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# DESTIN Life

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## Will Billy Bowlegs Gain A Foothold Along Our Sands?

### 68th Annual Billy Bowlegs Festival | May 16-20

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Ahoy, maties! Avast, ye! It's time to open your treasure chest, get your eyepatch on, take out your sword and get your pirate gear ready for 2024's 68th Annual Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival—May 16-20. Any landlubber knows Pirate Captain Billy Bowlegs has been setting his sights on our sandy white shores since the 1950s!

This year's new "Captain Billy," Bill Kilpatrick, takes the helm as Captain Billy Bowlegs LXVIII and is joined by the 68th Queen of Bowlegs Sharen Burt, First Mate and Mistress Brad and Krista Bowman along with their lackeys Christina Kilpatrick and John Burt and the Captain's Honor Guard krewe.

The 2024 festival kicks off with a Pre-Invasion on Thursday evening, May 16th, around 4:30 p.m., just off Main St. downtown, where Captain Billy Bowlegs and



his Krewe will arrive aboard their pirate ship parade float, the Blackhawk, to greet children, take photos and hand out treasure.

The Skirmish will be held on Friday evening, May 17th, where Captain Billy and his Krewe of Bowlegs will arrive by water at the Fort Walton

Beach Landing to scout the city prior to their invasion on

**BILLY BOWLEGS**  
*continued on page 2*



## Hope Medical Clinic Fills the Healthcare Gap

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

There's no doubt that most people would see our area as abundant, and it is. We live where other people work all year to get to and snowbirds spend entire seasons with us. We have a thriving military community as well as many successful small business owners and developers. At a glance, Okaloosa and Walton counties are doing well.

There are locals, however, who are struggling with necessities such

**HOPE MEDICAL**  
*continued on page 36*



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Community

BILLY BOWLEGS

continued from page 1

Saturday. The mayor of Fort Walton Beach and his forces are prepared and have threatened to arrest Captain Billy if he tries to land, resulting in a skirmish. The city of Fort Walton Beach will also host its Concert in the Park (6 p.m.), Arts & Crafts Fest (3 p.m.) and a Fireworks show (8 p.m.) over Santa Rosa sound.

On Saturday afternoon, May 18th, Captain Billy will return with the entire Krewe of Bowlegs and his allies from visiting Krewes across the country, after his defeat the night prior. The mayor will try everything to stop him from landing. Will he be a match for the overwhelming presence of Captain Billy's pirates? Will the Captain prevail in taking over our city? The pirates and wenches will be full of merriment and mischief as they hand out treasures (3:30-4 p.m.). Festivities at the Landing throughout the day include live music (noon-6 p.m.), an arts and crafts festival (10 a.m.), along with food, beverages and other vendor booths.

Finally, on Monday night,



May 20th, the Torchlight Parade will start at 7 p.m. on Eglin Pkwy. from First Street to Hughes Avenue to conclude the festival. The parade will be anchored by Captain Billy, the entire Krewe of Bowlegs and more than 100 floats and participants

marching down the street to celebrate Captain Billy Bowlegs' 68th annual capture of Fort Walton Beach. And, they'll be sharing their loot with those cheering them on!

Any local who has been around long enough looks forward to the famed treasure hunt. There are fewer than 100, limited-edition, two-inch treasure coins, each having an individually engraved serial

number. Some coins are being hidden with published clues, some are being given away on the radio and on social media, and some by Captain Billy personally at public appearances. The winning coin will be chosen by a live drawing on May 20th at the Fort Walton Landing for a Grand Prize.

In between the Skirmish and Torchlight Parade, there's all sorts of grub and grog, from ice cream to seafood. There will be live music and entertainment, fireworks a plenty and vendors showcasing lots of pirate booty and the like. For scallywags young and old, there's arts and crafts booths, food, refreshments and bouncy houses. Our high



seas are filled with hundreds of boats lining the mile-long sandbar off Fort Walton Beach Landing, where a melting pot of people will make their way to pillage, plunder and drink rum.

Drawing both locals and visitors, the festival is produced in partnership with the William Augustus Bowles Foundation, the Krewe of Bowlegs, the City of Fort Walton Beach, the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce and local businesses

and community organizations.

FWB Life implores you to boldly stand guard to defend our piece of paradise at this year's festival. Want to play a part? For more information, visit billybowlegsfestival.com. Captain Billy 68 is looking for a BIG 2024 turnout! So, join him and his Krewe for a swashbuckling good time as they, again, try to take over the city of Fort Walton Beach!

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Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

# "Reel Talk" from the City of Destin

## Keeping our Community Beautiful

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, we chatted about cleanups and celebrations to keep our community beautiful.

**TY:** Earth Day 2024 was April 22nd. In some ways, every day should be Earth Day!

**BW:** I agree, it is our duty to ensure that we leave our community and ecosystem in a better state than we found it every day. The significance of our natural resources to our families, economy, and way of life makes it even more crucial to safeguard and expand them for future generations. Simple acts of kindness by both locals and visitors are all that is required to maintain the beauty of Destin.

**TY:** I love that our community places an emphasis on the event to highlight its significance. Both in 2023 and this year, I was at Norriego Point for a cleanup. It was beautiful to see people volunteering. What's one of your favorite memories of celebrating Earth Day?

**BW:** One of my favorite memories is when the Okaloosa Island Pier allowed a few of us divers to go underwater along the pilings and take a few hours to clean up all the fishing gear and trash that had fallen over into the water. Before that time, the pier never allowed diving. While we were doing a voluntary trash cleanup dive, it became one of my favorite dives to date. The marine life, big and small, was very active that morning, and it was a great reminder of why it's so important to keep our waterways healthy and thriving for the marine life underwater.

**TY:** What an experience that had to be, and it's a good reminder that cleanups and care



aren't just for the beaches. In fact, we have a tree planting ceremony coming up to celebrate Arbor Day on behalf of the City of Destin, and we'll be planting a live oak in Kell-Aire Park, the South side. I know live oaks are one of your favorite trees. Why?

**BW:** Wow! It's amazing that you remembered my favorite tree! Live oaks are truly remarkable, not only because they can live for centuries, but also because they are incredibly resilient. Just like us Floridians, they



can withstand even the fiercest storms and adapt to the toughest challenges. Their sprawling and twisting branches are a symbol of Southern life, providing lush and cooling shade that's perfect for sunny days. And, they host a rich ecosystem that supports numerous species of local wildlife along the Emerald Coast, including us.

Planting a live oak tree is not just about adding a tree to the community. It's about enriching the community with a resilient, beautiful, and wildlife-supporting asset that will serve multiple generations.



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Community

# A Legacy of Service, Dedication and a Remarkable Journey: Meet Hometown Hero Patt Maney

By PASTOR DOUG STAUFFER

In the tapestry of American public servants, few threads are as colorful and resilient as that of General Judge Representative (GJR) Patt Maney. From military battlegrounds to the judicial bench and into the halls of the Florida State House, Patt Maney's life epitomizes leadership, patriotism and an unyielding commitment to minister.

Maney's military tenure as a Brigadier General in the United States Army honed his leadership skills and ingrained a profound sense of duty in him. His service across various global hotspots, including Panama, Haiti, Bosnia, and Afghanistan, equipped him with unique insights and experiences that would later refine his approach to governance and public service.

### Blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device

Patt Maney's military legacy took a pivotal turn following a near-fatal encounter with an IED in Afghanistan. The blast

left him with a TBI (traumatic brain injury), testing his resilience and reshaping his future. Fortunately for Patt, he married his college sweetheart, Caroline, almost 50 years ago, and she became his caregiver. "He became a 56-year-old/6-year-old, and I had to learn how to deal with him and help him," Caroline Maney said. "I was his full-time caregiver, and he needed assistance daily to get him from place to place."

Despite the daunting challenges of his recovery (20 months at Walter Reed Medical Hospital), which included over 80 hyperbaric oxygen therapy dives and multiple surgeries, Maney's spirit remained unbroken. His profound personal struggle and subsequent recovery not only restored his capabilities, but also deepened his empathy and commitment to fellow veterans facing physical and invisible life-changing injuries.

Upon returning to his duties



as an Okaloosa County judge, Maney initiated the county's first Mental Health and Veterans Treatment Court, recognizing veterans' unique challenges in the justice system. This court, the first of its kind in the state, has become a transformative platform for rehabilitation and

reflects Maney's dedication to serving those who have served, ensuring they receive the support and understanding needed to reintegrate into society successfully. The Florida statute establishing a Veterans Treatment Court system statewide is named after Maney, as is the

street around the Okaloosa County courthouse.

### Transition to Civilian Impact: The Legal Chapter

After retiring from active military service, Maney's journey did not decelerate. He shifted his battlefield to focus on the courtroom in Okaloosa County. For nearly three decades, he served as a judge, where his decisions were guided by fairness, empathy, and an ever-present commitment to justice. His legal career allowed him to directly impact his community, addressing local issues and making judicial decisions that resonated well beyond the courtroom walls.

### A New Arena: Political Aspirations

In 2020, General Maney transitioned to another realm of public service by entering the political arena. His election to the Florida House of Representatives was not just a change of career but a continuation of

*Continued on page 6*



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Community

# Yellow Fly Season! Are You Ready?

By BERNADETTE CANUT, PUBLIC OUTREACH COORDINATOR AND AMY ANGUIANO, FIELD BIOLOGIST

If Florida mosquitoes weren't bad enough, yellow flies are here to steal their thunder. These devilish insects will begin to arrive around mid-April and normally stick around for six weeks. They are quiet flyers and are hard to hear approaching. Once the female yellow fly decides you are the perfect meal, she will gently land on you, and I am sure we are all very aware of what happens next. The female yellow fly is known as a

fierce biter, and she will begin feeding on your blood by using her saw-like mouthparts to cut through the skin. I know it sounds horrible but just wait... there's more! Once the cut is made, she will begin to lacerate the skin with her two pairs of cutting "blades." This will allow the blood to flow out of the painful bite where she will then begin to "drink it up" with her sponge-like mouthparts. When this process is complete, the victim is left with a VERY painful welt which can take days and, worst case, weeks to go away.



You might be asking yourselves at this point, "Where are the male yellow flies?" Great question! The males are non-biters and keep busy as pollinators and nectar feeders. So surpris-

ingly, male yellow flies help us out with their pollinating abilities.

Yellow flies are most active on cloudy days or in wet, shaded areas near the edge of tree lines and avoid bright sunny, open areas unless

they are extremely hungry. If you cannot avoid going outside, the best way to prevent bites is to stay covered. They are attracted to dark materials, so it is best to dress in bright clothing.

Applying insect repellent containing DEET has had the best results.

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be an effective method to control populations, especially the larvae. Yellow fly kits can be used to reduce their presence in small areas or at least distract them from you but will not eliminate them.

Believe it or not, there is some good news when it comes to yellow flies! They do eventually disappear, and we can then turn our attention back to our dislike of mosquitoes!

## PATT MANEY

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his lifelong commitment to service. As a representative, Maney brought with him the discipline

of a military leader and the judicious calm of a seasoned judge.

### Current Contributions and Legislative Focus

Today, Maney serves with distinction, focusing on key policy areas, including education, employment, public safety, veterans' affairs and mental health. Notably, his work on mental health reform—spearheading significant legislation like the transformative Mental Health and Substance Abuse bill—showcases his dedication to improving the lives of Floridians. This legislation modernizes Florida's Baker and Marchman Acts and was PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. Maney introduced this groundbreaking bill every year during his time in office. These changes mark the first updates in 53 and 30 years, respectively!

### Collaborative Efforts and Bipartisan Leadership

Maney is known for his ability to collaborate across the aisle. His efforts in co-sponsoring bills and working within committees highlight his pragmatic

approach to governance, focusing on shared goals and mutual respect. His legislative success is due mainly to his ability to engage with peers and constituents, ensuring that his policies have broad support and real-world impact.

### Looking Ahead: The Path Forward

As Maney continues his work in the Florida House, his future initiatives promise to enhance further the state's infrastructure, healthcare, and environmental policies. His ongoing commitment to veterans' affairs and public safety remains unwavering, driven by personal experience and professional dedication.

GJR Maney's journey from the military to the judiciary and now to the Legislature is a powerful testament to a life well-lived in service to others. For those who know him and those he serves, Maney is not just a representative but a steadfast guardian of their welfare and a tireless advocate for their rights.

### Too Many Awards to List Each One

Representative Maney was honored as the national 2019 DAV Outstanding Disabled American Veteran and named Military Order of the Purple Heart National Patriot of the Year in 2010. He was also given the United States Army War College Outstanding Alumni Award (2019) for his community service after military retirement. Rep. Maney was inducted into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame (2018) and appointed to serve on the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council (2019) for making significant contributions to the State of Florida after military service.

In District 4 and beyond, General Judge Representative Patt Maney's legacy is not merely in the laws he has helped pass but in the lives he has touched—a true embodiment of leadership, service, and unwavering commitment. I count him a true friend, an outstanding patriot, and one worth emulating.

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# Blessed By Mom

To celebrate this Mother's Day, **Destin Life** asked, "What blesses (or blessed) you about your mom?"



My mom blesses me by being an amazing role model (and boss!) and supporting me in everything I do. She encourages everyone she knows to be their best and leads her staff and her family so well, always pointing them to Christ!

*Lizzy Chapman, Director of Marketing, Melting Pot Destin*



Marianne Stauffer: Forever cherished, deeply missed. Mom was a loving beacon of devotion and class. She died on the morning of Mother's Day 2021 before I preached, so I will always continue to honor her on that special day. She is pictured here with her devoted husband, son, and daughter-in-law, Judy. Her legacy of selfless love inspires me daily.

*Doug Stauffer, Pastor, Faith Independent Baptist Church, Niceville, and Life Media Writer*

My mom blesses me with unwavering constancy, she wrote the book on a strong work ethic and never wavers in her faith in The Lord. Her strength through adversity is a visual reminder daily of what I can do.

*Lorenda Smith, Director of Marketing & Retail, First National Bank*

My mom was always my encourager. She was a best friend and constant with the biggest heart, and she always told me that I could do anything my heart desired if I set my mind to it. She made sure I knew the Lord and prayed for me always. Her love was like no other. The best mom, Nana, and best friend.

*Adrienne Brackett, Licensed Stylist-Educator, Pure & Couture Salon, Pure Collective Salon*

My mom, Minnie Dickerson, is no longer with us, but she was

ALWAYS there for us no matter the sport or event, she was in the crowd cheering us on and she continued that with not only her grandchildren, but her great grandchildren also!

I'm also blessed to have an amazing mother in law that is always supportive of her family. She has such a gentle and kind spirit and loves the Lord with everything in her! She is a true blessing to everyone in her family!

*Bonnie Manthey, Loan Originator, Gerber Group at Homeside Financial*

My Mom is a blessing in many ways - but number one is she is always praying.

*Dan Collins, AJ's Restaurants*



My Mom, Carol, was a blessing in so many ways. She was compassionate and loving yet firm. She instilled in me to be a gentleman, to always give my best and to never quit.

*Scott Miller, Director of Sales & Advertising, Life Media Group*

My Mother fostered intellectual growth in me and a desire to continue to learn throughout my life. She was a woman of great integrity, living her values through example to her family.

*Carolyn Ketchel, Okaloosa County Commissioner District 2*



My mom has blessed me with unwavering unconditional love. I am blessed and grateful God chose her to be my mom.

*Julie Porterfield, Chief Executive Officer, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center*

My mother, Rose, was my inspiration. A teacher and a mom, she told me how important it was to have a career with a purpose. I remembered her words when my husband died at a young age and I raised three children on my own. I was fortunate to have a job at a local school system as a guidance counselor. I was

grateful for taking my mother's advice, so I was prepared to help my family financially.

*Barbara Palmgren, Life Media writer & Heritage Museum of NWFL Board*



My mom taught me to be honest and be tough! She was an amazing businesswoman who focused a lot of energy on her little project.

*Mary Anne Windes, Real Estate Professionals*



My mom, Claudette Canuel, has blessed me with a tenacity balanced with empathy which brought my family to live in this paradise!

*Greg Durette, Florida Health Connector*

"My mother, Lois Dokey, has been a true blessing and an inspiration to me. Despite facing impossible odds, she not only beat cancer once but twice. She is a remarkable example of what it



means to be a fighter and never give up. In the attached picture, you can see my mother, who has been in remission for eight years, surrounded by me, my husband Mike, and her two granddaughters, Jenna (15) and Elizabeth (13)."

*Catherine Card, Public Information Officer, Okaloosa County School District*



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# Trends & Treasures!



## Tennis Anyone? Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

Around the Destin-30A area, tennis isn't just a fashion statement, it's a lifestyle that we "love!" For those serious team players or wanna be fashionistas, the core component of this sporty look is surely a classic tennis skirt, paired with one of Frill Seekers' designer inspired Novel Tees. Start with the tee, then, layer up your outfit with some white tennis shoes, a solid tennis skirt, a pair of ankle socks, and a light jacket or sweater draped over your shoulders for good measure. Frill Seekers Gifts' super soft, cotton CHAMPAGNE DOUBLES T-shirt or the MVP (More Veuve Please) sweatshirt, are the most fabulous accessories to sport for your next practice session, tennis match or girl's trip. It also comes in a tank top—a darling swimsuit cover up, and on ball caps, too. If you want to score points with your tennis team, you'll have a ball giving them the stainless-steel champagne tumblers that feature one of four popular tennis-themed sayings: Game, set, match, pour! MVP more veuve please! Make mine a double! Sip, sip, play away! Complimentary signature gift wrap and shipping for any occasion. Start shopping now: [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com) or visit the store M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m. or Saturdays from 10 a.m. -2 p.m. Visit the shop in City Market Bayside or visit [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com). Open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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quisite for you for Mother's Day, Memorial Day or summer! With so much variety, your only challenge is choosing. Whether you're shopping for a special gift to honor your Mom, an engagement ring or a patriotic piece, Beyond Measure is here for you. Owner Ashleigh Woolly carries one-of-a-kind pieces to suit your fancy! How about a new twist on a classic style — the Ballerina Ring? In jewelry history, this style has long been referred to as a "ballerina ring." It traditionally consists of an ornate halo including tapered baguette cut diamonds and is said to mimic the elegance and art of ballet. Here is Ashleigh's take on this old classic! Intrigued? Specializing in diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry pieces, the Beyond Measure Jewelers' showroom is full of diamond and gemstone bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. Ashleigh is passionate about exquisite and custom-designed jewelry and selling it—especially engagement rings, wedding bands and working with couples, because "it is truly special to help people celebrate one of the biggest moments of their lives." Trust your custom project to Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, where a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting! What can Ashleigh design for YOU?!

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form your hair from ok to wow! Pure & Couture's hand-tied hair extensions are a game changer for eyes-on-you as you enter a room. This year, give mom the gift that keeps on giving with Pure & Couture's team of experts that can take her to summer with "pure" confidence. A Pure & Couture gift card is sure to delight her on her special day. Or book a stylist for your wedding or special event. Be "purely" beautiful!

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Thinking about purchasing a home or second home this year? Should you or does it make more sense to wait? Depending on your situation, here's how homeownership can help you combat the rising costs that come with inflation. During a period of high inflation, prices rise across the board for things like food and entertainment, even housing. Both home prices and rental prices are on the rise. As a buyer, how can you protect yourself from increasing costs? Buying a home allows you to stabilize what's typically your biggest monthly expense: your housing cost. If you get a fixed-rate mortgage on your home, you lock in your monthly payment for the duration of your loan, often 15 to 30 years. Even if other prices rise, your housing payment won't. If you rent, you don't have that same benefit. Buying now lets you lock in at today's rates and prices before both climb higher. "Homeownership is a historically strong hedge against inflation," said REALTOR® Brian K. LoCicero. "Once you buy a house,

any home price appreciation that does occur will be good for your equity and your net worth. If you're ready to buy, call me at (850) 739-3800.

[BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com)

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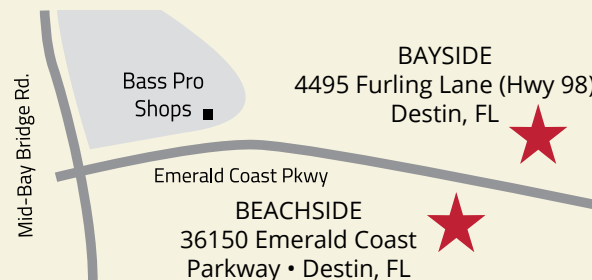


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Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! MAY 2024

..... 4 .....
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale
Paddle For Peace | 9am | Grayton Beach
Farmers Market | 10am | Harborwalk Village
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | 10am-6pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival | 10am-7pm | Grand Boulevard
GatorFest | 11am-3pm | Fudpucker's Destin
Mosaics with Mom | 2pm | Destin School of the Arts
Kentucky Derby Party | 3pm | Skybar Destin
C.A.R.E On The Coast | 3:30-7pm | Gulfarium
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Mary Poppins The Broadway Musical | 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Company
..... 5 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival | 10am-5pm | Grand Boulevard
Blessing of the Families | Sunday Church Services | Destin
Emerald Coast Bike Fest | 10am-4pm | Emerald Coast Harley Davidson
Craftathon | 11am | FWB Landing
Cinco De Mayo | 11am | The Gulf Okaloosa Island
Sinfonia Youth Orchestra in Concert | 2pm | Destin High School
..... 6 .....
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
..... 7 .....
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJs on the Bayou
Music Bingo | 7pm | Wood Foot Beer
..... 8 .....
21st Blessing of the Marketplace | 11:30am | Destin Methodist Church
Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay Women in Business | 5pm | The Palms Bistro
Blessing of the Youth | 6pm | Shoreline Church
Top Golf Social Club | 6pm | City Food Hall Destin
Farm Cocktail Dinner | 6pm | Bitterroot
Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom Pub FWB
..... 9 .....
67th Blessing of The Fleet | 4pm | Destin Harbor



Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Trivia | 6pm | The Island Hotel
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 10 .....
Tequila & Taco Festival Pre Party | 6pm-9pm | Marina @ Baytowne Wharf
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac
..... 11 .....
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 8am | Ferry Road, Fort Walton Beach
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale
Paddle at the Park | 9am | The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island
Tequila & Taco Festival | 12pm-4pm | Baytowne Wharf
City of Crestview's International Festival | 2pm | N Wilson Street, Crestview
FWB Youth Club Cornhole Tournament | 2pm | Ratchet Hatchet
30A Foam Fest | 2pm-6pm | 30Ave Harbor Sips - Mother's Day Weekend | 4pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Mary Poppins The Broadway Musical | 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Company
..... 12 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
Tequila & Taco Festival Brunch | 11am | The Beach House Sandestin
Mother's Day Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Mother's Day Brunch Buffet | 9am-2pm | Henderson Beach Resort & Spa
Mother's Day Brunch | 10am | AJ's Destin
Mother's Day Brunch | 11am | Beachwalk Cafe | Henderson Beach Resort & Spa
Mother's Day Brunch | 11am | The Island Resort

Mother's Day Brunch | 11am | Ovide @ Hotel Effie
Mother's Day Brunch | 11am | Bitterroot
Mother's Day Brunch | 11am | Vintij
Mother's Day Brunch | 12pm | Melting Pot Destin
Mother's Day Brunch Cruise | 12pm | Solaris Yacht
Mother's Day Dinner Cruise | 6:30pm | Solaris Yacht
..... 13 .....
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
..... 14 .....
Young Professionals Leadership Conference NWFL | 10am | Niceville Community Center
Leadership Lab Q&A | 11:30am | FWB Chamber of Commerce
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJs on the Bayou
Music Bingo | 7pm | Wood Foot Beer
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Teen Night | 10pm | Fudpucker's Destin
..... 15 .....
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
Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom Pub FWB
..... 16 .....
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Trivia | 6pm | The Island Hotel
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 17 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash | 5:30pm | Seascape Towne Center
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac
Digital Graffiti | 8pm-11pm | Alys Beach
..... 18 .....
Specialty Spot Fishing Tournament | 6am | Weigh-ins-3pm | Nick's Seafood Restaurant | Freeport
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard
USCG Boater Safety Course | 9am | Emerald Coast Marine
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale

Emerald Coast Open: Lionfish Tournament & Festival | 11am-6pm | Harborwalk Village
Emerald Coast Exotic Cars | 4:30pm | The Palms Bistro
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Sinfonia's Jurassic Park | 7:30pm | Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center
Mary Poppins The Broadway Musical | 7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre Company
Digital Graffiti | 8pm-11pm | Alys Beach
..... 19 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
Emerald Coast Open: Lionfish Tournament & Festival | 11am-4pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 20 .....
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
Billy Bowlegs Torchlight Parade | 7pm | Fort Walton Beach
..... 21 .....
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJs on the Bayou
Music Bingo | 7pm | Wood Foot Beer
..... 22 .....
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
Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom Pub FWB
..... 23 .....
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Trivia | 6pm | The Island Hotel
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 24 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac
..... 25 .....
Farmers Market | 8am | Village of Baytowne Wharf
Farmers Market | 8am | Ferry Road, Fort Walton Beach
Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

Slacker 0.5K Fundraiser | 10am | Boat-house Oyster Bar
Farmers Market | 11am | Destin Commons
Run Club | 9am | Ivy & Ale
Karaoke | 6pm | The Island FWB
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Memorial Day Weekend Celebration | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 26 .....
Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin
Breakfast | 8:15am | Destin American Legion
Destin Community Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | 743 Harbor Blvd, Destin
Memorial Day Weekend Celebration | 5:30pm | Harborwalk Village
Fireworks | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 27 .....
Memorial Day Service | 11am | Destin Memorial Cemetary
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
Memorial Day Weekend Celebration | 7pm | Harborwalk Village
Fireworks | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
..... 28 .....
Music Match | 6pm | The Island Resort FWB
Karaoke | 6pm | AJs on the Bayou
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm | Harborwalk Village
Music Bingo | 7pm | Wood Foot Beer
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
..... 29 .....
IdeaCamp | 8am | OneThirtyOne Events Center PCB
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
Trivia Night | 7pm | Boardroom Pub FWB
..... 30 .....
Ladies Night | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
Darts & Music | 6pm | Destin American Legion
Trivia | 6pm | The Island Hotel
Trivia | 6pm | City Food Hall in Destin Commons
All American Thursday | 6:30 | Harborwalk Village
Concerts in the Village | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Fireworks | 9pm | Harborwalk Village
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin
..... 31 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Good Vibes Bar
Karaoke | 8pm | Harry T's Lighthouse
Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac



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# 2024 Okaloosa County Mosquito Control

Okaloosa County's Mosquito Control technicians will begin night spraying operations Countywide in mid to late April and early May. Broadcast treatment is conducted in the evening and is required by State Law to be justified. Justification is based on mosquito population surveillance data and other methods. Treatments will begin one hour before sunset.

In our areas...

**Mondays:** Wynnehaven Beach, Florosa and Valparaiso; Destin: County Line to Airport Rd

**Tuesdays:** Airport Rd to Destin Bridge, Mary Esther/Fort Walton Beach and Bluewater Bay

**Wednesdays:** Streets off of Lewis Turner Blvd. to Carmel Dr., Rocky Bayou, Fort Walton Beach from Brooks Bridge to Memorial Pkwy.

**Thursdays:** Shalimar, Ocean City, Mooney Rd area and Niceville

Okaloosa County Mosquito Control and the Florida Department of Health urge the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These should include remembering to "SWAT."

**Stay inside** with screened doors and windows when mosquitoes are biting (dusk and dawn).

**When outside**, wear clothing that covers skin.

**Apply mosquito repellent** that includes DEET [N, N diethyl-m-toluamide] on your skin when you are outside.

**Turn over standing water** where mosquitoes lay eggs or rid your outdoor area of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Remember to apply all mosquito repellants in accordance with the recommended frequency and methods suggested by the manufacturer.

Okaloosa County Mosquito Control recommends the following mosquito-borne illness preventative measures:

- Drain standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying: Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, children's toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.

- Discard tires\*, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken

appliances and other items that aren't being used.

- Empty and clean birdbaths and pets water bowls at least once or twice a week.

- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.

- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

- Waste tires can be disposed of FREE at the South Okaloosa County Transfer Station and the Baker Landfill. This applies only to local households, not businesses. Tire sizes are limited to passenger car and light truck tires. Quantities limited - 5 tires per household per month.

- Cover skin with clothing or repellent.

**Clothing:** Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.

**Repellent:** Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.

**Netting:** Use mosquito netting to protect children younger



than two months old.

- Cover doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.

The County Mosquito Control Program sprays for mosquitoes county-wide excluding federal and state-owned land. Mosquito spray trucks generally operate starting 1 hours before sunset and/or in the 1 hours after sunrise. Surveillance activi-

ties may indicate certain types of mosquitoes known to be disease vectors that are active during time periods other than noted. If this is the case, the County will respond appropriately.

In addition to spraying, the County has an aggressive larviciding program that includes more than 1,500 sites treated and are checked on a regular basis. Additionally, more than 750 ponds and areas with standing water are treated with gambu-

sia fish which eat mosquito larva and are able to reproduce at a high rate.

Residents are also reminded to have outdoor animals vaccinated against mosquito borne disease. Horses should be vaccinated against Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Although West Nile and EEE can occur throughout the year, peak season is August, September and October. Horses must receive two vaccine injections three to six weeks apart and then it is recommended every three to six months. Dog owners are also reminded to have pets treated for heartworms since certain mosquitoes present in Okaloosa County carry the disease as well.

The Mosquito Control Division of Public Works is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and may be reached at 651-7394 or 689-5772. Mosquito spray schedule, preventative tips and other related information is available on the County's web site at <http://www.myokaloosa.com/pw/environmental/mosquito-control>.

Additional information about Okaloosa County's Mosquito Control Division can be found at <https://myokaloosa.com/pw/environmental/mosquito-control>.



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**1440 Live Oak Street, Niceville**  
 Open Monday-Friday 7:30-4  
 850-897-9060  
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 Community

# Baytowne Wharf Invites You to Spring Into an Event-Filled May!

It's BIG this month at The Village of Baytowne Wharf! Baytowne is boomin' with events, activities and fun! The Village and its merchants welcome you to celebrate, escape and embrace the colorful fun of Baytowne Wharf at one of the most favorite times of the year!

## Welcome Summer During the Memorial Day Celebration Weekend!

**Saturday, May 25th, 7-9 p.m. | Sunday, May 26th, 6-9 p.m. | FREE**

Kick off the 100 days of summer as festivities begin on Saturday, May 25th, when a true locals' favorite, Forrest Williams Band, takes the stage at the Events plaza from 7-9 p.m.

On Sunday, May 26th, enjoy live music from The High Aces from 6-9 p.m. There's also free children's activities from 6-9 p.m. and fireworks at 9 p.m. You won't want to miss the fireworks, live music, shopping, dining and fun all weekend long!

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

**Saturday, May 11 | 1-4 p.m. | Cost: Ticketed | Parking Available**

The Village of Baytowne Wharf proudly hosts the 11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest the second longest running event of its kind in the U.S. Visitors come from all over the south to enjoy one of the best events in the southeast. Local restaurants and food trucks will be competing for the Best Taco and Best Margarita on The Emerald Coast with a first-place prize of \$2,500 for Best Taco and \$500 for the Best Margarita, and you, will have a say in the People's choice Award for Best Taco. Sample many types of Tequilas and Margaritas from Blancos, Resposados, Anjijos, and even Mezcal while indulging on some of the area's best tacos. Live music, kid friendly and don't miss the Chihuahua Beauty Pageant! For tickets, visit [www.efestevents.com](http://www.efestevents.com).



## Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios Presents a Spring Concert!

**Friday, May 10th 7-8:30 p.m. Events Plaza Stage | FREE**

All Invited! Please join Vocal Coach Alissa Steffens and some of her very talented students as they present a night of music! All Genres! Performers are Kids through Adults! May 10th at 7 p.m. Location: Baytowne Amphitheater! (Next to Zip Line) Will be a night to remember! Come on out and support local talent! Open to the public! No charge. Grab a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening! Can't wait to see you there!

Coach Alissa Steffens is a Performer, Professional Songwriter, Recording Artist and Vocal Coach with a history rich in the Nashville Music Industry! After moving to Sandestin/30a area a few years ago, she continued her work as a Vocal Coach, specializing in Mentorship, Vocal Performance, Songwriting, Artist

Development/Career Planning, Acting and Speaking. Alissa works with students regionally, nationally and internationally. Her students sing all different musical genres and range from the Beginner to the Advanced Career Artist. She and her students work on various projects together that involve vocal performance, songwriting, albums, tours, career planning, artist development, commercials, film acting projects, theater, speeches, etc. Alissa has a big heart for giving her students both a voice and a platform.

## Wednesday Night Concert Series

**Wednesdays, May 1-29, 7-9 p.m. | FREE**

This concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Concerts are held on the Events Plaza Stage each Wednesday. Don't forget your lawn chairs and blankets.

*May 1: Below Alabama*



*May 8: Duchess  
May 15: Cadillac Willy  
May 22: Casey Kearney  
May 29: Smith Distillery  
FREE to attend.*

## Bubbly Baytowne

**Thursday, May 16, 5-7 p.m.**

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

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

## Scallywag Sunday

**Sundays, May 19 – August 4, 7-9 p.m.**

Join Baytowne for FREE magic, music and mayhem each Sunday from 7-9 p.m. Watch as the featured pirate, Captain Davy, takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage! 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. show times!

## Movie Monday

**Monday, May 20 & 27, 8 p.m.**

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

*May 20: SCOOB!*

*May 27: Playing With Fire*

## Boomin' Tuesday

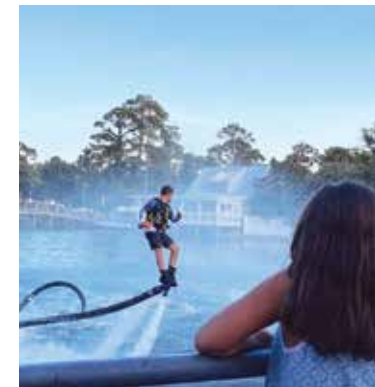
**Tuesdays, May 21 – Aug. 6, 7:15-9:15 p.m.**

Turn your eyes to the sky and watch as we light up the night

with a free, breathtaking fireworks show over the Lagoon at 9:15 p.m. Beforehand, dance a little at the DJ Dance Party with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza at 7:15 p.m!

## Fly Guy Thursday

**Thursdays, May 23 – August 8, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.**



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

## The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf

**Saturdays & Tuesdays | 8 a.m.-Noon**

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

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



# Dive into Summer Fun at Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park!

By MEGAN TRAINER

## Gulfarium Invites Kids to Sunset Camp for an Unforgettable Experience

Get ready for an adventure like no other! The Gulfarium is thrilled to announce this year's Sunset Camp dates, where kids can dive into the wonders of marine life and create memories to last a lifetime. On select evenings throughout the summer, children aged 6-14 are invited to join us for an immersive evening-long camp experience.

During Sunset Camp, young explorers will have the opportunity to engage with our incredible dolphin pod in a dockside encounter, learn from our expert trainers and education specialists, enjoy an exploratory venture along the Emerald Coast beach at dusk, eat dinner next to our pinniped friends at Seal Harbor, and participate in hands-on activities designed to inspire a love for conservation and marine life.

Spaces are limited, so be sure



to reserve your child's spot today for an unforgettable Sunset Camp experience at the Gulfarium!

All information regarding dates, tickets, and requirements can be found at [Gulfarium.com](http://Gulfarium.com).

## Splash 'N Play with Dolphins in This Unique Encounter!

Are you looking for a memorable experience for the whole family this summer? Look no further than the Splash 'N Play encounter at the Gulfarium! Join us for an interactive and

educational water adventure that will leave you smiling from ear to ear.

During this unique encounter led by one of our expert Marine Mammal Trainers, guests ages eight and up will have the opportunity to get waist-deep in the water with a member of our playful dolphin family, touching, feeding, and learning all about this magnificent species.

Whether you're a lifelong dolphin enthusiast or experiencing the magic for the first time, the Splash 'N Play encounter promises an experience you'll



never forget. Book your encounter at [Gulfarium.com](http://Gulfarium.com) today to ensure your spot in the water!

## Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center: May Begins Sea Turtle Nesting Season

As sea turtle nesting season begins, the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center is gearing up for another busy summer. Nesting season, combined with the warmer water attracting a variety of marine animals towards the shore, means sea turtles will be abundant along the Gulf Coast until October.

During these warmer months, it is more common for sea turtles to strand, get hooked at fishing piers, and become disoriented by artificial light, which is where the Gulfarium



C.A.R.E. Center comes into play. By rescuing and rehabilitating injured or stranded sea turtles, the C.A.R.E. Center gives them their best chance at life before releasing them back into the Gulf of Mexico.

You can help conserve our endangered sea turtles! By picking up your trash on the beach, only using red lights at night near the shore, avoiding single-use plastics, adhering to no-wake zones and safe boating practices, and educating others about sea turtle conservation, you are helping give our local sea turtles the greatest gift: life.

To support the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center's sea turtle conservation efforts, head to [Gulfarium.com/carecenter](http://Gulfarium.com/carecenter).

# C.A.R.E. on the COAST

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

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 Community

# Events Around Town

## Paddle at the Park Stand Up Paddleboard Race Offers Races for All Age & Skill Levels

The 12th Annual Paddle at the Park Sponsored by HCA Florida Healthcare will take place in the Gulf of Mexico behind The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island on Saturday, May 11, 2024. This standup paddleboard race features 1-

and 3-mile recreational races, a 6-mile elite race and a kids' fun out-and-back paddle. Racers and spectators alike will enjoy the festive atmosphere with displays and booths set up along the beach. The races have staggered start times, beginning at 9 a.m. The event will conclude with awards.

Registration is now open at <https://paddleguru.com/>

races/12thAnnualPaddleat-thePark. Find all race details at [PaddleAtThePark.com](http://PaddleAtThePark.com) or follow [Facebook.com/PaddleAtThePark](https://Facebook.com/PaddleAtThePark).

Thank you to our race partners BOTE and The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island; title sponsor HCA Florida Healthcare; platinum sponsors Destin - Fort Walton Beach and Shibumi Shade; silver sponsors Eglin Federal

Credit Union, T-Mobile, and VivanaMD; bronze sponsors Florida CFY, Harmony Beach Vacations, and The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach; and media sponsor Destin Life!

leaves fans dancing, singing, and discovering new facets of Fleetwood Mac's magic at every performance. Believe in miracles and join the unforgettable experience of Rumours.

**May 16:** Gotta Groove Band will put a fresh spin on popular cover tunes from the '60s to today. With outstanding vocals and top-shelf musicianship, they feature own arrangements and mixing many popular tunes together to create a fun flow of entertaining energy. You will not want to miss the party this Land O Lakes, Florida, band throws down.

**May 23:** Mitch Malloy will rock Destin. Former front man of Great White, rocker Mitch Malloy is a studio veteran and award-winning songwriter. With

## MKAF Showcases a Range of Music At 2024 CIV

The area's first live concert series is being held Thursday evenings at the MKAF Dugas Pavilion in Destin. This year's 29th annual family-friendly series began April 4 and continues to June 6.

**May 9:** Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute takes the stage. Since 2014, Rumours ATL has set stages ablaze across the U.S. with their scorching Fleetwood Mac renditions. With meticulous attention to detail and infectious energy, Rumours sells out venues and

*Continued on next page*



**Paddle at the Park**  
Sponsored by  
**HCA Florida Healthcare**  
Saturday, May 11 | 9 a.m.  
The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

**BOTE** **THE BOARDWALK** **Destin CHAMBER**  
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Register at [Paddleguru.com](http://Paddleguru.com)! | (850) 837-6241

## Anglers Invited to Cash-in at Charity Fishing Tournament

Anglers, novice to professional, are invited to cast their luck in the Specialty Spot Tournament on Saturday, May 18th for \$6000 in cash prizes. The charity redfish and trout tournament is presented by Specialty Roofers and benefits the Wright Fight for Cystic Fibrosis. "We are excited about this tournament because it combines two of our passions – fishing and giving back to the community," Erin Bakker, marketing director at Specialty Roofers, said. "We hope everyone has a great time for an even greater cause."

The Specialty Spot Tournament kicks off at 6 a.m. on Saturday, May 18th, and the scales open for weigh-ins at Nick's Seafood Restaurant in Freeport at 3 p.m. Fishing hours conclude at 4 p.m. All fish must be caught by hook, line, rod and reel by members of the registered fishing team. Cash prizes will be awarded for the redfish with the most spots on one side, the heaviest aggregate bag limit and the heaviest speckled trout. The entry fee is \$100 per angler or \$200 per boat in this no-boundary tournament.

The Specialty Spot Tour-

namment benefits The Wright Fight for Cystic Fibrosis. Specialty Roofers aims to draw awareness and support for the fight for cystic fibrosis by highlighting locals, William and Magen Wright, whose twin sons, Merrit and Campbell were born with cystic fibrosis. All proceeds from the event will go toward the Wright family's fundraising efforts for the Cystic Fibrosis Fund.

"We want to make CF stand for Cure Found," Peter Wright, Ships Chandler owner said. "The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has fueled dramatic improvements in cystic fibrosis research and care. Because of the foundation, people with CF are living longer and healthier lives. The outlook for people with CF continues to improve year after year."

Individuals and local businesses are invited to enter the tournament, and sponsorships are available. Special thanks to the event's co-sponsors, Ships Chandler and Nick's Seafood Restaurant. For more information about sponsorship opportunities and individual or team registration, visit [www.specialty-roofers.com/spottournament](http://www.specialty-roofers.com/spottournament).



SPECIALTY ROOFERS PRESENTS **REGISTER NOW**

**SPECIALTY SPOT TOURNAMENT 2024**

MAY 18TH, 2024

**TheShipsChandler**

**EVENTS**

*continued from previous page*

a career spanning decades, he's navigated the music scene since the '80s, achieving chart success and even turning down a role as Van Halen's lead singer in the '90s.

**May 30:** Haley Reinhart's timeless voice will transport you. With talent that transcends eras, blending pop, rock, and jazz in her 2019 album, *Lo-Fi Soul*. A finalist on *American Idol*, this Chicago-born singer is influenced by '50s music and enjoys playful lyrics. With a decade-long grind, platinum hits, and diverse collaborations, Reinhart's multifaceted artistry shines, promising a lasting connection with her audience.

**June 6:** Adam Ezra Group closes out the series. Fusing folk intimacy and rock energy with soul power and pop charm, the band first emerged from Boston in the early 2000s and quickly garnered widespread acclaim for their bold, insightful songwriting and interactive, euphoric performances.

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.

General admission varies per concert. Prices range from \$20 to \$35 for adults. Discounts offered for active-duty military (must show ID). Purchase tickets prior to day of the concert and save \$5 per ticket. Children (12 and under) are free. Purchase tickets at [MKAF.org/events](http://MKAF.org/events).

Proceeds fund cultural outreach programs through ArtsReach serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and through MKAF's Warrior Arts program serving active/veteran military. For more information, call (850) 650-2226.

**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 awards \$10,000 in cash prizes. The rain or shine event also features live performances, art-



ist 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, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. A \$5 donation will be accepted at the entrance gate.

**11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest | May 10-12 | Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin**

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.

**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.

**Main Event:** Taco Extraganza 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.

*Continued on next page*

**Legendary Hitmakers Atlanta Rhythm Section & Orleans Coming to Mattie Kelley Arts Center**

The legendary hit makers Atlanta Rhythm Section and Orleans team up to bring their melodic magic to Mattie Kelly Arts Center June 29th in Niceville.



The two iconic bands dominated the 70's & 80's charts—Atlanta Rhythm Section with top 10 hits "So Into You," "Imaginary Lover," "Doraville," "I'm Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight," "Champagne Jam," "Angel," "Do It Or Die" and "Spooky"—Orleans with the unforgettable radio hits "Still The One," "Dance With Me" and "Love Takes Time."

Their classic songs still resonate with audiences of all

ages thanks to continued airplay on Classic Rock radio, television, film and streaming services. With multiple gold and platinum albums to their credit, both artists continue to be in demand for live shows, as they have been for more than five decades. Purchase tickets (\$43, \$57, \$68 and \$79) at [www.mattiekellytickets.com](http://www.mattiekellytickets.com) or call 850-706-5206. All tickets are reserved.

**ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION & Orleans**

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 Community

# Condo Insurance and Claims



By JULIE A. MARTIN

When you have a property insurance claim in a single-family home, the claims process can be both frustrating and intimidating, and can be a long involved process. In a condo, it can be even more challenging, because the association is responsible for the exterior walls and the roof. So, what happens when the claim involves damage to the interior premises as a result of property that the association is responsible for?

**Hypothetical situation:**

Due to a roof leak that was not discovered, the ceiling collapses in a condo unit, with the ceiling dry wall pieces landing on furniture in the living room and dining room. In addition to the dry-wall damage to the ceiling, there is now mold in the unit that spreads on whatever it lands on as well as the other areas of the home.

In this situation, up until several years ago, insureds would put the claim in with their carrier and then wait for the carrier to subrogate against the condo

association. Now however, carriers opt to take care of the parts of the claim that the unit owner is responsible for, i.e. contents, additional living expenses and mold.

For the areas that the association is responsible for, the carrier will deny those parts of the claim that the unit HO6 coverage does not pertain to. In a condo, you own from the drywall in, and anything permanently attached to the inside of the unit are things the association is NOT going to pay for such as the flooring, cabinets, counters, bathroom fixtures and interior doors.

COA-Condo Association is responsible for the exterior walls and the roof. If there is a claim arising from property your COA is responsible for, your best bet is to get a copy of the Master Property policy for your building, along with a copy of their certificate of insurance, as well as a copy of your declarations page.

If you end up in the situa-

tion above, please let your agent know right away, and have your policy jacket and your declarations page handy. Protect against further loss by moving undamaged items away from loss site, and cooperate with the carrier inspection. If a carrier representative asks you questions you do not know the answers to, do NOT guess. Let them know you do not know the answer and will find out and let them know when you can.

Any questions you have about your coverage and how the coverage will respond in the event of a claim, please direct those questions to your insurance agent, and make sure you let them know any definitions you do not understand.

Claim time is the wrong time to not understand your insurance policy or what coverage you have, and whether it meets your needs. Having the conversation now will give you peace of mind that your insurance coverage meets your needs and will respond when you need it.

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**EVENTS**

*continued from previous page*

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 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.

Purchase tickets online at [www.efestevents.com](http://www.efestevents.com). A portion of the proceeds will benefit two worthy causes: Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and the Sandestin® Foundation for Kids.

**Sinfonia Gulf Coast Presents Jurassic Park in Concert May 18**

Sinfonia Gulf Coast "redefines the symphony experience" once again with Jurassic Park in Concert, Saturday, May 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center on Okaloosa Island in Fort Walton Beach.

Featuring visually stunning imagery and groundbreaking special effects, this epic action-packed adventure pits man against prehistoric predators in the ultimate battle for survival. Sheer movie magic 68 million years in the making, Jurassic Park in Concert tells the story as never before: projected in HD with Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing John Williams' iconic score live to picture.

Tickets to Jurassic Park in Concert are \$30 to \$55 per person. Discounts are offered for students and active-duty military with valid ID. Purchase tickets online at [SinfoniaGulfCoast.org](http://SinfoniaGulfCoast.org) or by calling the box office at (850) 460-8800. Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its education and community outreach engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.





# Inspect What You Expect!



BY PAUL DOMENECH

Hey there, ready to dive into the world of buying or selling a home? It's an exciting adventure. But, amidst all the excitement, there's a golden rule to remember: inspect what you expect. This simple mantra is the key to a smooth and successful real estate journey, emphasizing the importance of thorough inspections and relying on your trusted real estate agent every step of the way.

Let's talk about home inspectors—they're like the front line of the real estate world. From checking out the foundation to

climbing up on the roof, these inspectors leave no stone unturned. They uncover hidden issues and potential problems, giving you the inside scoop on the property's condition. It's your chance to really know what you're getting into before you make that big decision.

But here's the thing: the inspection is just the beginning. That's where your real estate agent swoops in to save the day. They're like your personal guide through the wild jungle of paperwork, negotiations and tough decisions.

Need help choosing a reputable inspector? They've got your back. Confused about what that inspection report really means? They'll break it down for you in plain English. Ready to negotiate repairs with the seller? They're there to fight for your best interests every step of the way.

So, why is it so important to "inspect what you expect"? Because knowledge is power, my friend. When you know exactly what you're getting into, you can make smart decisions with confidence. And when you have



*So, why is it so important to "inspect what you expect"? Because knowledge is power, my friend.*

a rock-solid real estate agent by your side, you can navigate the

twists and turns of the real estate journey with ease. So, let's embark on this adventure together, armed with the knowledge and support we need to make our real estate dreams a reality. With thorough inspections and expert guidance, we'll be well on our way to finding the perfect place to call home.



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 Community


BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Economic growth can be measured by corporate revenues and profits, GDP growth, productivity growth (latest report is a strong 3.7% for the last three quarters), market performance, low unemployment and the rate of inflation over time.

What is driving all of this, particularly when we look at the growth of the public debt (now at approximately \$28 trillion), historically large deficits and recent market volatility?

We can start with the monetary (money supply) stimulus from the Federal Reserve's balance sheet. That is the assets it owns because it bought bonds on the open market with the newly produced money supply. By buying the bonds it injects money into the economy. Would you believe that at the start of

# Insights for Investors: The Debt, the Economy and the Markets

the Great Recession/financial crisis of 2008 that it stood at \$900 billion? It grew to \$3.8 trillion (2019) pre-pandemic and then peaked at \$8.9 trillion in March of 2022.

That is a significant amount of new money that has made its way into the American economy. They call that quantitative easing or QE. It is now coming down steadily as the Federal Reserve is letting things mature and decreasing the money supply. They call that quantitative tightening or QT. The latest read from The Federal Reserve is \$7.4 trillion. Inflation grew steadily with the move in the money supply and peaked at 9.1% in mid-2022 and it is now at approximately 3.5%. So, the stimulus is down 17% and inflation is down about 60% even though much of the money that was created in the last 16 years is still out there and that has helped drive consumption, construction, innovation, the economy, and GDP.

Of course, federal spending has an impact as well albeit a two-sided effect: 1) It provides economic stimulus but 2) it also

drives up deficits, the debt and borrowing costs for the US government. The US Treasury has had the luxury of paying less the 3% on all of debt held by the public (about 30% of that is held by overseas buyers). We take note that this year the Treasury has to refinance almost a quarter of that, about \$7 trillion. There are a lot of new Treasuries hitting the market and the Treasury will have to pay higher rates than it was paying. One recent impact has been the steady rise in yield of the bellwether US Treasury 10-year note. Why are yields going up? When there is a lot of new supply and not a commensurate growth in demand, the price goes down and the yield goes up. At this writing it is at 4.66% and at the start of the year it was closer to 4%. Most of this move was recent and stocks correspondingly sold off. One mitigating factor is the strength of the US dollar. Its year-to-date increase in value is 4.5% (after an increase of 2% for all of 2023). That can have a positive impact for demand for dollar denominated securities like U.S. Treasuries and even though rates are up, can keep borrowing cost lower in the long run.

We are well into earnings season for America's corporations and thus far about 20% of the S&P 500 (which makes up about 80% of the value of the US stock market) have reported and about 68% are beating estimates. Growth rates (for earnings) for the year are projected to be 11% for 2024. Stock prices typically follow earnings (or sometimes get ahead of them). That is strong growth and typically that is reflected in stock prices unless there are competing priorities (like the 10-year US Treasury), and or an increase in costs of goods and or labor (hurting productivity and profitability).

So, we come down to a few questions: 1) Will the continued drawdown in monetary stimulus eventually lead to lower growth overall because the excess money is drying up? 2) Can the U.S. address its deficit growth? We think yes and the answer lies in healthy and fair, entitlement reform. We believe Social Security

and Medicare/Medicaid (the biggest drivers of government spending) can and will be fixed because they can be fixed. 3) Can the U.S. put a lid on public debt and outgrow it with GDP?

This brings us to innovation. The U.S. leads the world in the flow of capital and the incentive to innovate and create. The results are being seen with artificial intelligence, or AI. We are beginning to see the increased impact that is having on productivity and economic growth as mitigating factors. The USA leads the world in innovation but also consumption. We consume a lot of what we build or serve. If we look at the threat many see coming from China, we take note that China is more of producer and less a consumer of what it builds or serves. It depends on the rest of the world, the US in particular and that is yet another factor to consider for the long run.

Long-term investing and saving, to us, means that those who save out of fear but invest out of optimism best position themselves to obtain their goals and their dreams.

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 considered representative of the U.S. stock market. US government bonds and treasury bills are guaranteed by the US 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.

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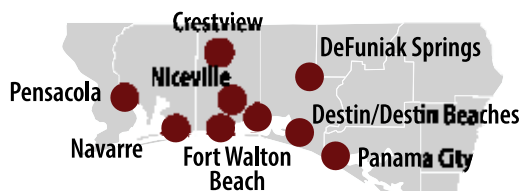


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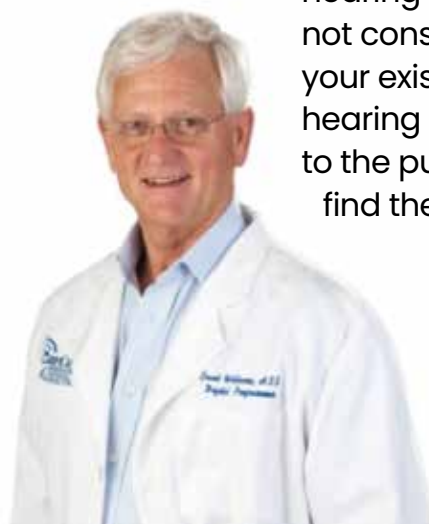
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Community

# Meet Our Local Pro Grant Williams: A Legacy of Listening and Empathy

By DOUG STAUFFER

Tucked away in Niceville sits the Niceville Hearing Center, a testament to the perseverance, commitment and compassion of its owner, Grant Williams. This establishment is more than just a hearing aid practice—it's a beacon of hope and transformation, symbolizing Williams'

unwavering dedication to bettering the lives of those grappling with hearing challenges.

From humble beginnings in the mining town of Matewan, W.Va., to championing gymnastics for the state of Kentucky, every step of Grant Williams' journey has been characterized by overcoming adversity. His

formative years, marked by economic hardships, became the very foundation of his tenacity and resilience. As the only one from his family of seven to attend college, Williams remains an inspiration to many, showcasing the limitless potential of human spirit.

His foray into gymnastics paved the way for an unexpected but life-changing encounter with Patrick Yeager, a mentor who guided him towards the path of higher education. Williams' journey is a testament to the serendipity of life and how one meeting can alter the trajectory of one's future.

However, life had its set of twists and turns for Williams. After his gymnastics program and his scholarship were defunded, he pivoted his attention to a field that would ultimately become his life's work—hearing healthcare. Williams' realization that he excelled in patient counseling was transformative. He understood that the cornerstone of effective hearing care was not just technical proficiency but also the art of listening.

Williams' empathy stems from his roots. Growing up in a modest environment, he was instilled with values that emphasized the importance of taking care of oneself and others. This



military service members. Williams' commendable initiative of offering follow-up services to returning vets, at no charge, showcases his unwavering commitment to the community.

In essence, Grant Williams and the Niceville Hearing Center epitomize the confluence of technical expertise and human touch. Williams emphasizes, "It's not just about the hearing aids; it's about the people wearing them." With several decades in the hearing health-

care domain, Williams has perfected the art of 'straight talk,' ensuring that every patient feels valued, heard and understood. For those seeking to transform their hearing journey, the Niceville Hearing Center stands as a testament to Grant Williams' legacy—one that underscores the significance of perseverance, empathy and, most importantly, listening. Full disclosure—Grant Williams is my Hearing Healthcare Provider—and why I offer him my personal recommendation.

philosophy became the cornerstone of his practice. His innate knack for fitting hearing aids, combined with his genuine concern for his patients, made him a sought-after specialist in the region.

Despite a successful business in Louisiana, life brought Williams to Florida to enjoy a brief stint at retirement. His desire to make a difference was evident as he set up his practice in Niceville. What initially began as a part-time venture quickly transformed into a sanctuary for many, especially veterans and

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# Selecting a Countertop: Pros & Cons



BY KIM SCHNEIDER,  
COASTAL DESIGN BY KIM

I'm continually asked "what's the best countertop" to use? Quite honestly there isn't one simple answer. I usually ask questions such as, "Do you cook lots of meals?" "Do you meal prep or bake often?" "Are you a spaghetti sauce or wine connoisseur?" "Do you or your family members clean up a spill right away?" "Do you or someone in your family forget to unplug the curling iron?" "If your countertop cracked or chipped, would you be able to live with it?" All of these questions help to determine what countertop is most suitable for your lifestyle.

Every type of countertop has its pros and cons in terms of durability, as well as heat and stain resistance. Below are some of the most common types of countertops with a list of their benefits and drawbacks:



## Butcher Block

- Pros:**
- Durable and long-lasting
  - Environmentally friendly
  - Direct cutting and slicing is an option

## Cons:

- Vulnerable to moisture and stains
- Porous materials and susceptible to bacteria
- Must be oiled and sealed frequently

## Concrete

- Pros:**
- Heat Resistant
  - Long-lasting material
  - Scratch resistant

## Cons:

- Porous surface and must be sealed regularly
- Requires alot of maintenance
- Expensive

## Granite

- Pros:**
- Resistant to heat and abrasion
  - Strong and durable material
  - Wide variety of colors and patterns

## Cons:

- Heavy and difficult to install
- Requires regular sealing
- Premium price

## Marble

- Pros:**
- Durable and long-lasting
  - Resistant to heat, cracking and breaking
  - Unique veining

## Cons:

- Requires regular sealing and maintenance
- Susceptible to scratches and staining
- Premium price

## Quartz

### Pros:

- Easy to maintain, no sealing required
- Resistant to mold, mildew and stains
- Wide variety of color options

### Cons:

- Direct sunlight can fade color
- Susceptible to heat damage
- Vulnerable to scratches

## Quartzite

### Pros:

- Durable and chip resistant
- Stain resistant when properly sealed
- Abundance of color options

### Cons:

- Heavy and challenging to install
- Porous and requires sealing
- Premium price

## Soapstone

### Pros:

- Non-porous, resistant to heat and stains
- Over time patina can create an antique appearance
- Unique veining and color patterns

### Cons:

- Must be treated frequently with mineral oil
- Surface is vulnerable to abrasive damage
- Takes time for the patina to develop

## Solid Surface Material

### Pros:

- Virtually invisible seams
- Resistant to stains
- Available in a variety of colors and patterns

### Cons:

- Susceptible to heat damage
- Scratches, chips and dents easily
- Moderately priced

Selecting the right countertop is one of the most important features in the design of your kitchen or bathroom. It's an investment that you'll want to enjoy for years to come, and your lifestyle will help determine the best countertop for your home.

If you are unsure of what's the best material for you, feel free to contact us at (850) 904-6622 to schedule a consultation. We've partnered with experienced vendors and installers to help make your new kitchen or bathroom come together seamlessly.

*Coastal Design by Kim is a full-service interior design company. Regardless of the size of your project, our team can help YOU bring beautiful, functional designs to life. Visit us at [www.coastaldesignbykim.com](http://www.coastaldesignbykim.com).*

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## AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

Spring is here! So, be sure to dance on down to a locals and visitors popular gathering place on the Destin Harbor. All April, enjoy the popular Crawfish Bash each Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Since 1984, AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar has been serving cold Gulf Coast oysters and cool libations. From its humble beginnings shucking oysters off the deck behind a small trailer on the Destin Harbor, it has grown to four locations along our Emerald Coast, serving fresh seafood, live music and exciting wa-

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](http://ajsdestin.com/destin-aj-s-seafood-and-oyster-bar-events-and-music).

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## Austons on 98

Offering an amazing raw oyster bar and the best happy hour in town, Austons is the place to be and home of the 102-foot

bar, including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England-style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail. With big screen TVs all around, 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](http://austonson98.com).

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## 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

## 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.

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# Tee Up Your Fun at City Food Hall's TopGolf Swing Suites

By BOBBY PARKER

In the heart of Destin, where sun-kissed beaches meet vibrant entertainment, lies a haven for both golf aficionados and those seeking a unique social experience. Nestled within Destin Commons, City Food Hall beckons with a promise of culinary delights and immersive entertainment. Among its many attractions, the jewel in its crown is undoubtedly the TopGolf Swing Suites – a haven for those who crave both camaraderie and competition.

Imagine stepping into a world where the traditional game of golf intertwines seamlessly with the modern comforts of a lounge atmosphere. Here, at City Food Hall's TopGolf Swing Suites, guests are invited to indulge in the perfect fusion of sport, relaxation, and culinary excellence.

With two exclusive TopGolf Swing Suites, City Food Hall stands as the sole purveyor of this unparalleled experience in Northwest Florida. Whether



you're a seasoned golfer or a novice, these suites offer an irresistible allure as you prepare to

tee off on a virtual course that stretches far beyond the confines of a traditional green.

The magic of the TopGolf Swing Suites lies not only in their state-of-the-art Full Swing Golf simulator technology – the very same utilized by PGA Tour pros like Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth, and Jon Rahm – but also in the diversity of experiences they offer. Here, golf enthusiasts can hone their skills on virtual renditions of some of the

world's most renowned courses. Meanwhile, non-golfers can revel in an array of alternative games, ensuring there's never a dull moment.

But the allure of City Food Hall's TopGolf Swing Suites extends far beyond the thrill of virtual golf. It's a social hub where individuals, families, and groups come together to create lasting memories. Whether you're celebrating a special occasion, hosting a corporate event, or

simply seeking an evening of leisure, these suites cater to every occasion.

One particularly enticing offering is the weekly TopGolf Social Club, held every Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m. Here, guests are treated to complimentary TopGolf, enticing drink specials, and a healthy dose of friendly competition. With prizes up for grabs and a welcoming atmosphere that embraces both seasoned golfers and novices alike, it's an event not to

be missed.

And let's not forget the culinary delights awaiting you at City Food Hall. With an eclectic array of local vendors offering everything from mouth-watering delicacies to craft cocktails - including an all new bar menu, your taste buds are in for a treat. Indulge in delectable dishes crafted with care, sip on handcrafted cocktails, and savor every moment of your TopGolf experience.

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#### 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

#### THURSDAYS

Ladies Night  
\$5 Tito's Martinis [Lemon Drop, Cosmo, Espresso, & French]

Trivia | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

#### SUNDAYS

Sunday Brunch | 11 AM - 3 PM  
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**DESTIN DINING***continued from page 22*

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Miramar Beach

[www.meltingpot.com/destin-fl](http://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!

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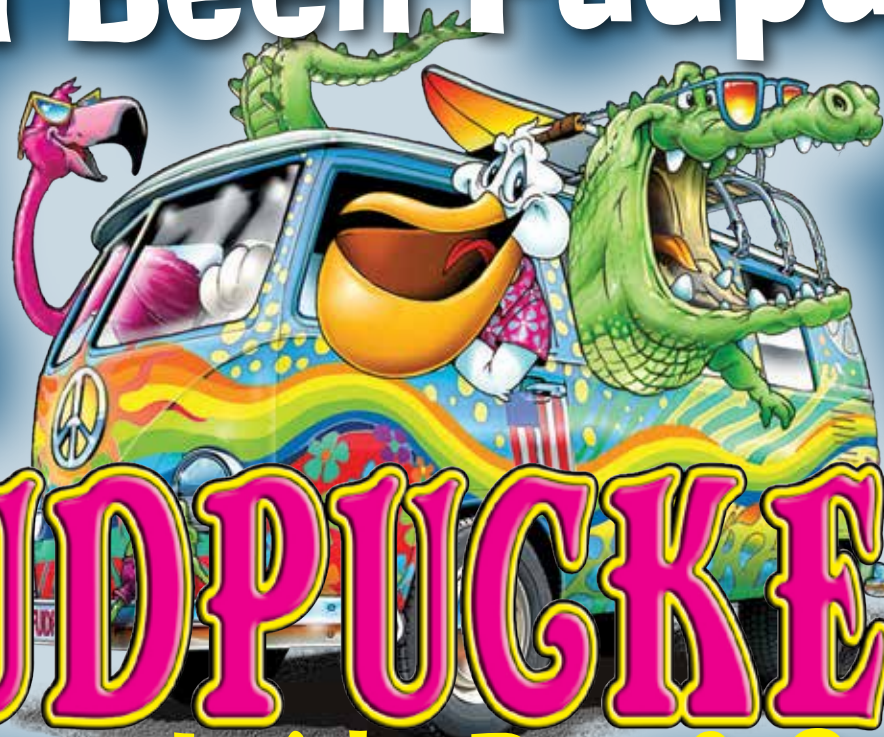
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**DESTIN DINING***continued from page 24*

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*On the Harbor in Destin,**172 Harbor Blvd.**[tailfinsdestin.com](http://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 favor-

ites 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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## It's Almost Time for the Annual Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash!

Get ready to let the good times roll at the Rotary Club of Destin’s 12th Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash! The charity fundraiser returns this year to The Towne Centre at Seascapes with co-host, Mezcal Mexican Grill on Friday, May 17 from 5:30 until 9 p.m. and is designed to help further educate and 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.

Club President, Christian Carlee stated “The open-air venue at The Towne Centre at Seascapes provides a spacious outdoor event plaza ideal to capture the famous Louisiana expression, Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler. Destin Rotarians are totally engaged in this fundraiser to help local charities whose initiatives are a match for the club’s mission of eradicating hunger and educational outreach. In addition, this event will support the Destin Rotary Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance to deserving high school graduates who are attending colleges and universities throughout the country.”

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, attendees are guaranteed to be dancing!

Attendees 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 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 those who don’t crave crawfish, there will also be grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken prepared fresh on-site.

The Rotary Club of Destin applauds its current sponsors: Kroeger - Mainland Family

*Continued on next page*

## CRAWFISH BASH

continued from previous page

Fund, Community Bank, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale, Emerald Coast Title Services, Edward Jones - James Roberson, Renovation Flooring/Elite Cabinet Designs, Les & Julie Porterfield, Newman-Dailey Resort Properties, Frances Roy Agency, Trustmark National Bank, Demetrius Fuller, Ryland/Morrow Agency, Harmony Beach Vacations, Hays Companies, Freeport Flooring, MetroPower, Coastal Accounting, Destin Pointe Vacation Rentals, Scenic Stays, BeHome 247, The CAM Firm Inc., United Healthcare, Acentria Insurance, SimpleHR, Gulfshore Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc., Destin Commons, Okaloosa Gas, Destin Health and Fitness, Poolman Jeff and Destin Life (Life Media). 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](mailto:dmoniz@handfirm.com) if interested.

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).

For reserved seating, VIP tables for 10 people (including 10 regular crawfish tickets) are available for \$500. The VIP Table option also includes 10 regular crawfish meal tickets (which can be upgraded to AYCE for



an additional charge).

Tickets can be purchased in advance online at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com), from any Destin Rotarian or through [Facebook.com/RotaryClubofDestin](http://Facebook.com/RotaryClubofDestin). The Towne Centre at Seascape is located at 80 Seascape Drive, Miramar Beach (one mile west of Silver Sands Premium Outlets).

The Rotary Club of Destin represents roughly 55 local 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 meets online and in-person 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 in Destin.

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## Military News

### Hurlburt Field Reopens Memorial Air Park to the Public

Air Commandos gathered with members of the public to celebrate the grand reopening of the Hurlburt Field Memorial Air Park, April 10, 2024.

For the first time in more than 20 years, Hurlburt Field opened its air park to the general public, allowing visitors to come face-to-face with the aircraft and history of Air Force Special Operations Command.

“Today’s grand opening is really a celebration of what Air Commandos are all about, this park and the people who flew these aircraft ... they have a story to tell,” said Col. Patrick Dierig, 1st Special Operations Wing commander.

“We want to take the opportunity to open the gates and open that history up to the public, so that we can



plant the seeds for future Air Commandos.”

The air park not only serves as a place of reflection but also as an educational venue for future generations. Informational plaques provide insights into the technological advancements and historic achievements of each aircraft, fostering an appreciation for the contributions

of military aviation. “As we view this crown jewel of our history, we see our heritage from two perspectives, our Air Commandos and our iron,” said Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, Air Force Special Operations Command Commander. “While the latter physically looms largest in the air park, the stories of our men and women on the bronze placards speak volumes of the true inspiration and carry the heaviest weight.”

Among the aircraft on display is the AC-130H Spectre gunship, emblematic of the specialized capabilities that have become synonymous with Hurlburt Field’s mission. Additional-

ly, visitors can see the MC-130H Combat Talon II, an aircraft integral to special operations.

The Hurlburt Field Memorial Air Park stands as a living testament to the dedication, sacrifice and valor of the men and women who have called Hurlburt Field their home. As visitors wander among the stoic aircraft, they are reminded of the enduring spirit of aviation and the profound impact it has had on AFSOC as a whole. “The Hurlburt Field Air Park is not just a reminder of our heritage; it is a living symbol ... a living story of our Air Commandos, bravery, valor and unending spirit of innovation that has and continues

to answer our nation’s toughest challenges and bring the advantages our joint force teammates need,” said Bauernfeind.

The air park serves as a destination for veterans, aviation enthusiasts and families seeking to honor the legacies of those that came before. For more information on the Hurlburt Field Memorial Air Park, please visit: [Hurlburt Field > Air Park \(af.mil\)](#)

### Base Access Procedures Change

The 96th Security Forces Squadron will begin 100 percent identification checks for anyone accessing the Eglin Air Force in May. Visitors who do not have a DOD issued ID card will need to get a visitor pass. “Our current security and information environment requires us to make this policy change,” said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Geraghty, 96th Test Wing commander. “We’re committed to safeguarding Eglin’s vital national resources.”

Uniformed service members, their dependents (over the age of 16), DOD employees and retirees can sponsor these passes, which can be obtained at the East Gate and West Gate visitor control centers until the new Air Force Armament Museum VCC opens in May.

Passes are good for up to 60 days. However, if a visitor pass is required for more than 60 days, a commander’s approval is needed and can then be issued for up to a year except for retirees. Retirees with visitors will need to renew those passes every 60 days. Passes should be shredded or turned back into the VCC when no longer needed. People can also process REAL IDs into the Defense Biometric Identification System, a networked database system designed to easily verify access authorization of people entering military installations at the VCCs.

Registering a REAL ID in DBIDS will alleviate gate congestion if an ID card holder forgets it at home or in a CAC reader. The REAL ID can also be used by retirees to access the base if they lose their ID or it’s expired. For more information, please contact the 96th Test Wing Public Affairs Office at 850-882-3931.

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## Memorial Day: A Tribute to Our Fallen Heroes

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

From every branch of service, every walk of life,

America’s soldiers are faced with peril and strife.

Bravery and sacrifice we continually recognize,

Never forget those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Memorial Day: a reminder to pay respect

To those who served, freedoms to protect.

On this solemn day, their legacy lives on,

Honored and remembered, even after they’re gone.

Let us guide our children to look up high

To heroes who serve and fight, and some die.

Not to those in sports or Hollywood’s fame,

But those who defend our country’s name.

Remember the Gold Star families still here.

Show them our gratitude for losing those dear.

They deserve our love, honor, and care,

For their loss is beyond compare.

Take a moment right now to remember and reflect

Of the fallen soldiers we must never forget.

Let us pay our respects to these heroes today

And honor their memory in every possible way.

# Destin Celebrates the 67th Annual Blessing of the Fleet and Its History

By MIKE HESSE AND CLAUDE NEWLAND

Think of Destin Harbor. Now add to the scene more than one hundred fishing boats, dive boats, rescue, recreation and tour boats forming a great line around the harbor. Picture a worship service outside the Destin Fishing Co-op with boat captains and crew members, families, friends and visitors gathered together. Then envision many of Destin's clergy processing down the docks. Imagine locals and visitors watching from those docks as each vessel passes by in its turn to receive a prayer asking the blessings of God on its captain and crew. Then, let your mouth water as you contemplate the fish fry which follows.

The past, present and future of Destin are tied to the sea. Her fishing industry is an integral part of northwest Florida history. The fishermen formed the backbone of early Destin. They and their families also shared their faith as members of Destin's churches. Thus, on May 15, 1958, Ascension Day on the Church calendar, an Episcopal minister named William P. Erwin, of Destin's first little church, St. Andrew's by

the Sea Church, held a simple worship service asking God to bless those who made their living on the water. 20 boats were blessed that day. Who would have guessed that the Blessing of the Fleet would grow to become one of Destin's greatest annual traditions?

The Rev. Mr. Erwin later reflected on the reasons behind that first celebration;

"Our purpose in blessing the boats was that the boats, as tools by which the people work for their living and serve others may be consecrated as worthy objects used according to God's will; that the Lord will bless the labors of those who work the boats and prosper them; and that God will keep in safety all who come aboard."

Those reasons still stand and Immanuel Anglican Church continues the tradition today. Clergy from various Destin churches now participate in blessing boats and the number of captains and crews seeking blessings has grown to more than 140 vessels per year.

God has been good to Destin. He has blessed the community with beautiful water, abundant fish and a safe harbor for her



Reel Chill and other boats that make their living on the sea wait their turn for local clergy to ask God for safekeeping and a bountiful harvest in 2022.

fishermen. The Ascension Day Blessing of the Fleet is a time for us to thank the Lord and humbly ask for His continued favor on those who make their living from the sea.

Ascension Day 2024 marks the 67th celebration of the event. This year's Blessing of the Fleet will be held on Thursday, May 9, at the docks behind Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer restaurant. The event begins at 4 p.m. with a public Worship and Prayer Service to be held under a large tent. After the service, around 5:15 p.m., clergy will head to the floating dock to begin blessing those vessels which have pre-registered.

All commercial fishing, safety and recreational vessels that make their living on the sea are invited to participate. In 2023, 153 fishing boats and other vessels were blessed. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

A community Fish Fry will also begin around 5:30 p.m. with a suggested meal donation. Many community sponsors help make the Blessing of the Fleet possible. Our special thanks go to Ariel Seafood and Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer restaurant for providing, cooking and serving the fish and all the extras. Thanks to the City of Destin, free parking will be available across the street from Brotula's at the City Parking Lot starting at 2:00p.m. on Thursday, May 9th. Blessing of the Fleet tee shirts will be on sale, near the docks on the day of the event.

your living on the sea and would like to receive a blessing, please register your watercraft by emailing [immanuel@iacdestin.org](mailto: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.

Also, during the week of Ascension Day, "Destin's Week of Blessings" offers additional faith-focused family-oriented events which create greater opportunities to bless and support the Destin community. For more on the Week of Blessings, visit "Church of Destin, Inc." on Facebook.

For more information on the Blessing of the Fleet, visit [iacdestin.org/special-events/blessing-of-the-fleet](http://iacdestin.org/special-events/blessing-of-the-fleet), or contact Immanuel Anglican Church at [immanuel@iacdestin.org](mailto: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.



The CHURCH of DESTIN presents:

**SUNDAY MAY 5**  
BLESSING OF THE FAMILIES  
Intentional blessings made over families in our community during Sunday services

**MONDAY MAY 6**  
DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING  
Pray for your neighbors, your community, the leaders of our nation and our world

**TUESDAY MAY 7**  
COMMUNITY & 1ST RESPONDERS OUTREACH  
Blessing of local government and 1st responders with prayer and snacks from the Church Of Destin

**WEDNESDAY MAY 8**  
21st BLESSING OF THE MARKETPLACE  
11:30-1:30 at 200 Beach Drive Lunch Provided Speaker Panel, Marketplace Blessings and Individual Prayer Opportunity

**BLESSING OF THE YOUTH**  
Middle and High School Students are invited to bring a friend and join in a community Youth Concert from 6:00 to 7:30pm SHORELINE CHURCH 140 Palmetto Street.

**THURSDAY MAY 9**  
67th BLESSING OF THE FLEET  
Prayer and worship service beginning at 4pm on the Harbor behind Brotula's Seafood 210 Harbor Blvd Boat Blessing to follow immediately  
Boats used to earn a living on the sea may register by calling: 850-837-6324

**FRIDAY MAY 10**  
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Sports

# Seascape Golf Course Awaits Big Changes



BY BARBARA PALMGREN

Words from a famous poem Sea-Fever by John Masefield echoed in my ear as I approached the Seascape Golf Course.

*"I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky. And all I ask is a tall ship and the sky."*

I have always been drawn to the beautiful seas that are our Emerald Coast. And when I hear the nearby surf as I leave my car to interview Ryan Hillstrom, I smile and know that this special golf course is changing soon. Changing so there is an

even more exciting reason for golfing families to visit the Emerald Coast again. Visit not just for the ocean, but for the new golfing amenities that await.

Last year, the Seascape Golf Course at Seaside Resort, one of the oldest courses along the Emerald Coast, was an 18-hole golf course. The Osborn Investment Group made a decision to change it to an 18-hole Par 3 course within the next two years. The back nine is still open for play today while the front nine is being turned into land to support condominiums, leaving the driving range for concerts and festivals. With several 18-hole courses nearby, this unique new Par 3 will be the only one in Walton County.

This venue will challenge golfers who prefer a short hole golf game or don't have time for a long day on an 18-hole course. I remember with fondness the Executive Par 3 on Okaloosa Island, enjoyed before land was needed for the county convention center. What isn't going to change is the presence of Ryan Hillstrom, golf manager for



Seascape Golf for more than seven years.

Ryan serves as golf manager and golf instructor. He bravely takes on the challenge of helping new or novice golfers eliminate bad habits and create a better swing and golf game. Of course, golfers of all ages and skills who need help with some aspect of the game, well, they

can call Ryan too. On-course instruction with group and family lessons are available as well as post lesson video analysis. Ryan has been teaching golf for over 20 years. So, he developed a series of solid instructional tips.

Ryan always loved golf and knew he would spend his life playing or teaching golf. On the college team at Virginia

Tech, Ryan played golf on several mini-tours after college. He told me Seascape Golf is busy right now offering tee times for nine holes of the back nine. The price is a reasonable \$39 for play with a cart included. Morning tee times are popular during the summer.

This new creation of golf, entertainment and beautiful condos should add to the attraction that is a mecca for Destin and our surrounding area. I'm sure tourists will be echoing these words,

*"I must go down to that sea again, the Seaside Golf and Resort. And all I ask is the perfect swing to help me hit this drive."*

*I must go down to that sea again, the Seaside Golf and Resort. And all I ask is the perfect putt to help me lower my score."*

*Of course, the lovely beach is calling with outlet malls nearby, but I must go down to that golf course again near azure seas and sky."*

I congratulate the developers and the golf staff as they begin this new chapter that will change and enhance golf for our area.



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# Okaloosa Maintains StormReady Designation from National Weather Service

The National Weather Service (NWS) has recently renewed Okaloosa County's StormReady status, a designation that acknowledges the county's emergency preparedness through robust communications infrastructure and an increased lev-

el of severe weather awareness.

after a storm.” StormReady status is effective for four years and is a success that is approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NWS and the local StormReady Advisory Board. Applicants must demonstrate efficiency in Emergency Operations Planning, Coordination and Partnership Development and Community Preparedness.



The county has maintained this designation since 2002. “I am extremely proud that Okaloosa County remains at the highest level of storm readiness,” said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Paul Mixon. “While we cannot prevent natural disasters, it is important for all of us to be prepared so that we can react appropriately before, during and

To be officially StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center.
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public.
- Create a system that monitors weather conditions locally.
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars.
- Develop a formal hazardous

weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

“Meeting the metrics defined by the National Weather Service for this recognition is a reflection on the hard work of the Coun-

ty’s Emergency Management team,” said Okaloosa County Director of Public Safety Patrick Maddox. “The fact that we pay attention and have plans and policies in place, ensures that we are as prepared as possible in the event of a disaster.”

Learn more about NWS’s StormReady program at <https://www.weather.gov/stormready/>.

Sign up for local weather alerts at <https://alertokaloosa.com/>.

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ly; 20 minutes twice a week.

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- EMS (Electrical Muscle Stimulation) training targets multiple muscle groups simultaneously, resulting in efficient workouts that can save time compared to traditional training methods.
- Whether you’re a beginner or an advanced athlete, wireless EMS training can be adapted to your fitness level and goals, offering a versatile training option.
- The next generation wire-

less, dry suit allows for freedom of movement during workouts.

Now offering programs for strength training, fat burning or yoga flow! Visit CRYO850 in May to try out the new Performance Lab and book your spot today!. CRYO850 memberships start as low as \$99 a month with military discounts of 10%, spousal discounts of 15% and student discounts of 25%! Pre-register online. (850) 279-4145 | [facebook.com/CRYO850](https://facebook.com/CRYO850) | [www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com).



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- \*Collagen Enhancement Treatment Series + Red Light (\$615)





 Wellness

# Check Your Alignment



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Do you ever notice you aren't behaving consistently with the person you want to be? Maybe you want to be honest, but you find yourself lying. Maybe you want to be patient, but you find yourself being irritable with those around you. Maybe you want to be trustworthy, but you find yourself continuing to let yourself and others down.

Day to day life can be overwhelming and distracting from

the bigger picture of who you want to be. Often, you might find yourself doing the next thing without creating space to be intentional about your values. When you don't know what you value, you don't know who you want to be. And when you aren't clear about who you want to be, your choices and behavior are likely to take you down destructive paths you did not intend to travel. When your lifestyle is out of alignment with your values and who you want to be, life becomes less fulfilling, less hopeful, less focused and less purposeful. Life lived out of alignment can also bring destructive patterns like addiction, failure to tend to relationships and lack of self-awareness about how your behavior is impacting yourself and others.

So, how do you know if you

are out of alignment and what can you do about it?

## 6 Ways to Check Your Alignment

**Refine.** Refine what character traits and values are most important to you. Use character guides like the Biblical fruit of the spirit to clarify who you want to be. "I want to be kind, patient, loving, responsible, thoughtful, adventurous, creative." Use value lists to determine what is most important to you. "I value integrity, faith, family, loyalty, travel, generosity, commitment." Try creating a list of 10 positive character traits and 10 values to provide structure. You can find a printable Strengths List and Values List at [journeybravely.com](http://journeybravely.com) to help you get started.

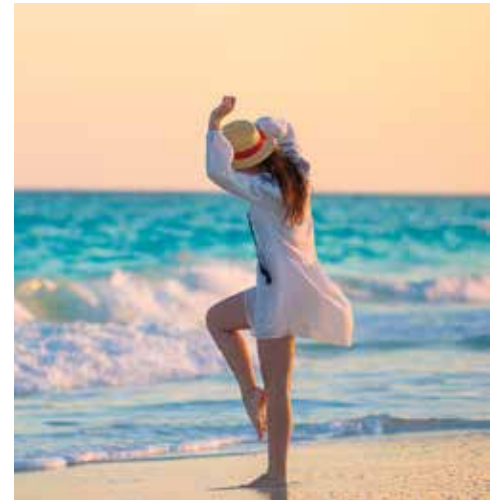
**Remember.** Take time weekly to remember your values. Revisit character and values lists. Notice when your behavior is in conflict with who you want to be. "I want to be reliable but I am not following through on commitments leaving others experiencing me as flaky."

**Reflect.** Notice what is contributing to your alignment struggle. Are you under stress? Do you have unhealthy coping skills that need replacement?

Are you surrounding yourself with negative influences and information? Are you engaging in positive things that help you stay grounded such as spiritual practices, self-care, personal growth? Are there boundaries you need to set? "I have trouble saying no to people so I say yes when I know I'm not actually going to follow through. I need to learn how to say no."

**Repent.** Repent means to turn in the opposite direction once you realize you are off your desired path. Acknowledge to yourself, God, and others you have made mistakes and engaged in behavior that is inconsistent with who you want to be. "Failing to follow through is not how I want to live. It's distancing me from people I care about. I'm sorry I've been making that choice and I want to learn to live differently."

**Repair.** Take ownership of your unaligned behavior's negative impact on yourself and others. Make amends. Apologize directly. Receive forgiveness. Communicate adjustments



you will make. "I'm sorry I told you I would help you and then I backed out at the last minute. I'm realizing I have a tendency to say yes, because I don't want to hurt people's feelings and then I don't follow through. It will be better for me to say no up front and I'm going to work on improving in this area."

**Realign.** Determine meaningful action steps to bring your behavior and choices back in line with your values. Seek spiritual, social, and professional support as needed in your process. Begin taking action in the direction of your values and remember your brain naturally rewires through consistent repetition over time. Move forward in grace and growth. "In the spirit of learning to say no and keeping my word, I'm going to listen to a boundaries podcast and I'm going to ask a friend to check in with me each week on what I'm learning and how I'm applying it."

We all get out of alignment at times. Maturity is developed through the gracious process of noticing when it happens and walking through your realignment practices. As you walk along your growth journey, connect with us at [journeybravely.com](http://journeybravely.com) for counseling and coaching support.

## Get the Smile You Deserve

### Smile with Confidence Again

- Are you embarrassed about smiling in front of people?
- Do you ever put your hand up to cover your smile?
- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
- When you look through magazines, do you envy the models' smiles?
- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
- Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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BY KAY LEAMAN, HEALTH ARCHITECT, HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

To every mom: Thank you for everything you do. Moms wear many hats—housekeeper, teacher, counselor, nurse, chef, chauffeur, time management guru, investigator and wife. I know this doesn't cover it all, but the sacrifice, rewards and love amounts to a life filled with adventure, smiles, tears, laughter and pride (the good kind). Have a Blessed Mother's Day!!!

Now about your skin. Skin reflects what we eat, if we're hydrated, if we've received some vitamin D from the sun, if we're not feeling well, etc. Even though this article talks about what we use on the skin, what we eat and drink plays a big role on our skin. Just ask me what changes I see after eating some dark chocolate ice cream!

Skin should be nourished (This includes the men out there!) and cared for. It starts with using more natural soaps such as pure-castile soap, which comes in many different natural scents. Body washes also offer more natural options. The more natural ingredients, the less chance there is of reactions. This goes for shampoo, deodorant, makeup, lotions and potions as well. Remember, whatever you put on your skin is absorbed into the body. These products are more than skin deep. Healthy on the inside shows up as healthy on the outside.

There is no doubt that some people are more sensitive to ingredients and that includes natural. Unscented is a good choice and, of course, knowing what ingredients to watch out for. Take time to read ingredients. You can also take a picture of the ingredients and look them up online. This will give you a list of what to avoid. Focus on three or four ingredients that you want to avoid. Your list will grow as your knowledge grows.



NOTE: Glycerin is a humectant, a type of moisturizing agent that pulls water into the outer layer of your skin from deeper levels of your skin and the air. There are several benefits with the use of products with glycerin, but if it is not diluted enough, it can actually dry out

the skin. Ingredients are listed in order of percentage, highest to lowest.

ewg.org is a site that offers great information on the use of chemicals in food, household products, skincare, makeup, etc. The upgrades on this site have made it a bit more difficult to dig into. So, if you search for a specific ingredient, look for the EWG link that can get you directly there. The

U.S. allows dangerous chemicals to be used in the products we use and the food we eat, whereas many, many other countries have outlawed them.

This company also has EWG approved products so if you are easily overwhelmed this can be a great way to start; it's how I

found the makeup I use.

This topic is much deeper than my brief thoughts in this article. Sometimes starting simply gives us the success and confidence we need to continue to take control of our health. We don't need to replace everything

at once. Doing the work when it's time to replenish gives us space to find our new favorites.

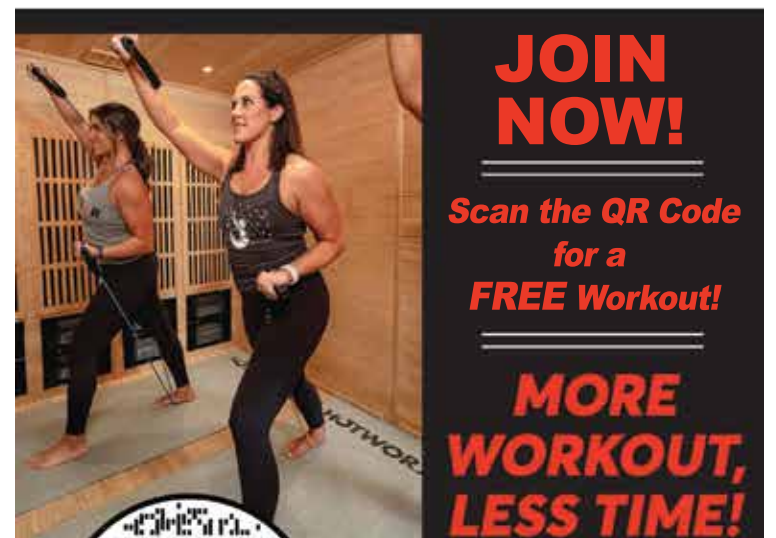
Moms, pamper yourself this year with ingredients that nourish your body and your soul. Heres To Health!

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# Skin and Mother's Day



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 Wellness

# An Active Mom is a Happy Mom



BY LISA LEATH TURPIN, HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

It's hard to find time to exercise when you are a mom. I know this from my own experience and through dealing with my client's schedules. Many moms have a lot of guilt taking the time for themselves; thus, feel selfish doing so. Viewing

exercise as a luxury instead of a necessity couldn't be more misleading. It's just like the instructions on an airplane to put the oxygen mask on yourself first, because that way you can be alert and helpful to your loved ones. You must take care of your health and well-being in order to have strength, endurance, stamina and a clear mind to meet your heavy demands as a mother. What you commit to now will either make your life better, happier and strong, or cumbersome, lethargic and challenging; then you start resenting the state you're in.

Small children have tons of energy and need to be held; if your health and strength are failing, it will be hard to keep up. Grandparents are finally learning that exercise is essential to

being able to stay energized for keeping up with grandchildren of all ages, even the young adult ones. Young moms may take this for granted. But, no matter what your age, staying active and exercising makes all stages of life easier. If you can get in shape and stay in shape, making it a LIFESTYLE, all of life is more FUN! Wondering where to start?

**Set a goal:** Going on a family trip, attending a class reunion, planning a wedding or some life event you want to feel and look great for are excellent motivators for getting in shape. Also a great "life goal" is general fitness where you can set daily or weekly goals. Working with a personal trainer or partner will hold you accountable and help with consistency. Aim for hitting your highest percentage for at-

tendance. If 95% attendance is your goal, and you hit it, reward yourself by scheduling a massage or nice dinner out. These are fun ways to encourage yourself and/or your partner to stay consistent.

**Time/Day:** Set a routine. Make your workouts on the same days at a consistent time of the week just like a work appointment. Schedule it so that it makes sense and you won't have to stress over it. This way you can work your other appointments and life around it. Even if you work out at home, this will give you the most success in your efforts. Nothing can get in the way.

**Comradery:** Workout with your kids, some friends or a partner. I am a witness to the benefits of working out with your

friends in a private group. I have several groups I train and they keep each other accountable as well as catch up on life events and buddie time. Many of my groups have been together 10+ years now! I'm so proud of them, and they look great and have fun together! They very rarely miss, because they are there for each other to cheer and encourage.

Moms wear so many hats. Keep yourself healthy for the sake of your family! They will thank you for being the best, most calm you, because you took the time to detach just long enough to train yourself to handle the rest of what comes your way!

Happy Mother's Day! Be Active – Stay Active!!

## Self-Care Corner: Celebrate Mother's Day with Self-Care

BY KRISY ANDERSON, OWNER

Self-care is sacred—not self-indulgent—a way of taking care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being. It can help recharge your energy, boost your mood and feel happier.

Below are some ways you can help your mother, sister, friend or yourself practice a little self-

care to celebrate Mother's Day:

- Enjoy a massage, a facial or other spa treatment. A massage can reduce stress and tension in your muscles and joints. It can improve your blood circulation and lymphatic drainage. A massage can also release endorphins, the natural painkillers and mood enhancers of your

body. Try a Swedish massage for relaxation and to create increased circulation of blood and lymph, for relief of pain, improved mood and better sleep.

- Feel beautiful and glowing with a spa facial that will cleanse, exfoliate and hydrate your skin. It can also remove impurities, stimulate collagen production and brighten your complexion and give you a healthy glow. For example, Beverly Hills Day Spa's Ultimate Skin Refiner is a way to safely clean your pores of dirt, debris and oil. Fresh, clean, clear skin is what you'll get making you feel brand new!

- Get outside and enjoy time in nature. Here in our piece of paradise, you can enjoy miles of sugar, white sand beaches, perfect for walking and talking

with friends or family, especially this time of year—a great place to relax and unwind. You might prefer to take a walk along the coastal dune lakes or walking trails or hang out at one of Destin's newly-designed parks. Or enjoy an afternoon on a Pontoon boat in the Destin Harbor.

- Do something that makes you laugh, smile, relax or feel inspired. Perhaps spend the afternoon listening to some live music at one of Destin's many venues that offer live performances daily.

- Practice gratitude and positivity. Write down what inspires you or things you are grateful for every day, or say them out loud. Or perform a random act of kindness.

- Exercise—just move your



body! Exercise is a way of taking care of your physical and mental health, and it improves your mood, energy, sleep, stress and self-esteem. Exercise can help you release endorphins, which are natural chemicals that make you feel good. There's some great options in our area to enjoy, and you, likely, won't even feel like you're exercising—maybe join a class with friends, dance, hike, bike, paddle board or golf.

Remember that self-care is not a luxury—it's a necessity. And Mother's Day is a good day to remember this and to practice it fully.

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# Unlock the Secret to Youth and Vitality with NAD+:

## The Miracle Molecule of Wellness and Destin Success Story PART 2!

By SCOTT ANDREWS

Throughout history, humanity has been captivated by the quest for eternal youth, with legends of rejuvenating springs that promise eternal vitality. In today's scientific frontier, this quest has materialized not through mythical waters, but via a groundbreaking molecule: NAD+.

Did you know NAD+ is crucial for energy conversion and DNA repair, which diminishes with age and leads to all too familiar signs of aging. This decline impacts everything from energy levels to cognitive function, but there is hope. NAD+ therapy promises a revival of youthful vitality and health.

Chris Alexander, a dedicated marathon runner, found new energy and enhanced performance: "NAD+ turned back the clock for me. My endurance has never been better." Dr. Lisa Reynolds notes, "My patients experience remarkable improvements in mental clarity and energy. NAD+ therapy is a game-changer."

**A Note on Quality:** While NAD+ therapy offers incredible benefits; the source makes a significant difference. Not all pharmacies and wellness centers provide the same level of purity and efficacy. For genuine results, choosing reputable, high-quality providers is crucial.



This ensures the transformation you experience is profound and lasting, not just a placebo effect. You can't replace NAD+ with a supplement. So, be sure to seek out a wellness center that values delivering the best product on the market.

Beyond Anti-Aging - NAD+ also supports brain health, mood enhancement, and cellular resilience, offering a holistic approach to combatting the declines of aging. It's about enhancing life's quality, every day.

NAD+ therapy isn't just about adding years to your life; it's about adding life to your years, offering a path to vitality and health that begins with quality. Are you ready to embrace a more vibrant future with NAD+?

We are blessed to have met a client and an IV therapy member who shared this testimony from his NAD+ experience with us. His name is Timothy Ret-



tinger "RETT" United States Army, SFC, 51T, 12B & 19D.

"First, I am a 100% totally and permanently disabled veteran, just to give you an idea of my situation. I was miserable and dying with my health care from the Veterans Administration. I was considering putting myself down, but I've never been a quitter. Evil enemies couldn't put me down in the sandbox, but my own country was doing a good job at the VA. Very sad!

Prime IV saved my life!!!



review after the NAD+ series."

Timothy "RETT" Rettinger  
United States Army, SFC  
51T, 12B & 19D

And where should they find this superior product? Well, Prime IV of course!! And look at that, there's an ad (NAD+) right there for them to call and make an appointment.

I've tried several of their standard and custom IV's which are amazing and made me want to live again.

I am experiencing the NAD+ infusions this week, because I need to live longer and healthier to support my family and country. Early indications are amazing! I will follow up with another

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stores and physique.

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- Sermorelin
- Tirzepatide
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- Muscle Building
- Unparalleled Weight Loss
- Improved Metabolism
- Metabolic Boost
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- Sustainable Results
- Enhanced Energy
- Clinically Proven Effectiveness

Please schedule a consultation with our medical provider at Prime IV Destin and realize the positive power of Peptides.



 Wellness

**HOPE MEDICAL**

*continued from page 1*

as basic healthcare, from the homeless to entrepreneurs. This is the gap that Tim Roberts, the Founder and Executive Director of the Hope Medical Centers in Destin and Freeport, has been trying to fill since the Destin clinic opened in 2009. Both clinics are designated free and charitable clinics, in Destin and Freeport. “I moved here from Oregon and was introduced to the need that people who were working jobs ‘behind the scenes’

– restaurant workers, cleaning staff, etc. – weren’t able to afford healthcare, including the insurance that was offered by their jobs. It was just too expensive, especially now as food and housing costs are increasing. People shouldn’t have to choose healthcare OR basic needs. As I was considering what I could do to help, Brad Bynum, who was the minister at the Destin Church of Christ at the time, felt like there was a possibility that they had space that could be used, and they had connections to medical personnel. Once I

understood the needs of the community, which are similar to much of our nation, just exacerbated. The two counties we serve, Okaloosa and Walton, are classified as medically underserved areas. What makes our area work are the individuals who do foundational work. They’re working in construction, they’re working on the docks, they’re cleaning, they’re cooking, they’re doing all these things That make our tourist economy work, and a lot of those jobs do not provide health benefits. And so that’s where the Hope Medical Centers in Destin and Freeport can offer some relief to the residents of Okaloosa and Walton counties. When we stay healthy as a community, everyone benefits.”

The Destin clinic is based in the Destin Church of Christ while Destiny Worship Center hosts the Freeport clinic. The generosity of these church communities in donating space and resources has provided the opportunity for Hope Medical Center to use their donations and grants directly toward patient care, offering massive relief from rent and utilities, as the number of patients continues to grow.



Many of the patients who come to Hope Medical Center are referred by local hospitals or word-of-mouth and Tim appreciates that the growth has been steady throughout the years, with the Freeport clinic opening in 2016. “If we’re going to give free healthcare, why wouldn’t we do it the best we can and make it what we would want for ourselves and our families? Our staff and volunteers work together to make our care the highest level it can be. Cost shouldn’t be the difference between critically declining health and taking care of treatable diseases, like hypertension and diabetes.”

So, how can you partner with Hope Medical Center to ensure that our local community continues to stay as healthy as possible? There are several ways. “We’re always needing more volunteers, especially medically trained volunteers, especially if you are a specialist. The great thing about volunteering with us is we’re grateful for any time you can provide and can schedule patients accordingly. No matter how much time you can offer, it will make an impact.

The other thing we need is advocates in our community. We need people who see the value in what we do and want to support us in whatever capacity their resources or connections can offer. Partnerships in health services and funding are what help our everyday operations. Even a donation of \$125 helps us to see one patient for an entire year.”

If you would like to learn more or would like to support these efforts, go to [hopemedclinic.org](http://hopemedclinic.org), or send a check made payable to Hope Medical Center to:

Hope Medical Center  
150 Beach Dr.  
Destin, FL 32541

Interested in volunteering or want to become a new patient? Email Cora Sternberg the LPN Nurse Operations Director at [cora@hopemedclinic.org](mailto:cora@hopemedclinic.org), or call 850-270-7130. You’ll need to provide your first and last name, an email and a phone number.

The staff at both clinics are made up of Nurse Practitioners, Case Managers, Medical Assistants, Front Office Managers, Social Workers and Counselors. Together, with a team of medical volunteers and students, HMC can provide a more holistic model of healthcare. Patients are not only given a physical assessment through consultations, exams, and lab work but there is also an opportunity to assess the mental health of the patient as well. “We all want to be known and for many of our patients, Hope isn’t just where they get their physical needs met, it’s a place to be supported in many other areas too. We understand that for a person to build emotional resilience and move toward healing, we not only need to take care of the body, but we also need to look at how they’re responding to what’s going on in their lives. Not everyone wants or needs that kind of support but we do want to make that available.”

Hope Medical Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit primary care facility that serves those who don’t have any type of medical insurance, and also meets the salary cap which is based on how many adults and children make up the household. The clinics are primarily funded by private donations, support from local churches and grants. There is no cost to the patient when they are seen at either clinic but donations are gratefully accepted to help with the longevity of their healthcare, no matter how modest. If the patient has to be directed toward specialty care, in most cases, there are available community partners that offer discounted rates, and every effort is made to build a team for the patients who are part of the practice. This includes partnering with other agencies and hospitals, offering discounts on medication, and talking with a social worker to see what other resources are available.

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# Earth Day and Mother's Day – Two Great Reminders to Save Energy



BY CHRIS BALZER

Earth Day was April 22 and Mother's Day is May 12. At Emerald Coast Energy Solutions (ECES), we treat every day like Earth Day. We increase comfort and lower CO2 emissions, saving the planet one home at a time. With these two great holidays so close together, I had to offer suggestions more than just flowers, gift cards or home-made cards for Mom this year.

Air conditioning is vital, spring and summer months are getting warmer and we want Mom to be comfortable. When you visit your mom, help change the air conditioning filter. Clogged filters cause strain on the system and can lead to more service calls, costing mom money. Many HVAC professionals suggest using the less

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

expensive filters to allow more air flow and efficiency. These filters do need to be changed more often but cost less. After replacing the air filter, pour distilled vinegar down the condensate drain line to remove mildew and grime from the line, as well as extending time between service calls. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this process, consult a professional. Don't forget to dust HVAC vents and fans. These areas build up dust quickly and could be hurting the circulation of airflow as well.

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

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

What's tall, green, made of wood and can save energy for your mother? (Answer: a tree) Doing a little landscaping and planting trees can cut energy costs in the long run by adding shade during the summer

months. Trees also help purify the air we breathe by absorbing pollutants and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife, maintaining a balance with nature.

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

If your mom says that her HVAC constantly runs or there are rooms which never get cool, it is time to schedule an energy inspection by a professional. These

professionals can pinpoint areas which are losing energy, costing money and comfort. By addressing these areas with energy efficient solutions, you can increase comfort, lower energy bills and lower your CO2 footprint.

Finally, try keeping our Earth and our moms in our daily activities and actions. They deserve it.

*Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions which is a Smile Provider Company. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com) and Beat the Heat.*




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# Education News

## 12 Okaloosa County Schools are "Schools of Excellence"

In March, 10 Okaloosa County District Schools, along with two charter schools, were designated by the Florida Department of Education as "Schools of Excellence" for the 2022-2023 academic year. The Schools of Excellence program was established by the Florida Legislature in 2017 under HB 7069 to recognize and reward Florida's highest-performing schools. The program aims to promote continuous improvement and provide administrative flexibility to the state's top schools so they can maintain the highest quality education for students.

Superintendent Marcus Chambers stated, "This prestigious recognition is awarded to schools that have consistently ranked in the 80th percentile or higher for at least two of the last three school years based on their school grade calculation. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the students, teachers, staff, and administrators who have all contributed to this remarkable accomplishment!"

Okaloosa County Schools of Excellence: Bluewater Elementary; Destin Elementary; Edge Elementary; Eglin Elementary; Florosa Elementary; Plew Elementary; Northwest Florida Ballet Academie; Ruckel Middle School; Okaloosa

STEMM Academy; Niceville High School; Liza Jackson Preparatory School—Charter School; Collegiate High School at Northwest Florida State College—Charter School.

### The Seaside School™ Named School of Excellence

The Seaside School™, encompassing Seaside Neighborhood School™ and Seacoast Collegiate High School, proudly announces its designation as a 2022-2023 School of Excellence by the Florida Department of Education for the sixth consecutive year as a combination public charter school serving grades 5 through 12 in our area.

Out of 783 schools designated as Schools of Excellence for the 2022-2023 academic year, 658 retained their designation from the previous year, 37 renewed their designation and 88 were newly designated in 2022-2023.

Section 1003.631(1)(a), Florida Statutes (F.S.) mandates the designation of a school as a School of Excellence if its percentage of possible points earned in its school grade calculation ranks in the 80th percentile or higher for at least two of the last three school years. The program, established by the Florida Legislature in 2017,

High School are eligible to participate in the practical nursing program through the Career and Technical Education Department of OCSD. Students receive hands-on clinical training at HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital during their senior year. Upon completion of the two-year program, students will be eligible to earn a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), a Certified Patient Care Technician (CPCT), and/or Electrocardiogram Technician (EKG) certification. Juniors who complete the program will have the opportunity for dual enrollment in the LPN program at Okaloosa Technical College during their senior year, and get a head start on earning their required course hours toward an LPN license.

### First High School Health Academy on HCA Healthcare Campus Opens

HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital and the Okaloosa County School District (OCSD) have partnered to open the Health Academy of Northwest Florida on the hospital's campus. The Health Academy of Northwest Florida is the first high school health academy to be housed on an HCA Healthcare hospital campus anywhere in the country! A joint partnership between HCA Florida Fort-Walton Destin Hospital and OCSD, the Health Academy of Northwest Florida provides high school students interested in healthcare careers the opportunity to earn industry certifications, providing them with the skills they need to directly enter the workforce or continue their post-graduate studies.

Students enrolled in the two-year practical nursing program learn the foundational principles of basic nursing and medical skills needed to provide care to patients.

Students at Niceville High School, Choctawhatchee High School and Fort Walton Beach

"We are grateful for this pioneering collaboration, alongside the invaluable support and funding provided by Triumph Gulf Coast for this program," said April Branscome, OCSD Career and Technical Education Program Director. "This marks a historic milestone as the first initiative of its kind nationwide, ushering in a transformative era in healthcare education."

As part of the partnership, HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital provided a 6,375-square-foot-space to OCSD for the Health Academy of Northwest Florida, which includes two classrooms and two practical labs. Students who successfully complete the practical nursing program will have job placement opportunities throughout HCA Florida Healthcare. In addition, if employed by an HCA Florida Healthcare facility, tuition reimbursement will be available for students wishing to continue their education.



## Turning 65? I can help!

### To Do List!

- Call Keri McPherson 3 months before turning 65 to discuss your enrollment in Medicare Parts A & B.
- Avoid Penalties! If over 65, ask employer for proof of insurance.
- Watch for your new Medicare card to arrive in the mail.

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# Tactical Wisdom: From Battlefield to Board Room



BY BILL MASON,  
ROCKET FUEL COACH

Leadership blends strategic vision with decisive action. But what mix of planning and execution delivers the best outcomes? This isn't just theoretical; it's crucial for executives and CEOs to make decisions that shape their organizations. This exploration uncovers strategic insights to enhance decision-making from the battlefield to the boardroom.

## The Pendulum of Leadership: Planning and Action

Leadership is about guiding and motivating people toward a shared goal. Yet, this simplicity masks the complex responsibilities involved. The balance between planning and action is vital. Leaders making significant decisions need thorough planning. An army general wouldn't march without solid strategies and contingencies, just as CEOs must plan beyond quarterly reports, embracing long-term vision and risk management for growth.

## In the Trenches: Lessons from the Front Line

During my service in the Army as a Blackhawk pilot, complemented by my Air Assault training, a staple in military operations, I was confronted with the stark dichotomy between planning and action. Real combat scenarios demand quick, decisive decision-making. Understanding how the military

manages these high-pressure situations provides crucial lessons for executives in similarly high-stakes business environments.

For instance, if a pilot is down and a medevac is required, a window of 30 minutes for planning a one-hour flight can be the difference between life and death. This exemplifies action taking the front seat, with planning serving to optimize execution rather than dictate the entirety of the operation.

Conversely, when orchestrating a multi-ship air assault with infantry and various helicopter units, the weight of the operation demands meticulous planning. Ten hours of planning for every one hour of flight time ensures the seamless coordination necessary for mission success.

These extremes teach the value of context-appropriate planning and execution. In business, decisions of similar urgency and magnitude warrant equally careful calibration.

The true mark of a leader is their ability to discern the landscape and act judiciously. It's not whether planning or action is more important but how their interplay can be optimized.

## Leadership Coaching - A Key to Ensure Regular Planning Happens

The ability to anticipate, strategize, and prepare for future developments is crucial in today's volatile business landscape. Leaders who excel in planning effectively become architects of their own success. Strategic foresight, innovation, and a deep understanding of the business ecosystem are essential for fostering resilience and agility in the current market.

In the fast-paced realm of modern life and business leadership, many executives often overlook the significance of regular planning. To counteract this, engaging with an executive coach offers a strategic solution

to guarantee consistent planning. Establishing bi-monthly coaching sessions provides executives two dedicated monthly hours for deep reflection. This time is invaluable for assessing past actions, envisioning future goals, setting or refining objectives, and considering the necessary adjustments. An executive coach serves as more than just a sounding board; they are a partner, confidant, unbiased adviser, and cornerstone of accountability, helping turn plans into actionable strategies for immediate and long-term success.

Much like the importance of regular maintenance to keep an aircraft in optimal condition, the best time to prepare for an emergency is not during the crisis itself but beforehand. Regular coaching sessions offer not just a remedy for the monotony of daily life but also prepare leaders for the unforeseen challenges that leadership often presents.

A crucial element of executive coaching is to assist executives in executing their strategies swiftly and effectively. It provides the necessary support and accountability to keep them aligned with the objectives set by the leader, not the coach, for both the company and their personal leadership development. The coach acts as a pivotal reminder, highlighting discrepancies between intended actions and current behavior, prompting the question, "Is this the path you want to follow, or should we adjust our course towards a new goal I can help you achieve?" This ensures that long-term and short-term goals align with the executive's "north star," guiding their vision and direction.

## The Power of Delegation

Leaders must prioritize their time towards activities yielding the highest return on investment. This entails mastering



the fine art of delegation—assigning the appropriate tasks to the right individuals. Additionally, it demands the humility to request external assistance and the discernment to recognize when external perspectives can enhance the planning and execution phases.

Delegating tasks to skilled team members allows leaders to concentrate on strategic priorities requiring unique attention. Leaders should dedicate 80% of their time to their most critical and impactful activities. Recognizing the distinction between leading and doing marks a significant milestone in a leader's

journey toward growth and maturity. Coaches provide essential insights that enhance leadership skills. Consulting individuals detached from the situation can refine strategic insights and tactical execution.

## In Conclusion

Leadership revolves around allocating resources, including time, people, or ideas. Finding the right mix of planning and action is crucial. Plans guide purposeful steps, while action brings plans to life. Leaders must provide strategic direction for growth while staying flexible to seize opportunities. Aiming for this balance leads to success and sets an example in a fast-paced world that values action over contemplation.

Leaders must remember that the wisdom of generals on the battlefield is as relevant in the corporate boardroom. Leaders can forge a legacy of strength and foresight by respecting the planning that precedes action and the action that brings plans to life.

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 Musing



BY PASTOR DAVE HOLLAND

“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” – Luke 16:1-13

I ate ham, sweet potatoes, green beans and salad for dinner last night. Some of the best pecan pie known to man followed, and I went to bed fat and happy. I slept in a warm bed with the love of the Lord overflowing my heart. God is good.

God has made us rich—we just don’t like to admit it. The blessing of God transformed America into one of the richest countries in the world. Three square meals a day, a roof over

our heads, clothes in our closets and a car in the driveway testify to wealth that over half of the world’s population will never know.

God’s favor carries with it both great responsibility and tremendous potential. Luke 16:1-14 records a peculiar story called “The Parable of the Unjust Steward.” Jesus talks about a manager of an abundant estate with great resources. The manager is about to be fired for wasting the owner’s resources, so he plots a devious plan.

The dishonest manager negotiates with those who owe money to his boss. He cuts the debtors a sweet deal to gain favors for his future. I’m sure both the “sinners” and the “pious people” who heard Christ’s story thought, “That guy is a scoundrel.”

Jesus shocked everyone by complimenting the unjust manager. Christ commended the rascal, because he had the foresight to think ahead and plan for his future. By using this dark figure, Jesus grabs everyone’s at-

# A Pastor’s Ponderings: Money



attention and highlights three important themes.

First, consider your future. Where are you going to spend eternity? Are you investing your spiritual life by serving the Lord and giving to those in need? An honored place in heaven awaits those who use the blessings of God to help others.

Second, spending your life on comfort and pleasure with little thought to God’s purposes cheats the Lord who gave you life. When you put your faith in Christ, God invested grace and blessing in you. He expects you to serve him with generosity and

thanksgiving.

Finally, one phrase in this long parable haunts us all. “You cannot serve God and money.” Money is important. We all need money to live. It’s when it becomes too important that it corrupts us. Money is numbers and numbers never end.

If it takes money to be happy, then your search for happiness will never end.

When you stop chasing money and start chasing purpose, you will find prosperity and peace.

Hebrews 13:5 gives us a warning and a promise. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘never I will leave you or forsake.’”

Jesus commended the scoundrel in our parable for his forethought concerning his future, not for his faith. If we have faith

in God, we do not face the future alone. We live with the expectation of God’s presence and blessing. We attain a security and happiness that is not dependent on circumstances or finances, but rests solely on the promises of God.

Pray with me: Dear Lord, I believe in you. Forgive my worry and stress over finances. I’m sorry I allowed money to compete with you. I choose to trust you with my life, family and future. Only you can satisfy my soul. Strengthen me to serve you and your purposes. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 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](http://DaveHolland.org), or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences. Contact him at [DavidHolland54@gmail.com](mailto:DavidHolland54@gmail.com).*

## MKAF Call to Artists for 29th Festival of The Arts!

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation’s Festival of the Arts is one

of the Southeast’s premier festivals and showcases more than

100 artists from across the U.S. The Festival is a celebration of art, music, food, and family fun and features a live music lineup, Cuisine on the Green, a wine and beer garden, art activities for kids, merchandise, and more.

The 29th annual Festival will be held on Saturday, Oct. 26,

and Sunday, Oct. 27 in the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin.

This is a juried show that includes artists in the categories of Acrylic, Clay, Pen & Ink, Mosaic, Watercolor, Metal, Jewelry, Sculpture, Photography, Collage, Printmaking, Fiber, Glass,



Wood, Mixed Media, Pottery, Resin, Pastels, Ceramics, Pencil, Oil and Original Digital Art.

Artists display their pieces and compete for \$12,100 in cash award prizes. Participating artists must pay a \$30 non-refundable jury fee. Booth fees are from \$350.

The winning design for the official poster competition will become the signature artwork for the festival. The winning artist will also receive a \$750 cash prize.

The application deadline for both Artist Exhibition and Poster Art is June 30, 2024.

Visit [www.mkaf.org](http://www.mkaf.org) for Artist Application, Rules of Participation, and Poster Art entry forms. Call (850) 650-2226 or email [mkaf.org](mailto:mkaf.org) for more information.




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# Sean of the South: Memorial Day



BY SEAN DIETRICH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Speaking of women. We guys were always talking about our sweethearts, wives, and mothers. If you mentioned someone's girl a man was liable to talk for hours about her. And even if you'd already seen his wallet photos before, you never interrupted a guy talking about his gal. Because eventually you'd be talking about yours.

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Germans had a local radio station that broadcasted American stuff like Bing and Frank. Then, between songs, a German gal talked propaganda over the airwaves to us American GIs in a sexy voice, trying to mess with our heads.

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

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

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

So when we heard the official papers had been signed and the war was over, it was Christmas morning multiplied times a hun-

dred. No. Times a trillion.

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

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

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

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

They were those who evaporated like the early morning fog over Anzio, or the thick mists of Normandy. They died young. And they died for a lot more than a three-day weekend of barbecues and Budweiser.

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

Happy Memorial Day.

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 Arts & Music

# Seasons Change



BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, EMERALD COAST THEATRE COMPANY

I always treasure the micro seasons we experience in this beautiful white sand corner of Florida. We get a little taste of fall, a miniscule winter, a gorgeous capsule of spring and a large slice of summer. I feel the same excitement when our new season is announced at Emerald Coast Theatre Company. Like fall, winter, spring and summer, we always have four different phases culminating in the run of our new season.

We start with one of the most important phases, the reading and research quarter. This is the time when Nathanael and I read a portion of the stacks and stacks of plays we have in our home library. Our desks at work and our counters at home be-

come the staging area for “must reads” and “maybes” along with every color sticky note to mark our thoughts about each one. Then we order more scripts and do the same thing with them too. This leads to the next phase of impassioned debate and deliberation. Did I mention “impassioned debate?” We discuss each story and its nuances, (always calmly and rationally without throwing any scripts across the room) the characters, the writing, the music, and the overall cohesion of each show choice within the full season. We present our first draft picks and some other top choices to our executive staff for input and collaboration before settling on our new line up.

The next phase is securing production rights and graphic design for all of the show posters and media which leads up to the big announcement of what’s coming in the new season! We aim to get this information out in the spring, well ahead of when we actually launch the new season in the fall. The final large slice kicks off on opening night with a dynamic fall musical and all of the anticipation that a new season brings.

One of the most exciting moments for our patrons is the big spring announcement that happens ahead of the new season-



and that day is here! I’m thrilled to present the upcoming 2024-25 Season 12 at Emerald Coast Theatre Company!

We launch in September with **Jersey Boys**. This toe tapping musical takes you behind the music of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons as they work their way from the streets of New Jersey to the heights of stardom. You can continue the fun in October with **Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery** as our five talented actors portray more than forty characters complete with silly accents and hilarious disguises.

**All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914**, our holiday show, is an a cappella masterpiece. This remarkable true story is told in the words and songs of the men who lived it. Every Brilliant Thing, an interactive show with depth and

humor, premieres during January. The story centers around a young boy as he attempts to ease his mother’s depression by creating a list of all the best things in the world worth living for. Everyone’s favorite man-eating plant, sadistic dentist, and meek yet heroic shopkeeper will also make an appearance next January/February in Little Shop of Horrors.

**Always a Bridesmaid**, a hilarious “Golden Girls” style romp where four friends have sworn to keep their promise to be in each other’s weddings no matter what, rounds out our winter offerings in February/March. And finally, the can’t

miss transformation of the eternally pink Elle Woods in **Legally Blonde: The Musical** is the perfect spring show to end our Season 12! We also have two spring shows specifically geared towards our younger audience members. P.D. Eastman’s classic children’s book **Go, Dog. Go!** comes to life on stage like a pop-up book full of big and little doggy music fun for the whole family. We are also offering **The Tortoise and the Hare: Fast Friends, Slow Foes**, a madcap re-telling of the classic, complete with all the forest animals and a pesky possum who just wants to join the fun.

It is always a little astonishing to be in production mode for our upcoming spring show — which this year is **Mary Poppins** — and launching a new season for the next year. Each phase brings its own set of joys and challenges, and I have so much gratitude for what I get to do every day and the people I get to work alongside. The heart of ECTC is each and every one of those talented artists along with each and every one of you. Here’s to Season 12!

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| <b>LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS</b><br>JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 9   | <b>ALWAYS a Bridesmaid</b><br>FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 2                        | <b>Go, Dog, Go!</b><br>MARCH 11 - 16                                 | <b>LEGALLY BLONDE</b><br>The Musical<br>MAY 2 - 18 |

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# Gulf Coast Jam 'Kicks Off' Brand New Music Festival with Garth Brooks, Carrie Underwood and Alabama

By PAUL BONNETTE

For over a decade, Gulf Coast Jam, one of the southeast's largest country music festivals has been bringing "Country to the Coast" to Panama City Beach showcasing some of country music's biggest stars. Every year, thousands of visitors and locals alike pack into Frank Brown Park for great vendors, delicious food, and of course, country music. For many years, Gulf Coast Jam was a staple event on Labor Day Weekend with the festival becoming synonymous with college football and the last days of summer. The festival was then moved up earlier in the summer, leaving a gap in Labor Day tourism. In order to bridge the gap, Gulf Coast Jam organizers announced a brand-new country music festival in addition to the current Gulf Coast Jam.

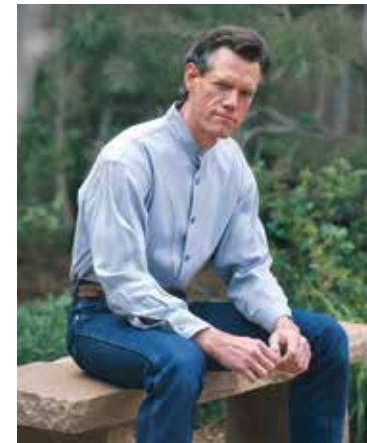
Kick Off Jam will be a 3-day star-studded festival featuring 18 musical acts, running August 30-September 1 at Frank Brown Park. The lineup includes Garth

Brooks, Carrie Underwood, the band Alabama with special guest star Randy Travis, as well as numerous other country music artists such as Pam Tillis, Jamey Johnson, Tyler Farr, Oak Ridge Boys, Lauren Alaina, Randy Houser, and more.

Garth Brooks took to social media to help announce the festival declaring that with availability to only do one outdoor gig per year, he was excited for it to be Panama City Beach. Kick Off Jam will be a country music celebration that celebrates five decades of country music on Panama City Beach.

For Executive Producer Rendy Lovelady, securing Garth Books fulfills a mission, years in the making.

"I've been trying to get Garth Brooks for my festivals for years and it's always been 'no.' He's excited. Panama City Beach is where Garth came for summer vacation when he was a kid. That's why he's doing this, he is doing this to celebrate where he



came from and to be a part of it."

For Lovelady, Kick Off Jam promises to be bigger than any-

thing before it.

"I've been doing this for 40 years, and without question, this is the biggest show we've ever put on. We're excited to celebrate five decades of Country music in Panama City Beach!"

Alabama will headline on Friday, August 30 with Carrie Underwood performing on Saturday, August 31. Garth Brooks will take the stage on Sunday, September 1. For more information and tickets visit [www.kickoffjampcb.com](http://www.kickoffjampcb.com).



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Arts & Music

# Taylor Swift's Ode to Florida Mentions Destin

By KIM HARPER

Taylor Swift's new album dropped on April 19, 2024. "The Tortured Poets Department" is Taylor's 11th era album. "Florida!!!" is the only song that includes three exclamation points. It also mentions Destin timeshares. All the Swifties are googling Destin now.

*"Little did you know your home's really only  
A town you're just a guest in  
So you work your life away just to pay  
For a time-share down in Destin"*

The song is Taylor's first collaboration with Florence + The Machine. Taylor and Florence's voices blend amazingly for the edgy track that sounds a little different from Taylor's usual pop songs. They seem to be singing about a retreat to Florida to recover from heartbreak, but it takes a darker turn, mentioning hurricanes, swamps, cheating husbands and more.

*"The hurricane with my name when it came*

*I got drunk and I dared it to wash me away  
Barricaded in the bathroom with a bottle of wine  
Well, me and my ghosts, we had a h\*\*\* of a time"*

Taylor told iHeartRadio about the song: "I think I was coming up with this idea of 'what happens when your life doesn't fit' or 'the choices you've made catch up with you' and you're surrounded by these harsh consequences and judgement. And circumstances did not lead you to where you thought you'd be and you just want to escape from everything you've ever known. Is there a place you could go?"

"I'm always watching, like, Dateline," she continued. "People have these crimes that they commit, where they immediately skip town and go to? They go to Florida. They try to reinvent themselves, have a new identity, blend in. And I think when you go through a heartbreak, there's a part of you that thinks, 'I want a new name. I want a new life. I don't want anyone to



self and blend in? Florida." Fans are speculating that the song could have something to do with Taylor's breakup with Joe Alwyn, which happened while she was touring in Florida on the "Eras Tour" in 2023.

From Taylor's Instagram regarding the album: "The Tortured Poets Department. An anthology of new works that reflect events, opinions and sentiments from a fleeting and fatalistic moment in time – one that was both sensational and sorrowful in equal measure. This period of the author's life is now over, the chapter closed and boarded up... And then all that's left behind is the tortured poetry."

Floridians are honored that Taylor took notice of the sunshine state. It's a beautiful place to retreat, to heal; but as Taylor knows, it's not without its dangers and temptations.


*"I need to forget, so take me to Florida"*

know where I've been or know me at all.' And so that was the jumping off point behind where would you go to reinvent your-



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## Around Town

### Brenda Gray Named Destin Chamber's 2023 Ambassador of the Year



Brenda Gray, Director of Sales at the Hilton Garden Inn Destin/Miramar Beach, is the Destin Chamber's 2023 Paul Woolman Ambassador of the Year! The award was presented by 2023 Chairman Jason Belcher of FNBT, during the Chamber's April Business Before Hours Sponsored by The Palms Bistro. "Brenda has been a great advocate for the Destin Chamber for many years. She brings happiness, enthusiasm and excitability to everything she does. She almost never says 'no,' and she truly enjoys her involvement and work with us. She is certainly deserving of this award," said Chamber President & CEO Shane A. Moody, CCE, FCCP. After a successful career in hospitality in Texas, Gray moved to Northwest Florida in 2019 to open the Hilton Garden Inn. She made joining the local chambers of commerce and Rotary Club of Destin her priority and quickly rose to leadership of the Destin Chamber's Ambassador Program. She takes great pride in her service and works tirelessly to ensure the events and activities in which she is involved flow seamlessly for those in attendance. For more information, call (850) 837-6241 or visit [DestinChamber.com](http://DestinChamber.com).

### Destin Community Farmers Market Now Open

A vibrant new farmers market is now open year-round, every Sunday. It offers an array of locally sourced products and artisanal goods each week from

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Located at 743 Harbor Boulevard in the heart of Destin, this market aims to bring together local vendors and residents in a lively and welcoming atmosphere. With an emphasis on supporting local businesses and artisans, visitors can expect a diverse selection of high-quality products ranging from farm-fresh produce to handcrafted jewelry and everything in between.

Some of the highlights of the Destin Community Farmers Market include jams, macarons, jewelry, animal treats, art, books, clothing, superfoods, baked goods, and fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy products. For more information, visit [destincommunityfarmersmarket.com](http://destincommunityfarmersmarket.com) or follow us on @destincommunityfarmersmarket on Facebook and Instagram.

### Third Annual Area Fire Truck Pull a Huge Success!



The Rotary Club of Destin collaborated recently with additional area Rotary clubs and roughly 200 service-minded individuals, in teams of 10 people each, to compete by pulling a 38,000-lb. fire truck 50 ft. in the least amount of time to raise money in the 3rd Annual Fire Truck Pull. Hosted by 3rd Planet Brewing in Niceville, 18 teams from various area communities helped raise more than \$13,000 for Twin Cities Pavilion in Niceville and the Manor in Crestview, two worthy causes that have great impact on our communities.

Multiple Service Clubs (Rotary Clubs, Knights of Columbus) and the Okaloosa County Fire-Rescue joined together to make the pull a huge community service event. More than 500 people attended including the "Pull Teams," Military organizations and their families and friends. Additional funds were donated also, such as \$1,000 from the Okaloosa County Fire and Rescue Association.

## A Mother's Day Tribute to My Sister

By LORI LEATH SMITH, PUBLISHER

"All I ever wanted to be was a mom," she often said, even when we were growing up. That's my sister, Lisa Leath Turpin. And when her first child, William Wesley Turpin, was born, she was elated—glowing—like the culmination of her life's purpose was ignited. With her second child, Lauren Elaine, she further fell into her coveted role of being the best mom for her kids.

She then understood why she had always held that desire in her heart. There is no greater love than that of parent for their child. And the bond between a mother and child is a most precious one, truly unbreakable.

As Wes and Lauren ("Bebe") grew, Lisa lived her life around them and saw to their every need (and many wants), trying her best, later as a single mom, to rearrange her schedule, her events and all so that she could be a hands-on mom—whether it was soccer games, track meets, football games, cheer leading competitions, art shows, musical performances—she did her best to be an involved mom, making the choice every day to put her children in front of herself...and still does to this day.

I once saw something written: It takes someone brave to be a mother, someone strong to raise a child and someone special to love someone other



than herself. How true that is of my sister! I might add, however, it takes a strong mom to be an overcomer, even through the loss of her precious child.

So, when something tragically out of order happened, it made me wonder how Lisa would cope. You see, no one ever considers losing a child or even being able to understand things when it happens—until it does. It's the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take, and the only people who can come close to appreciating what the grief is like, are those who share the experience.

Wes was one of the greatest gifts she was ever given. She loved Wes with every fiber in her body and he was all she dreamt her son would be. And then, in an instant, he was no longer here. Things are still fresh for her. Wes was killed only a few months ago. A senseless, out-of-order death such as this one can break a person. But not my Sissy. She is coping with grace, compas-

sion for others who have experienced the same and is doing her best to balance the pain and guilt of outliving Wes with the desire to live in a way that honors him and his time here. There are very challenging days. But, ultimately, she finds hope and security in our creator, and knows she will see her son again one day.

To all the moms who have loved a child unconditionally, but have suffered this loss, we support you, love you and want to honor you and your children while imparting hope.

If you know of a mom this Mother's Day whose child is no longer on this earth, let them know you care, recognize their ongoing battle and remember their child, even if it might make you feel uncomfortable. It is a precious Mother's Day gift to remember and acknowledge their son or daughter.

I consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with my Sissy who has endured one of life's most frightening events, but lives with it daily. And if you know her, you know how precious she is to her friends, family and this community—she inspires me and is my Mother's Day gift.

In remembrance of all Moms this Mother's Day...

*Publisher note: Many of you knew Wes. Visit <https://www.daviswatkins.com/obituary/William-Wes-Turpin> to read more about his life and legacy.*

## On the Edge



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Around Town



# Ask Destinities: Florida Toll Bridge Fees

By PATRICIA LEE, OWNER  
DESTINITIES.COM

In our local Destinities group this past month (www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities), a poll was taken regarding paying bridge toll fees. The majority agreed that Florida residents should not have to pay any fee to use the bridges. Residents speak

out with some legitimate concerns. Below are just some of the comments made in addition to the poll:

1. We own a small business in Destin and constantly hear from people in Niceville that they won't come to Destin to shop even though they would love to support our business. They don't



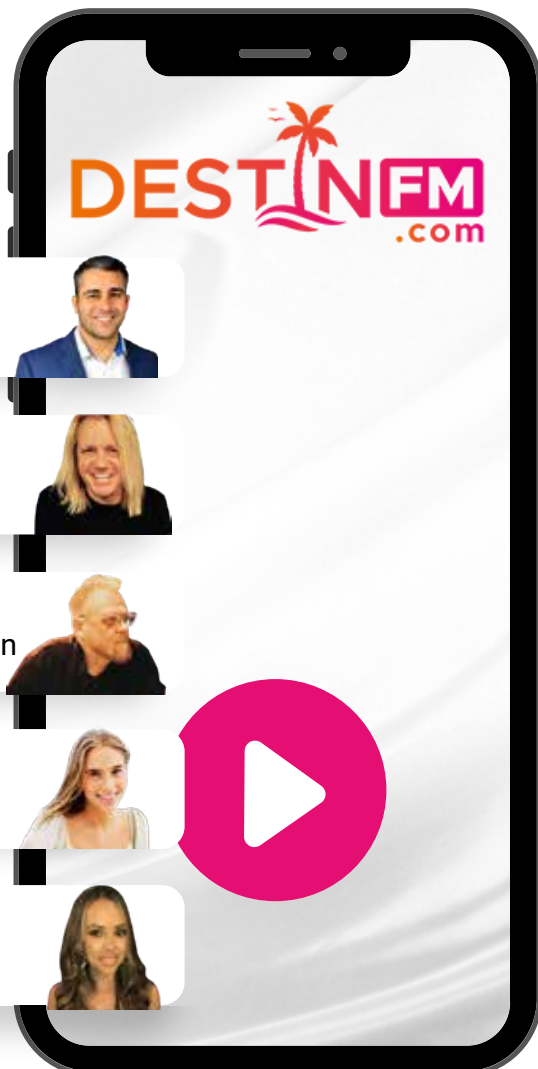
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want to pay the toll. The ZIP Codes at each end of the bridge should be free. It also keeps people in Niceville and Crestview from coming to Destin to work, which also hurts small businesses.

2. When we lived in Hilton Head, the people who lived there full time could purchase a sun pass for like \$35 a month and go over the bridge as much as they needed too. It is insanity to me that isn't offered here as well.

3. Have to pay to exchange my kids with their dad when he decided to move to Niceville is maddening.

4. The bridge maintenance benefits residents more than visitors - I think it's silly to say we shouldn't pay.

5. I think there should be an annual pass for locals for a flat fee. Tourists should pay for it, and money should be put towards improvements, maintenance and Destin.

6. I just want someone to explain to me why the two lane, poorly maintained 293/Mid Bay Bridge and extender highway have ever-increasing tolls—and the beautiful, 4-lane 331 Bridge hasn't ever had tolls? Explain it like I'm in kindergarten please. Thank you.

7. Free Okaloosa and Walton counties. We have been paying tolls for almost 25 years. It was supposed to have been paid for already.

8. We have enough tourists to cover this. Florida residents have a higher cost of living and should not be charged for crossing a bridge to go to work.

9. When the bridge at Navarre Beach was paid for with the HUGE .50 cent toll, they took the toll booth down."

10. I do believe the Destin/293 bridge should get freed of the toll - if necessary tolls make sense for the first few years if they are paying for construction - beyond that I'm not for them.

11. If you don't want to pay the toll don't use the bridge. Fair-

ly simple concept.

12. There is no state tax and we have to pay for bridges, roads, etc. somehow.

13. Destin has an interesting take on "residents." Tax payers should be getting the breaks on tolls and parking. We do not get a proration on our taxes if we can't be there six months a year, yet we can't consider ourselves a "resident." Therefore it is difficult for me to answer this. But yes, I agree those who pay property taxes should get a discount on things that help fund the government and not be treated equal to any other "tourist." Some of us are also contributing with bringing in large amounts of bed tax on top of property taxes, yet we need to pay \$20 to park by our own house near the beach. Meanwhile, our next-door neighbor who is a long-term renter pays zero taxes and gets to park for free. "Residents" and ALL property owners should get a break on things we charge tourists.

14. My daughter went to Collegiate High School. She had classes early in the a.m. before the bus and a night class. She was 13 and unable to drive herself. There were days I was crossing the bridge as many as six times in a day. It was financially killing us. I finally just sent her to live with her sister, so she could go to Florida tech when she was

15. Would have been really nice to have an Okaloosa resident discount. Since it wasn't for "work," a discount for that wouldn't have helped us.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private group at [www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities) with more than 9,800 members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out our monthly newsletter and sponsored local business directory at [www.Destinities.com](http://www.Destinities.com).

*The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the opinions of Life Media Group.*

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 City Market Bayside | 850-279-4145

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