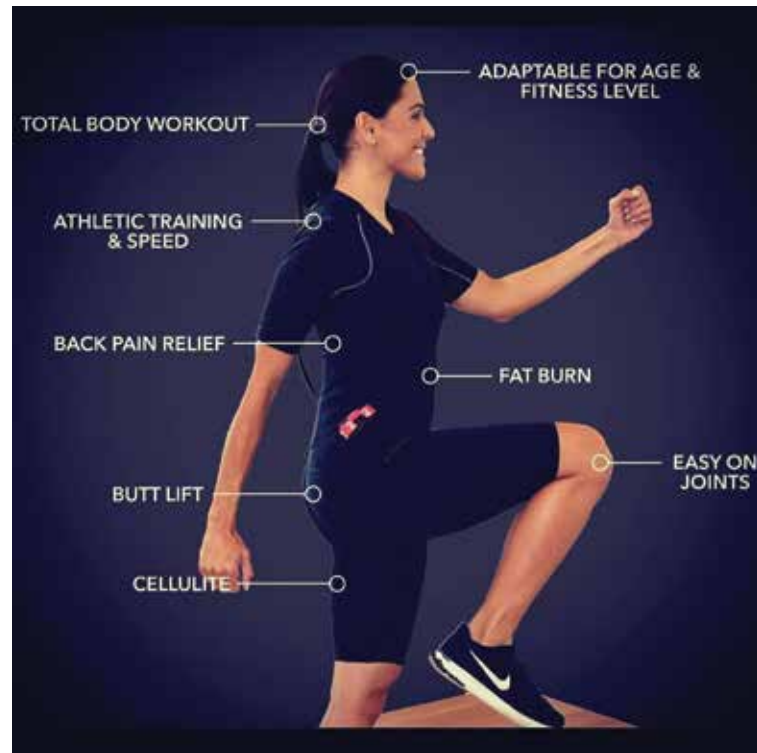
March marked the five-year anniversary and the unveiling of yet a third division designed to meet our community's needs. The long-awaited Performance Lab has now introduced Visionbody Wireless EMS Training and Reflexion Neuroscience Vision Training to Destin, further elevating the health and wellness center's importance. EMS (Electric Muscle Stimulation Training) is an efficient, non-weight bearing muscle development program. With adjustable stimulation, EMS works for all ages and levels of fitness with 20-minute sessions. EMS has several benefits for fitness beginners, athletes looking for a competitive edge and those with mobility issues. Strength, Fat Burning and Yoga Programs are available.

The Reflexion Vision Board is designed for cognitive training in a myriad of areas including hand-eye coordination, response



time, peripheral awareness and focus. Users can customize programs and track progress. While vision training gives an athlete a competitive edge, it can also serve as a baseline to offer valuable insight if he or she takes a hard hit. "We are so excited to bring this brain-training technology to the center," says Amy. "It's an incredible tool for all ages. We are looking forward to working with the Neurodiverse Community and the military community for cognitive progress and healing," she says.

Through education, community involvement and an unprecedented list of high-tech services, CRYO850 has made an undeniable impact on the health of our local community, growing and expanding to become THE



local wellness spot and comprehensive body maintenance center. "On any given day, you'll find community members from ages 12 to 82 sharing experiences and resources and offering advice and support to one another," says Amy. With the traditional Hyper Wellness services combined with CRYO850 Es-

thetics and the new addition of the much-needed Performance Lab, CRYO850 has created a trifecta for comprehensive body maintenance. As this community of health and healing continues to grow, we can't wait to see what they think of next!

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 Wellness

Dealing With Difficult People



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

When did you last interact with a difficult person? Maybe the difficult person has anger problems, behaves with superiority, doesn't treat others the way they expect to be treated or is generally unkind, mean or rude. Sometimes you might label people as difficult when they have different values, opinions, religious views, political leanings or personalities than you. When are differences just

different rather than difficult? When do you invest energy in making space for different ways of moving through the world vs. investing energy in addressing boundary crossings by people who seem to disrespect you or others?

While easy to overlook, sometimes you might be the difficult person. Self-awareness is a skill developed through uncomfortable practice. Noticing when you may tend towards being judgmental, short-fused, selfish or unkind can go a long way in helping you sort interactions with others. Noticing your capability of being difficult and your need for grace when you aren't your best self can inspire increased humility when addressing difficulty in others.

A common way to deal with difficult people is to become dif-

ficult yourself. When someone is rude, you may feel the invitation to match the rudeness. When someone is mean, you may spend time brainstorming ways to inflict vengeance. While these approaches can bring short term satisfaction and a false sense of justice, you end up giving up healthy emotional control and compromising your character. Over time, matching others' difficult behavior leads to bitterness, resentment, drama, shame and poor character habits. So, how do you address difficult behavior in healthy ways?

7 Ways to Navigate Interactions with Difficult People

1. Evaluate. Determine what is happening in a situation. What is bothering you and why? What is tough or feels like a boundary crossing?

2. Sort past emotion from present. Notice if something about this situation is bringing up feelings from past events/relationships that may be intensifying your emotions in the present. If so, take time to process past feelings separately to give you an accurate perspective in the current situation.

3. Sort differences from



difficulty. Ask yourself if the other person is showing poor character vs. has different opinions, values, perspective than you. Make space for difference. Address poor character.

4. Set boundaries. Use kind, direct words and tone to clearly state how the other party is crossing a boundary, how it impacts the relationship, what you will do differently and what you would like for them to do differently. "When you belittle me in front of others, I feel disrespected and emotionally unsafe in our relationship. I won't participate in conversations where I am belittled and disrespected. When talking to me, please use respect." If the other party respects your boundary and makes a change, that is an indicator of movement toward health. If the other party continues to cross boundaries or re-

sponds poorly to your boundary setting, that is information you need to understand the low value the other party places on the relationship.

5. Speak up for those whose voices are hard to hear. Sometimes difficult people cross boundaries

resulting in negativity, abuse, or injustice for those who are vulnerable. Try using your voice and boundary setting for the sake of others.

6. Distance. Once a person has established an ongoing pattern of crossing boundaries and poor character they are unwilling to address, it's appropriate to create various forms of distance including limiting conversational topics, time, space, emotional energy/investment, and financial involvement. You have power to give your energy and resources to life-giving relationships and to withhold energy from life-draining relationships.

7. Disengage. Try practicing forgiveness toward difficult people for the sake of your own peace and character. Release your right to vengeance and let the relationship go. You have the power to discern when relationships need to end. Disengaging is not defeat. In fact, you win by sustaining good character and recapturing energy to invest in pursuits that bring positive meaning to your life and those around you.

Navigating relationships with difficult people is challenging but inevitable. Practicing boundaries will grow your confidence. As you seek support along your journey, connect with us at Journeybravely.com for counseling and coaching.

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- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
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- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
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- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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Meet Our Local Wellness Pro: **Dr. Jake Hawkins!**

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

Two criteria that are invaluable in looking for a healthcare provider are their investment in the community and what drives their care. Dr. Jake Hawkins, an orthopaedic surgeon with Orthopaedic Associates, grew up in the Destin area and knows it well. He and his wife, Caroline, were high school sweethearts at South Walton High School. After graduation, Dr. Hawkins pursued his bachelor's degree at Florida State University and received his Doctor of Medicine degree at the Florida State University College of Medicine. He then completed his orthopaedic surgery residency training at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and rounded out his training with a fellowship in hip and knee replacement and revision surgery at the University of Florida.

Years later, the couple is raising their three children, Noah (5), Asher (2), and Lainey (10 months) among the people they love. "We live in one of the most beautiful areas in the country,

surrounded by friends and family, and I am proud to call North Florida home. Outside of orthopaedic surgery, my hobbies include playing golf, fishing, exercising, going to the beach, boating, hunting, traveling and spending time with my family."

Dr. Hawkins also feels blessed that his professional life is fulfilling and rewarding. "Orthopaedic Associates is an amazing group. My favorite thing about my work is helping patients with hip and knee pain. Seeing my patients experience pain relief, restoration of function and resumption of their hobbies and activities is very gratifying.

I could not ask for a better group of practice partners and leadership. The entire staff is supportive, friendly, and attentive. We are humbled and honored to have the opportunity to come alongside people in the community to restore their health."

Dr. Hawkins also attributes his calling to the field of orthopaedic surgery to his love for Jesus. "I have a strong faith. The



Lord has blessed me with the ability to help people who are injured, hurting, suffering or in pain. I love praying with my patients and impacting them not just physically, but spiritually as well. It is by His mercy and grace that I have the opportunity to impact people in my work. I strive to do everything unto the Lord in all aspects of my life—marriage, parenting, family, my job, relationships, etc."

Dr. Hawkins specializes in hip and knee replacement surgery utilizing cutting-edge

technology and surgical techniques that allow his patients to recover as quickly as possible. This includes outpatient total hip and knee replacement surgery, anterior approach total hip replacement, minimally invasive surgery, robotic-assisted total knee, and hip replacement surgery, and computer-navigated joint replacement. He also specializes in complex

revision total knee and hip replacement. Dr. Hawkins also cares for patients with fractures (broken bones) utilizing both operative and nonoperative techniques. The course of action is based on the patient's injury and situation.

Dr. Hawkins is a fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon which means that he opted for one additional year of training in hip and knee replacement and revision surgery. Becoming an orthopaedic surgeon requires four years of medical

school, five years of orthopaedic surgery residency training, and added one year of fellowship training to study hip and knee replacement and revision surgery. His decision to work so hard in his field came from being a patient himself. "My interest in orthopaedic surgery began after I suffered a femur fracture while playing football at Destin Middle School. I was treated by Dr. Thackeray, who is now one of my senior partners. My experience with him and Orthopaedic Associates had a lasting impression on me and motivated me to pursue a career in medicine and, ultimately, orthopaedic surgery."

Not only does Dr. Hawkins have an office in Destin, but you can also find him in Fort Walton Beach, Niceville and Crestview. If you need his help, you can call 850-344-1646 to make an appointment for any of the area offices. He is ready to serve you. To learn more about Orthopaedic Associates, visit www.orthoassociates.net.



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Spring Into a Summer Fit Midsection



BY LISA LEATH TURPIN,
HEALTH & FITNESS COACH

Wanna be PROUD to wear your swimsuit this season? Start now and be well on your way to looking your best at the beach.

Be Consistent. First of all, you will never get anywhere if you are sporadically exercising. If a strong and toned midsection is what you're after, then keep your workouts consistent.

Our bodies change when they are forced to adapt. The constant work on a muscle is needed for it to develop the strength and stamina to perform movement. This goes for any physical system in your body, i.e. muscular, neurological or cardiovascular.

Abdominal Anatomy. Abdominals are comprised of the Rectus Abdominis (the "six pack"), internal & external obliques (sides), and transverse abdominis (what pulls your belly button in). Ab muscles are highly striated, meaning they have more muscle fibers than they have nerves sending impulses to move them. Once you work a set of reps and take a break, the neurons move from the worked ab muscles to new ones. This makes them high endurance muscles, a necessity, because our bodies depend on the abs for movement and strength ALL

DAY LONG. The abs aide the back erector muscles to protect the spine, especially the lower vertebrae that are not protected by the ribcage or hip girdle. If your abs are deconditioned and weak, your spine is way less protected.

What To Do. Incorporate a mixture of different ab exercises, targeting the various ab muscles to be well rounded and develop a strong core.

Plank It. The most common and basic plank is also called a front hold, hover or abdominal bridge. It's an isometric core strength exercise that involves maintaining a position, similar to a push-up, for the maximum possible time. This can be performed on the forearms (low plank) or hands (high plank). If your wrists begin to ache at first, that's common. Most people find as they plank frequently, their wrists strengthen and get much better. There are actually several varieties that make the mighty plank even more challenging. Once you can master a basic plank, with good form, holding between 30 – 60 seconds, then it's a great idea to venture into other varieties. Working on the different plank varieties incorporates the entire body, through body weight, making it ideal for

home workouts. Some common varieties are side plank, reverse plank, single leg plank, moving from elbow plank to hand plank for reps, "spider-man's," rocking planks, single knee and double knee taps, plus many more.

Watch your form. Protecting the spine is MOST IMPORTANT. Shoulders should be aligned directly over your elbows or your wrists. Keep your low back from sagging. If your spine continued to the sky, it would continue from the neck and extend posteriorly from your head. So, to perfect the plank, elongate the spine from that part of your head, to your tailbone, then to your heels. Your body becomes a 2x4, a.k.a. a solid PLANK. Keep your abdominals pulled in (Transverse Abs), and thighs engaged super tight. Don't forget the legs!

Correct The Crunch. The crunch is losing its popularity, but I strongly feel it is an essential movement. The abs are responsible for flexing the spine. We flex every day—the epitome of "functional." The issue is people aren't engaging the TRANSVERSE ABDOMINIS. This is imperative to perfecting the crunch. Failing to pull your belly button in can result in the belly "pooch." But performed correctly, avoiding

straining, focusing solely on the ab muscles, minimizing back contractions, crunches will increase strength and aesthetics.

Incorporate Balance (Core). Not only should you perform balance work, but create balance within your body by keeping your repetitions EVEN on each side when doing one-sided movements. Practicing balance work is an entirely extra conversation. I'll give you some ideas and more explanation next month. Stay tuned...

Remember, form is very important! If you are unsure if you're doing it correctly or how to begin core training, I'm available to help you. Text or call (850.974.2005), email (lisa.turpin@icloud.com) or visit me on Facebook @LisaTurpinFitness. "Be Active, Stay Active!"

Lisa Turpin is a degreed and certified health and fitness lifestyle coach who has devoted her life to motivating and strengthening the bodies and minds of others. With over 20 years' experience as a group exercise leader and an independent personal trainer in the Destin area, she is diverse and extensively trained in classical and modern Pilates, lifestyle management, personal training, group exercise and post-rehabilitation.

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NAD+ The Fountain of Youth!

By SCOT ANDREWS, PRESIDENT ANDREWS WELLNESS CORP, DBA PRIME IV HYDRATION & WELLNESS DESTIN

There have long been stories, tales of adventure seeking magical life restoring waters, luring explorers such as Alexander the Great in Europe and, of course, Juan Ponce de Leon to the area we now call Saint Augustine, Fla., and its famed fountain of youth attraction.

What if there was a compound that could turn back time, restore energy, improve athletic performance, bring back clarity of thought, reverse depression and help eliminate cravings for alcohol and drugs even in the most addicted individuals?

There is a substance! – NAD+. What is NAD+? It is a coenzyme, responsible for several metabolic reactions in our citric acid cycle called the “Krebs Cycle.” These enzymes are responsible for starting reactions in the body. NAD+ plays a major role in our cellular respiration cycle and is responsible for ATP – Adenosine Triphosphate (Cellular Energy). NAD+ acts as an antioxidant and reduces reactive oxygen species (Oxidative Stress from free radicals). NAD+ repairs DNA! And is shown to lengthen telomeres (Anti-Aging). This is important to vitality defined as how we feel on the inside of our body! And NAD+ is majorly protective and regenerative for the brain.

First this is a bit of a science lesson! So here we go! It's worth the read!

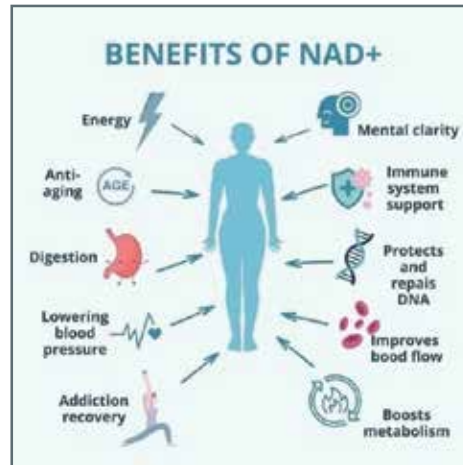
Symptoms that clients seek to improve from are poor mood, mental focus, fatigue, anti-aging and vitality—those suffering minor to mild stress, anxiety or depression, or having cognitive impairment, Parkinson's, Dementia and early-stage Alzheimer. Traumatic brain injury clients have seen improvement thru NAD+. There has been positive research in immune support and long-haul illnesses. NAD+ has been effective in Opiate and alcohol addiction recovery.

So how does the normal body produce NAD+? It's produced in our Krebs Cycle or citric acid cycle which is what our body's uses for turning sugar or glucose into energy or ATP. This is called cellular res-

piration, where our body's fuels are oxidized for energy. This is how free radicals or reactive oxygen species are naturally formed. What are “free radicals?” Free radicals are unstable oxygen molecules missing an electron that can damage DNA and decrease organ function by trying to steal electrons from other molecules. As this continues, free radicals build in a cell, and antioxidants decline. The cell undergoes oxidative stress, where it can die or mutate. Antioxidants prevent this and balance the cell by donating electrons.

NAD+ is responsible for most of the ATP production. NADH (the H is for hydrogen production) gets oxidized and results in 33 of 38 ATP produced. As we age NAD+ production decreases, and ATP declines continuing with this “oxidative stress and aging” which occurs naturally within our body. As our cells continue to undergo oxidative stress, they can mutate and become cancerous or die from this necrotic cycle. A balance of antioxidants to free radicals are imperative for reducing this and combating the aging process with cell replication!

Telomeres are at the end of a of DNA chromosome. Telo-



meres protect our DNA from degradation, help repair damage and assist with cell replication/over replication. Telomeres naturally shorten over time and are linked to decreased lifespan. Cell division is for renewal of older damaged cells. This is important for all damaged cells and for our bodies to heal and regenerate from damage including cellular free radical damage. When a telomere gets too short, this triggers a cell to die through apoptosis or the automatic death of a cell. Telomere shortening is a hallmark of aging.

NAD's anti-aging properties include stopping the damage and degradation of telomeres and repairing the damage. This

allows for longer time of cell replication. If this process doesn't stop, it can eventually lead to the development of senescent cells. In biology, senescence is a process by which a cell ages and permanently stops dividing but does not die. Over time, large numbers of old (or senescent) cells can build up in tissues throughout the body. This

leads to major issues like cognitive decline, cardiovascular disease, cancer and much more.

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 Wellness

Shalom Home Foundation – All About Serving

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Shalom, one of the most beautiful words ever spoken. A Hebrew word, it's used by Jews as both a greeting and a goodbye. Shalom means peace and wholeness. That same peace and wholeness that was in the Garden of Eden at the beginning, and the way it will eventually be again in the new heavens and the new earth.

But until then, God uses people like Mike and Marge Gross

who do their part in bringing Shalom to those seeking recovery. Both Mike and Marge have been in full-time ministry for many years and now use their training and experience at Shalom Home. Their goal is to “provide spiritual, emotional and mental support to those in need.”

The main thrust of Shalom Home is for those interested in recovery, such as veterans, those out of treatment, released from incarceration and people in AA



who desire a home with structure and accountability. As Marge says, “What makes us different is that we cultivate love and faith. Jesus is the only way to give up your addictions.”

Speaking of addictions, James Higham, Shalom Home's house manager, knows a few things about that. He's been 18 months sober. In his past, he was a successful business owner until his addiction to alcohol and drugs took him farther down than he ever thought possible. One day, he cried out to God, “Lord, remove everything between me and you.”

Since James knows firsthand the disastrous effects of addiction, it's his job to review the applications and interview prospective residents. James loves to encourage the men as they work through their recovery. “Today is our sobriety. You're in the right place because that's where Jesus wants you to be right now.”

Mike and Marge understand the importance of structure and participation. All residents are required to attend five recovery meetings a week. There's a cur-

few and plenty of house rules. Each resident participates in household chores, with weekly meetings to cultivate a feeling of family and healing.

Both Mike and Marge are very hands-on. “We're in their lives and we give them counseling if they desire. We talk about life and building family. When they feel a sense of purpose, it helps in their healing.” With their extensive ministry background, the Gross' are quite comfortable spending time one-on-one, listening to the residents share about their relationships and marriage and family.

Mike and Marge are constantly amazed at each person's story. “They have every reason to forsake God – like He wasn't there for them. Many have trouble from abuse and neglect in their past. But they're grateful for their sobriety and attribute everything to God.”

Shalom Home, if it's allowed to boast just a little, is the first sober living home in Okaloosa County that is FARR Certified (pending). The Florida Association of Recovery Residences certifies houses that are dedicated to compliance with FARR standards for well operated, ethical and supportive recovery housing. Shalom Home is also Level II MAT Housing, which stands for

Medically Assisted Treatment, that allows individuals with prescribed federally approved medication to assist with their substance use disorders and improve outcomes.

Right now, Shalom Home's greatest need is for donations to cover a new resident's initial fee and weekly fee until they obtain employment, which is a requirement of residency. They also need bicycles for the residents to use to get to their jobs, plus food, or grocery gift cards.

Next on Mike and Marge's list is a Shalom Home for women, because many of our mothers and sisters and daughters are in great need as well. “The need is great and there is hope for people to change. Everyone needs to know that these people deserve second and third chances and that they can contribute to society.”

Jesus was very clear about how the Kingdom of God works. “The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” A wonderful reminder that we are all equal at the foot of the cross, and that spending our time in service to others continues what Jesus started.

To find out more about Shalom Home and how you can partner in this ministry, visit www.shalomhome.org.



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Back to Basics



By KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

What sparked this month's topic? I ran a report for our grocery expenditures for February; what a shock!

As we maneuver through the times we're in, creating new habits around how we shop and consume can improve our health and wallets. Below are nine health tips with thoughts to help reduce spending at checkout:

- Focus on eating more fruits and veggies. A salad with every meal will usually create more leftovers which creates another meal at no added cost. Also, buying fresh vegetables offers multiple lunches and side dishes. Non-processed foods will always offer health benefits. Salads don't always have to be served with lettuce. Consider brown rice, quinoa or gluten free noodles. Change up the veggies for variety. Serve the salad warm vs. cold.

- Who doesn't love a delicious plate of spaghetti or lasagna? Dishes like this are filling and

can be stretched. A big pot of sauce can give you several dishes: spaghetti, lasagna, or dinner-in-a-dish (seashell noodles, veggies, sauce and cheese). Be sure to par-boil (not quite done) noodles. Doing this slows down how quickly the sugar in the noodles is absorbed.

- Scratch baking can also save money. Replace white sugar with Turbinado (cane sugar), honey, date sugar or pure maple syrup. Check the prices on these. Raw honey and pure maple syrup can be pricey, but they also require a much smaller amount due to their sweetness which also makes it last longer. On the health side, the body recognizes these natural sweeteners as real food which allows it to be broken down easier.

- Cut your white flour in half with almond flour, oat flour (You can make this by grinding whole rolled oats.) or another less processed flour. This cuts down on the sugar impact on the body.

- If you're a yogurt person, switch up to plain low-fat Greek or regular yogurt. It should have only two-three ingredients. Add your own fruit (frozen fruit works well) and add nuts, seeds, and a touch of honey or maple syrup. This is cost effective and makes a great breakfast or lunch.

- Supplement with a high-quality vitamin. The company should be able to guarantee that the ingredients on

the label are in each and every tablet. Consumer Lab tested 74 products and found defects in 40% of them. Taking control of our health includes becoming more informed with what we are putting in our bodies.

- Soup! I love soup. It's filled with all kinds of good stuff, from chili to veggie to chicken tortilla soup. I've found with soup that by cutting the chicken up in smaller bites I can stretch my chicken breasts for more meals. And, soup usually always allows for left overs. Tacos are another way to stretch out ingredients.

- Make your own beans. You can make a big pot and freeze them. Soak them over night. Rinse and fill the pot with fresh water and cook until done. An Insta-Pot cooks them quickly. You can also crockpot them on high for a few hours. This is a great savings and offers us the benefit of less salt in our diet.

- Replace cereal with oatmeal. Soak it in the bowl overnight in milk or water. Serve hot or cold. add nuts, seeds, fruit, nut butters, natural sweeteners, etc. You can also add a few chocolate chips (dark chocolate) for a little treat. The benefits of this one is huge. You're cutting back on starches and a high amount of sugar.

- Lastly, consider a garden. If you're like us, growing a garden has it challenges. To make this less overwhelming, grab some

neighbors and friends. One can grow tomatoes, another peppers, another squash, another lettuce and so on. Then you can share with each other. You can use containers, growing bags, etc. If you have a green thumb the ground works too :-). You can

even grow flowers for sharing. Have an amazing spring. I hope the above thoughts spark you to think outside the box. Here's to Health!

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Self-Care Corner:

The Difference Between Swedish and Deep Tissue Massage



By KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER

Swedish Massage and Deep Tissue Massage are two popular forms of massage. A very common question is, "What is the difference between the two?" They're both beneficial for anyone in need of massage therapy.

But it's important to know the difference, so that you get the optimal benefits.

Basically, according to healthline.com, Swedish massage uses long strokes and light-to-firm pressure to provide gentle relaxation. Deep tissue massage is a more forceful technique that releases tension deep in the muscles and connective tissues.

Though the name implies otherwise, Swedish massage did not originate in Sweden. It was originally created in Europe by Dutch practitioner John George Mezger. The most commonly offered massage technique, utilizing a firm or lighter pressure on the muscles, it consists of specific strokes as well as passive and active joint movements,

stretching and bending of the joints with the assistance of the therapist. Swedish massage is mainly used to increase blood flow, easing tension in the body's muscles and improving flexibility. It is very stimulating to the skin, helping reduce emotional and physical stresses in the body as well as stimulating the nervous system. It targets toxins that, with increase of oxygen to the blood, are filtered out. Swedish massage is best suited for people interested in relaxation and tension relief. At Beverly Hills Day Spa, you can relax like a star in a candle lit room.

Using medium to light pressure, you'll begin with a hot

Continued on page 40

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Scary Places



BY CHRIS BALZER

As children, some of us had places which scared us: the space under the bed, a cracked closet door or shadows in the dark which drove our imaginations wild. As adults, some of us have different scary places: our bank balance, our retirement investments, our children going off to college, a friend or relative's health or not waking up to our alarms. We all have things or places which can trouble us.

One space which causes some of us grief is a crawl space under our homes. Not all of us have these and they're not really scary. Merriam-Webster defines crawl space as: a shallow unfinished space beneath the first floor or under the roof of a building, especially for access to plumbing or wiring. These spaces are typically insulated with rolled insu-

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

lation with some type of netting to keep the insulation from falling down. Some of us who have this type of insulation have witnessed our wild native friends: beach mice, squirrels, birds, and even geckos. Yes, geckos, the small chiefly tropical and nocturnal insectivorous lizards, also like this space and will rip the netting to gain access to the insulation and become non paying roommates under our homes.

At ECES, fixing crawl spaces was not always a service we provided, because there was not really a great solution other than spray foam or replace the rolled insulation and netting which would once again become a playground for our wild friends and would need replacing in a few years.

We believe in finding solutions which are highly energy efficient, healthy and will last the life of the home. A local Destin resident introduced us to a system which was a collaboration between LSU (AgCenter), Forest Product Laboratory and Raised

Floor Living. This system was a year study which took 12 homes and six different insulation systems after Hurricane Katrina. The types of insulation included Open Spray Foam, at three different thicknesses, one with a vapor barrier, Closed Spray Foam, Kraft-faced fiberglass batt (typical in most homes) and our Max Cap System. Max Cap and Closed Spray Foam showed the best performance from all types tested. The main differences we found between Closed Spray Foaming the crawl space and installing Max Cap, is there is no off gassing and ease of maintenance for plumbing or wiring with Max Cap. Plus it leaves the



crawl space, in my opinion, with a clean, crisp look.

After many conversations with the director of LSU's AgCenter, and countless hours of research, ECES added the Max Cap Crawl Space System to our services. This system gives our customers a piece of mind, knowing that their wild friends have been evicted, higher energy efficiency than before, maintenance free and will last the life of the home. If you have a scary place under your home and would like to not

think about it again, we would be happy to see if your home is a fit for Max Cap.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions and resides in the Santa Rosa Beach area with his wife and three children. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com and Beat the Heat.



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The Courage Cake: A Delicious Concoction for Workplace Harmony



BY BILL MASON,
ROCKET FUEL COACH

In the bustling workplace, we are constantly shuffling between projects, deadlines, and, yes, people. These interactions often form the crux of our work joys or woes. How do you handle those moments when a mere conversation feels like wading into a battlefield? It could be a dispute with a colleague, a struggle to deliver constructive feedback or the perennial issue of feeling misunderstood.

Imagine this:

You and a colleague stand at an impasse, ideologies poised like knights on a chessboard, each awaiting the prestigious move that would render them victorious. It's not a question of who is right or wrong, but how game-changing the next interaction could be.

I love a tool I learned from RARE Leadership in the workplace, by Jim Wilder and Marcus Warner. They call it CAKE. I call it the 'Courage Cake'—a blend of personal courage and interpersonal finesse, wrapped in a confection of relationship management.

Picture it — a cake with layers of complexity, where every slice tastes like a new hope for team unity. Each ingredient serves a unique purpose, ensuring that when served, it is

not just the taste but the afterthought that lingers.

The Ingredients

To bake the perfect Courage Cake, we need just the right mix of ingredients:

Curiosity: The yeast that allows us to rise above our initial presumptions and truly understand the other's perspective. It's not about immediate condemnation but the eagerness to explore deeper. Ask yourself, do you have the humility needed to cultivate genuine curiosity, or are you content to billow in the hot air of your own conclusions?

Appreciation: The sweetener that coats even the bitterest morsels of conflict with a glaze of warmth. How hard is it to simply acknowledge that, regardless of the situation, the other person's intentions were partly noble, at least from their own lens? Are your interactions with colleagues seasoned with a pinch of gratitude, or are they simply bland exchanges of utilitarian dialogue?

Kindness: The most overlooked element that can make or break a professional relationship. In the quest to prove our point, we often forget the human behind the professional facade. Are you kind in your approach? Do you take care in the way you structure your conversations and your feedback, ensuring that the recipient feels respected and valued?

Eye Contact/Envelope: The oven that bakes the courage elements into the core of our being. Maintaining eye contact can be a simple yet powerful way to anchor respect, especially looking into the left eye, which connects you relationally to the person. Envelope the issue, ensuring that the conversation unfolds within the bounds



of the issue at hand. This is the one time you did this, not every time in the past that this has happened.

Think of these elements not just as the components of a CAKE, but as the ethics of a master chef. They dictate how we put these elements together not just for my good, but for the good of the relationship, team, and company at large.

The Baking Process

Creating a workplace where 'Courage Cake' is a regular on the menu takes more than a dash of willingness. It requires a culture that actively nurtures the seeds of courageous conversation, one interaction at a time.

Recognize the fear: Before any growth can occur, we must eradicate anxiety's weeds. Fear can be the biggest adversary in interpersonal conflicts, crippling our ability to engage constructively. By recognizing that fear you're preempting that weakness. FEAR is often simply False Evidence that Appears Real. It's a ghost!

Create a framework: Every good cake has a recipe to follow, and a courageous conversation is no different. Develop a framework — perhaps CAKE

— as a guide. What goes where, when to bring in the 'icing,' and how to ensure the layers remain distinct yet cohesive.

Cultivate the environment: A workplace that nurtures open dialogue, respectful challenge, and a commitment to growth will always bake the best cakes. Nurture an environment where everyone, regardless of

rank or role, feels their contributions and concerns are worthy of the table.

Encourage indulgence: Courage Cake will not bake itself. Encourage your team to engage in the 'cake-chat'. Indulge in the delightful discomfort that comes with addressing issues head-on, and watch as your team becomes more robust, innovative, and united.

Serving Slices of Resolution

Now imagine the joy of slicing through a Courage Cake. Each bite is a step towards resolution, a moment of triumph. It's more than just a sweet treat; it's a celebration of the will to engage with the world, even when the world seems pitted against you.

Are you ready to take a slice? Are you prepared to lead your team through conflicts with the culinary prowess of a seasoned chef? The Courage Cake is waiting to be tasted, and the following conversation might be the most delicious morsel of your day.

In the end, remember, the Courage Cake isn't a remedy for all conflicts — it's a call to harness the bravery within each of us to shape our workspaces into collaborative sanctuaries. Take each slice, one interaction at a time, and relish the growth that comes from being courageous in conversation. Your workplace is not just a field for professional endeavor; it's a kitchen of human interaction, a place where we bake the realities we want to live.

Did a colleague come to mind as you read this? Get started today, set up a time for coffee or a lunch with that colleague this week to eat some cake together! It's time to indulge in those conversations you've been putting off for too long. It's time to take that first bite of Courage Cake.

Bill Mason, PCC, CPL C, Executive Leadership Coach, Rocket Fuel Coach, bill@rocketfuelcoach.com

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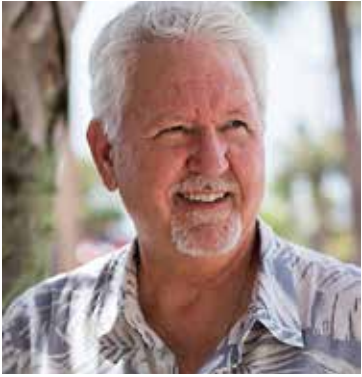
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 Musing



A Pastor's Ponderings: The Tomb of Darkness

BY PASTOR DAVE HOLLAND

Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. Luke 23:50-56

The tomb breathes cold,

clammy air. The cave shrouds the dead body and cradles Christ's dead body like the swaddling clothes that welcomed Him into the world. His dead body lies still all night.

Imagine he lay asleep resting, it was the Sabbath after all. I have been in that tomb and it is not a place you want to hang around. The cavernous tomb is closed, dirty, and makes you claustrophobic. How would you feel resting in a sealed crypt waiting?

The cross of Calvary had done its cruel work to our Master and Joseph of Arimathea was the one who dealt with the lifeless, bloody body of Christ. Joseph was well-to-do, highly educated and esteemed as a holy man. He was a member of the national religious leadership body called the Sanhedrin. By touching a dead body, he disqualified himself from worship the next day. How did he feel lifting Jesus' body?

Curiously, the scriptures refer to this time as the Preparation for the Sabbath. Surely the Law and the Prophets were prepara-



tion for this moment. Over 1,500 years the Jews had rested on the Sabbath in anticipation of this very day, yet only Joseph and a few women were present. Can you imagine the grief that gripped their hearts as they wrapped clean linen around his body? They worked in haste on Friday as no work could be done from Friday sundown to Sunday morning.

Grief slowed the work of Joseph and the women. Their mindless motion slowed them to a crawl, yet they did as much as they could before sundown. Then they hurried home to weep and wait until Sunday to finish the morbid work of embalming the Resurrection and the Life.

It's hard to summon your faith when it feels lifeless? Jesus is gone. Hope is shattered, your future in shambles, your body aching with despair, those are the times when you decide who or what you really believe in. Those are the times of preparation for something more.

Joseph and the women summoned a lot of faith that day—they handled Christ's dead body and did what needed to be done. All the evidence of defeat was lying on a stone slab in the tomb without the slightest flutter of life.

Quiet, grievous waiting is their groundwork. The Greek word translated "preparation" above is the same word used in Ephesians 6:15 where Paul admonishes Christians to have their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In Christ tomb lay the body and blood that would pay the price for our atonement. The anger of God toward our sin would be appeased and peace with God was purchased for us.

Holy Saturday then acknowledges those of us struggling be-

tween post-traumatic defeat and pre-resurrection hope. This is a day of loss, but also a day of quiet hope. Psalm 15 reminds us, "For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay."

Can you still believe when you are grieving and all is silent? Can you have faith when your body seems to be dead, and you didn't get what you expected out of life? Turn to Jesus like Joseph and the women did.

Say with me, "Rest well today my Savior, for tomorrow there is a stone to be moved, a grave to be conquered and a light to be shone on those who lay in darkness.

Dave Holland pastored churches for thirty-eight years before retiring in Destin, Florida. 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 at churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com.

SELF CARE

continued from page 37

towel for your feet continued by long strokes to promote increased circulation to overcome and relax tired muscles.

Deep tissue massage is a specific type of massage that targets deeper structures of muscles and fascia. It is best used on smaller muscle injuries and

chronic problems.

Whiplash, sports injuries, postural alignment, treating spasms as well as tension in the muscles are very good examples. It works layer-by-layer releasing tension in the connective tissue going into the deepest accessible layer to create changes in posture and make room for movements after releasing fascial adhesions and chronic muscle


contractures. This is where I focus on releasing chronic muscle tension as well as knots and adhesions in the muscles.

In summary, Swedish massage is for more relaxation and to create increased circulation of blood and lymph, for relief of pain, improved mood and better sleep. Deeper tissue massage is designed for chronic pains that are more muscular in



origin, to help your posture and create more range of motion during the healing process.

If you still have questions,

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BY SEAN DIETRICH

A small town. The kind of American hamlet that causes you to start looking around for the Norman Rockwell signature. Hanging begonias. Storefronts with colorful awnings. A cute downtown.

There was a loud party happening on Main Street.

I followed the sound of distant music and many voices. I suddenly realized I was still wearing my pajamas. I shuffled into town barefoot, with sleep crusted in my eyes.

The sun was shining. Birds were cackling. People were everywhere. It was a veritable town-wide hoedown.

I saw women positioning casseroles on card tables. I saw children playing tag. Old men in aprons were deep frying hunks of fish.

There was music playing at the hardware store. Good music. The kind with twin fiddles. People were dancing before a plywood stage. Each front porch was crowded with people drinking lemonade and sugary tea.

Everyone was there, the whole gang. I saw them all. All my loved ones who died and left me behind. All my friends who met untimely ends. All my relatives who were called home too early. All my kin.

They were all right here, holding plates of hot food, mingling with one another. Everybody was smiling, throwing their heads back, laughing until they couldn't breathe.

I saw grandparents, deceased uncles, departed aunts, and cousins who died before they were old enough to know what life was about.

I saw multitudes of unfamiliar children, dancing while the musicians played "Turkey in the Straw." I asked an old woman nearby who all these children were.

"Those are the babies who died in the womb," the woman said. "Aren't they precious?"

We were interrupted when a large pack of dogs came running through the town, careening up Main Street. They came stampeding like a herd of bison. Among them, I saw six of my own dogs.

I saw Lady, the cocker spaniel who died in my arms when I was a teenager. I saw Joe, who was hit by an SUV in a hit and run. I saw Boone, the collie-mix who died in a veterinary office while gazing into my eyes. I saw Ellie Mae, the bloodhound I'll never get over.

In a nearby park, I watched old friends play baseball. Mister Reginald was pitching—the retired Methodist minister who once lived on my street.

I saw my grandmother, standing at home plate, holding a hickory bat in her hands. Lord have mercy. She was a teenager, long and beautiful, with raven hair and Hershey's Kiss eyes.

After the ball game, I was hungry. So I found a paper plate and stood in line at one of the food tables. A guy in line said, "Sean! Don't you remember me?"

I stared at him, but didn't recognize his face.

"It's me!" he finally said. "James!"

"JAMES!" I screamed. James and I were friends as kids. He died driving home from his very first job. He wrecked his car on the interstate. I sat on the front row at his funeral and wept alongside his sisters.

Mid-hug, I saw someone else



familiar. She was standing behind a food table, serving people. I knew those two fiery eyes, flecked with tinges of playfulness. It was my mother-in-law.

She was behind a crockpot, wielding a long spoon, wearing an apron that said "KISS ME, I'M METHODIST."

When she recognized me, she shouted my name and came running around the table to hug me. It was a colossal embrace that made my ribs squeak.

"You have no idea how much we all miss you back home," I told her.

Next, I saw Aunt Judith, Uncle Tommy Lee, the Williams boy, my old Little League coach, Cousin Elroy, Cousin Rose, Cousin Ray, and dear Mrs. Betty Lamb, who taught me in elementary school. I saw hundreds more familiar faces. Maybe thousands.

Then an old woman grabbed my arm and said, "There's one more person you need to meet, sweetie."

She led me to the edge of town, to a meandering river. There, on a shallow wooden bridge sat a young man, feet dangling over the edge, trousers

rolled up to his knees. He was holding a long fishing rod like a grown-up version of Huck Finn.

He saw me.

He stood.

My God, he was so young. He was so very young and so very lean. He had a mess of red hair atop his head, and his patient pending matinee smile was unchanged. He was wearing the same shirt he died in.

We embraced and I heard myself say his name. A word I've been waiting to use for a long time.

"Daddy."

I could smell his deodorant, a scent I haven't known in years. I could feel his lean trunk beneath

my arms, and his beating heart only inches from my own.

"What is this wonderful place?" I asked my father.

"Does it matter?" he said

"Yes, it matters. Because I don't ever want to leave."

He smiled. "Neither do any of us."

Then I woke up.

Sean Dietrich is a columnist, novelist and podcast host known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Life Media publications, Newsweek, Reader's Digest, Southern Living, Garden and Gun and in newspapers from Savannah to San Diego.

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Arts & Music

ECTC Summer Camp Registration is Open

Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC) is offering many summer camp options for children this summer. Dance, sing, act or be behind the scenes in one (or more) of these fantastic summer camps. Many are being held at ECTC in Grand Boulevard in Miramar Beach, but there are a few options in Seaside, Panama City and Defuniak Springs. Payment plans are always available. More information on the camps and registration is available at emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps.

The Mini Player Camps (Ages 5 - 7, rising Kindergarteners) are designed specifically for the youngest performers. These one-week camps are held Monday-Friday (with the exception of the Disney Dreams Camp which is Tuesday-Friday) from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. with a final performance on the last day of camp. Tuition is \$250. Mini Player Camps are held at ECTC in Grand boulevard.

May 28 - May 31 - Disney Dreams

June 3-7 - Treasure Island

June 10-14 - Trolls

June 17-21 - Aladdin's Lamp

June 24 - 28 - Cinderella's Slipper

There are four Summer Camps at ECTC in Grand Boulevard for 2nd - 5th graders. Tu-

ition varies depending on camp. Payment plans are always available.

Camp Showtime: Disney Dreams

Let the rhythm get you! Come act, sing, and dance your heart out to popular Broadway Disney show tunes as we learn simple choreography to some of the most popular musical numbers ever recorded. Parents, this is the perfect camp for your first time performer!

Tuition \$325

MAY 28-31 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Treasure Island - Non Musical

This is a great opportunity for young performers to learn stage directions, the language of the theatre, and how to work together to bring a story to life! There will be treasure maps, gold, plunder, and plenty of mischief! Jim, Long John Silver, and a colorful cast of pirates set sail this summer! Will you join their crew?!

Monday-Friday with final performance on the last Friday of camp at 2 PM.

Tuition \$375

JUNE 3-7 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Camp Showtime: Rock and Pop!

Come act, sing, and dance your heart out to popular rock and pop songs as we learn simple choreography as an ensemble. We'll also play theatre games and work on our improv skills!

Monday-Friday; Tuition \$375

JUNE 10-14 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Little Mermaid (two week camp)

Join us for this classic underwater adventure featuring all the characters you know and love—Ariel, Flounder, Sebastian and more! Everyone gets to sing, dance!

Monday-Friday for two



funniest shows on Broadway—a true laugh a minute production! Come be a part of the Cornely Drama Society's unforgettable rendition of The Murder at Haversham Manor. What could possibly go wrong?!

Monday-Friday for two weeks (skipping Saturday and Sunday) with final performance on the last Friday of camp.

Tuition \$675

JUNE 10-22 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Final Performances will be held at ECTC - Friday, June 21 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, June 22 at 7 p.m.

Combat Camp: The Art of Stage Combat

Throw a punch! Throw a bottle! Swashbuckle and sword fight! But—safely! There is an art to stage combat. How do actors make fights look believable onstage? The secret is all in the choreography! Come learn those skills that will help to make you an efficient and marketable actor, and have no fear for physicality. Onstage it's always: Safety first!

Monday-Friday; Tuition \$375 (payment plans available)

JUNE 24-28 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

There is one summer camp option exclusively for Grades 8th - 12th. Tuition varies depending on camp. Payment plans are always available.

High School Musical! Musical Theatre Intensive
(Grades 6th - 12th)

This three week camp will stretch your students' theatre skills and grow them as performers. Get the full Musical Theatre Experience with this Intensive. We'll work on our acting, voice, makeup, and dance in the compact structure and schedule of the professionals. Students will also have the opportunity to work with some of ECTC's theatre professionals! This camp is offered July 8 - 28, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at ECTC. Tuition is \$1,125 (payment plans available)

The Final Performances will be Friday, July 26 at 7 p.m., Saturday, July 27 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, July 28 at 2 p.m.

weeks (skipping Saturday and Sunday) with final performance on the last Friday of camp.

Tuition \$675

JUNE 17-28 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Final Performances will be held at ECTC - Friday, June 28 at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

There are five summer camp options for middle and high schoolers (Grades 6th - 12th) at ECTC in Grand Boulevard. Tuition varies depending on camp. Payment plans are always available.

Camp Broadway: Beetlejuice, Hamilton, & Hadestown

Sing, dance, and act the songs and scenes that are hot on Broadway right now! Come ready to move as you learn choreography. Join in group numbers or step up and take a solo. Camp ends in a sensational showcase for parents!

Tuesday-Friday; Tuition \$325

MAY 28-31 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Comedy Camp: Sketch, Stand-up, and Improv

We're going to fill our time with sketch comedy scenes, stand-up comedy sets, and good ol' improv games. It's going to be abstract. It's going to be absurd. Some might go so far as to say... It's going to be funny! Bring your talent, sharpen those comedy skills, and show off in our showcase on the final day of camp!

Monday-Friday; Tuition \$375

JUNE 3-7 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The (One Act) Play that Goes Wrong

It's been called one of the

ON STAGE
APRIL 4TH - 7TH



MOTHER GOOSE ON THE LOOSE!

Join her children as they try to find their beloved Mother Goose, and sing and dance along the way. Big fun for the very little!

ON STAGE
MAY 3RD - 19TH



MARY POPPINS

This show is "practically perfect in every way" for all ages and feels like a "jolly holiday" with friends and family. Don't miss this supercalifragilisticexpialidocious show that will lift your spirits and leave you feeling like you want to go "fly a kite!"









emerald coast theatre company

Tickets or Info, call 850.684.0323 or visit EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG

Lakeside Songwriters Concerts Underway!

Featuring a lineup of top-notch, popular talent, the Lakeside Songwriters Concert Series, Friday nights at Old Florida Fish House on 30A, continues with Michael Morgan on April 5th, Charles Esten on April 12th, Leslie Satcher and Kevin Mac on April 19th and Bryan White on May 3rd.

Captivating audiences with his authentic approach to storytelling through song, William Michael Morgan (April 5) is a country music singer with Warner Bros. Nashville. One of his notable breakthroughs was the release of his debut single "I Met a Girl" in 2015. The song, known for its traditional country sound and Morgan's sincere vocals, garnered widespread acclaim. In 2016, William Michael Morgan released his debut studio album, titled "Vinyl," highlighting Morgan's commitment to traditional country music.

Charles Esten (April 12) is an American actor, comedian and singer best known for his role as Deacon Claybourne in the popular TV series "Nashville." Esten's journey into the entertainment industry began with improvisational comedy as a regular performer on the British and American versions of the improv show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" In "Nashville," Charles Esten's portrayal of Deacon Claybourne, a talented musician dealing with personal and professional challenges, earned him acclaim from both fans and critics, even with his musical abilities. Esten performed numerous songs on the show and has released several albums with a blend of country and rock influences.

Leslie Satcher (April 19) has penned numerous songs for prominent country artists that often delve into the complexities of human emotions, relationships and life experiences. She has collaborated with various country music stars, contributing her songwriting prowess to hit songs across the genre.

With Nashville as his home base, writing great songs and bringing them to the masses is Kevin Mac's calling. Whether he's playing solo, jamming in front of his band or teaming up with other songwriters as part of Southern Rounds and Songwriters in Paradise, Kevin Mac connects with fans across the na-

tion. "Take a sandy beach, mix it with some blue water, add a Corona, a guitar, a good song, and a good singer! That's how you make Kevin Mac," quips Keith Stegal, his famous producer.

Purchase VIP (with dinner) and general admission tickets at www.oldfloridafishhouse.com/lakesidesongwritersconcert. Old Florida Fish House is located at 33 Heron's Watch Way in San-



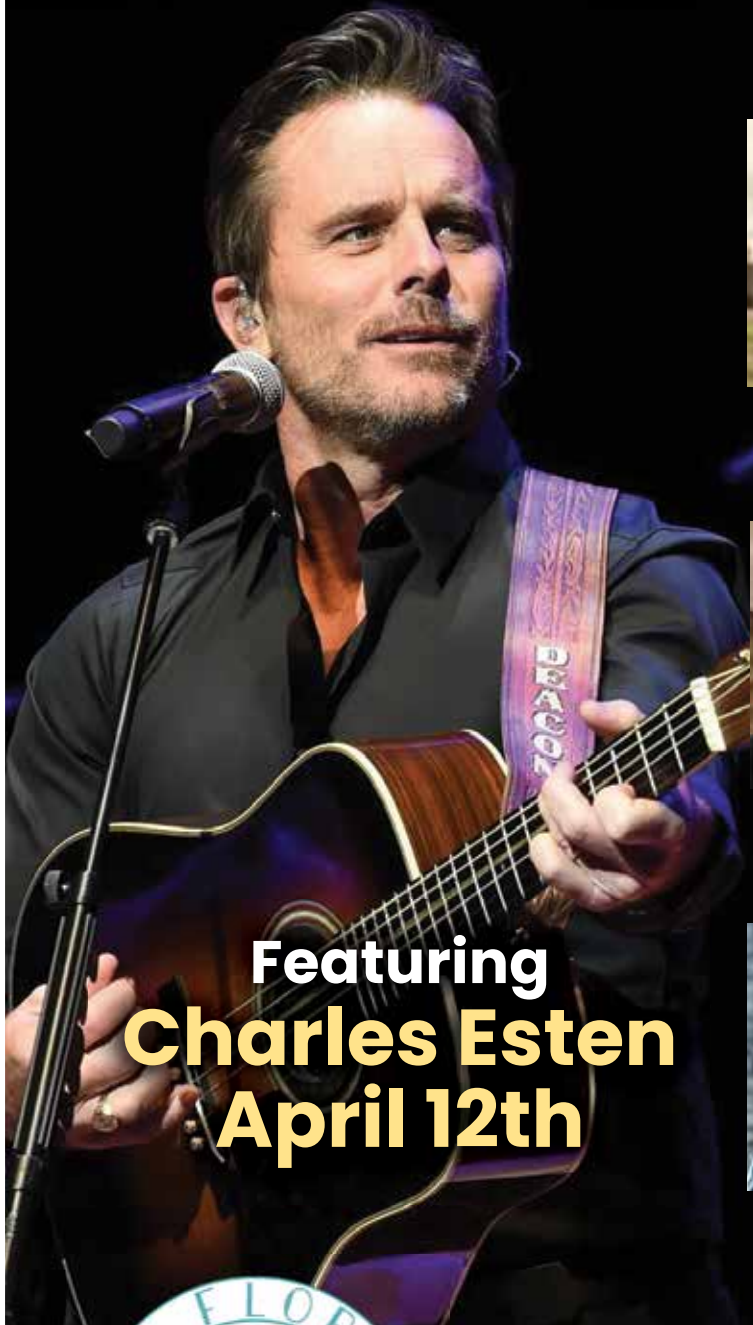
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Arts & Music

Sinfonia Becomes Orchestra of Nearly 3,000 Students During Link Up: The Orchestra Rocks

On March 6, the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center in Fort Walton Beach was transformed into an electrifying concert hall when Sinfonia Gulf Coast — the only fully professional non-profit orchestra on the Emerald Coast founded in 2005 by music and artistic director Demetrius Fuller — presented its 12th live Link Up concert performance “The Orchestra Rocks,” a national program it presented in partnership with New York’s Carnegie Hall Weill Institute of Music.

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

With recorders in hand, the students performed from their seats when given their cue by Maestro Fuller to join the Sinfonia Gulf Coast orchestra for a range of pieces from Come

to Play by Thomas Cabanis, La Follia by Antonio Vivaldi, excerpts from Igor Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring, O Fortuna from Carmina Burana and others. But these inspired kids didn’t stay in their seats at this spirited performance which ended with a celebration of Chuck Berry’s Johnny B. Goode they were up out of their chairs singing, dancing moves and parts they have been practicing for months.

This curriculum is geared towards 3rd-5th grade students, and in many cases locally, is the only music education that they receive during the school year. The theme of this year’s Link Up program was centered around discovering how elements of rhythm and time can unite musicians, singers and audiences.

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



ing from Sinfonia Gulf Coast’s Crescendo! annual fundraiser, Treble Makers, an honorary membership committee of Crescendo! and community donors,

has helped Link Up steadily grow to the Sinfonia’s largest education initiative.

For more information on Sinfonia Gulf Coast visit Sin-

foniaGulfCoast.org, call (850) 460-8800 or e-mail info@sinfoniagulfcoast.org.



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EVENTS

continued from page 13

Warrior Arts program serving active/veteran military.

Purchase tickets online at MKAF.org/events—\$20 to \$35 for adults. Discounts offered for active-duty military (must show ID). Purchase tickets in advance of concert day and save \$5 per ticket at the door. Children (12 and under) are free. A limited number of VIP tables (reserved table for eight guests for the entire season) are available for \$2,250. Corporate VIP tables are \$2,750.

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

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

Taylor Swift Album Release Party

Join City Food Hall at Destin Commons on April 19th from



6-10 p.m. for an unforgettable Taylor Swift Album Release Party of the highly anticipated release of Taylor's latest album, "The Tortured Poets Department." Get ready to test your Taylor Swift knowledge with Swiftie Trivia kicking off at 6 p.m. Show off your expertise and compete for fabulous prizes! Following the trivia, immerse yourself in the magic of Taylor's new album with a special Listening Party. But that's not all! Indulge in delicious special cocktails and mocktails inspired by Taylor's music as you min-

gle with fellow Swifties. Get crafty and make friendship bracelets to commemorate the occasion, and don't miss out on Taylor Swift-themed games and swag to keep the fun going all night long. Capture memories with friends at the Taylor Swift-themed photo booth and dress in your favorite Eras look to truly embrace the Swiftie spirit! Free and open to the public. All ages welcome. Visit www.cityfoodhall.com or follow City Food Hall on social media for the latest updates and event details.

Attend the International Festival! April 21

You are invited to Conexion Media Group's (CMG) 6th Annual International Festival at the beautiful Landing Park in Fort Walton Beach, Sunday, April 21, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. More than

60 nations will present with music, food, folklore and art with attendees traveling from as far as Tallahassee, Panama City, Pensacola and the surrounding states of Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama!

For this year's festival, CMG selected the Advanced Sacred Hope Academy (ASHA) as the local non-profit to benefit. ASHA is a 501c3 non-profit independent private school dedicated to the individualized learning of students with autism or other neurological disorders that prevent them from succeeding in a traditional school setting. Visit ASHA at advancedsacredhopeacademy.org.


Corporate sponsorships and vendor opportunities available. Contact David at 850-368-3505 or via conexionflorida@gmail.com.

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival! May 4-5

In its 36th year, ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival will be held May 4th-5th! Produced by the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County and presented by Grand Boulevard Town Center, ArtsQuest provides an opportunity to view and purchase




original art from over 100 artists from throughout the country. ArtsQuest is a juried show that includes artists in the categories of Ceramics, Fiber, Glass, Jewelry, Metal, Mixed Media, Oils & Acrylics, Original Digital Art, Photography, Sculpture, Wood and Works on Paper (Watercolor, Printmaking, Pastels, Pencils, Ink). ArtsQuest awards \$10,000 in cash prizes. The rain or shine event also features live performances, artist demonstrations, hands-on learning opportunities, student exhibits, ImagiNation: where kids rule, food, beverages and more! Join us in the Town Center of Grand Boulevard, from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 4th and again on Sunday, May 5th, 10am - 5pm. A \$5 donation will be accepted at the entrance gate.



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 Around Town

Ask Destinities: Tesla Charging Stations at Winn Dixie

By PATRICIA LEE, OWNER
DESTINITES.COM

The Destinities local Facebook group (www.Destinities.com/groups/Destinities) was all a buzz with chatter about the new Tesla charging stations being installed at the local Winn Dixie. The conversation thread was lengthy and pretty clear that people were ei-

ther for this proclaimed environmental progress or they weren't. To Tesla or not to Tesla; that is the question. And here is what some locals think about it all:

"Where are the chargers getting their electricity? Hmm"

"Total waste. Work the math on the power requirements, cost and recharge time."

"Having lived directly behind these chargers for six months, I can attest to that stretch of the parking lot being completely empty. There was a boat trailer occupying it, I assume, illegally for about a month. And homeless people sometimes frequent it, because it's always empty and is nearby a bus stop. At least now

it can provide a use to some residents and tourists."

"Who's paying for these stations is my question? They can't be cheap. That's for sure. Plus, who purchased the parcel they sit on?"

"Everyone who pays federal taxes is paying for them! There wouldn't be a single charger to be found if the taxpayers weren't paying for them!"

"I was almost certain of that. It does my Chevy 1500 no good at all. We should all get free gas, too, then right."

"The price of these 12 charging stations was over \$30,000 dollars. The average charge is around \$30 dollars. Each station must generate at least 953 charges in the ballpark to break even."

"Extremely high radiation field. Major draw on the grid."

"People with your perspective used to say what you are about combustion engine horseless buggies! Those seemed to do alright."

"Have you heard of generators? They are used during storms to pump the gas until the grid comes back up. I don't see one on site."

"My wife has owned a Tesla for three years and loves it. Almost zero required maintenance, no gas stations, and a very safe car."

"Great, so the power plant can burn a ton of coal to produce electricity for the lithium batteries that destroy the world so people can act like they are green. Oh, yeah, don't forget the stations aren't taxed, so the money they make doesn't help improving the roads either."

"I'm just here to laugh at the anger at progress. It's 2024. Quit crying."

"If you saw and experienced the beauty and kinder people here before your 'progress,' you might retract that statement."

"I saw them today and just rolled my eyes."

"Worrying about Electric Vehicles would be worrying about yourself considering the damage they cause to the earth which is something everyone should care about—they're terrible. Look up what has to be done to make a single battery for one of these vehicles. People should be worrying about this."

"Unfortunately, the majority of people who believe electric ve-

hicles are the answer also believe electricity comes from a socket in the wall."

"Electricity is a secondary energy source that we get from the conversion of other sources of energy such as coal, natural gas, oil, nuclear power and so on."

"You do realize that the cobalt needed for those electric car batteries is mined by the hands of children in the Congo."

"Lots of big questions going on. No electricity, no charging. Batteries catching on fire in heavy traffic situations. Infrastructure that can't support them. How much 'cradle to grave' do they really save the planet."

"I hope FP&L beef up their transformers for that grid. Can you imagine the summer when all those apartments are running ac and all those cars being charged."

"Folks are driving these things and one may consider it progress since the gasoline engine we are driving dates back to the 19th century. With the Publix competition coming, perhaps this was a smart move by the Winn Dixie (Aldi?) folks to attract the tourist customers who drive the Electrics. This is not for locals who most likely already have chargers at home."

"With gas powered generators next to them so they will work (HA!)."

"Needs a food trailer across from it. I just made someone another business idea. You're welcome!"

"Hey, a huge draw on the grid. Maybe will get those awesome rolling brown out and black outs like California. All the cool kids are doing it."

AND, last but not least....

"To manufacture each EV battery, you must process 25,000 lbs. of brine for the lithium, 30,000 lbs. of ore for the cobalt, 5,000 lbs. of ore for the nickel, 25,000 lbs. of ore for copper, digging up 500,000 lbs. of the earth's crust for just - one - battery."

Just sayin'...Something to ponder for sure!

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private group at www.Destinities.com/groups/Destinities with more than 9,700 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out our monthly newsletter and sponsored local business directory at www.Destinities.com.

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