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## A Legend at 100: The Primrose

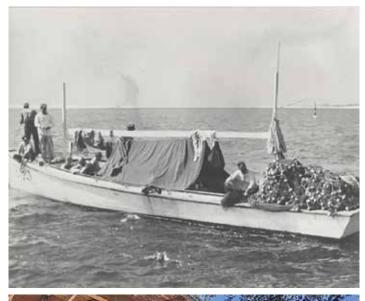
By Christopher Manson

In 1925, the Jazz Age was in full swing, The New Yorker magazine published its first issue, and here on the Emerald Coast, a revolutionary fishing boat was about to launch.

On Saturday, May 3, the Destin History & Fishing Museum commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Primrose seine fishing boat. Locals and visitors got a look at the restored Primrose while the kids enjoyed cake, a bounce house and activities with the Emerald Coast Science Center.

The museum offered some historic games from the 1920s and there's now new Primrose merchandise - hats and stick- $\operatorname{ers}$  – in the gift shop. They also raffled off a two-night "staycation" from Ocean Reef Vacation Rentals & Real Estate and a museum merchandise basket that includes the aforementioned Primrose

"She was the last seine boat built in Destin and the first of her kind to have a motor installed," says Destin History & Fishing Museum





Executive Director Vivienne Williams of the Primrose's significance. The Primrose functioned as a fishing boat until 1968, enabling local fishermen to hone their skills and serving as a bridge between traditional and modern methods of fishing.

"We have a volunteer at the museum who used to help tie fishing nets together." The seine nets are five feet tall and 100 feet long.

The previous Primrose restoration happened in 2015, and the museum invited several of the people involved to the anniversary event, along with members of the Destin City Council.

Over a century ago, the Primrose was the brainchild of Captain John W. Melvin Sr., one of Destin's local fishermen. His experience and know-how planted the idea of a bigger and better fishing

Melvin proached John George Maltezo in 1922. Maltezo knew

> **PRIMROSE** continued on page 2



## No Child **Should Carry** Their Life in a Trash Bag:

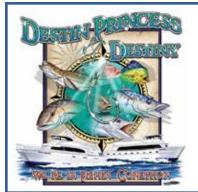
Kay's Carry-On Gives Foster Kids Hope on Wheels

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

When children in foster care are forced to leave their homes because of dire circumstances or because they've aged out, they are provided

**KAY'S CARRY-ON** 

continued on page 2



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#### **PRIMROSE**

continued from page 1

his way around boats, but was unsure exactly how to build a craft like the Primrose. Melvin and Maltezo worked tirelessly for days designing and planning every detail of the Primrose's length of 56 feet.

The Primrose was completed in 1925 and fitted with a Palmer Marine engine. It was the last seine boat to be built in Destin.

The 2015 restoration involved the participation of at least 10 groups, says Williams. The Primrose was then moved from the Destin Community Center to the museum where a "pole barn" was added to protect the vessel from the elements. Other groups, such as the Destin Chamber of Commerce's Destin Forward classes, have helped with preservation



projects over the years.

"I love being part of the community and its very rich history," she says. "I like being able to maintain it and share it with everyone that comes to visit."

In addition to the Primrose centennial, the museum hosted a Night at the Museum event in March to mark its 20th anniversary. "We had live music, a custom martini bar and raffles, and several area restaurants donat-

ed appetizers," says Williams. "Food, drink and fun." The "true" celebration is set for October and is still in the planning stages.

She adds: "We'll be celebrating all year long."

The Destin History & Fishing Museum is located at 108 Stahlman Ave. Learn more at destinhistoryandfishingmuseum.org, and follow the museum's Facebook page.

#### **KAY'S CARRY-ON**

continued from page 1

with garbage bags to transport their personal items. What's also used to hold food scraps, used tissue and discarded mail will now carry the clothes, toiletries and personal treasures of children who have already endured so much. No person should feel their things are being treated like trash, especially a child who has already experienced the unpredictability of fear, trauma and displacement. Area local, Dr. Kay Kizer, veteran, author and founder of Kay's Carry-On, has made it her mission to help children in foster care have more dignity, hope and respect. "When a child is removed from a home, they are provided with two black trash bags to transport their belongings. To me, that's just so demeaning, and I know that from personal experience. I grew up in the foster care system and I have been a foster mom."

Dr. Kizer believes it was divine inspiration that Kay's Carry-On became Dr. Kizer's mission. "The Lord was specific about it being rolling luggage. It means even a five-year-old can handle their luggage, because the wheels help them pull easily. Whether they have to get into a case worker's car or arrive at a bus terminal, train station or airport, they're ready with luggage and not just trash bags. It's making sure that they have



some sense of comfort that their belongings are secure and don't look like something that is being thrown away.

Dr. Kizer's goal is to have a carry-on program in every state, so that others will grow this idea wherever they live. "All they have to do is have someone be in charge of collecting. It's a wonderful thing to help children this way and it can get a community excited to do this together."

Not only does Dr. Kizer encourage the collection of carry-ons, but she also hopes these children can get some essentials, especially those who age out of the system at age 18. "For the young ones, stuffed animals are always a source of comfort. But, at any age, blankets, toothbrushes and toothpaste, towels and face cloths, and Bibles are also needed. I've even given a child their favorite cereal with their name on it so they had some sense of ownership and familiarity."

Dr. Kizer also hopes that having a rolling carry-on will provide more security. "Foster children can go through multiple moves, and each time there is the possibility of theft or loss in the displacement. If a child has to move in the middle of the night, they know that luggage is theirs and their belongings can





be secured with a simple lock. A trash bag can't provide that."

Donated luggage is given to foster homes, shelters and foster parent agencies. With this in mind, Dr. Kizer is grateful for every donation, but encourages people who are thinking of donating luggage, to bring "like new," if not brand new. "Of course, each donation that is given is wonderful. But, we want to make sure that each



piece of luggage that is presented to a child reflects that they are valuable, not just something second-hand. In a moment of upheaval, the hope is that it will be seen as a gift that reflects that they're cherished."

To partner with her organization or donate to Kay's Carry-On, visit www.kayscarryon. org. If you have any questions, or you're an author who would like to contribute to her anthol-

ogy series, The Faces of Foster Care (found on Amazon), contact Dr. Kizer by emailing kay-kizer3@gmail.com or calling 936-240-8762.



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## Billy Bowlegs Festival

MAY 15: LITTLE SCALLYWAGS PIRATE WALK MAY 16: CONCERTS AT THE SANDING, SKIRMISH & FIREWORKS MAY 17:
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## Meet Hometown Hero John Wambough:

## Flying Against the Odds

By Kelly-Murphy Redd

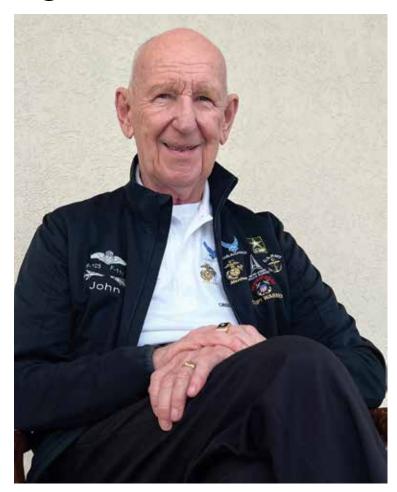
John Wambough says courage and love of country was the glue and inspiration that kept the F-105 fighter jet pilots climbing high in the sky at record speeds over North Vietnam. Retired Colonel John H. Wambough, remembers the heroic past of his pilot friends who daily went into battle facing being shot down, perhaps rescued, killed or falling into the hands of the North Vietnamese. John says he never thought of himself as a hero, though his F-105 took on enemy fire. He says, "The real heroes were those who fought bravely and didn't make it back safely. Many were unmercifully tortured for years in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" and many never returned."

Born in 1939, John grew up in Glen Cove, Long Island, N.Y. He attended New York University (NYU) and joined the Cadet Corps, became Captain of the Pershing Rifle Trick Drill Team, and Cadet Corps Commander his senior year. Graduating NYU in 1962, he attended Flight School at Vance Air Force Base during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He flew the B52G Bomber during the Cold War against the Soviet Union. He volunteered to fly F-105 Fighters in 1967.

During the Vietnam War, John volunteered to fly the F-105 Thunderchief (THUD) and trained at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nev.

- 1967 was the peak year for pilot losses. F-105 pilots averaged getting shot down every 33 missions.
  - The rescue rate was 50%.
- 180 F-105 pilots were killed in action during the Vietnam War.
- 107 pilots became prisoners of war (POW's).
- 145 F-105 pilots were shot down and rescued.

Of the pilots who became POWs, most were tortured during captivity via beatings, stress positions and prolonged isolation to extract information



and propaganda confessions. At least 7 F-105 pilots died in captivity. The extreme loss rate of F-105 pilots was due to highly sophisticated air defenses in North Vietnam, second to only Moscow, to include 10,000 anti-aircraft artillery guns (AAA), Soviet supplied surface to air missiles (SAMs) and MIG fighters. F-105 missions were so dangerous, by the late 1960s, the odds of an F-105 pilot completing a 100-mission tour were less than 50%.

Micromanagement of the Vietnam War by the sitting President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert Mc-Namara also contributed to high loss rates. President Johnson bragged, "They (pilots) cannot hit an outhouse without my approval." Predictable routes of attack and hideous Rules of Engagement prevented hitting targets necessary to win the War.

Continued on page 17

## JudeFrances



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Mayor Bobby Wagner and PIO Tamara Young, PhD

By Tamara L. Young, PhD, Public Information Director

This time Mayor Wagner and I sat down to talk about the developments at Norriego Point.

TY: You can't drive over the bridge or be down at the Harbor without noticing the construction at Norriego Point. Some see it as progress, others a blight, but it's happening. There's a misconception that this was something recently approved; but the actual development order for the condo piece was approved back in 2009.

BW: What we're seeing at Norriego Point is the result of development rights approved back in 2009, delayed by multiple extensions tied to state emergency declarations after hurricanes. While Pointe Mezzanine's condo project does temporarily limit some beach access, it also includes roadway improvements that will benefit public parking, traffic flow

## "Reel Talk" from the City of Destin

## Straight to the Point ... Norriego Point!

and access to the park. Everything beyond the development remains public, including our nearly completed restrooms and ADA pathways that connect residents to this iconic space. I understand concerns about changing views, but our priority now is ensuring public and private spaces work together to build the kind of connected community we all want for Destin.

TY: I do understand many people's frustrations over wanting the area to stay unspoiled. But, one positive I'm excited about is the multiple dune crossovers being constructed. These are crucial for protecting coastal ecosystems. So, I'm hoping people respect them and use them. While it's fun to trample around in the sand, those crossovers and the boardwalk will help maintain dune stability, lessen erosion and allow native species an undisturbed habitat. Crossovers are a small investment that protect big-picture resilience.

**BW:** Absolutely agree on the importance of dune crossovers. They're a great example of how we can balance access and



environmental preservation. Without them, people naturally create their own paths, which damages vegetation and speeds up erosion. Last June, City Council invested \$233,918—less than 1% of the total cost—to fund one of the three crossovers. That small contribution

supported a \$17 million project, largely funded by BP oil spill settlement money, keeping the impact on local taxpayers minimal. This is what I mean when I talk about reviving and sustaining Destin—creating infrastructure that connects people with nature while protecting it.

TY: We were recently asked if the ruling is still in place that "the pointe LLC marina" is for private use only and not for commercial use. This is a good chance to answer that. Yes, the Point Mezzanine docking facilities are for residents of the Point Mezzanine condo only. Again, this is from an older development order. The whole area is an incredibly beautiful area of Destin, and I'm looking forward to getting out there. The park should be completed by the end of June barring any unexpected delays. We should have plenty of gorgeous weather here for people to enjoy the space still this year.

**BW:** The Norriego Point project reflects what makes Destin special—our natural beauty, harbor views, and engaged boating and walking community. Some were concerned about view changes or construction, but the need for restrooms was a top issue during my 2022 campaign, especially from Holiday Isle residents. It wasn't just about convenience—it was about health, sanitation and respect for the environment. I'm excited to see the park open this summer. It represents years of collaboration and shows our commitment to preserving Destin's identity while improving access for all. I hope everyone will join us for the ribbon-cutting this summer!



Saturday, May 17th • 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM at the Destin-FWB Fairgrounds and Event Center 1958 Lewis Turner Boulevard, Fort Walton Beach, FL

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## Make May Magical at The Village of Baytowne Wharf!

Get ready—May is bursting with energy at The Village of Baytowne Wharf! From sunset strolls to live music, themed nights to family-friendly fun, there's something unforgettable happening around every corner. The Village is buzzing with excitement, and its local shops and eateries are rolling out the welcome mat for you to play, dine, dance, and discover. Whether you're sipping something sweet by the lagoon, grooving under the stars, or simply soaking in the vibrant vibes-there's no better time to dive into the magic of Baytowne!

#### Welcome Summer During the Memorial Day Celebration Weekend! Saturday, May 24th, 7-9 p.m. | Sunday, May 25th, 6-9 p.m. | FREE

Kick off the 100 days of summer as festivities begin on Saturday, May 24th, when a true locals' favorite, Forrest Williams Band, takes the stage at the Events plaza from 7-9 p.m.

On Sunday, May 25th, enjoy live music from Saltwater Revival 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!

#### **Wednesday Night Concert Series**

#### Wednesdays, May 7-28 | 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 7th: The Sunshine Wranglers

May 14th: Duchess May 21st: The New Cahoots May 28th: Below Alabama FREE to attend.

#### 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 hosts the 12th 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'll have a say in the People's choice Award for Best Taco. Sample many types



of Tequilas and Margaritas from Blancos, Resposados, Anjieos, and even Mezcals while indulging in 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.

#### Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios Presents a Spring Concert!

Friday, May 13 | 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 13th at 7 p.m. Location: Baytowne Amphitheater! (Next to Zip Line) It 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!

IACOS · MARGARITAS · BEE

#### Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, May 15 | 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 18 – August 3 | 7-9 p.m. | FREE

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 19 & 26 | 8 p.m. | FREE

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!

5/19: Encanto 5/26: Elemental

### **Boomin' Tuesday**

#### Tuesdays, May 20 – Aug. 12 | 7:15-9:15 p.m. | FREE

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!

## Thursdays, May 22 - Aug. 14 9 p.m. | FREE

This one-of-a-kind aerial display blends technology and coastal charm, making it the perfect way to celebrate the magic of the Village under the stars!

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!





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Open enrollment is NOW underway at Destin High School (DHS), a top-performing public charter school that offers the feel of a private school with the accessibility of a public education. With no zoning restrictions and no tuition, DHS is your gateway to a personalized, future-focused high school journey.

At DHS, we go beyond graduation. Our students are empowered to lead, create and thrivewith innovative academics, real-world career pathways and hands-on learning experiences extending beyond textbooks to provide life-changing opportunities designed to prepare you for success in college, careers and life. From amazing new facilities and expert teachers to diverse, hands-on, real-world programs and community partnerships, DHS offers the freedom to explore your passions and shape your future—your way.

## Why choose Destin High School?

Academic Excellence: From Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment to honors and standard courses, DHS provides a variety of academic pathways to challenge and support every student. Whether preparing for college or a specialized career, we ensure you have the foundation to excel.

Award-Winning Arts & Broadcasting Opportunities: Destin High School offers a vibrant Performing and Visual Arts program where students shine in competitions and public performances:

- Theatre Star in award-winning productions
- Band Perform with distinction in marching and concert events
- Dance Compete and express artistry through movement
- Choir Perform at top regional events
- Visual Arts Create across a variety of mediums

Our students consistently excel at the regional level, proving that creativity thrives at DHS!

Plus, with the launch of our Radio Broadcasting Club—in



partnership with DestinFM—students gain hands-on experience in broadcasting, journalism and live hosting. The program includes a School-to-Work Pipeline, preparing students for radio and digital media careers through mentorship and real-world training.

**Athletic Excellence:** With over 20 varsity sports, DHS athletes compete at elite levels and earn big wins:

- Football Led by FSU Hall of Famer and former NFL player Coach E.G. Green, DHS football is building a legacy of excellence, tradition and teamwork
- Girls Volleyball Ranked #1 Independent Team in Florida two years in a row
- Boys Soccer Ranked #2 Independent Team in Florida this year
- Baseball, Softball & Basketball – Multiple athletes awarded college scholarships
- Cheer Competed at Disney World Cheer Nationals!

This June, DHS will be recommended for full membership in the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA), allowing all 22 varsity teams to compete in state championship series. Since launching in 2020, Destin High has steadily built a top-tier athletics program with strong community supportgiving student athletes a bigger stage and brighter future.

Nation's Only High School Artificial Reef Program: DHS is home to the country's only high school-based artificial reef program. Through the Fishing Education Program, students partner with Reefmaker of Orange Beach, Ala., to build and deploy 8-foot, 5,500-pound concrete reefs in the Gulf—some serving as personalized

memorials

Over 20 reefs have been placed in the "Destin High School Reef" zone, 65 feet deep off the Okaloosa Island Pier. Supported by community fundraisers and partnerships—

including Okaloosa County's Natural Resources Team—this hands-on program promotes marine conservation while teaching students real-world skills and environmental stewardship.

**One-of-a-Kind Saltwater Fishing Program:** DHS is the only high school in Florida where students can earn a captain's license through our unique

Continued on page 20





## Cali's To Do In Destin! MAY 2025

Mindful Meditation | 9am | Destin

Run Club | 4:30pm | Idyll Hounds

Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou Trivia Night | 6pm | Ricks Crab Trap

Karaoke | 6pm-9pm | Fatboy's Destin

Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay Trivia Night | 5pm | Down Island Music Match Game Night | 5pm | The

Run Club | 5:30pm | Destin Brewery Rock n Roll Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's

Trivia Night | 6pm | Craft Bar @ The

Music Bingo | 6:30pm | Palm Folly Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm I Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke | 7pm | AJ's Oyster Shanty Mini Makers & Experimenters Lab

10:30am | Emerald Coast Science Center **Singo Music Bingo** | 5pm | The Island Yoga Class | 6pm | Destin Community

Concerts in the Park - Dear Amy: Amy

Winehouse Tribute | 6pm | Mattie Kelly Little Black Dress Night | 6:30pm-

9:30pm | Marina Café Fort Comedy Open Mic Standup | 7pm

Tequila Dinner for Tequila & Taco Festival | 6pm | Cantina Laredo

Emerald Coast Storytellers Open Mic Night | 5-8pm | Grayton Beer | Miramar

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin Friday Martini Lunch | 11am-4pm |

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

Singo Music Bingo | 5pm | The Island

Spring Luau Fundraiser | 5pm | Soundside FWB

Karaoke | 6pm | Kluges Rucken Fidiculous BBQ (1310 Lewis Turner Blvd) Tequila & Taco Festival Kick Off Party

6pm | Baytowne Wharf NHS Theatre's Hello Dolly | 7pm | Niceville High School

Free Outdoor Movie Night | 7pm |

Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm |

Latin Night | 8pm-2am | Bosforo in

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Lighthouse 10

Famers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

Farmers Market | 10am-2pm | Harborwalk Village

EmpowHER Mental Health Workshop 10am | Niceville High School

Girls Empowered with Math & Science (GEMS) | 10:30am | FWB Public Library Tequila & Taco Festival | 1pm | Baytowne Wharf



Harbor Sip & Shop: Mother's Day | 3pm

Free Jazz Concert | 6pm | Fudpucker's NHS Theatre's Hello Dolly | 7pm | Niceville High School

The Piano Man | 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center at NWFSC | Niceville Velvet Coffin | 8pm | Native's Cove Karaoke Night 19pm | Harry Ts Light-

Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab

**Destin Community Farmers Market** | 9am-1pm | Bealls Parking Lot, Destin Bye Bye Brunch | 10am | Poppy's

DJ Brunch | 10am | Azul @ Harborwalk Trivia Night | 6pm | The Wharf 850 Karaoke | 9pm | Outcast Bar & Grill

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm |

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Destin Brewer Trivia Night | 7pm | Beachview Breakfast ••••••• 13 •••••

Singo Music Bingo | 5pm | The Island

Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou Trivia Night | 6pm | Ricks Crab Trap FWB Karaoke | 6pm-9pm | Fatboy's Destin Open Mic Night | 7pm | Soundside FWB

**Destin Community Farmers Market** | 4pm-7pm | Beall's Parking Lot Destin Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay Trivia Night | 5pm | Down Island Music Match Game Night | 5pm | The Island Resort
Run Club | 5:30pm | Destin Brewer

Trivia Night | 6pm | Craft Bar @ The

Rock n Roll Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's

Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke | 7pm | AJ's Oyster Shanty

**Little Scallywags Pirate Walk** | 4pm | Downtown FWB Art & Architecture Walking Tour | 4pm

Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Baytowne

Concerts in the Park – Kickstand Jenny l 6pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Baby Goat Yoga | 6pm | Native's Cove Little Black Dress Night | 6:30pm-9:30pm | Marina Café

Fort Comedy Open Mic Standup | 7pm l Downtown Music Hall

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin Friday Martini Lunch | 11am-4pm |

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

Singo Music Bingo | 5pm | The Island

Rotary Crawfish Bash | 5:30pm | Towne Centre at Seascape | Miramar Beach Concerts at The Landing / Billy Bowlegs Festival | 5pm-9pm | The Landing FWB

Karaoke | 6pm | Kluges Rucken Fidicu-lous BBQ (1310 Lewis Turner Blvd) Free Outdoor Movie Night | 7pm |

Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm |

Bric a Brac Latin Night | 8pm-2am | Bosforo in

Digital Graffiti Adults Only | 8pm-11pm

Fireworks | 8:30pm | The Landing FWB Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

Farmers Market | 8am | The Landing

Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand

Billy Bowlegs Festival | 10am-6pm | The Landing FWB

Spring Home & Boat Show | 10am-5pm | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds | FWB Lionfish Festival | Harbor Boardwalk |

Splash of Gold Pool Party | 1:30pm | Taj Renee Community Aquatic Center I

Splash of Gold Cocktail Social | 4:30pm Taj Renee Community Aquatic Cente Tchaikovsky x Drake | 7:30pm | Des-

Island Digital Graffiti All Ages | 8pm-11pm |

Harbor Sip & Shop | 3pm | Harborwalk

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry Ts Lighthouse ......... 18 .......

Destin Community Farmers Market 9am-1pm | Bealls Parking Lot, Destin **DJ Brunch** | 10am | Azul @ Harborwalk

Lionfish Festival | Harbor Boardwalk |

Soundside Brunch Market | 11am | Soundside FWB

**Trivia Night** | 6pm | The Wharf 850 Karaoke | 9pm | Outcast Bar & Grill

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Destin Brewery

Trivia Night | 7pm | Beachview Breakfast

Billy Bowlegs Torchlight Parade |7pm|Downtown FWB 20 .....

Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou Trivia Night | 6pm | Ricks Crab Trap FWB Karaoke | 6pm-9pm | Fatboy's Destin Open Mic Night | 7pm | Soundside FWB Destin Community Farmers Market |

4pm-7pm | Beall's Parking Lot Destin Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay Trivia Night | 5pm | Down Island Music Match Game Night | 5pm | The Island Resort

Run Club | 5:30pm | Destin Brewer Trivia Night | 6pm | Craft Bar @ The

Rock n Roll Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's

Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm l Village of Baytowne Wharf Karaoke | 7pm | AJ's Oyster Shanty

Concerts in the Park - The Molly Ringwalds | 6pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Little Black Dress Night | 6:30pm-

Fort Comedy Open Mic Standup | 7pm

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin

Yoga on the Green | 9am | The Island Friday Martini Lunch | 11am-4pm |

Singo Music Bingo | 5pm | The Island

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

**Karaoke** I 6pm I Kluges Rucken Fidiculous BBQ (1310 Lewis Turner Blvd) Free Outdoor Movie Night | 7pm |

Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Bric a Brac Latin Night | 8pm-2am | Bosforo in

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Lighthouse

••••••• 24 ••••• Farmers Market | 8am | The Landing

Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand

Slacker Half K | 10am | Boathouse Oyster

Memorial Day Celebration | 6pm | Harborwalk Villad Memorial Day Celebration | 7pm |

**Disguise Night** | 7pm | Soundside FWB **Karaoke Night** | 9pm | Harry Ts Light-

house

**Destin Community Farmers Market** | 9am-1pm | Bealls Parking Lot, Destin DJ Brunch | 10am | Azul @ Harborwalk Blessing of the Families | Church of

Destin Church Services **Destin Commons Farmers Market** 

Memorial Day Celebration | 5:30pm | Harborwalk Village Trivia Night | 6pm | The Wharf 850

Memorial Day Celebration | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf

Sinfonia Goes Pops! | 7:30pm | Alys Fireworks | 9pm | Baytowne Wharf Fireworks | 9pm | Destin Harbor

Karaoke | 9pm | Outcast Bar & Grill

26 ..... Memorial Day Celebration | 6pm |

Harborwalk Villac Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Destin Brewery
Trivia Night | 7pm | Beachview Breakfast

Silent Disco | 7pm | Captain's Deck

Fireworks & Fire Spinning | 9pm | Harborwalk Village

Karaoke | 6pm | AJ's on the Bayou **Trivia Night** | 6pm | Ricks Crab Trap FWB Karaoke | 6pm-9pm | Fatboy's Destin Harbor Nights ft. Harbor Street Parade l 6pm | Harborwalk Village Open Mic Night | 7pm | Soundside FWB

Blessing of the Marketplace | 11:30am | Destin Methodist Church

**Destin Community Farmers Market** | 4pm-7pm | Beall's Parking Lot Destin Bonfire on the Beach | 5pm | The Bay Music Match Game Night | 5pm | The

Trivia Night | 5pm | Down Island Run Club | 5:30pm | Destin Brewery
Blessing of the Youth | 6pm | Harborwalk

Rock n Roll Bingo | 6pm | Fatboy's

**Trivia Night** | 6pm | Craft Bar @ The Wednesday Night Concert Series | 7pm

I Village of Baytowne Wharf Karaoke | 7pm | AJ's Oyster Shanty

**68th Annual Blessing of the Fleet** | 4pm | Harbor Behind Brotula's | Destin Concerts in the Park - Petty Hearts |

6pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Four Blessing of the Fleet Watch Party | 6pm

Little Black Dress Night | 6:30pm-Fort Comedy Open Mic Standup | 7pm | Downtown Music Hall

Fireworks | 9pm | Destin Harbor Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-

Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuire's Destin Friday Martini Lunch | 11am-4pm |

**Singo Music Bingo** | 5pm | The Island

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

**Karaoke** I 6pm I Kluges Rucken Fidiculous BBQ (1310 Lewis Turner Blvd) Coastal Country Concert | 6pm | Harbor-

Free Outdoor Movie Night | 7pm |

Salsa & Bachata Dance Lessons | 8pm | Latin Night | 8pm-2am | Bosforo in

Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-

Farmers Market | 9am-1pm | Grand

Boulevard Summer Sun-Sets Concert Series | 6pm Karaoke Night | 9pm | Harry T's Light-



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## **Event Highlights Around Town**

#### Let's Taco 'Bout It! 12th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest May 8-11

So. Many. Tacos! Chicken, Pork, Beef, Steak, Shrimp, Barbacoa – you name it; we have it at the wildly popular Tequila & Taco Festival – the 2nd longest-running Tequila and Taco Fest in the U.S. Enjoy Tequila and Margarita tastings, live mu(\$79.99). Call 850-654-5649 for reservations.

**Kickoff Party** – May 9, 6-9 p.m. at Baytowne Wharf. Live music, unlimited appetizers, tequila & margarita samplings (\$75).

**Festival Main Event** – May 10, 1-4 p.m. (VIP noon-4 p.m.) Unlimited taco tastings & tequila samplings (\$40-\$175).

May 15 to May 19, 2025. Festivities begin Thursday evening with a Pre-Invasion meet-and-greet downtown. On Friday, May 16, the Landing hosts a Pirate Skirmish starting at 5 p.m., featuring live music and fireworks. Saturday, May 17, brings

the main event at Fort Walton Beach Landing (131 Brooks St. SE), running from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with vendor booths, food trucks, live music, and the Pirate Landing at 3 p.m. The celebration concludes Monday, May 19, with the Torchlight Parade along Eglin Parkway beginning at 7 p.m. For more details, visit billybowlegsfestival.com.







sic, DJ and face painting, and recently honored with the Gold Award for Best Event in the 2025 Perfect in Walton County Awards! Sample many types of Tequilas and Margaritas from Blancos, Reposados, Anejos and even Mezcals. So, get ready for Tacos, Tequila and fun and find your favorite at the 12th Annual Tequila & Taco Festival, happening May 8-11, 2025, at The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin! Local restaurants and food trucks will compete for the Best Taco on the Emerald Coast with a \$2,500 grand

Enjoy Tequila and Margarita tastings, live music, DJ and face painting.

Event Highlights: Tequila Dinner - May 8,

6:30-9 p.m. at Cantina Laredo

VIP at Jimmy Buffett's 5 O'Clock Somewhere.

**BYE BYE Brunch** – May 11, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Sunset Bay Cafe at Sandestin. \$50 includes two Margaritas or Bloody Marys (limited seating).

**New Yacht Charters** – that include Tequila, Latin Small Plates, Boating and one VIP Ticket per person.

Get your tickets NOW at EfestEvents.com. Part of the proceeds benefit Fisher House and A Bed For Me Foundation. Don't miss this Emerald Coast favorite!

#### Get Your Pirate on at the Billy Bowlegs Festival May 15-19

The 69th Annual Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival will take place in Fort Walton Beach from





Mattie Kelly Arts Center 100 College Blvd East, Niceville



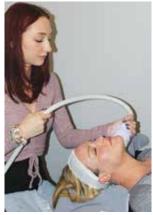






## **Trends & Treasures!**













#### Celebrate Spring with Sparkle at Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

At Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, the season's colors inspire dazzling designs in diamonds, gemstones and precious metals. Owner Ashleigh Woolly and her team are ready to craft your next showstopper. Let's design something for you for Mother's Day, Memorial Day or summer! With so much colorful variety, your only challenge is choosing. Whether you're shopping for a special gift to honor your Mom for Mother's Day, a graduate gift, an engagement ring or a patriotic piece, Beyond Measure is here for you.

Step into the City Market Bayside showroom and explore stunning rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings—or sit down for a one-on-one custom design experience. From classic to bold, Ashleigh's passion for jewelry shines, especially when helping couples choose the perfect engagement ring or wedding band. "Helping people celebrate life's most meaningful moments is what we love most," says Ashleigh. With hundreds of custom creations and an eye for exceptional quality, Beyond Measure makes every piece personal and unforgettable.

Visit BeyondMeasureJewelers.com or stop by the shop to begin your custom journey.

(850) 424-7011 | Facebook. com/beyondmeasurejewelers beyondmeasurejewelry.com

#### Mothers' Day May Madness CRYO850 Performance and Recovery

It's our favorite time of year at CRYO850 when we get to honor the women in our lives! Most moms spend their days focused on everyone except themselves. What better way to celebrate her than spoiling her

with a gift of self care and time with loved ones! In appreciation for all moms (and a push to kids and spouses), we're offering a DAY PASS FOR TWO for only \$125 (\$175 value). Spend an afternoon with mom experiencing all the latest technology in health and wellness. Detox in the Infrared Sauna. Refresh and rejuvenate your body and your mind in the Emerald Coast Igloo and Red Light Therapy Room. Shake it out with Vibration and move your lymphatic system and increase circulation in our Compression Lounge. Want to go next level with mom? Give her a COLLAGEN ENHANCEMENT TREAT-MENT \$125 (\$145 Value). Want to go all out? Give her a full body MOMMY MAKE-OVER with Radio Frequency Skin Tightening for only \$399.

Give mom the gift of youth and self-care! CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center accepts Health Saving Accounts and Flexible Spending Accounts, which provide tax free dollars for spending on your health.

Pre-register online.
(850) 279-4145 | facebook.
com/CRYO850
www.cryo850.com

#### Polished, Classy, Edgy, Inviting—For You or Mom! Pure & Couture Salon

At Pure & Couture Salon, beauty isn't just a service—it's a passion woven into every appointment. "It's a beautiful thing when a career and passion come together," says owner Adrianne Brackett. "For me, it's not just about making clients look and feel amazing—it's about sharing knowledge, uplifting our team, and creating real connection with our community." From the moment you walk in, you'll notice something different. "Our guests often say the

atmosphere just feels special," Adrianne adds. "That's because we genuinely love our stylists, therapists, and guests like family. Your relationship with us means everything." Whether you're shopping for salon products or booking a service, the Pure & Couture experience is centered around you-your look, your lifestyle and your confidence. Expert stylists carefully consider your skin tone, face shape, personality and budget, crafting styles that take you from "fine" to fabulous. Planning a wedding or special event? The salon offers on-location bridal and event styling to make your big day even more beautiful. This season, treat yourself-or Momto the gift of timeless beauty. Let the Pure & Couture team take you into summer with pure confidence, expert care and effortless style. Be beautifully you. Be "Purely" beautiful.

Second location: Pure Collective Salon, 600 Grand Blvd., Suite 102.

(850) 424-3935 | facebook. com/PureandCouture pureandcouture.com

#### Flavors That Wow—From Mom's Day to "Just Because" Smallcakes Destin: A Cupcakery

From custom cakes to gourmet cupcakes, Smallcakes at City Market in Destin is your go-to for sweet celebrations this Mother's Day, Memorial Day-and every day! Whether you're planning a wedding, surprising Mom or just craving something delicious, Smallcakes serves up handcrafted treats baked fresh daily with flavor, flair, and fun. Choose from 13 signature cupcakes, 4 rotating specialties, 12 ice cream flavors, plus gourmet popcorn, cookie cakes, brownies, jumbo cookies and cupcakes-in-a-jar. Looking for a lighter option? Ask about gluten-free treats. Even furry friends get in on the fun with adorable pupcakes.

Celebrate in style with custom edible images or logos on cupcakes, cakes and minis—perfect for weddings, birthdays, office events or just because. Can't choose? Grab a 12-pack of assorted minis to sample the season's best. New cupcake and frosting flavors are dropping in May—colorful, creative—and made to impress—with flavor and fun baked in.

Stop by or order online | DoorDash & curbside pickup available. Call ahead for custom orders!

Mon–Sat: 11 a.m.–7 p.m. | Sun: 11 a.m.–4 p.m. (850) 842-9002

SmallcakesDestin.com | Follow @SmallCakesofDestin

#### Cheers to Fun, Unique Gifts! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

Looking for a unique gift for Mom, Grandma, Graduate or your BFF? Frill Seekers Gifts in City Market Bayside has you covered with meaningful treasures and stylish surprises.

Start with a Champagne Nite Shirt—super soft 100% cotton sateen with pink trim and French cuffs. Add her monogram for a chic, personalized touch. Or gift a custom porcelain ring box—monogrammed on the lid with a sweet note tucked inside. Sentimental and stylish!

For the note-writing mom, engraved stationery, notecards or calling cards make thoughtful keepsakes. And no one can resist the cult-favorite Volcano candle by Capri Blue—citrusy, sweet, and absolutely addicting. Don't forget graduation invitations and thank you notes, customized with your personality and style.

Want to wow her? Let Frill Seekers create a custom gift basket filled with curated goodies. Just call with your budget or browse in-store to build your own. Every gift includes complimentary signature gift wrapping and shipping available for any occasion.

Visit Mon–Fri 10–5 | Sat 10–2

(850) 460-2700 | Facebook. com/FrillSeekersGifts frillseekersgifts.com

#### Unlock the Secrets to Selling Your Home for Top Dollar!

## Brian LoCicero, REALTOR® Thinking of selling your

Thinking of selling your home? Discover the insider strategies used by top sellers with the new book from luxury REALTOR® Brian K. LoCicero. With years of experience and thousands of successful sales, Brian reveals the proven methods that can help you get maximum value in minimum time—in any market.

Inside his book, you'll find battle-tested techniques once reserved for high-end sellers, now available to you. Whether you're selling a cozy cottage or a luxury estate, these insights will give you the edge you need. "In this guide, I share what works—practical, powerful strategies for sellers who want results," says Brian.

Clients agree. "Brian helped us navigate 30A's competitive market with ease. Thanks to his strategies, we sold our Destin home quickly and bought a beachfront home on 30A—below asking price!" shares happy client A. Albright.

Destin Life readers can claim a FREE copy of Brian's book for a limited time by emailing Brian@BeOnTheCoast.com or calling (850) 739-3800.

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## **Around Town**

#### **Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Demetrius Fuller Accepted into Florida Chapter of the Recording Academy; Takes Leadership Role in Music Education**

Demetrius Fuller, Founder and Music & Artistic Director of Sinfonia Gulf Coast, has been named a Professional Member of the Florida Chapter of the Recording Academy—currently the ONLY professional member from Northwest Florida. He has also been appointed to the chapter's Education Committee, helping guide statewide music education and scholarship initiatives supported by Musi-

Fuller founded Sinfonia in 2004 at just 24 and joined the Academy in 2024. His appointment comes as Sinfonia pre-



pares to celebrate its 20th anniversary season in 2025–2026.

Joining the Florida Chapter of the Recording Academy is an honor that places Sinfonia Gulf Coast within an influential global network of music industry professionals," said Fuller. "This affiliation aligns perfectly with our mission to redefine

the symphony experience while supporting music education and professional growth in our community and beyond."

Demetrius also mentors through GRAMMY U, connecting music professionals with college students pursuing careers in the music industry. He has commissioned and premiered numerous works, helping shape both regional and international music culture.

"We are beyond proud of this stellar accomplishment," added Elizabeth Boswell, board president. "Demetrius is not only a distinguished music professional, but a relevant and engaged industry leader."

The Recording Academy's Florida Chapter, founded in 1995, represents artists and professionals throughout Florida and Puerto Rico and includes icons like Gloria Estefan, DJ Khaled and Bad Bunny, reflecting Florida's rich musical heritage and dynamic contemporary scene.

Visit SinfoniaGulfCoast.org.

#### **Award-Winning Real Estate and Vacation Rental Company Celebrates Major Milestone**

Newman-Dailey Resort Properties, founded by Jeanne Dailey and Randy Newman in 1985, celebrates its 40th anniversary this month. Known for excellence in vacation rentals, property management, and real estate, the company has built a legacy rooted in integrity, service, and community involvement.

"We're honored to have an extended family of owners, guests and friends who have supported us all these years," said founder and CEO Jeanne Dailey. "They've shaped our culture and inspired our commitment to excellence."

Recognized by Emerald Coast Magazine, VIP Destin (Best in Destin Award for Vacation Rentals) and the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce (Best Large Business), Newman-Dailey's real estate team also ranks in the top 10% on the Emerald Coast (Emerald Coast Association of Realtors). The company has received accolades such as Florida Trend's Best Places to Work and the Torch Award for Ethics from the Better Business Bureau.

Leadership remains active locally and statewide—Dailey serves on boards including the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation and VISIT Florida, while President Ken Wampler chairs the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourist Development Council.

Community impact is core to the company's mission. Last





year, Newman-Dailey's summer service project raised \$35,569 and donated 4,479 food items to Harvest House of Destin. Newman-Dailey also participated in a community grant program for Habitat for Humanity Walton County, which contributed \$133k toward the building of a home in Hope Village.

With more than 40 years service, Newman-Dailey's team remains strong and steady—59% of staff have been with the company for over a decade. That stability has been crucial in navigating major challenges, from Hurricanes Opal and Ivan to the BP Oil Spill and COVID-19.

During the Housekeeping & Laundry Manager Eddie Gray helped develop new industry-wide sanitization standards, while CEO Jeanne Dailey led efforts to lobby the Governor's Office to reopen Florida tourism in time for Memorial Day weekend.

Visit NewmanDailey.com.

## **Spring into Savings at the Northwest** Florida Spring Home & Boat Show!

Saturday, May 17, 2025 | Northwest Florida Fairgrounds | FREE Admission!

Get ready, Northwest Florida! One of the most anticipated events of the season is sailing your way—the Northwest Florida Spring Home & Boat Show is coming to the Northwest Florida Fairgrounds for one exciting day only on Saturday, May 17, 2025—and admission is completely FREE! Presented by Paradise Promotions and powered by sponsors Life Media (Destin Life. Bay Life, FWB Life), Ecoview Windows, Defined Interiors, JVC Broadcasting, Fast Signs, Peaden AC, Zoo Graphics, and The Honey Do Service, this dynamic event will feature 50+ vendors showcasing ev- has it all. erything you need to upgrade your home and lifestyle—with exclusive show-only discounts and giveaways. Expect to find the best deals on everything from roofing,

remodeling, and restoration services to flooring, furniture, pools, spas, windows and doors.

Plus, explore innovations in solar energy, tech gadgets, closets, kitchens, bathrooms, and more—all under one roof! And that's not all-Emerald Coast Marine will be on-site hosting a Super Spring Boat Show & Sale, offering fantastic boat deals you won't want to miss. Whether you're dreaming of hitting the water or refreshing your home, this show

On top of that, there will be over \$10,000 in swag and door prizes up for grabs! And with vendors from health and wellness to tech and travelincluding Scentsy, chiropractic

massage therapy, and more—there's something here for everyone.

Don't miss this chance to connect with local experts, score unbeatable deals, and get inspired for your next home or boating adventure. Want to be a vendor? Visit www.Paradise-Promotions-FL.com to register your booth space today!

It's all happening Saturday, May 17—one big day, one fantastic event. See you at the fairgrounds!



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## **Niceville Slabs and Cookies:**

## Our Roots Run Deep—and Wide

By Genevieve Burgess

Tucked just behind a gate off Kelly Road—marked by a bold blue "B" and the faint scent of sawdust in the air—you'll find one of the best-kept secrets on the Emerald Coast: Niceville Slabs and Cookies, also known as "Your Emerald Coast Wood Source." But if you're imagining an old-school lumber yard? Think again.

What started as a garage passion project has grown into a dynamic, community-driven woodworking hub with a mission: connect people to truly remarkable wood and help them bring their creative visions to life

From the very beginning, NSC wasn't built on big-box ideas—it was built on relationships, craftsmanship, and a deep respect for the story each tree tells. Whether you're a first-time DIYer, a professional maker, or someone who just fell in love with the perfect slab for a dining table, you'll find more than just wood here. You'll find people who get it.

And now, NSC is leveling up. The business is in the midst of restructuring into three distinct branches designed to serve the growing community of makers, artists, and legacy builders across the Gulf Coast:

#### The Wood Shed at NSC

- The heart of the operation. Stocked with over 50 domestic and exotic hardwood species—many milled and kiln-dried on site—The Wood Shed offers raw slabs, cookies, dimensional lumber, and milling services for everyone from hobbyists to highend builders.

### The Legacy Line at NSC

- Where heirloom meets heart. Specializing in handcrafted custom work, this division brings meaningful builds to life—whether you're dreaming of a show-stopping dining table, a statement mantel, or floating shelves that feel like they were always meant to be there.

NSC serves both residential and commercial clients, with standout projects including a stunning full interior build at Eagle Eye Vision in Niceville, and a cozy custom library featuring a built-in daybed for a local homeowner. The team works

regularly with trusted names like Randy Wise Homes, Rominger Construction, and other respected contractors throughout the Panhandle.

Each project under The Legacy Line is grounded in craftsmanship, intention, and a deep respect for the material—turning slabs with character into pieces with soul.

### The Shop Shelf at NSC

Home to all things finished, polished, and wildly giftable.
 From epoxy charcuterie boards and stabilized pen blanks to hand-finished home goods, this retail space celebrates the creative talent that flows through NSC—and makes it accessible to anyone walking through the door.

And behind all of it? A crew of hardworking, hands-on, sawdust-covered humans who proudly refer to themselves as Wood Dealers.

There's Mike—owner, sawmill master, and the quiet force behind the big machines. Kathleen—the in-house accountant with a woodworking obsession and a love for clean cuts and clean ledgers. Aaron-yard expert and lumber wrangler, likely to be your first point of contact when you pull through the gate. And Genevieve—creative director, chaos coordinator, class instructor, and one of NSC's founding voices, often found giving shop tours or promoting epoxy classes to the next wave of makers.

Together, they're not just selling wood—they're building a movement.

NSC regularly hosts woodworking and epoxy classes, live demos, and collaborative workshops with local artists, florists, and small businesses. They also lend their talents and time to causes that matter, donating builds and support to nonprofits like Emerald Coast Autism Center, PAWS, Freedom House, and CALM.

"Our goal has always been to make quality wood more accessible—and to show people what's possible once they get their hands on the right piece," Genevieve says. "We're here to help people create. Whether it's a massive dining table or a simple epoxy cheese board, it



all starts with the right piece of wood—and the right people to help."

So the next time you're nearby, stop in. Browse the slab wall. Ask questions. Get inspired.

Because at NSC, we don't just sell wood—we deal in possibility.

Visit us at 207 B Kelly Rd., Niceville. Phone 850.897.0038. On the web: NicevilleSlabsAnd-Cookies.com.





207 B Kelly Rd., Niceville, FL | 850-897-0038 www.nicevilleslabsandcookies.com



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## What You Should Do Right After An Auto Accident

By Julie A. Martin Publisher's Note:

Recently, my daughter was involved in a rear-end collision, and the experience opened my eyes to just how overwhelming and confusing the aftermath of an auto accident can be. The article that follows offers es-

amial wallitt

Life is complicated.

doesn't have to be.

Your insurance

ABORA

sential steps to take after an accident information that proved incredibly helpful to my family during a stressful time. I felt it was important to share it again, in hopes that it may serve you as well, should you ever find yourself in a similar situation.

It can be scary to be driving

along one minute, and the next, either you've been run off the road, or spun out into the intersection, or even into a ditch. You or your passenger might even be injured, and need medical attention. Here is the short version of how to handle auto

Personal &

Insurance



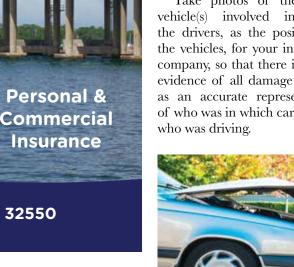
accidents so that you know you handled everything correctly and your stress level can come down.

Pull over safely to the side of the road and call 911. Calling for help is the first essential step in making sure that any injuries are treated in a timely fashion, as well as making sure the police arrive to do a full accident report.

Take photos of the other vehicle(s) involved including the drivers, as the position of the vehicles, for your insurance company, so that there is photo evidence of all damage as well as an accurate representation of who was in which car, as well



hospital bills, medical bills relating to your accident injuries, physical therapy, casts, crutches, etc. If you have medical payments on your policy as well, they will start where the Personal Injury Protection ends. If the at fault driver is not you, and they either have no bodily injury liability coverage, or not enough to cover your injuries, this is where uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage comes in. You insure for those times that





Make sure you have your license, registration and insurance information on hand. I recommend keeping a copy of your declarations page, your auto id cards and your registration in your glove box.

If your vehicle is not drivable after the accident, you have two choices. If you have AAA, you can have them pick up your vehicle and drop it off at your preferred auto repair shop. If you have towing on your auto policy, and the site of your accident is less than five miles away from your repair shop, you can potentially use the towing coverage on your policy for this accident.

If you are injured, go to the hospital to get checked out or your primary care physician, if your injuries are not serious. Personal Injury Protection in the state of Florida pays 80% of your \$10,000 coverage, minus the deductible. This includes

you get hit, you're hurt, but the person who causes the accident does not have enough coverage to cover your medical expenses.

If you have not already called your insurance company to put in the claim, do so now, calling your agent and explaining to them what happened. Answer their questions and do not guess if you do not know the answer. Let them know that the police have been on the scene. Give them the case number the police give you and they will get the accident report when it becomes available. Write down the claim number and any other instructions the claims representative, and your agent give you for the accident.

Dear reader, we all get into a scrape from time to time, and hopefully this list is helpful when you need to know what to do. Call 850-424-6979.



850-424-6979 11275 U.S. Hwy. 98 #7 | Miramar Beach, FL 32550



## Truth Be Sold: The Hidden Costs of Rate 2/1 Buydowns and Flawed Advice in Real Estate



By Paul Domenech

#### Truth be sold:

2/1 rate buydowns might sound attractive, but they can cost you more in the long run, especially if you're not prepared for what happens next.

#### Here's the deal:

You're told you can "buy down" your interest rate and save \$240 a month in your first year. Sounds great, right? Until year two hits, and your payment jumps from \$1,700 to \$1,950.

Meanwhile, if you had negotiated that same buy-down cost off the purchase price instead, your mortgage would've been \$1,880, every year, consistently. Predictable. Budgetable.

That's not just a math lesson; it's a mindset warning.

You've probably heard the saying: "Marry the house, date the rate." Cute, but terrible advice if you ask me. You wouldn't run a household like a casual relationship. If you're planning to buy a home, arguably the biggest financial commitment of your life, you need to approach it like a responsible, long-term investment, not a temporary fling.

The reality? Many people who were sold on rate buydowns or the hope of refinancing in 2024 are now stuck. Rates didn't drop the way they were promised. Equity hasn't climbed the way it used to. And that "refi later" strategy? It's left a lot of folks feeling trapped, stressed, and financially stretched.



Then there's the tax hit no one talks about. If you bought with the plan to "get in now and sell when things are better," and end up selling in under two years—boom, you could be facing capital gains taxes. Because you didn't live in the home long enough to qualify for the exclusion.

And that's not all. Watch out for lender fees buried in flashy "first-time buyer" or "veteran programs." There's no magic lender out there just for veterans. Some are veteran-owned, yes, but that doesn't always mean better terms. Sometimes that lower rate comes with padded closing costs. A great lender is someone who answers the phone, charges no junk fees, and offers solid options with full transparency,no matter who you are.

#### Here's our promise:

Whether you're buying, selling, or just need to make sense of the chaos—we'll give you the

truth. Not a pitch. Not a gimmick. Just the information you need to make a smart, sustainable decision for you and your future

Call us at 850-543-1418 or visit TheDomenechGroup.com. We'll help you cut through the noise and point you in the right direction—even if we're not the group you choose to work with.

Because sometimes the truth isn't sold. It's given.

And that's exactly what we do.

## A House Sold Name



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## Cheers to 20 Years: Destin Charity Wine Auction Raises \$3.55M for Children in Need

The 20th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family, raised a record-breaking \$3.55 million—a \$350,000 increase over last year—to support 17 children's charities across Northwest Florida. Held April 25-26, the sold-out event welcomed more than 600 guests to celebrate two decades of giving back through exceptional wine, food and generosity.

"This year's Destin Charity Wine Auction was unforgettable. Together, we raised \$3.55 million to change lives a milestone made even more meaningful as we celebrated 20 years of impact and honored the

founders who made it all possible.," DCWAF President Karah Fridley-Young said. "I am overwhelmed with gratitude and pride for this community, and for the visionaries whose hearts started it all."

The weekend kicked off with 12 exclusive patron dinners from Destin to Rosemary Beach, raising \$978,600 in a single evening. Each dinner featured expertly paired wines with gourmet menus from acclaimed chefs.

Saturday's live auction was equally impressive. The Magnum Force lot raised \$60,500 alone, while a 7-night trip to Barbados sold for \$120,000. Additional standout lots included:



· A trip to the South of France - \$105,000

- A custom Paul Sutton Bourbon barrel + distillery experience - \$100,000 (sold twice)
- Champagne and Alsace \$105,000 (sold three
- Record-breaking \$260,000 Paddle Raise

Local favorite restaurants added to the celebration of flavor with exquisite tastings perfectly matched to the vintners' selections. World-class wines were thoughtfully paired with gourmet tastings by top regional

• Bijoux Restaurant & Spirits Wine: Red Blend

Pairing: Bold, savory bites designed to enhance the richness of the blend

"We've participated for 20 years—this pairing is a guest favorite."

Marrow Private Chefs

Wine: Sauvignon Blanc

Pairing: Light, elegant dishes to complement the wine's crisp

• Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood

Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon Pairing: Aged steak cuts and hearty flavors

• O-Ku

Wine: High-acid whites & sake

Pairing: Sushi and Asian fusion with fresh, bright notes

• Wild Olives

Wine: Chardonnay

Pairing: Creamy cheeses, seafood and savory pastries

• Browne Trading Co.

Wine: Assorted varietals

Pairing: Premium smoked seafood and caviar

Wine Chips

Wine: Versatile reds and

Pairing: Gourmet snack chips crafted to balance tannins and sweetness

These carefully crafted pairings elevated the auction's culinary experience and honored the vintners who make DCWAF's mission possible.

Featured Chefs and Restaurants included Chef Nikhil Abuvala of Roux 30a, Chef Matthew Basford of Canoe, Chef Ignacio Bernal of Vin'tij Food + Wine, Chef Fleetwood Covington, III of Seagar's Prime Steaks and Seafood, Tim Creehan of Cuvee 30A, Chef Mark

Eichin of Restaurant Paradis, Chef Will Farrington of M&P Farrington Foods, Chef Jason Goodenough of The New Culinarian, Chef Emeril Lagasse of Emeril's, Chef Francisco Lopez, Ir. of Ambrosia 30A Prime Seafood and Steaks, Chef Jack Mc-Guckin of Bijoux Restaurant and Spirits, Chef Tom Stafford of Roy Estate, and Chef Dan Vargo of Fine Coastal Cuisine.

In total, 48 Live Lots, 33 Cellar Lots, 18 Super Silent Lots, and 143 Silent Lots were auctioned, featuring rare wines, luxury travel and once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Proceeds from the 2025 Destin Charity Wine Auction benefit 17 local nonprofits serving children in Northwest Florida:

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Caring & Sharing of South Walton, Children's Home Society of Florida, Children in Crisis, Inc., Children's Volunteer Health Network, Ellison McCraney Ingram Foundation, Emerald Coast Autism Center, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, Habitat for Humanitv of Walton County, Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties, Opportunity, Inc., Point Washington Medical Clinic, Shelter House Domestic Violence Center, The Arc of the Emerald Coast, Westonwood Ranch and Youth Village.

Together, these organizations serve thousands of children in our area providing hope, healing and opportunity-made possible by DCWAF supporters. Funds will be distributed in August to 17 local nonprofit partners during a private check presentation at the Hilton Sand-

DCWAF's Impact? Since its founding in 2005, DCWAF has donated more than \$35 million, impacting over 100,000 children affected by health challenges, abuse, poverty, and more.

Save the date: The 21st Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction is scheduled for April 24–25, 2026. Learn more at DCWAF.org or follow @ DCWAF on Facebook.



Day Of Prayer And Fasting

Pray for your neighbors, your community, the leaders of our nation and our world.

### Wednesday, May 28th Blessing of the Marketplace

The business community is invited to worship together and be blessed. Lunch provided by Big Red Truck

11:30 - 1:30 at Destin Methodist Church | 200 Beach Drive, Destin.

#### Blessing of the Youth

The Youth Pastors welcome Middle & High School students for worship and blessings. 6pm - 8pm at Harborwalk Village. Free parking at Harborwalk for those attending the event.

### Thursday, May 29th 68th Annual Blessing Of The Fleet

Prayer and worship service beginning at 4 PM on the Harbor behind Brotula's Seafood and Steamer 210 Harbor Blvd. Destin. Boat Blessing and Fish Fry to immediately follow Boats used to earn a living on the sea may be register by calling: 850-837-6324

#### Friday, May 30th **Practice Random Acts Of Kindness**

Share the love of Jesus by practicing random acts of kindness throughout our community. Leave big tips, lend a helping hand, give generously of your time and resources - However your heart leads.



THE CHURCH OF DESTIN is a community organization presenting a unified voice for all churches in the greater Destin area. Its mission is to unify the body of Christ in Destin, Florida, through fellowship and prayer, recognizing one church, many congregations





## Award-Winning and Moving Forward: West Florida NSDAR Charts a Bright Future

By Marcia Hull

Founded in 2014, the West Florida Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (WFL-DAR, NSDAR) was recently recognized by the Florida State Society for 2024 chapter and individual awards. West Florida Chapter, NSDAR also earned the Gold Level on the Florida Honor Roll. The 2023-2025 Regent, Teri Vice presented the above awards as well as chapter and individual awards to the officers and committee chairs for their service during the 2023-2025 term.

Honorary Regent Connie Lee formally installed the 2025-2027 board of directors, Robbie Carroll, Regent, Connie Hall, First Vice Regent, Diane Taliaferro, Second Vice Regent, Janice Ferguson, Chaplain, Dotty Caskey, Corresponding Secretary, Jeanne-Marie Stelter, Treasurer, Carole Kendy, Registrar, Renea Duck, Historian and



Chris Keating, Librarian.

The West Florida Chapter, NSDAR represents over 146 members and serves the communities of Destin and Walton County to support the mission to promote historic preservation, education and patriotism. The WFDAR, NSDAR generally meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM, Kelly Plantation Owner's Clubhouse in Destin.

Founded in 1890 and headquartered in Washington D.C., DAR is dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children. DAR is ranked as one of the most inclusive genealogical societies in the U.S. with over one million members inducted since DAR's inception. For more DAR membership guidelines, please visit https://www.dar.org/discover/ become-member.

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### **WAMBOUGH**

continued from page 3

The first year and a half into the War, 97% of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's recommended targets in North Vietnam were off limits to air strikes. The N. Vietnamese were able to build up defenses to attack our aircraft when we were finally permitted to attack targets previously off-limits.

Pilots noticed the uncanny ability of the N. Vietnamese to move AAA and SAMs into position before we could hit assigned targets in N. Vietnam.

John flew missions as a part of Operation Rolling Thunder. The F-105 accounted for approximately 75% of the sustained bombing campaign against N. Vietnam during Rolling Thunder. Targets included heavily defended rail lines, bridges, supply depots and missile sites to stop the movement of war materials going to South Vietnam to be used against our troops and S. Vietnam troops. Civilian populations were not targeted. John's combat tour included strikes into N. Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, with only a single mission into South Vietnam in support of our troops in

contact with enemy forces (Viet Cong).

John loved flying the F-105. He describes it as "fantastic." The F-105 was the biggest and fastest fighter-bomber ever produced. It could go up to 1,000 mph off the deck. MIGs (fighter aircraft supplied by Russia to the North Vietnamese) couldn't match its speed.

In September of 1968, John began a tour of duty in the 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) at KORAT, Thailand expecting to fly 100 combat missions in 6 months. But due to the high losses of F-105 aircraft during the Vietnam War, in 1969, the F-105s were withdrawn from combat in the 34th TFS and replaced with F-4 fighter aircraft. John went on to an assignment as an Air Operations Officer at 7th Air Force, Saigon, followed by assignment to the 12th TFS at Kadena AB, Okinawa. He retired in 1990 at Hurlburt Field after 271/2 years in the Air Force.

Celebration to Honor Vietnam Veterans

John is looking forward to the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber's Honoring Our Heroes celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

The tribute to honor our Vietnam veterans begins April 28–29 with free events at the Air Force Armament Museum in Fort Walton Beach, 5-8 p.m.

The Heroes' Tribute Banquet follows on April 30, 5-9 p.m., at the Destin/Fort Walton Beach Fairgrounds & Event Center.

Keynote speaker is Rocky Bleier, four-time Super Bowl champion and Vietnam veteran. Other featured speakers include decorated Marine and Warriors, Inc. founder Dale Dye, and Col. Ed Hubbard, a former POW who spent over six years in captivity in North Vietnam.

Register for the banquet at: https://www.fwbchamber. org/events/details/heroes-trib-ute-banquet-honoring-our-viet-nam-veterans-20292.

#### **Publisher's Note**

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. In recognition of this milestone, we are honored to share stories that pay tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of those who served. We thank our Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and invite our readers to join us in remembering their legacy.





## Crawfish, Community and a Cause: Rotary Club of Destin Hosts Annual Bash

May 16 | Towne Centre at Seascape | Food, Music, Auction, Photos, Magic & More!

By Lori Leath Smith

Get ready to laissez les bons temps rouler! The Rotary Club of Destin's Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash is back and bigger than ever on Friday, May 16, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at The Towne Centre at Seascape, co-hosted by Mezcal Mexican Grill.

This lively fundraiser supports the Destin Rotary Scholarship Fund, A Bed 4 Me, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation—



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SPECIALTY



helping to fight hunger, boost education and lift up families in need. Since 1979, the Rotary Club of Destin has been making a difference through charitable, educational and humanitarian projects.

"Our open-air venue captures the true spirit of Louisiana, and this event helps us fund initiatives close to our mission," said Club President Wayne Bernheisel. "We're committed to supporting education and eradicating hunger, right here at home."

Enjoy mouthwatering Lou-

isiana crawfish with all the fixings. 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 juicy burgers, hot dogs and chicken prepared fresh on-site. Dance the night away with live music from the Jenna Mc-Clelland Band, bid in the silent auction, try your luck at the famous bourbon pull, enjoy spectacular magic from Magician: MagiShaun, a fun-filled photo

booth from Events Photo Booth 360, and face painting for the kids—all to fuel the Rotary's life-changing work!

Tickets are \$40 for a flat of crawfish and fixings, \$50 for All-You-Can-Eat and \$15 for kids' or non-crawfish meals (children three and under eat free). Each ticket includes a complimentary drink (beer, margarita, soda or water). VIP reserved tables for 10 are available for \$500 and include regular crawfish meal tickets. (Upgrade to AYCE for an additional fee.)

Tickets can be purchased at Eventbrite.com, from any Destin Rotarian or on Facebook. com/RotaryClubofDestin. The Towne Centre at Seascape is located at 80 Seascape Drive, Miramar Beach.

Special thanks to event sponsors that allow Destin Rotarians to continue their work in our communities and abroad. Interested in sponsoring? Email dmoniz@handfirm.com for details—sponsorships come with fantastic perks!

The Rotary Club of Destin is a vibrant network of roughly 58 local leaders dedicated to "Service Above Self," changing lives across the street and around the world. The club meets Tuesdays at 7:15 a.m. at Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club and hosts its "Sunset Club" Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. at O'Quigley's in Destin.





## Is Your Storefront Silently Sending Customers Away This Season?



By Danica LaFaire

In the heart of Northwest Florida, from the streets of Destin to the shops in Fort Walton

Beach and the growing businesses of Walton County, local pride runs deep—and so does the importance of first impressions. While quality products and top-tier service are the backbone of any successful business, many owners overlook a simple but powerful factor: how your business looks from the outside. A clean, well-maintained exterior—clear windows, swept walkways and fresh signage—is key to turning foot traffic into revenue.

And why does this focus on a pristine exterior hold such significance here in the heart of Northwest Florida? It's because we understand the fabric of our community. Our businesses aren't just storefronts, but integral parts of the local landscape, reflecting the pride we collectively hold for our beautiful surroundings.

Think about it: visitors flock to our stunning beaches and charming towns seeking an escape, a breath of fresh air. When they encounter businesses that mirror this beauty and care through their clean and welcoming exteriors, they reinforce their positive impression of our entire region. It signals that we, as local business owners, are custodians of this beauty, extending the same level of care to our establishments as we do to our natural treasures.

Customers often decide where to shop, dine or do business in a matter of seconds. And in that brief moment, appearances matter. Multiple studies show that people are more likely to trust and spend money with businesses that look clean, organized and professional. This sends a quiet but powerful message: "We care about the details."

On the flip side, a cluttered or dirty storefront can turn people away—sometimes for good. In fact, many consumers admit to avoiding businesses with poorly maintained exteriors or negative cleanliness reviews. In today's connected world, word travels fast, and a single bad impression can impact your rep-



utation more than you might expect.

But here's the good news: making your business stand out doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Often, it's the simple things—like sparkling windows or a tidy entrance—that create the most welcoming atmosphere. These small touches not only draw people in, but also show that you're ready and eager to serve.

Let's not forget, in a close-knit community like ours, word-of-mouth also travels quickly. A business that presents itself with pride and attention to detail earns the trust and loyalty of locals who are the lifeblood of our economy year-round. A clean exterior isn't just about attracting tourists; it's about fostering a sense of community pride and mutual respect among neighbors. It says, 'We care about our business, and we care about our community.'

Interestingly, customers tend to be more forgiving of small service hiccups when they feel like they're in a clean, cared-for space. It builds trust, which is at the heart of every lasting customer relationship.

Investing in a clean exterior is more than just good business sense; it's an investment in the very essence of what makes Northwest Florida, and especially our corner, so special. It's about contributing to the overall appeal of our region, strengthening our local economy, and showcasing the pride we all share in calling this beautiful place home. And that, ultimately, is why a clear view from the outside can lead to a clearer path to success on the inside.

Whether you're looking to attract foot traffic, earn repeat business, or simply reflect the pride you take in your work, keeping your exterior clean is a smart and lasting investment.

At Fish Window Cleaning, we understand that First Impressions Start Here.

Call 850.842.2162 or visit fishwindowcleaning.com/3249 to schedule a free estimate. We're proud to serve our local community and help fellow business owners shine—literally.







## Spring Into Style: Create Your Perfect Outdoor Oasis at The Shop at Baldwin Turf

By Jenny Herndon, Owner

Spring has officially arrived, and there's no better time to refresh your outdoor spaces! At The Shop at Baldwin Turf, we've been proudly serving the community for over a year with a carefully curated selection of quality outdoor furniture, vibrant plants, thoughtful gift items and premium fertilizers. We've got everything you need to create the perfect backyard

May is one of the best times to shop for outdoor furniturenot only is the weather perfect for planning and setting up your space, but shopping early in the season means the best selection of styles, colors, and sets before

summer is in full swing. Whether you're prepping for backyard BBQs, casual evenings by the fire pit, or peaceful mornings on the porch, now's the time to create the outdoor retreat vou've been dreaming about. But before you dive into decorating, here are a few quick tips on choosing outdoor furniture that fits your space—and your

1. Consider Your Space and Purpose - Are you furnishing a spacious deck or a small balcony? Think about how you'll use the area—dining, lounging, entertaining, or all of the above. Sectionals and dining sets work great for larger areas, while bistro tables and compact



chairs are ideal for cozier spots.

2. Pick Durable, Weather-Friendly Materials - Our Florida weather can be tough on furniture, so look for pieces made with weather-resistant materials like recycled plastic, teak, aluminum, or all-weather wicker. We carry plenty of stylish options built to last.

3. Comfort is Key - A great-looking chair isn't much good if it's not comfortable. Be sure to try out seating before you buy, and go for

cushions made with fade-resistant, quick-dry fabrics to keep things fresh season after season.

4. Match Your Style -Whether your vibe is coastal, rustic, or modern, your outdoor space should feel like an extension of your home. Add personal touches with planters, throw pillows, and outdoor lighting.

5. Visit Us in Person -Come see what's new at The Shop at Baldwin Turf, where you can browse our curated collection in person, get inspired, and let our team help you bring your vision to life. Follow along on social media @baldwinturf for updates on new items and events!

The Shop at Baldwin Turf @baldwinturf 739 John Sims Parkway Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-5

p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

#### **DESTIN HIGH**

continued from page 7

saltwater fishing program. This outside-the-box, hands-on experience immerses students in charter and commercial fishing, providing real-world skills that benefit their futures and our coastal community.

Culinary Arts Program Cooks Up Real-World Experience: DHS' Culinary Arts Program will launch next fall



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with the addition of Chef Davy Crockett, a seasoned instructor from Keiser University. Under his guidance, students gain hands-on training rooted in real-world culinary practices.

**Future Business Leaders** Shine at DHS: DHS's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students are making waves in business education, ranked #10 in Florida out of 1,400 teams in the High School Stock Market Game and #1 in the district for Entrepreneurship two years running. Additionally, our FBLA team just won 1st place at state for the highly coveted social media marketing competition. At DHS, students don't just study business—they become future leaders.

Four-Day School Week Begins Fall 2025: Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, DHS will move to a four-day week, with classes Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Supported by 84% of survey participants, this innovative schedule aims to improve learning, well-being and work-life balance. Fridays will be used for staff development, student internships and service opportunities. Principal Dr. Diane Kelley noted that the schedule provides more focused instruction and family flexibility.

Prime Location, Personalized Learning: Centrally located in Destin, DHS offers students easy access to a high-quality education in a boutique school setting. Strong teacher-student relationships help students thrive academically while receiving the support and guidance they need to plan

for the future.

At DHS, students are prepared academically, physically and mentally to become confident, capable citizens. We're more than just a school-we're a family. Whether you're a scholar, artist, athlete or entrepreneur, you'll find a place to grow, lead and shine. Here, passion meets purpose in the classroom, on the stage and on the field.

Apply today at https:// destinhighschool.schoolmint. com-open enrollment is underway, but won't last forever!

For more information, stop by at 4325 Commons Dr. W., Destin, call (850) 204-4044 or visit destinhighschool.org.

Your future starts NOW at Destin High School. Become a Destin Shark!



## **What Moms Really Want:**

## A Mother's Day Gift Guide That Actually Gets It

By Liesel Schmidt

Let's be honest—whether you're a husband who needs constant Google alerts on the shared family calendar or you're the son or daughter of a mother who reminds you how many hours she spent in labor with you at every opportunity that presents itself—Mother's Day can sneak up on you. One minute, you're staring at Easter bunnies hopping everywhere, and the next, you're realizing that it's May and you're panicking over having to find something that doesn't feel like a last-minute grab from the "impulse gift" aisle. News flash: No one actually uses a neck fan.

But this year? We're making it easy, because Mom deserves better than a generic greeting card and convenience store flowers.

Whether she's the queen of cozy, someone who loves to laugh, a spa-day dreamer who doesn't take the time for herself or a style maven, we at Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. have thoughtfully (because we're that nice) curated a list of original gifts that show her you really get her—and maybe know her better than she even knows herself.

## Part Zen Master, Part Candle Hoarder

Start with scent. As Proust so famously said in Remembrance of Things Past, smell is an incredible trigger of memory. It's a way to imprint the brain, and it's also a great way to set the tone in a room or an entire home.

What's better than a great scent? We'd say...A great scent with personality.

Candles from Whiskey River Soap Co. say what she's thinking (we personally love "Smells like Day Drinking" and a few other tongue-in-cheek scents that appeal to anyone with a snarky sense of humor), while Sweet Water Decor's more refined blends, like Driftwood + Mahogany or Wildflower + Salt,



create a spa-like atmosphere for her to relax.

## **Style, Sass, the Sense of Humor**

Moms are many things. And yes, sometimes that includes hilarious, sarcastic, irreverent and wildly relatable.

For the woman who loves a good laugh, Ellembee Gifts nails it with snarky, bypass-the-filter and say-it-out-loud tea towels and makeup bags (think: "I keep hearing it takes a village to raise a child. Do they just show up? Or is there like, a number to call?"). Add one to a gift basket with an adorably designed and useful tea towel from Avery's Home, and you've got something that's both cute and clever.

Who doesn't love that?

Want to win major style points? Cue the accessories. Ellesee Women's polymer clay earrings are handmade, bold, and lightweight-perfect for any mom who likes her accessories to make a statement without weighing her down. For something classic and layerable, check out our selection from Lizou Jewelry, which blends French flair with effortless charm that everyone will gush over. And if she's a leather lover, Hobo's buttery-soft handbags are the kind of gift she'll use every day and still swoon carry five years from

## Sporty, Stylish, or Adventure-Ready

If she's more about joggers than jewelry, don't worry—we've got you.

Vuori's casual wear is ultra-soft and made for real life—you know, running errands, taking walks, going on coffee runs, and everything else that moms

do. Their crossbody bags are equally versatile: chic enough for brunch, tough enough for travel. And we do adore a multi-tasker.

While you're at it, don't forget the details. A pair of Sunski or Maui Jim polarized sunglasses or a Sunday Afternoons UPF hat will keep her protected from the sun's harmful rays and stylish, whether she's beachside or just basking in her own backyard.

## **Give Her Something That Feels Like Her**

Whether it's a fun candle or a cozy top, these gifts are thoughtful without being over-the-top. They feel intentional, not obligatory. And honestly, isn't that the best kind of gift?

If you're still not sure what to get, there's no shame in the gift card game. A Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. gift card lets her pick her own adventure—and you get full credit for being the world's most thoughtful child. Win-win.



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For over 40 years, AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar has been serving cold Gulf Coast oysters and cool libations. What began as a popular local hang out known for fresh oysters and cold beer has grown into one of the most iconic "hot spots" on the Destin Harbor. From its humble beginning shucking oysters off the deck behind a small trailer on the Destin Harbor, it has grown to four locations along

our Emerald Coast, serving fresh seafood, live music and exciting water activities in the Destin area. Attention all sports fans, AJ's boasts the one and only Jumbotron on the Destin Harbor, where you can watch your favorite games on the BIG, BIG screen surrounded by the energy and beauty of the Destin Harbor. AJ's serves up delicious daily specials, mouth-watering drinks plus entertaining live music all month, too. Don't miss any of the action! Come on down to AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar all season long.

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

#### **Austons on 98**

Offering an amazing raw oyster bar and the best happy hour in town, Austons is the place to be and home of the 102-foot bar, including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England-style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail. With big screen TVs all around, there's no bad seat in the house. So, come by and watch the games 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 ovsters. 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. Check out February's amazing live music line-up at Facebook. com/austonson98.

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

#### **Boathouse Oyster Bar**

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

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

#### **Café Destin**

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



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

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

## 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 operated since its inception in 1982. Fudpucker's restaurant stands out by being dedicated to its owners' three favorite "F" words: Food, Fun and Family. Fudpucker's is not just a restaurant, it's not just a bar, it's a one-of-a-kind entertainment experience, and one that can be enjoyed by locals, kids and families of all ages and all occasions with plenty of fun included!. Bring your family and come for the food! Come for the fun! Get your Birthday shopping done with a Fudpucker's gift card or shop the Fudpucker's gift shop for unique gifts and merchan-

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

#### **Kwench Destin**

Fuel your body, elevate your health, savor the goodness! Welcome to Kwench Juice Café, Destin's go-to spot for freshpressed juices, smoothies, and nourishing acai and pitaya bowls. Since 2023, Kwench Destin has been blending up pure, raw goodness to energize your wellness journey.

"At Kwench, we believe in quality ingredients, bold flavors, innovative recipes and fresh nutrition—because your body deserves the best." Every sip is a boost of vitality, every bite a step toward better health.

Craving something fresh? Stop by today and taste the difference!

(850) 842-2802 985 US-98, Unit E, Destin kwenchjuicecafedestin.com

### **Melting Pot Destin**

Every mom is the best mom in the world. But yours really is!
Celebrate her at The Melting Pot this Mother's Day! As a gift from us; A "mum" for

ing Pot this Mother's Day! As a gift from us; A "mum" for Mum. Each Mother will receive a complimentary flower as they are seated. Enjoy our delicious

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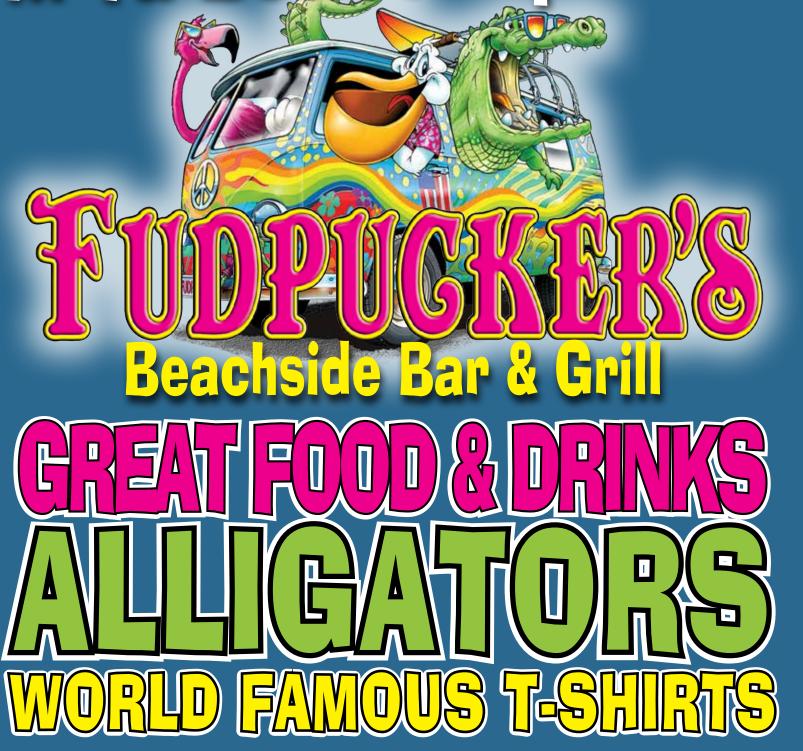
4pm: Cole Jordan
8pm: Roshambo
8pm: Austin Jennings
4pm: Hunter & Tony
8pm: Smoke Show
4pm: Flash Flood
8pm: Austin Jennings
4pm: Jason Findley
8pm: Airavata
12pm: Rotating Spot
4pm: Flash Flood
8pm: Gunner
12pm: Rotating Spot
4pm: Shane Curle
8pm: Rotating Spot

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## Destin Diving, Entertainment, Specials

#### **DINING**

continued from page 22

Mother's Day Fondue Menu for \$55 per person on Saturday, May 10th and Sunday May 11th, or choose from our regular menu and get all of Mom's favorite items. Reserve a table

today and celebrate Mom the sweetest way at Melting Pot.

Melting Pot is now open at Noon every Saturday and Sunday for lunch!

Fondue Cravings Menu: Saturdays and Sundays from 12 - 4 p.m. \$30 per person

Choice of Cheese Fondue,

Fresh Salad and Chocolate Fondue. Sharing is not permitted.

Reserve a table today at Melting Pot Destin and celebrate the start of spring!

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



#### **Tailfins Waterfront Grill**

Hey sports fans, Tailfins Waterfront Grill is calling YOU! That's right y'all, Destin is a sports-loving town and Tailfins is a must-be place in Destin to come and watch your team play. Tailfins is a go-to destination for sports watching featuring more than 70 big screen TVs showing all college games and Sunday Ticket

Looking for a locals' favorite breakfast before the game? Start your day off right with Tailfins breakfast from 8-11 a.m., seven days a week. Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs, a seafood or Cajun omelet and even a kid's smiley pancake. Be sure to order up a round of mimosas and bloody marys. Enjoy some of your favorite food and drinks, and scrumptious early bird dinner specials Monday to Friday, 3-6 p.m. Sip and unwind with happy hour from 3-6 p.m. Monday through Friday. And come on in for live music on the docks.

DAILY CRUISES: Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure! Departures seven days a week aboard "Always Workin'," Tailfins' 45-foot-long cruiser, and "Talk of Town" Tikis, Tailfins' newest, one-of-a-kind tiki boat. Both feature on-board

restrooms and certified captains. Talk of the Town tikis are the only Coast Guard certified Tiki boats in the United States! Enjoy the Destin Harbor and Crab Island like never before. Choose between the threehour tour, sunset cruise or Thursday night's spectacular fireworks cruise. Book online: tailfinsislandadventure.com.

(850) 650-1111

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

## Tequila's Mexican Restaurant

Did someone say Margaritas? Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill is a local favorite, with world class, jumbo-sized margaritas, Mexican food favorites inspired by years of tradition and authentic spices such as the Tequila's Plate, chili con carne, The Three Amigos and the new Master Parrillada – a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes. Celebrate Taco Tuesdays with 2-for-1 margaritas. Lunch specials are offered Monday-Friday. "Our love lies in the food we make and the connections we create with our customers every day," says Oni, Tequila's owner. "Our goal is to have the widest selection of tequila brands in town. You're sure to find your favorites here." Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner or call ahead to place your take out and to-go orders.

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

### GET READY TO CELEBRATE CREATIVITY



## **EVENTS CALENDAR -**



### DINE+DIVE UMA FUNDRAISER

APRIL 30 • 6-9 P.M.
GRAND BOULEVARD TOWN CENTER

SAGE & DRAGONFLY
VERSES + VIBES: OPEN MIC NIGHT

MAY 1 • 6-8 P.M. DEFUNIAK SPRINGS

MATTIE KELLY ARTS FOUNDATION CONCERT SERIES - BLACK JACKET SYMPHONY: JOURNEY'S ESCAPE MAY 1 • DOORS OPEN AT 6 P.M.

DESTIN

## EMERALD COAST THEATRE COMPANY LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL

MAY 2 - 18 GRAND BOULEVARD



## 37TH ANNUAL ARTSQUEST FINE ARTS FESTIVAL

MAY 3 • 10 A.M. - 7 P.M. MAY 4 • 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. GRAND BOULEVARD TOWN CENTER

CULTURALARTSALLIANCE.COM/ART-MONTH



## **Celebrating Mom**

By Christopher Manson

It was the day before my birthday, and I was talking to my mother (Pauline Manson, nee Weekley) about the legendary movie star Charles Bronson. Mom expressed her dismay at the lack of Bronson movies being shown on broadcast television these days.

Good son that I am, I introduced her to Tubi, the greatest free streaming service in the world. We spent the afternoon watching Death Wish 4: The Crackdown, which she had somehow missed during its brief theatrical run in 1987. It was all I could do not to recite the dialogue out loud, as I'd seen this Cannon Films classic dozens of times.

Thanks, Mom, for letting me share one of my favorite movies with you. And for not complaining about all the commercial breaks.

In celebration of Mother's Day (Sunday, May 11), Destin Life reached out to friends, family and complete strangers to share how their lives have been—and continue to be—blessed by their mothers.



Sherri Wagner has been my guiding light, always providing unwavering support and unconditional love. Looking back, I see that her actions of kindness, generosity and perseverance have shaped who I am today. Thank you for being you, Mom. - Bobby Wagner, Mayor, City of Destin

My mother-in-law, Carol Palmgren, died over 13 years ago. I had lost my mother to cancer in the 1980s, and when I married Lornie Palmgren, who was an only child, Carol shared with me that because of health complications she had been unable to bring more children into the world. She had always wished for another child, espe-



cially a daughter.

Upon hearing that, I made it my mission to spoil her on a consistent basis. We had one "Mother-Daughter Day" each Sunday and made a bucket list of things she had never done—Broadway shows, a cruise, trips to different cities. So much fun together. I treasure these moments and am grateful I had two moms in my life.

- Barbara Palmgren



My mother taught us by example the importance of being gracious and kind. Always full of Southern colloquialisms, she was quick to remind us "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar" and "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." I've never heard her disparage anyone or pass judgment on poor choices.

When my mother says "Bless her heart," she actually means it. "It's not my favorite" is the most she will ever say to show distaste. Her voice stays in my head as I navigate relationships, children, and my career, and I strive to stay gracious and kind. If I can be half the woman she is, I am truly blessed. Happy Mother's Day, Callie!

-Amy Milligan, Cryo850

My mother Artie passed away when I was 36. My father had already been gone 18 years. She met my husband and my firstborn, which I count among my greatest blessings. One of the most profound gifts she gave me was permission—permission to protect my peace, even if that meant distancing myself from negative people, including family if necessary. She gave me the freedom to be present on my own terms. She never expected attendance at holidays or gatherings out of obligation; she wanted you there because you wanted to be. And, perhaps most meaningfully, she gave me permission to choose my family. If I felt deeply connected to friends, she believed they could be considered family too. Having left my hometown in my

twenties and living away from relatives ever since, this perspective was a powerful and lasting blessing.

- Zandra Wolfgram, Director of Marketing and Communications, Sinfonia Gulf Coast

Continued on next page





## Destin Diving, Entertainment, Specials

#### **MOM**

continued from page 25

I didn't fully understand the depth of a mother's love until I became one myself. It was then I realized that my mother had made that same choice every day—to put someone else before herself. She gave of herself completely, without hesita-

tion. Though she's been gone for years, I still miss her deeply. She was my biggest cheerleader and my quiet strength. A gifted artist, writer, designer and true professional—she created beauty in everything she touched, long before technology made things easy, such as page layout on a computer.

She loved God, her family,



and her husband deeply. And her friendships? Many of them are still mine today. She left me with the best of who she was—her legacy. Her wisdom, creativity, and faith continue to guide and inspire me in both my work and my life. I carry her with me, always.

-Lori Leath Smith, Publisher and Executive Editor, Life Media



Carol, my mom, 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 Advertising/Sales, Life Media

My mother taught me many things—honesty, generosity, kindness and love. She has always been there for me. She is my mother and best friend.

-Debra Henry, CPA



My stay-at-home mom demonstrated sacrifice by taking on work to send us to Germany after college, giving us the priceless gift of heritage, family connection, and a remarkable cultural experience.

- Dr. Doug Stauffer, bibledoug.com



My mother has created a strong, independent, opinionated young lady. I always know she is available for support and to listen and to give me the artificial inflation for my personal hype team I need at this point in my life!

- Kassia Garfield, MaxStrength Fitness





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Off the Hook

## Destin's Deeper Purpose: More Than Just a Beach Town

Faith, Community and the Sea: Destin's Week of Blessings Returns May 26–29

By Lori Leath Smith

We all have our reasons for calling Destin home. Some come for the beauty, others for the lifestyle—but many of us feel we were drawn here for something greater. Yes, to the outside world Destin is now a beach destination. But long before the tourists and high-rises, this was a humble fishing town—a place where hard work met the sea, and faith anchored the community.

Known proudly as "World's Luckiest Fishing Village," I believe Destin's blessings go far beyond its natural beauty. Every year, we gather to bless our boats, our Harbor, our children, our leaders and our people. Could it be that this annual act of faith and unity brings favor to our city? That beneath the sparkle of our shoreline lies something even more powerful: a shared purpose and a spirit that keeps our little paradise thriving? Many Destin fisherman, locals and area professionals alike will tell you they believe their success rides on blessings.

Destin's beloved Week of Blessings returns May 26–29, 2025. Organized by the Church of Destin, Inc., this cherished tradition brings together neighbors, businesses, fishermen and faith leaders for a heartfelt week of prayer, unity and gratitude that includes a series of faith-focused, family-oriented activities leading up to Ascension Day, 40 days after Easter, with the Blessing of the Fleet.

On Thursday, May 29, is the highlight of Destin's Week of Blessings—the 68th Annual Blessing of the Fleet, Destin's second oldest, annual tradition that pays homage to our city's deep-rooted maritime heritage and is held behind Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer. (The oldest is our annual Fishing Rodeo first held in 1948.)

This time-honored tradition got started when more than a half century ago, Destin's Immanuel Anglican Church began blessing a tiny fleet of perhaps



four to five boats. From this handful of small boats, the fleet has grown and prospered into the largest fishing fleet in North America, with more than 125 charter-fishing boats. Captains fly the small blue cross-and-dove Blessing of the Fleet flag to indicate they and their vessels have been blessed.

The festivities commence

at 4 p.m. with a Captain's Testimony and Worship Service under the tent, open to all. At 5:15 p.m., the Blessing of the Vessels begins, where clergy from various local churches will bless each commercial boat one-by-one that makes its living on the sea, praying for safety and prosperity in the upcoming season. In 2024, over 158 vessels



participated in this important procession.

Following the blessings, attendees are invited to a community fish feast provided by Brotula's, with donations appreciated. Free parking is available at Brotula's and the City of Destin's harbor district lots.

Continued on page 30









## Governor DeSantis Champions State-Led Conservation Success and Announces Record-Breaking 126-Day Red Snapper Season

By Doug "Doc" Stauffer

In a bold testament to the success of state-led conservation, Governor Ron DeSantis announced Florida's longest-ever Gulf red snapper recreational season—an unprecedented 126 days—during a recent press conference at Legendary Marine in Destin. With the sparkling waters of Choctawhatchee Bay behind him, DeSantis declared, "This is the longest combined season that's been available for anglers in Florida history since state management began."

The record-setting 2025 season surpasses last year's 103-day stretch and is a shining example of what can be achieved when state governments, rather than Washington bureaucrats, manage their natural resources. The extended season includes a summer run from Memorial Day weekend (May 24-26) through July 31, followed by a daily fall window from Sept. 1-14, and

three-day weekends through the end of the year, including Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The announcement drew numerous cheers from business leaders, anglers, and conservationists who gathered to celebrate economic and environmental implications. Todd Royall of Legendary Marine called the move "priceless," and Clint Rogers of Saltwater Restaurant Group praised the governor for boosting tourism and the local dining industries. "This gives our TDC more marketing ammunition to bring families to our area," Rogers said

By contrast, the federally managed Atlantic red snapper season remains abysmally short, just two days last year, despite a growing population of Red Snapper. DeSantis didn't shy away from highlighting the stark difference in outcomes. "We've asked the President himself. Let us manage the red snapper in the Atlantic," DeSantis said. "We will do a good job. We will have accurate data, and we're going to be able to expand opportunities for a lot of people."

DeSantis has proven himself a trusted leader in ecological stewardship by blending science with the somewhat uncommon common sense. Under his leadership, Florida has prioritized angler-reported data through programs like the State Reef Fish Survey, resulting in better-informed policy and more robust fish populations. Florida now leads the nation with over 920,000 boat registrations, 4 million licensed anglers, and an annual \$31 billion boating and fishing economic impact—figures that dwarf federal performance metrics.

While Washington's red tape continues to stifle opportunity on the Atlantic coast, Florida's Gulf coast is flourishing thanks to state control. DeSantis's firm commitment to states' rights starkly contrasts with the one-size-fits-all failures of federal agencies like NOAA and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. "We stand ready, willing, and able," DeSantis emphasized. "Florida's proven it knows how to balance access and conservation—let us do the same for the Atlantic."

In an era when federal mismanagement too often limits economic growth and outdoor access, Governor Ron DeSantis offers a successful alternative: empowered local governance that delivers ecological protection and freedom for Floridians and those who vacation here.

## **2025 Gulf Red Snapper Season Schedule:**

**Memorial Day Weekend:** May 24-26

**Summer Season:** 

June 1 – July 31

Fall Daily Season:

September 1–14

Weekend/Holiday Access:

Sept. 19–21, 26–28 Oct. 3–5, 10–12, 17–19, 24–26,

31–Nov. 2 Nov. 7–9, 11 (Veterans Day), 14– 16, 21–23, 27–30 (Thanksgiv-

Dec. 5-7, 12-14, 19-21, 25-28 (Christmas)

As the Florida Gulf Coast experiences another record year under state stewardship, one thing is clear—when it comes to natural resources, the Sunshine State shines brightest when the federal government steps aside. Those who love fishing and those dependent upon tourism should applaud the Governor's successful leadership.





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**Off** the Hook

## From Manatee Cove to CARE on the Coast:

## Dive into the Latest at the Gulfarium

By Mary Fomby

#### CARE on the Coast Raises Support and Awareness for Sea Turtles

The Gulfarium CARE Center recently hosted its second annual CARE on the Coast fundraiser, and thanks to the incredible support of our community, it was a wave of success for sea turtle conservation! Held on April 26 at the Gulfarium, the event welcomed hundreds of guests for an evening of live music, delicious food, animal presentations, and conservation-focused activities.

The highlight of the night

thing new! Gulfarium is proud to welcome guests to Manatee Cove, our newly renovated habitat dedicated to rescued manatees in need of long-term care. This first-of-its-kind exhibit in the Florida Panhandle is now home to Lil Joe and Inigo, two gentle giants who are inspiring a new wave of manatee conservation.

Formerly a dolphin habitat, the 300,000-gallon space has been transformed with manatee-focused features like resting ledges, specialized life support systems, and an on-site medical area. As part of the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partexpert 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 Gulfarjum! All information regarding dates, tickets and requirements can be found at Gulfarium.com.







was the chance to celebrate the rescue and rehabilitation work being done year-round by the CARE Center team. Guests met local sea turtle experts, bid in a silent auction, and enjoyed special presentations that underscored the importance of protecting endangered marine life. All proceeds from the event go directly toward the care of injured sea turtles brought to the Center throughout the year.

We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors, vendors, and supporters who helped make CARE on the Coast such a memorable night. To learn more about the CARE Center or how you can contribute, visit Gulfarium. com/carecenter.

## Meet Lil Joe and Inigo at Manatee Cove-Now Open!

Get ready to float into some-

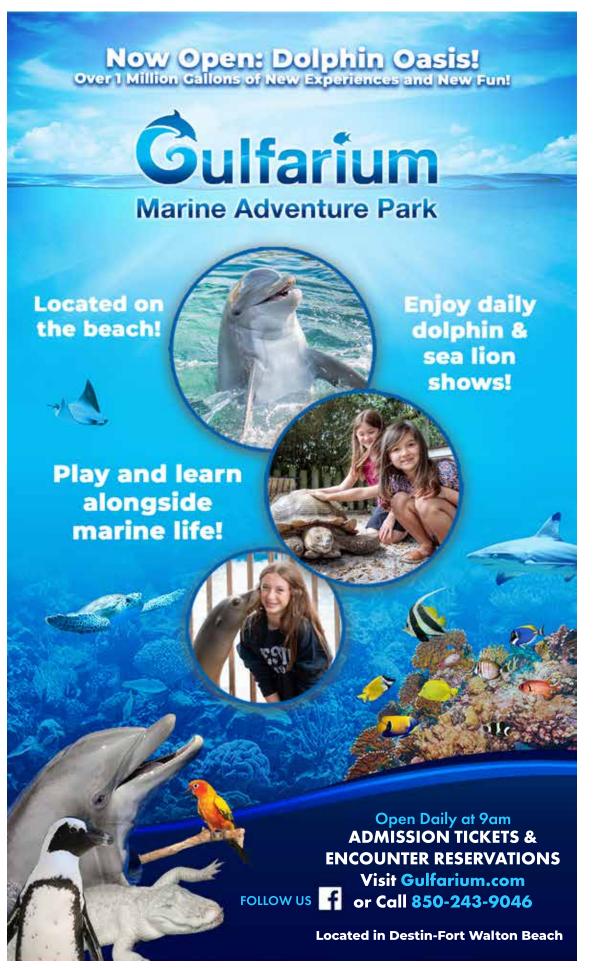


nership, the Gulfarium is helping relieve pressure on critical care facilities and offering these threatened marine mammals a second chance at recovery.

Guests can visit Manatee Cove during their trip to the Gulfarium, where daily educational chats and interactive displays highlight the threats manatees face in the wild—and how each of us can help protect them. Don't miss your chance to meet Lil Joe and Inigo and learn their incredible stories of resilience and hope.

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

During Sunset Camp, young explorers will have the opportunity to engage with our incredible dolphin pod in a dockside encounter, learn from our





## Protect the Basin: A Call to Action for Our Waterway

By Alison McDowell, Executive Director, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) is proud to launch the Protect the Basin campaign—an initiative designed to empower residents, businesses, and visitors to become everyday stewards of the Choctawhatchee Bay and its surrounding waterways.

At its heart, Protect the Basin is about transformation: turning awareness into action and concern into commitment. The campaign outlines four key steps



that anyone can take to make a meaningful impact on the health of our waterways:

**1. Prevent Pollution -** Our watershed starts in our back-yards. We can stop pollution be-

fore it begins by reducing consumption, reusing and recycling, properly disposing of waste, and keeping harmful chemicals out of storm drains.

2. Safeguard Habitat & Wildlife - Healthy ecosystems depend on mindful behavior. Good boating behavior includes respecting slow-speed zones, steering clear of sensitive seagrass beds, and using designated fishing line bins to help protect the diverse species that call our waterways home.

**3. Plant for Resilience** - Nature knows best. Planting native vegetation along shore-

lines supports erosion control, filters runoff, and enhances water quality, creating a stronger, more resilient environment.

**4. Be Water-Wise -** Small habits add up. Conserving water, minimizing fertilizer use, and capturing rainwater can dramatically reduce our impact on the basin's delicate ecosystems.

"Protecting our waterways is a shared responsibility," said Alison McDowell, Executive Director of CBA. "This campaign is about turning awareness into action because every small choice we make impacts the health of the Choctawhatchee Bay."

The Choctawhatchee Basin is vital to our local environment, economy, recreation, and overall quality of life. Whether you're a lifelong resident or a first-time visitor, you have a role in preserving this natural treasure.

We invite you to join the movement. Visit basinalliance. org/protect-the-basin to explore resources, find volunteer opportunities, and learn simple, practical steps to make a lasting difference.

Together, we can protect the basin—one action at a time.

#### **BLESSINGS**

continued from page 27

For those not in a vessel, the event can be viewed from various vantage points around the harbor. Additionally, SkyBar at Edge Seafood is hosting a Blessing of the Fleet Watch Party starting at 4 p.m., featuring live music by The Six Piece Suits at 6 p.m. and a firework display at 9 p.m.

Captains wishing to have their vessels blessed can register by emailing immanuel@iacdestin.org with their vessel's name, captain's name, business contact information and mailing address.

Though the Blessing of the

Fleet is the focal component of the extended week of events, the Week of Blessings is now a 20-year tradition that brings together faith, family and the workplace alongside the fishing community.

For example, at the Blessing of the Marketplace, local pastors gather to pray over business owners, first responders and industry leaders seeking guidance and prosperity for their businesses and the community.

Organized by the Church of Destin, Inc., the Week of Blessings reflects our city's deep-rooted connection to the sea and its enduring faith through all facets of life. Several pastors make up the 'Church of Destin' formed 20 years ago as a symbol of unity, crossing denominational barriers. As the Blessing of the Fleet grew, so did the hundreds of people, families and businesses in the area who also wanted to be blessed. And before you knew it, the vision expanded into a full "Week of Blessings." That's how the Blessing of the Marketplace was born, enabling the "blessing" to impact further to other locals, professionals and visitors, too.

"This week is a reminder of what makes Destin truly special," said one of the event organizers. "We're a fishing village, yes—but we're also a faith-filled community that supports one another through every season."

God continues to richly bless our "Little Fishing Village" and we shall continue to call upon Him to bless, preserve and protect those who make their living from our bountiful seas.

For more information, contact Immanuel Anglican Church www.iacdestin.org, 850-837-6324 or the Church of Destin at info@iacdestin.org.

### **Schedule of Events**

#### Blessing of the Marketplace - Monday, May 26, 11:30 a.m.

The week begins with the Blessing of the Marketplace luncheon at Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer. Local clergy will offer prayers over business owners, first responders, civic leaders, and workers across all industries. The luncheon is free and open to the public, with food provided and a spirit of encouragement offered to all who attend.

#### Blessing of the Youth -Tuesday, May 27, 6 p.m.

Held at Destin United Methodist Church, this service lifts up local students, educators and youth ministries. The evening includes worship music, student testimonies and words of encouragement for the next generation.

## Blessing of the Land - Wednesday, May 28, 6 p.m.

This outdoor event, hosted at Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Dugas Pavilion, honors farmers, builders and stewards of the land. Guests can enjoy live music and a message focused on restoration and growth.

## Blessing of the Fleet - Thursday, May 29, beginning at 4 p.m.

Festivities begin at 4 p.m. with a Captain's Testimony and Worship Service under the tent behind Brotula's. At 5:15 p.m., boats of all sizes will line the harbor to receive blessings from local pastors as prayers are lifted for safety, abundance and calm seas in the season ahead. Immediately following the fleet blessing, all are invited to a community fish fry—an evening of fellowship, food, and music on the waterfront. Donations are welcome.

From bow to bowline and storefront to sanctuary, the Week of Blessings is a celebration of what binds Destin together: faith, family and an enduring love for the water. We celebrate our city's deep spiritual roots and strong ties to the sea-- the Blessing of the Fleet remains a poignant reminder of the city's origins and the enduring spirit of its fishing community.







## Golf Series: Shalimar Pointe Golf Club Hosts First Prestigious AJGA Preview Presented by Destin-Fort Walton Beach

By Barbara Palmgren

The American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) Preview was brought to this area by Destin-Fort Walton Beach. They sponsored this outstanding preview of male and female golfers of the future. This 36-hole stroke play event was challenging and exciting.

The 78 young golfers, age 12-19, began competition on Friday, April 11, in the Qualifying Round at beautiful and challenging Shalimar Pointe Golf Course. Yardage for boys was 6.620 yards and for girls was 5634 yards for 18 holes of golf. In the field itself, 19 states were represented including 36 young players from Florida. Seven countries were represented with three players already receiving college letters of intent. After the Qualifier Round on Friday, tournament rounds began Saturday with the majority of golfers continuing. Maximum score to continue for the weekend was 77 for the boys and 76 for the girls.

The American Junior Golf Association national headquarters is located in Braselton, Ga., close to Atlanta. Past winners that became pro golfers included memorable names of Phil Mickelson, Scottie Scheffler, Jordan Spieth and Tiger Woods.

The Tournament Director, Harlie Valinho, worked with a staff of eight interns and one assistant. She coordinated a flawless registration and organization of the day requirements. Regional Director Matt Emmi shared more information with me about the organization itself, the point system players collect and the trophies that are awarded. Matt grew up in a golfing family, inspired by his father who was a head golf professional. Matt is now the Regional Director of Florida for the AJGA working in the Tourist Bureau of Affairs Department at the

national headquarters.

Impressed with Shalimar Pointe Golf Course and the warm welcome of staff and golf members who opened their homes to house 10 staff members, Matt also thanked Destin-Fort Walton Beach for the sponsorship of this event. Ron Schumard of the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Department worked with Matt to bring this tournament, one of a few nationwide, to the Florida Panhandle. Shalimar Pointe Golf Course Manager John Jenkins and course employees and staff created perfect course conditions and excellent restaurant service throughout the threeday tournament.

On Sunday, April 13, trophies were presented to the top men and women golfers. In first place, from Jacksonville, Fla., was Ethan Gossman with a two-day score of 149. Ethan won in a playoff with Charlie Hipp of St.



Johns, Fla. Tied for 3rd place was Hugh Michael Hollingsworth from Milton, Ga., Henry Hurley from Atlanta, Ga., and Nathan Peji from Dunwoody, Ga., with a score of 153.

Winners for the Girls division included Emily Storm from Lakewood Ranch, Fla., with a score of 151. Tied for second place was Meredith Finger from Wilmington, Del., Payton Haugen from Brookfield, Wis., and Olivia Hodges, from Duluth, Ga., with a score of 152.

The weather was perfect for the game of golf and these





young players are ones to watch in the future. This golf reporter with newspaper publisher, Scott Miller, enjoyed helping with the trophy presentation on Sunday afternoon. Just another golf day in paradise in Northwest Flori-







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## A Walk Down Magnolia Lane Raises \$80K for Embrace Florida Kids

By Ali Weil

More than \$80,000 was raised at the second annual A Walk Down Magnolia Lane fundraiser on April 7 at the WaterColor LakeHouse in Santa Rosa Beach. Hosted by Embrace Florida Kids, the golf-themed soiree supports vulnerable children and families across Northwest Florida with homes, healing, and hope.

The Masters-inspired event featured themed cuisine, golf games with prizes, live music by Jacob Mohr, and signature cocktails. "There is a tremendous need in Northwest Florida, and events like this help close a critical gap," said Blake Horne, Ph.D., Embrace Florida Kids president and CEO. "We're especially grateful to our sponsors, community, staff, and volunteers



for their support."

Top sponsors included Good News Church (Nicklaus sponsor), Peaceful Family Oklahoma, and Shoreline Title. Additional support came from Hancock Whitney, Hill Coleman LLC, and others. "It was an honor to support Embrace Florida Kids' vital work

at such a creative and inspiring event," said Mike Barcum, Chairman Emeritus of Peaceful Oklahoma.

Embrace Florida Kids is a faith-based nonprofit providing foster care, family preservation, and residential services throughout the Panhandle.

Learn more at Embrace-FLKids.org or follow @EmbraceFLKids on social media.

## Local Nonprofit Celebrates 10 Years With Olympic Gold Medalist

By Wendy Rudman

The Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation (ECFF), a nonprofit formed around a kitchen table 10 years ago, is celebrating hitting a key milestone. The foundation operates two facilities in Fort Walton Beach and an aquatic center in Destin – all of which are open to the public.

Over the years, the organization has welcomed more than

5,000 swimmers of all ages to its pools, teaching some to swim and giving others opportunities to train and compete.

To commemorate 10 years of bringing pools back to local communities, ECFF is holding Splash of Gold May 17, which will feature Olympian swim clinics, a giant pool party and an evening cocktail social. Gold medalist Olympic swimmer,

Cody Miller, will be teaching the youth clinics, signing autographs at the pool party and speaking at the evening cocktail social. The event will be held at the Taj Renee Community Aquatic Center at 4345 Commons Drive W. in Destin.

"I'm excited for our keynote participant, Cody Miller," said ECFF Board President Kevin Leibold. "I'm looking forward to watching him bring his expertise to local swimmers and to hearing how he relates his professional swimming career to them."

Kathi Heapy, one of the founders of the foundation, reached out to Miller early this year after enjoying his swimming YouTube videos for years. Miller is a prolific YouTuber, as well as an Olympic gold medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics in the 4 X 100 medley relay.

Both swam for Indiana University, which makes them family, she said.

"I emailed him, mentioned that I was also an Indiana swimmer, and told him what our foundation is doing here," Heapy said. "Next thing, I got a text. 'Hi, this is Cody Miller. Let's set up a time to talk."

Heapy said Miller was compelled by the foundation's mission, which is to bring aquatic opportunities to all. Ten middle school teams, six high school teams, two summer leagues and one year-round team practice or compete at ECFF pools. Additionally, more than 1,000 children and adults take lessons in foundation pools each year. In 2024, the foundation added adaptive swim lessons and its second pool in Fort Walton Beach to expand these unique offerings.

"The foundation is growing," Heapy said, adding that when they started 10 years ago, they assumed a larger entity would take up their mission of operating local pools. That never happened, but support from businesses like Tim Smith Acu-

ra, which has contributed generously to a large spring fundraiser for the last several years, has helped the foundation to succeed and thrive.

This year for the first time, the spring fundraising event will also include an online auction, which will wrap up on May 17th. Items include beachfront stays, vacations, charter boat trips, premium bourbon baskets, and Olympic gold medalist memorabilia.

The foundation is a 501(c)3 organization, which is funded by memberships, business sponsorships, and fundraisers like Splash of Gold.

The May 17 events include:

- Morning youth swimming clinics with Cody Miller. Tickets are \$100 each, with a discount for siblings. Register here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/break-out-swim-clinic-with-olympian-cody-miller-tick-ets-1253076719199?aff=oddt-dtcreator
- An afternoon Pool Party from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., which includes family splash time in our pool, demonstrations, sweet treats, and a chance to meet Olympian Cody Miller. \$25 admission for the family.
- An evening Cocktail Social from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., where ECFF will unveil the 2025 Okaloosa Swim and Dive Hall of Fame inductees and Cody Miller will share some of his experiences. Heavy appetizers and cold drinks included. \$62 per individual or \$100 per couple.

Purchase tickets at https://ecfitnessfoundation.org/fundraiser.





## Living with High-Functioning Depression and Anxiety:

## The Hidden Struggle



By Melanie Yost

High-functioning depression and anxiety are often invisible to the outside world. People who live with these conditions may appear successful, organized, and sociable — yet internally, they struggle with persistent sadness, chronic worry, and emotional exhaustion. Because they continue to perform at work, maintain relationships, and meet responsibilities, their suffering is often overlooked by others and sometimes even by themselves.

High-functioning depres-

sion often mirrors symptoms of Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD) — a long-lasting, low-grade form of depression. Those affected may experience a constant sense of emptiness, low self-esteem, fatigue, and difficulty enjoying life. However, they continue to "push through" daily tasks, sometimes excelling in them, which masks the emotional toll beneath the surface.

Similarly, high-functioning anxiety often resembles Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). People may appear competent, driven, and reliable, but internally they battle racing thoughts, fear of failure, perfectionism, and an inability to relax. Their productivity may be fueled more by anxiety than genuine motivation, leading to chronic stress and feelings of burn out.

These conditions are frequently missed for several reasons. First, mental health symptoms are often judged based on external behavior. If someone is working, socializing, and main-



taining responsibilities, others may assume they're fine. Second, many high-functioning individuals downplay or hide their struggles out of fear of stigma or judgment. Lastly, the individuals themselves may have difficulty recognizing or validating their symptoms, believing they are simply "not trying hard enough," "just tired," or "in need of a vacation."

The impact of high-functioning depression and anxiety on health and daily life is profound. Physically, chronic stress can lead to headaches, digestive problems, sleep disturbances, muscle tension, and weakened immune function. Emotionally,

these individuals may feel numb, disconnected, or overwhelmed. Over time, unaddressed symptoms can contribute to burnout, relationship problems, and even increased risk of substance use or suicidal ideation.

Work and productivity are often affected in subtle but damaging ways. People may overwork to avoid anxi-

may overwork to avoid anxiety, struggle with imposter syndrome, or fear delegating tasks. Despite outward success, they may feel unfulfilled or constantly on edge. In daily life, maintaining a façade of normalcy can be exhausting, leaving little energy for genuine connection or self-care.

Fortunately, treatment is available and effective. Therapy can help individuals understand and manage and change their thought, emotion, and behavioral patterns. Wholistic therapies such as body/energy work, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, and Ketamine infusion therapy

can be very helpful in calming down the nervous system and creating neuroplasticity. Lifestyle changes — including a healthy whole food diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, mindfulness, meditation, and setting appropriate boundaries will also make a meaningful difference. And lastly Medication, such as antidepressants or anti-anxiety prescriptions, may support symptom regulation when appropriate.

It's important to remember that you don't need to "hit rock bottom" to seek help. Functioning doesn't mean flourishing. If you're living with persistent inner struggles despite outward success, reaching out for support is a strong, valid step toward healing.

Melanie Yost is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and owner of Be Well Solutions and Complete Ketamine Solutions in Destin. She has been in the healthcare field for more than 35 years and can be reached at (850) 786-2051.

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## In May We Celebrate National Physical Fitness and Sports Month



By Lisa Leath-Turpin, Health & Wellness Coach

Annually observed since 1983, The President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition

highlights the entire month of May to raise awareness and encourage participation in physical activities while promoting the benefits of being active.

The benefits speak loud and clear that our bodies are made to move. Counting our daily steps has become the big "thing" as we get more proficient with our wearable fitness tech and apps. Science shows that aiming for 7,000 to 8,000 steps a day is the sweet spot for lowering the risk of disease and premature death. Walking has no cost, no equipment and availability is everywhere... even in the workplace.



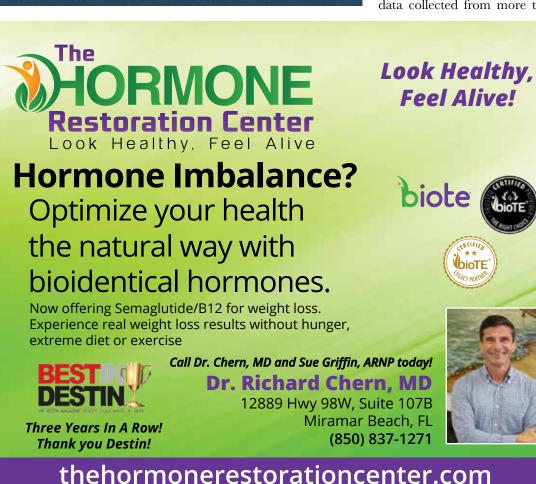
People with desk jobs or that sit for long periods of time are at risk for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, dementia, fatigue, inflammation, certain types of cancer, high blood pressure and "dead butt" syndrome (where your glutes forget how to work and hip flexors shorten). Dead butt syndrome causes a slew of alignment and nerve issues. One small study concludes getting up for movement/walking for five minutes every 30 minutes can help significantly with the above sedentary issues.

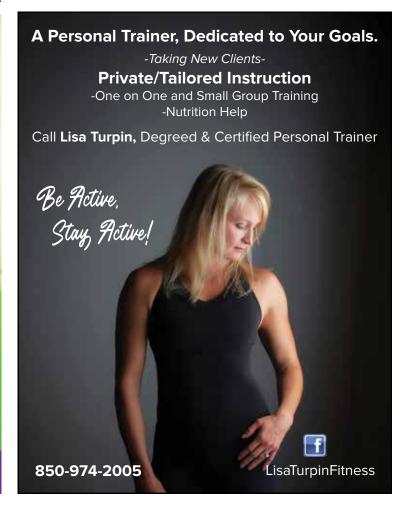
Another study published in The Journal of American College of Cardiology analyzed one week of activity tracker data collected from more than 89,500 people who participated in the U.K. Biobank, a longitudinal health study to assess how many hours people sat during the day and how much moderate to vigorous physical activity they achieved, and followed up across a decade. According to the article, the researchers then broke down the data to look at the associations between how much time people spent sitting during the week, along with their future risk of developing atrial fibrillation (an irregular heartbeat), heart attacks, heart failure and death from cardiovascular causes. After crunching the data, the researchers discovered that people who were

sedentary had a higher risk of developing all of the cardiovascular issues just mentioned. But those who sat for more than 10.6 hours a day (not including when they were lying down asleep) had up to a 60 percent higher risk of developing heart failure or dying from a cardiovascular cause. The study also showed that getting the prescribed 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a week suggested by The American College of Sports Medicine helps but going beyond your regular workout, adding the habit of moving more throughout the day (5 min / 30 min) is VITAL to the equation, such as suggested by the other study. It was noted that it appears even active individuals that hit the gym regularly can be affected by sitting too long and need this extra hourly movement to ward off the harmful side effects of sitting.

I hope this encourages you to get up and get moving! Remember that physical activity significantly enhances your mood, levels out hormones and improves your sleep. If you have the ability, why would you risk losing it? Be Active, Stay Active!







**Wellness** 

## Beyond Routine: Innovative Testing for Proactive Health



By Dr. Karen DeVore

Healthcare should be proactive, not just reactive. You shouldn't have to wait until something is "wrong" to start paying attention to your body. This is the foundation of our integrative approach—focusing on prevention, understanding the root cause of symptoms and delivering care that's personalized to you.

Although often a great first step, conventional lab work often doesn't tell the full story. Maybe you've been told your results are "normal," but you still don't feel like yourself. Fatigue, brain fog, bloating, mood swings or trouble sleeping—these aren't just in your head. They're signals from

your body that deserve to be explored, not dismissed.

That's why we offer a deeper level of testing at the Tortoise Clinic. Our specialty diagnostics are designed to find answers, target care more effectively, and give you the insights you need to feel empowered on your wellness journey.

#### Precision Testing for Personalized Care

Specialty testing goes beyond the basics. It helps us detect hidden imbalances, identify early warning signs, and tailor a treatment plan specifically for you. This isn't about chasing symptoms—it's about uncovering what's really going on beneath the surface so we can support your health in a meaningful, lasting way.

Here are a few of the impactful tests we use to support your whole-body wellness:

## • Galleri® Multi-Cancer Early Detection Test

This groundbreaking blood test screens for over 50 types of aggressive cancer—many of which don't have routine screening options. It detects tiny fragments of tumor DNA in your blood before symptoms ever appear. It's a great option for those with a family history of cancer, unexplained symptoms, or anyone who wants to take a proactive approach.

## • Genova GI Effects® Comprehensive Stool Analysis

Your gut tells a bigger story than you might think. This test looks at digestion, inflammation, your microbiome (the bacteria living in your gut), and even signs of infection. Because your gut health is connected to your immune system, mood, energy levels, and more, this test can be a game-changer if you're struggling with things like bloating, fatigue, skin issues, or autoimmune concerns.

## • Hormone Testing (Serum & DUTCH)

We offer both traditional blood work and the more advanced DUTCH test, to give us a fuller picture of your hormone patterns. DUTCH helps us see how your body makes, uses, and clears hormones like cortisol,



estrogen, and testosterone. It's especially useful for symptoms like low energy, irregular cycles, sleep issues, and mood swings.

## • Food Sensitivity Testing

Unlike allergy tests, which check for immediate reactions, this test looks at delayed immune responses that can cause chronic inflammation. That includes symptoms like brain fog, joint pain, headaches, or breakouts—often tied to foods you'd never suspect. Knowing your sensitivities helps us craft a dietary strategy that truly supports your body.

## • Methylation & Genetic Wellness Testing

This test looks at the genes that affect detox, hormone balance, mood, and how your body uses nutrients. A common example is the MTHFR gene, which plays a role in how you process folate and B vitamins. With this info, we can fine-tune your supplements and lifestyle to work with your genetics, not against them.

#### • Functional Lab Panels

We also look at standard labs—like vitamins, minerals,

Continued on next page



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## Important Conversations



By Stephenie Craig

You know that feeling when it's time to have a conversation about something important but you aren't sure how to approach it? You feel the urgency to speak but your hands get sweaty, your chest gets tight, and you tell yourself it's not really a big enough issue to discuss resulting in avoidance. Or, you feel anger bubbling up and you speak up with aggression, anger and intensity that turn the conversation in an unintended direction.

Avoiding important conversations may keep the peace in the short term, however, in the long-term avoidance creates unresolved tension, lack of change, feeling unseen, resentment and bitterness. Approaching important conversations with anger and aggression most often results in defensiveness, not being heard, escalation, alienation and seeing the other person as a villain. What if there was another way to talk about things that are important to you? What if there was a way to be calm, clear, direct, and curious, while also being heard?

#### 7 Healthy Ways to Have **Important Conversations**

1. Notice your emotional ac-

tivation. When are you feeling upset, bothered or emotionally reactive? Notice big feelings, body tension, irritability, headaches, stomachaches, exhaustion, anxiety, depression.

- 2. Regulate yourself. Use intentional calming skills to move your brain from emergency, overwhelmed mode to rational mode. Breathe slowly for 2 minutes, take a brief walk, journal, yell into your pillow, punch a punching bag, etc. Use coping skills that don't hurt yourself, others, or property.
- 3. Engage internal sorting. Notice if past emotion about previous situations/relationships is intermingled with the present. Determine the real issue in the present moment separate from other emotional situations.
- 4. Own your part. Remember that while you may feel upset with someone, you are not a victim. You have power and self-control. You have a voice and it is healthy to use it. Notice when you are being defensive or making up negative stories in your head (we all make up negative stories that aren't accurate). Determine and clarify what negative contribution you might be making to the situation at hand. Determine how you can communicate your willingness to take responsibility for your
- 5. Reach for vulnerability instead of blame and finger point-

ing. Notice if you are feeling hurt, misunderstood, invalidated, rejected, afraid, unsupported, insecure, unappreciated, or unseen. Look underneath anger as vulnerable feelings often hide beneath.

6. Outline your approach to the conversation. Start by asking the other person if they would be willing to take a few undistracted minutes to talk about something important to you. Then use "I" statements and feeling words to describe what is feeling difficult for you. Follow up by communicating a clear alternative that would feel better to you. "I feel hurt and dismissed when I tell you I am overwhelmed in parenting and you respond by telling me I just need to get more organized. What I'm really needing in those moments is some validation that parenting can be hard. I'm also needing to know you understand my feelings and

can be curious about support I might be needing."

7. Practice your outline, then gather your courage or calm and initiate the conversation.

Remember to regulate yourself before and during the conversation with calm breathing. Your approach will influence the tone of the discussion. Also, try to listen to the other person with curiosity rather than defensiveness when they respond to your thoughts. The other person may or may not respond the way you are hoping. However, it feels empowering to know you handled your side of the conversation well. Practice is needed much more than perfection when it comes to learning new communication skills. Keep working at it consistently and it will become more natural. Connect with us along your journey for counseling at coaching at Journeybravely.com.





### **BEYOND**

continued from previous page

cholesterol and inflammatory markers-through a functional lens. That means we're not just checking if you're in a "normal" range; we're asking, is this optimal for you? These panels help us assess your metabolic health, nutrient levels, and inflammation in more meaningful ways.

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At the Tortoise Clinic, we believe wellness is built over timenot rushed. Our approach helps you slow down, look deeper and make informed decisions without pressure or guesswork.

Because real healing isn't a quick fix—it's progress, not perfection. It's clarity over confusion. Prevention over reaction. And above all, wellness is a marathon, not a sprint.





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## Why We Should Care



By Kay Leaman, HealthyDay HealthyLife

As I write this, summer is starting to sneak its way in. A new morning to start fresh, make a change, do something different and up-level my health journey so I can do more, enjoy more and encourage others to do the same.

Here are some headlines:

**Wall Street Journal:** Your Healthspan Is as Important as Your Lifespan—and It's Declining The U.S. Diet is Deadly.

**Health News:** Six in 10 Americans Have Unhealthy Pro-Inflammatory Diets. Less Than 3 Percent of Americans Have a Healthy Lifestyle.

**New York Times:** Three-Quarters of U.S. Americans Are Now Overweight or Obese.

**Comment and Health:** Why is the U.S. still in such poor health, despite its wealth? Why Is American Food So Unhealthy?

Health and Medicine: Only 12 percent of American adults are metabolically healthy, Carolina study finds. Many sports supplements have no trace of their key ingredients.

**HealthWatch:** U.S. spends the most but ranks last in health compared with other high-income nations, new report says.

**Forbes:** 89% Of Sports Supplements Tested Did Not Accurately Label Their Ingredients. 40% of Sports Supplements Don't Contain Ingredients On The Label, U.S. Study Finds.

**CNN:** Nearly 800 dietary supplements contained unapproved drug ingredients, study finds

**CBS News:** Herbal supplements filled with fake ingredients, investigators find.

Dr. Mark Hyman M.D. (Doctors Pharmacy Podcast) states: "Since the nutrient densi-



ty of our diet has declined over time, we all need supplements. Unless you're hunting and gathering and foraging all your own wild food, unless you're drinking pure clean water, you have no exposure to environmental toxins, you have no chronic stress, you go to bed with the sun and wake up with the sun, you sleep nine hours a night — if that's you, you don't need supplements; but everybody else — we need supplements."

When choosing a vitamin, do we know if they have industry leading certifications such as USP, GMP, NSF TGA, ISO, HACCP, etc. Are they manufactured in a FDA registered facility? What rigorous trials have they gone through using 3rd party research?

When we look at all the information above and think about what questions to ask regarding our food supply as well, it becomes overwhelming. However, there are steps we can take to impact our own health in a positive way. Being proactive in understanding food labels is a good start. We can decrease the number of inner isle products we normally purchase. Many canned vegetables contain sugar and other preservatives. An example of this is canned tomatoes. Pomi's ingredients are tomatoes. Check the other options and you'll notice a trend. I have found more natural (less ingredients) in the international isle. I avoid any item containing sugar or coloring. Why they need to add yellow coloring to pickles is beyond me!

Supplements are a whole other issue. Because they are not regulated by the FDA, there are many both in stores and online that are not what they claim to be or have (They can be added to the sport supplement quotes above.). Several years ago, I attended a training on taking a

product to an online platform. The short version; create a label, find a manufacturing company that can produce the product and attach your label to it. The product they were focused on—vitamins. The bottom line of the entire training: the money, not quality, purity, efficacy or

safety.

If you are interested in a couple of short videos regarding where my husband and I redirected our supplement spending, send me an email with 'I care' in the subject line. I am also available to discuss labels or other questions you might have

via a phone call. Please use the same subject line in your email.

It's about learning and sharing what we learn with others that can impact the health of our communities. Here's to Health

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# More Than a Pretty Polish: The Health Benefits of a Mani-Pedi

By Krisy Whitely Anderson, Beverly Hills Day Spa Owner

Getting your nails done isn't just about looks—it's a smart way to care for your health. With sandal season, Mother's Day and Memorial Day just around the corner, now's the perfect time to treat yourself or someone you love.

Here's why regular manicures and pedicures are more than a luxury:

- **Boost Circulation:** Hand and foot massages improve blood flow, ease muscle tension, and support joint mobility.
- **Prevent Infections:** Professional cleanings reduce



bacteria and fungus, prevent ingrown nails, and stop cracked skin from leading to infection.

• Healthier Nails: Exfolia-



tion removes dead skin, reduces calluses, stimulates collagen and can even ease back or leg pain.

• Youthful Appearance:

Treatments can help tighten skin, reduce cellulite and leave hands and feet looking smoother and younger.

• **Mental Refresh:** The soothing experience helps reduce stress and supports better mental health.

Meet Megan, our talented, new nail tech specializing in detailed designs and artistic flair. She is a trained professional who specializes in the care and beautification of your hands, feet and nails. She will not only make your nails look beautiful, but help you feel relaxed, refreshed and confident.

#### **Deluxe Manicure - \$45**

Includes nail shaping, cuticle care, massage with hydrating oils, hand mask with hot towels and polish.

#### **Deluxe Pedicure - \$60**

Includes soak, callus treatment, scrub, extended massage, foot mask with hot towels and polish.

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# Book Review: Max Strom's A Life Worth Breathing

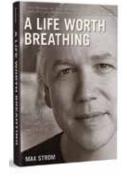
REVIEWED BY MICHAEL McManus, LCSW

Max Strom's "A Life Worth Breathing" is an inspiring and thought-provoking exploration of personal transformation through mindfulness and conscious living. Drawing on his extensive background as a yoga teacher and speaker, Strom presents a comprehensive guide that encourages readers to reflect on their lives and embrace their true selves

The central theme of the book revolves around the significance of breath—not merely as a biological function but as a powerful tool for emotional and spiritual well-being. Strom eloquently explains how conscious breathing can foster self-awareness, reduce anxiety, and facilitate personal growth. He provides practical exercises and insights that empower read-

ers to harness the power of their breath to navigate challenges and cultivate a more fulfilling

Throughout the book, Strom shares personal anecdotes and relatable stories that illustrate his points, making the concepts accessible to a wide audience. I love his warm and engaging writing style, which invites readers to embark on their own journeys of self-discovery, urging them to confront fears, embrace vulnerability, and seek deeper connections with others. This emphasis on community and relationships adds a rich layer to his message, underscoring the idea that personal growth is



often intertwined with our connections to those around us.

In summary, "A Life Worth Breathing" is a beautifully crafted book that offers valuable insights for anyone seeking to lead a more intentional and meaningful life. Max Strom's blend

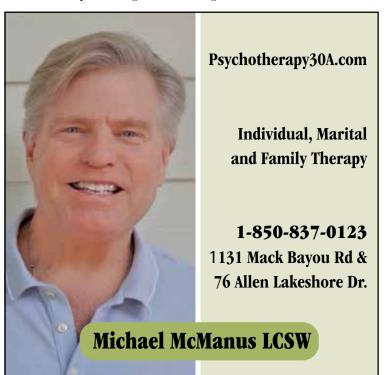


of practical wisdom and philosophical reflection makes this a compelling read, inspiring readers to embrace each breath as an opportunity for growth and connection. Whether you are new to mindfulness practices or looking to deepen your understanding, this book is a worthwhile addition to your personal development journey.

This book was especially meaningful to me since my wife Angela has been trying to get me to go to Yoga for over 10 years, and I finally started going about a year ago. I love going and especially enjoy the positive physical, emotional and community benefits – it's also a wonderful time to pray silently.

Michael McManus LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice for over 30 years. He and his wife Angela live in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. He can be reached for an appointment by text or phone at (850) 837-0123 or visit his website: Psychotherapy30A. com.





# How to Take Back Your Time and Boost Your Impact



By BILL MASON, EXECUTIVE COACH AND FOUNDER OF ROCKET FUEL COACH

Time is the one resource we all want more of—but often use the worst.

Recently, I sat down with a CEO whose company pulls in over six figures in annual revenue. Smart. Driven. But completely buried in tasks. One day, he told me he was debating whether to spend \$500 on ZipRecruiter to hire a new employee—or do the search himself

At first glance, it seemed like a no-brainer to save the cash. Then I asked, "How much is your time worth?"

We did the math. His personal earnings came out to about \$500 per hour. That meant spending 40 hours on hiring would cost the company \$20,000 in lost opportunity. Within minutes, the real cost was clear—and so was his decision. He paid the \$500, filled the role faster and freed up time to

close two new deals that week.

That's what happens when leaders start treating time like the asset it truly is. **The 4D Strategy: Do, Develop, Delegate, Delete** 

Most leaders I coach don't have a time management issue—they have a decision-making issue. They're overwhelmed not by laziness, but by loyalty to the wrong tasks. That's why I teach the 4D Performance Strategy, a tool that helps you categorize every task on your plate into four powerful buckets:

**Do** – The things you're great at and energized by. These are your zone of genius— double down on them. In this zone, you have the potential for exponential growth.

**Develop** – The things you love but haven't mastered yet. These are worth the time and effort to grow. Hire a coach, attend group trainings, take courses, read books, or tune into podcasts.

**Delegate** – The things you're competent in, but that drain your energy. These are ideal to train and hand off. Those who stay in this zone too long burn out—even though they appear productive.

**Delete** – The time-wasters. They bring no value and drain your focus. Cut ruthlessly. If you don't, these are the tasks that can eventually get you fired.

When leaders start filtering



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their calendar through this grid, everything shifts. Burnout fades. Focus sharpens. Impact rises. It's not about doing more—it's about doing less better.

But here's where the magic multiplies: this strategy isn't just for individuals—it transforms teams

When an entire team uses the 4D Strategy, something powerful happens. Tasks that drain one person are often energizing to another. What you hate doing, someone else may thrive on. By mapping out team tasks across these four zones, companies unlock hidden potential.

Workloads get balanced. Morale improves. People operate in their strengths. And the team moves from just surviving to truly thriving—from good to great. The result? Higher engagement, less turnover and significantly better outcomes.

Whether you're a business owner, a team leader or simply

juggling too much—this strategy works.

Time poverty is often a sign of priority confusion. When everything feels urgent, nothing truly important gets done. The 4D method gives you clarity, not just control. And clarity creates freedom.

So, here's the question: What is your time really worth?

And what's it costing you to keep doing things someone else could do better, faster and cheaper?

The best leaders don't do more—they do what matters most, their highest and best!

"The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to



almost everything."

— Warren Buffett

Ready to Take Back Your Time? Call me at 850-855-3430.

Bill Mason











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This 90-minute experience is designed for business owners, team leaders, and anyone tired of being stretched too thin.

Learn how to stop wasting time and start focusing on what moves the needle.

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(850) 855-3430

Email: Bill@rocketfuelcoach.com



Stuck? Frustrated? Tired of conflict? Need accountability? Visit rocketfuelcoach.com to get started today!



# Sean of the South: Memorial Day Weekend



By Sean Dietrich

Memorial Day is the unofficial start to summer, and summer was in full bloom in America. The nation experienced mostly beautiful weather.

The Midwest had highs in the 80s, The Southeast experienced temps even higher. Temperatures in the Florida panhandle exceeded approximately 173 degrees.

But it's important to remember that it wasn't a great Memorial Day weekend for everyone.

Yesterday in Saint Louis, for example, a man named Phillip was playing baseball with his kids while his wife, Lindsey, was making potato salad inside. The day was going swimmingly.

"Guys in my family have always played baseball on Memorial Day weekend," Philip wrote to me this morning in an email. "It's a longstanding tradition for us."

Phillip was pitching. His 11-year-old son, Austin, was at the plate. Phillip delivered an easy pitch underhand. His son swung the bat like the baseball had personally insulted his mother. The bat connected.

PING!

The good news is that Phillip's son hit a line drive. The bad news is: it was a line drive which struck a part of Phillip's anatomy most often associated with procreation.

The ball nailed Phillip. He howled in pain. He went down under the power. His kids all gathered around him and asked if he was okay. All Phillip could utter was, "Go get your mom, please."

It bears mentioning, Phillip's son was using an aluminum bat not a wooden bat. Which might not sound like an important detail to this story except that the exit velocity of a ball hit by an aluminum bat is a LOT higher than that of one hit by a wooden bat.

A ball hit by a wooden bat has an average velocity of 60 to 80 mph. Whereas a ball hit by an aluminum bat is capable of breaking the sonic barrier.

Phillip's wife approached her



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husband and asked her children what had happened.

Her 4-year-old son remarked, "Austin hit daddy in the Twinkie."

His wife had to excuse herself for a moment. When she returned, her face was red and she looked like she'd been laughing.

"I wasn't laughing," said Phillip's wife. "It's allergies."

Then, his wife single-hand-

edly loaded Phillip into their SUV. She placed him in the cargo hold because Phillip was incapable of sitting. Phillip laid on on his side throughout the long ride to the hospital and tried to remind himself to breathe.

Occasionally, he heard a cackling sound coming from the front seat, but his wife swears that her allergies get so bad this time of year.

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"My wife doesn't even have allergies," Phillip writes.

At the hospital, a doctor checked him out. The nurse removed Phillip's trousers and the medical professionals inspected the bruising. The doctor asked how it happened.

Phillip's 4-year-old spoke again. "My brother hit my daddy in the Twinkie."

The doctor nodded, covered his mouth, then excused himself briefly. The medical man left the exam room and Phillip swears he heard the sound of the doctor's allergies acting up.

When the doctor returned, he was out of breath and he had four other male medical colleagues with him who were available to offer their expertise. Also, the janitor said he wanted to see, too.

One of the veteran ER doctors, male, inspected the bruising and wore a grave face. Whereupon he looked Phillip square in the eye and said, "Son, I'm afraid we're going to have to remove it."

At which point, all medical staffers excused themselves again and Phillip heard more allergies in the hallway.

"What kind of world is this we live in," Phillip wrote to me, "when doctors and nurses can't even act professionally?"

Thankfully, as it turns out, Phillip will make a full recovery. The main advice the doctor gave Phillip was to use frozen vegetables—either corn or peas work best—to de-inflame the affected netherregions. Once the bruising goes away, the doctor recommends that Phillip retire his jersey and quit baseball altogether.

Phillip spent most of today in the supine position, lying on his sofa. All day, Philip's friends have been stopping by to wish him well.

"They've been bringing me a lot of Hostess products," said Phillip.

He hopes that by sharing his story he can warn fathers out there to take the proper protective measures when playing backyard sports.

"I just don't wanna see this happen to someone else," he added. "I think it's time we talked openly about this painfully sensitive subject."

Now if you'll excuse me, my allergies are acting up.

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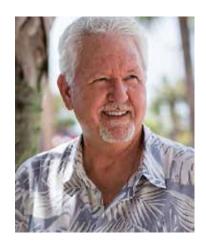
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# A Pastor's Ponderings: Following at a Distance



By Pastor Dave Holland

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns." Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. — Luke 22: 52-54

How do you react in a tension-filled situation? That's when the real you comes out. There are three types of reactions to the pressure-packed arrest of Christ in this passage.

First, there are those who live under the reign of darkness. Priests and officers stand cowering behind the brute force of the Temple guards. They could have arrested Jesus in the Temple Courts where He preached each day. But they didn't because they were afraid of the crowds who adored Christ. Fear

made them cower and sneak around in the darkness. Similarly, there are many Christians who do not confess their faith in the Lord because they are afraid of how people will respond.

Second, there are the Temple Guards who view Christ as a nuisance. Someone who provoked their officers enough to require them to get out of bed, find Jesus, and arrest Him. Their inconvenience fueled their anger toward Jesus. Christ's physical sufferings began with these ruffians. Thugs need little reason to beat people. To them, it was fun to mock Jesus. They put a hood over Jesus' head, struck Him and pushed Him. Laughing at the stumbling figure, they commanded He prophesy who hit Him. They were sadistic men who enjoyed inflicting pain. Yet, Jesus endured.

Finally, Peter followed at a distance. I get it. Peter was afraid of getting arrested too. Nobody wants to be taken into police custody. So, when it mattered most Peter followed at a distance. This phrase haunts me. How many times have I kept quiet when I should have spoken up for the Lord? How many opportunities have I had to witness to Christ's saving power but instead, I removed myself from the situation?

When I was in Bible College, I was searching for a friend's house in Los Angeles, Calif. As I was driving, I saw an old Rambler parked in a crowded apartment neighborhood. My grandfather, Red, drove an old Rambler of the same color and

model. How many old Ramblers could still be on the road, I thought.

We hadn't seen Red in over a year, so I looked at the mailboxes for his name.

Sure enough, I found his name. I knocked on his door and heard a feeble, "Who is it?"

"Red, it's Dave, your grand-

"Come on in, Hot \*amn, how did you find me?" Said the emaciated old man on the couch, covered with a blanket. Red had once been the strongest man I knew.

 ${
m ``I \ saw \ your \ old \ Rambler \ on }$  the street."

"I junked that car years ago," he said.

Then I knew the Lord sent me there to speak with Red. "You don't look yourself Red, are you alright?"

"No, this liver cancer is kick-

ing my butt."

Everything in me wanted to run to him, hug and thank him for everything he had done for me and my siblings. When I was a kid, when I thought we would have no Christmas, Red showed up out of nowhere with his car full of presents. He gave me my first baseball mitt. Other times, this strong tattooed naval veteran would let my sister and I stand on the couch and comb his silky gray hair (he always had a comb in his front shirt pocket).

Yet, when Red needed me most to share the gospel with him, I failed. I sat stone cold, only mumbling pleasantries about the weather and television programs. Red died a week later. I can only hope that someone better than I had the guts to share the truths that Jesus died for him and rose again to resurrection life. That is our only

hope of salvation.

Meanwhile, as the Temple guards lead Christ away, Peter followed at a distance. Imagine if Peter stood up and said, "Jesus is the Son of God. We saw Him heal lepers, blind men and paralyzed people. He even raised the dead." Instead, when darkness reigned, Peter followed in stone-cold silence at a distance.

Peter failed Jesus.

I failed my grandfather, Red. We all fail, but Jesus never fails.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. This devotional is from his book, "Extraordinary Jesus." You can get a copy of his books from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidvHolland54@gmail.com.



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# Seeking Justice

# **Destin True Crime Club**

# Forensic Science in Homicide Investigations

By Michael Yoder, Retired FBI CRIMINAL PROFILER

Technically, the meaning of forensics is "the application of scientific methods used in connection with the detection of crime." Although commonly misused as the name of the science itself, the word forensics is an adjective, describing the science that follows. So, Forensic Biology is the application of biology to detect and/or solve crimes. It is another level beyond the hard science of biology. Forensic science can be applied to most aspects of science. There are hard sciences like biology, chemistry, and pathology that are common in the forensic arena. Soft sciences such as psychology that can also be applied forensically.

The use of forensic sciences in modern day crime fighting has become commonplace. The astute homicide investigator

understands when specific scientific methods can be applied. For example, gathering DNA samples at a crime scene often involves the gathering of evidence that is too small for the naked eve to detect. However, the collection of that crucial evidence has to be done on a macro level. It is not possible to take a microscopic view of an entire crime scene to make sure the "right" evidence is collected. One must use logic and experience to know where to collect this evidence.

Once the potential DNA evidence is collected and placed into a sterile container, the homicide investigators, crime scene techs and lab personnel must maintain the evidentiary integrity of the sample until a forensic chemist analyzes the sample. In addition to the chemical analysis, the forensic chemist compares the sample to known



samples in a DNA database to look for possible matches. Ultimately, the forensic chemist may be required to provide testimony regarding their analytical results and the integrity of the evidence's chain of custody during a criminal trial. The forensic chemist is not only an expert in their field of scientific study, they must also understand investigative procedures and then they must be able to communicate their knowledge and conclusions to a jury of non-scientific people in a manner that the jury fully understands every

court authorized expert? The trial judge is the final arbiter of who is deemed to be an "expert," but the criminal courts recognize what is known as the Daubert Standard. While there are exceptions, the Daubert Standard is generally accepted by the courts if the person has reached the pinnacle of their academic studies (Ph.D or MD) in the field of their expertise, has published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal on topics related to their expertise, and worked or lectured in their field of expertise. A trial judge will evaluate a person's background against the Daubert Standard and will

decide whether the person is an expert and can offer expert testimony based on their observations, experience, and general knowledge related to their area of expertise. Conversely, a fact witness can only testify on facts they know to be true on a firsthand basis.

So, the next time you hear someone say they want to study forensics, you should ask them, "Forensic what?" It is a noble cause to find the truth using scientific methods. It goes beyond the theories of science to the application in a law enforcement setting. A good forensic expert needs to be as comfortable in the law enforcement community as they are in the scientific community. They should be confident in their conclusions and ready to testify under oath about their findings while being prepared to face challenges to their testimony. The result of their analysis and testimony could take someone's freedom away. Testifying is its own skill set. However, it is important to get to the truth.

If you're passionate about true crime and want to help solve real cold cases, join the Destin True Crime Club on Facebook. We meet monthly to discuss our ongoing case and share research ideas. It's a serious but fun group of fellow sleuths. Questions or speaking requests? Email myoder0361@ gmail.com.



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# The Blessings of Theatre Education

By Heath Carroll, Education and Outreach Director, Emerald Coast Theatre Company

I've been blessed enough to work in theatre education for 13 years. I've seen children learn and grow. They've learned about themselves, learned to work as a team, learned to build skills that aren't only beneficial to the stage, but truly follow them into their adult lives. These are skills of confidence, communication, and empathy. Surely, learning the process of theatre is fun, but that hidden by-product--the thing they don't yet clock in their young eyes--is that it makes them better people. It's transformative.

One of the biggest transformations I see in my students is confidence. Whether my students are 5 or 75, and I've got both, that first step on stage can be daunting. But as I tell all my students: those butterflies in the tummy? That stage fright? That's a good thing! It means that you care! But, for my kids, there is no need to fear. Because our audiences want to see them succeed! And no matter who is in that audience they can know, without doubt, that they have someone behind them--cheering them on. That's me. It's more than my job. It is my true passion. Because I know what comes next. I see it time and time again; every time that student speaks up, tries-tries again, and feels supported by the group, they start to realize something important:



that their voice matters. They're seen. They're heard. That kind of self-assurance? It sticks with them, way beyond the curtain call. And, parents have repeatedly testified to that fact over the years.

And speaking of parenthood... In a few short weeks, my wife and I will be blessed to welcome our first child into our family. And I want this for my daughter. I want her to have a sense of community. I want her to see the different perspectives that theatre offers. I want her to be wise, and above all, empathetic to those around her. I know that studying theatre and being involved in the art can make this happen. I've lived it myself. I fell in love with theatre in high school. It allowed me a scholarship for college, the ability to travel and meet and work with new people, chiefly among them was the woman who would become her mother. Our shared love of the art brought us together, brought us to this place. It's life altering and life affirming.

And it's so much fun in the summertime. There is magic in the summer for kids. It's two short months that can feel like a year for a child. There's no school. Kids are looking for a way to connect with their friends. Camps of any kind kindle that flame of socialization. I'd want my daughter in a theatre camp. Dancing wildly-even if off beat. Singing loudly-even if off key. Playing. Learning. Pretending. Finding a place to belong.

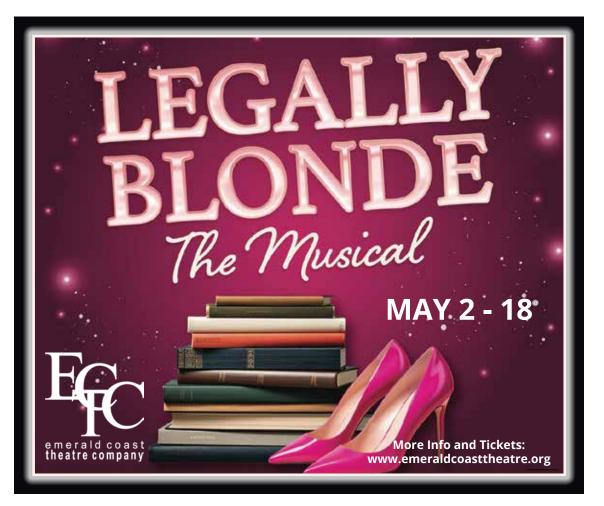
This summer at Emerald Coast Theatre Company we have a wonderful selection of titles to choose from. Snow White and Seussical the Musical for grades 2nd to 5th. Too Many Detectives, Chicago (audition only) and Beetlejuice for our Teens 6th-12th grade. And our Mini Players, K-1st, have ti-

tles like Moana, Encanto, Trolls, and more! There are also several Show Choir Camps available for multiple age groups.

If your kid's looking for a place to belong, I'd love to welcome them to our stage. Maybe they, too, will grow, connect, and fall in love with the arts. There is no way of knowing just where it could take them. It could very well be a blessing.









# Summer Camps 2025: A Local Guide for Families

Destin Life has curated a recommended list of a variety of summer camps to keep your kids engaged this summer! From STEM and environmental education to creative arts, leadership, theater and dance to basketball and classic outdoor adventures, there is a variety of options from which to choose.

### General Enrichment & Academic Camps

- Kids on Campus Northwest Florida State College (Niceville): Open to students entering grades 3–7, with classes in science, music, art, athletics and more. Sessions run June 23–27 and July 7–11, full- or half-day options available. Register: nwfsc.edu/kidson-campus-2
- Youth Village Summer Program (FWB): For ages 2–14, this full-day camp includes STEM activities, field trips, arts and crafts and more. Weekly rates range from \$140 to \$190. Register: ouryouthvillage.
- Camp Forager The Barrett School (Destin): For children ages 3–12, weekly

themed camps run June 2–July 25, with options like "Bee" Creative, "Bee"ach Days, and "Bee" Mad Scientists. Standard day (8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.) is \$400/week; extended day (7:45 a.m.–4:30 p.m.) is \$450/week. Register: thebarrettschoolfl.org/camp

- RoboQuest STEM Workshops The Barrett School (Destin): Designed for ages 10–15, these workshops run June 10–July 26, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m., at \$350/week. thebarrettschoolfl. org/roboquest
- **Abadie Academy (Santa Rosa Beach):** For ages 5–12, week-long camps run June 3–July 12, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m., at \$350/week. Themes include "Under the Sea" and "Happy Campers." abadieacademy.com

### Arts & Performing Arts Camps

• Emerald Coast Theatre Company (Miramar Beach): Offers various theater camps for ages 5–14, including Mini Player Camps (ages 5–7) and Camp Broadway sessions (grades 2–5). Dates and tuition



vary. Register: emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps

- studio6twenty5 (Destin): This boutique classical ballet studio offers summer camps for children ages 2–9, following the American Ballet Theatre® National Training Curriculum. Programs include Pre-Primary and Primary levels, focusing on foundational movement, musicality, and imaginative exploration. Camps are held at 625 Harbor Blvd., Destin. Register: studio6twenty5.com
- Drama Kids of Northwest Florida: Designed for children aged 6–12, this camp focuses on building confidence through theater activities. Camp Hollywood runs June 2–6, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$250

per week. Register: dramakids. com/destin-fort-walton-beachniceville-fl

- NFB Summer Dance Camp (FWB): Designed for children entering Kindergarten through 2nd grade, this camp introduces young dancers to the fundamentals of ballet in a fun and engaging setting. Sessions run Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Tuition is \$150 per week. Register: nfballet.org/community-classes
- NFB Pre-Ballet Classes (FWB): Classes (once a week) are tailored for preschool-aged children, focusing on basic ballet movements and coordination. Various time slots available. Tuition \$75 for 4-week session. Register: nfballet.org/community-classes.

• NFB Summer Workshop Intensive (FWB): Aimed at dancers entering 3rd grade and up, this intensive workshop focuses on advanced ballet techniques, including pointe work and variations. Sessions run Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuition is \$300 per week. Register: nfballet.org/community-classes.

• Compass Rose Academy Summer Enrichment (Santa Rosa Beach): Offering programs for ages 3–12, this camp includes activities in art, music and dance. Half-day and full-day options available June 2 - August 1; weekly rates range from \$180 to \$440. Register: compassroseacademy.org or call (850) 660-1110

### **Sports & Recreation Camps**

• Emerald Coast Rush Youth Development Program (Niceville, Valparaiso, Destin, FWB): For ages 6–12, this soccer camp develops skills in a fun, structured environment led by licensed coach-

Continued on next page













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#### Arts & Music

#### **SUMMER CAMPS**

continued from previous page

es. Register: emeraldcoastrush.

- Destin Community Center Summer Day Camp: For ages 5–12, this half-day camp runs June 2 to August 1, Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Activities include games, crafts and swim days. \$85/week for Destin residents; \$115 for non-residents. Register: (850) 654-5184 or cityofdestin.com
- Raider Basketball Camp (Niceville): Held at the NWFSC Raider Arena, this coed camp is open to students entering grades 2–8. Week 1 runs June 2–5; Week 2 is July 28–31. Includes instruction, T-shirt and lunch. Register: nwfsc.edu/k12/sports-camp.
- Challenger International Soccer Camp (Freeport): A soccer camp for boys and girls, offering skill development and fun games. Dates and specific details for 2025 are to be announced. challengersports. com.

### STEM, Science & Innovation Camps

• Camp Invention (Nicev-

**ille):** A nationally recognized, STEM-based camp for kids entering grades K–6, focusing on hands-on STEM activities. Sessions are scheduled for June 2–5 in Santa Rosa Beach and June 9–13 in Niceville, with fees between \$275 and \$295. Register: invent.org.

- Summer STEAM Workshops (FWB): For ages 5–12, these themed hands-on science workshops include engineering, physics and biology. Emerald Coast Science Center Fort Walton Beach. Sessions are limited to 20 students. Register: ecscience.org
- Barrett School Robo-Quest STEM Workshops (Destin): Targeting ages 10–15, this program offers robotics and coding workshops from June 10 to July 26. Weekly fee is \$350. Register: barrettschool. com
- HSU Foundation STEM Program via Youth Village (FWB): Selects 12 girls aged 8–12 for a two-week STEM experience with Lego Robotics, Coding and Drones. Register: ouryouthvillage.org
- Ohana Day School (Miramar Beach & Inlet Beach): Themed camps for ages 3–5



run weekly from June 10–July 19, featuring themes like "Under the Sea" and "At the Carnival." (850) 608-2081. ohanadayschool.org

# Outdoors, Wildlife and Environment Camps

• Gulfarium Marine Adventure
Park (Okaloosa Island): Sunset Camps
for ages 6–14 include
dolphin encounters,

beach exploration and dinner. Select dates in June–August, 4–9 p.m., at \$89 for the first child, with discounts for additional siblings. gulfarium.com

• E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center – Wednesday Summer Day Camps (Freeport): Designed for children aged 5–12, these camps focus on nature exploration, animal encounters and environmental education. Sessions are held on Wednesdays from June 4 to

Continued on next page

# Artists Invited to Apply for 30th Annual Festival of the Arts!

The Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) is now accepting artist applications for the 30th Annual Festival of the Arts, set for October 25–26, 2025, at the Dugas Pavilion in Destin.

This juried show features over 100 artists and awards more than \$12,000 in prizes! Mediums include painting, sculpture, photography, jew-



elry, and more. Artists benefit from amenities like free

breakfast, booth sitters, and an awards dinner.

Applications, including four images, are due by June 30, 2025. Fees are \$30 to apply and \$350–\$700 for booth space.

Proceeds support MKAF's arts outreach programs. Details at mkaf.org or call (850) 650-2226.



#### Around Town



By Patricia Lee, Owner Destinites.com

Fear not! There are still good people in this world and some of them are right here in Destin. This month in our private, Destinites Facebook group (www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinites), we had a member to place the following post.

# Ask Destinites: Good People In Destin

#### Post:

"Looking to help those in need. I'm local and offering to help those who can't afford to hire me. If you're living in unsafe or dangerous conditions and can't afford to do repairs, I'll do my best to help you at no charge. I can't afford large scale jobs or expensive materials. But, I will come and do whatever I can. Priority goes to the elderly or the disabled as well as single parents struggling to make ends meet. My hope is that others will see this and perhaps I can even find people to help with things I can't do like plumbing and electrical jobs that require permits. Perhaps there's a local supplier that's willing to help with materials. So, if you're a contractor or are handy and want to help me do this, just let me know. I'm hoping to help as many as I can. I do work and I'm a single dad, so my time is limited. But, I'm going to do my best. If you work with a local church group, are law enforcement or someone in public service and know who is in need, please reach out.

For those who want my help. Please know I won't be asking questions about your personal situation and I won't make assumptions or judge. Feel free to send me a private message if you don't want to post here! I will just help you and ask for nothing in return. I only ask one thing – if you can afford to hire someone, then please don't take my time away from someone

that is truly in need."

Was this guy for real making such an offer, in a group of almost 12,000 people? Much to my delight, yes, he was very sincere. I never know from one minute to the next what a member will post in our group, but this was seriously heartwarming. What made it even better was the overwhelming positive response it received. When I started the Destinites group nine years ago, it was an effort to bring the community together and posts like the one I just mentioned make it all worthwhile. The post touched the hearts of others so much that they began to reply with their own offers to help this man with his volunteer efforts. They volunteered not only their

time, but also products and services. It was amazing to watch one reply after the other of people reaching out. It all rather reminded me of an old short story called Stone Soup. If you haven't heard it, look it up. Read it to your children and grandchildren. It's what life is all about.

If you are a Destin resident or in the close surrounding area, I invite you to join our private, targeted group for locals and property owners at Facebook. com/groups/Destinites with 11,600+ members (Est. Oct. 2018). Check out our local business directory at Destinites.com where 400+ local businesses are already listed.

#### **SUMMER CAMPS**

continued from previous page

July 30, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$55 per camper. Register: (850) 835-1824.

• Camp Longleaf at E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center (Freeport): Camp Longleaf provides week-long overnight camps for children aged 9–14. Campers engage in tradition-

al outdoor activities combined with hands-on nature education, including animal encounters, nature hikes and team-building exercises. Cabins are air-conditioned. Dates TBD. eowilsoncenter.org

• Creature Features & Special Programs (FWB): Interactive wildlife programs and science demos are held throughout summer and in-

cluded with general admission. Emerald Coast Science Center. More info: ecscience.org

• 4-H Camp Timpoochee (Niceville): This beloved overnight and day camp experience offers marine science, outdoor adventure and environmental education. Day camps are for ages 6–12; overnight options available for ages 8–16. Sessions run throughout summer. Regis-

ter: florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu.

• Childcare Network WonderQuest Summer Camp: Held at multiple locations, this themed adventure camp is open to children ages 5–12. Register: childcarenetwork.com

#### **Variety & Specialty Camps**

- City of Destin Summer Camps: Various camps for children ages 5–12, including Half-Day Summer Camp (June 2–August 1), Cooking and Serving Classes, Soccer Camps and more. Fees and dates vary. Register: cityofdestin.com/recon-
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast: From June 2 to August 6, the program serves children K-12 with educational, recreational and leadership-building activities. Register: emeraldcoastbgc.org
- Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida (Valparaiso): Children aged 5-12 can embark on a week-long journey through time at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida's summer camp. Campers will engage in handson activities, games and crafts that bring history to life. The camp runs Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., with sessions available in July. \$75 for non-members; \$70 for museum members. Register: (850) 678-2615 or visit heritage-museum.







We are thrilled to announce our second location in Panama City Beach.

12909 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, FL 32407

### **Accepting New Appointments!**

(850) 797-6191 | Emerald-ENT.com 141 Mack Bayou Loop, Suite 102, Santa Rosa Beach 12909 Panama City Beach Pkwy., Panama City Beach, FL 32407



### **Local Coupons**

# BLUEWATER PLASTIC SURGERY

PROFOUND (RF MICRO-NEEDLING, FOR SKIN TIGHTENING AND CELLULITE) \$500 OFF PROCEDURE WITH 50 UNITS OF COMPLIMENTARY BOTOX

Offer expires 5/31/25
Niceville • Santa Rosa Beach 850-530-6064
www.bluewaterplasticsurgery.com

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GIFT CERTFICATE \$500 & UP (EXCLUDES SURGICAL PROCEDURES)

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www.bluewaterplasticsurgery.com

### **SMALLCAKES**

# BUY 2 CUPCAKES GET 2 CUPCAKES FREE

Offer expires 5/31/25 36150 Emerald Coast Pkwy #110 850-842-9002 | SmallcakesDestin.com

### **CAFÉ DESTIN**

10% OFF PURCHASE WITH COUPON

Offer expires 5/31/25 985 Highway 98, Destin, 850-424 6777, CafeDestin.com Kwench: 981 US Hwy. 98, 850-842-2802

### **BEVERLY HILLS DAY SPA**

Springtime Glow Brightening Chemical Peel \$85

Add Red-Light Therapy Session to Any Treatment \$1 Per Minute

> Offer expires 5/31/25 114 Palmetto Drive, Suite 6, Destin 850-654-8544 | BeverlyHillsDaySpa.com

### **TAILFINS TIKIS**

# Tiki Boat Tours FREE Child Ticket



\*age 12 and under, limit one per group

Offer expires 5/31/25 172 Harbor Boulevard, Destin 850-650-1200

### BLUE BAY LIFESTYLE CO.

**20% OFF PURCHASE** 

ENTIRE PURCHASE WITH COUPON

Offer expires 5/31/25 27 Racetrack Road NE, Fort Walton Beach bluebaylifestyle.com • 850-374-8236

### **KWENCH / 850 FROYO**

**KWENCH: \$5 OFF** 

WITH \$30+ PURCHASE

850FROYO: FREE KID CUP

WITH 160Z PURCHASE

Offer expires 5/31/25 985 U.S. Highway 98 • Destin Kwench: 850-842-2802 | 850 Froyo: 850-353-2093

### **TEQUILA & TACO FEST**

**MAY 8-11 IN BAYTOWNE** 

10% OFF! ON ALL TICKETS

**USE PROMO CODE: LIFEMEDIA2025** 

Offer expires 5/11/25 efestevents.com

### **AUSTONS ON 98**

1/2 PRICE APP

WITH PURCHASE OF AN ENTREE

1 per table

Offer expires 5/31/25 125 Poinciana Blvd., Miramar Beach 850-842-3200

### **SPECIALTY ROOFERS**

\$250 OFF

**RESIDENTIAL ROOF CONTRACTS** 

MENTION PROMO CODE NEWYEAR250

Offer expires 5/31/25 850-974-7663 Specialtyroofers.com

### **KAYAK ON A BAY**

33% OFF TO DESTIN RESIDENTS!

COUPON CODE COMING SOON

Offer valid 6/1/25-6/30/25 kayakonabay@gmail.com

# BEACHSIDE SLIDING GLASS DOOR MAINTENANCE, LLC

\$25 OFF SLIDING DOOR TRACK REPAIR
WITH ROLLER REPLACEMENT

**FREE ESTIMATES** 

Offer expires 5/31/25 BeachsideSlide.com 850-98-SLIDE (850-987-5433)

### **FUBAR PIZZA BAR**

\$5 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$25 OR MORE

(Not valid with any other promotions)

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850-226-7084 | www.fubarfwb.com

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City Market Bayside | 850-279-4145



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