



MAY 2023  
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# SOUTHWAL Life

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## Get Your Art On with CAA in May

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Celebrating its 35th year this month, the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) of Walton County's ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival is one of the organization's signature – and biggest – events. In recent years, the CAA has expanded this into Art Month, with visual, performing, and literary arts programming in diverse formats at various venues throughout Walton County.

Additional Art Month events and programs include Under the Sea, a fundraiser for the CAA's Underwater Museum of Art; the Longleaf Writers Conference, formerly the Seaside Writers Conference, a gathering of creative writers from across the nation, featuring award-winning scribes from the worlds of poetry, fiction and screenwriting offering workshops and seminars; Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, a unique "projection art" festival employing digital technologies; "Sinfonia Goes Pop!," a free concert at the Alys Beach Amphitheatre; performances by the Emerald



Coast Theatre Company; and, of course, gallery events.

Find the complete Art Month schedule at [culturalart-salliance.com](http://culturalart-salliance.com).

CAA Events Director Allie Anderson says patrons can expect new twists for May 13 and 14's ArtsQuest festival at Grand Boulevard Town Center. "Things are different with

the layout," she says. "We're expecting around 5,000 people over the weekend." This year's festival includes adult art classes with the likes of Justin Gaffrey, non-stop live entertainment and new sponsors.

"The other events are happening almost every day throughout May," says Ms. Anderson. "We support and pro-

mote them all and want people to go to as many as they can."

Ms. Anderson handles all of the huge CAA events, including the 30A Songwriters Festival and the Flutterby Festival. "Anything involving 500 or more people," she says.

She came onboard in September 2022. Prior to that, Ms. Anderson ran her own business designing custom apparel – t-shirts, tote bags and the like – for sororities all over the country. Originally from Panama City, she has also lived in Dallas and California.

Now she's back in Panama City with her two daughters and couldn't be happier. "It's nice to be back with friends and family," says Ms. Anderson. "I appreciate the growth that's going on. There's so much to do here now. I just love the community and how much everyone supports each other."

Her connection to the arts began at a young age. "I was an artist growing up, and my mom is a glass artist," she says. "We used to do paint

**ART**

*continued on page 3*

## South Walton's Volunteer Beach Ambassadors Gearing up for 2023 Season

BY PETER MOHYLSKY


It's all about Sea Turtles! Do you love our local beaches? Do you have some free time from March through October? Why not join the Volunteer Beach Ambassadors?

What began as a group of 30 volunteers back in 2016 has now grown to over 200 volunteers for the 2023 season. The volunteers are ambassadors for the culture that makes this such a great place to visit and live. Volunteer Beach Ambassador (VBA) Team Leader Peter Mohylsky stated "I am very proud of this team of dedicated volunteers. Everyone is dedicated to working on improving the quality of beach life for those who are full-time residents and just vacationers or part-time residents. The overall impact on the environment along the beach is nothing short of remarkable."

This group of volunteers greets our locals and visitors along the

**2023 SEASON**

*continued on page 3*



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**ART**

*continued from page 1*

classes together. We were always around the arts, and I really found an appreciation for it at a young age. My mom is the one who told me about the CAA position.”

ArtsQuest officially kicks off Thursday, May 11, at 6 p.m.



with the Underwater Museum of Art fundraiser at Grand Boulevard Town Center. The event celebrates the museum’s fifth installation with art, dancing, cocktails, food and more. “We’ll have two sculptures by Allison Wickey and Zachary Long – about six feet tall each – at Under the Sea for people to view before they go underwater,” says Ms. Anderson.

**Dallas Primavera**, this year’s ArtsQuest featured artist, is a longtime CAA member. His work will be featured on posters and t-shirts. Mr. Primavera is based out of Jacksonville Beach and has been painting for over 20 years. “I’m traveling around

the state of Florida to do art shows and trying to get my name out there,” he says.

The Florida State alum says he’s always been a vivid dreamer. “I have developed a skill that I will try to put into words,” the official bio reads. “As I close my eyes, every night I relive the same dream – long halls filled with paint-

ings on both sides, in every color, shape and size.

“At first, I would wake up with a feeling of jealousy, like what I saw was exactly where I was going. A warm wave of understanding washed over me as I realized everything I saw was mine to come. Best part, I remembered everything I dreamt about. To this day, the process is the source of my inspiration, and it keeps getting stronger.

“He does beautiful work,” says Ms. Anderson. “The posters are amazing.” Discover more at artbydallas.com.

**2023 SEASON**

*continued from page 3*

beaches, scenic bike paths and throughout our community. They are members of the Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles (FOSWST), a non-profit organization that promotes sea turtle conservation through awareness and education.

While greeting everyone visiting our beaches, the main job of a VBA is to educate them on beach etiquette and county beach ordinances, specifically those codes that directly impact the preservation and safety of our nesting sea turtles. They also pick up trash, fill in holes in the sand, and flatten any sandcastles/art at the end of the day. The purpose is to work to achieve what we’ve all heard described as #CleanDarkFlat beaches. They are working towards educating the visitors, so they return to their homes safely and come back to our county next year.

There is no requirement on where or when to volunteer. You pick your favorite beach, time and day, and just show up. Students under 18 may also join but must be accompanied by a



a branded shirt and nametag. Training is held in the South Walton Visitors Center’s Conference Room. The next training/signup dates are Saturday, May 13 and 20 from 9:00-10:30 AM.

parent who is also a VBA. Community service hours are logged for each student.

Recruiting is taking place now for 2023. Upon completing a training session and joining the FOSWST (\$5 membership fee), you will be provided with

The VBA Team would like to grow to 300 plus members this year and will be training once or twice per month through August. Those interested should follow Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles on Facebook to see dates and times of training sessions, and email [VBA@FOSWST.COM](mailto:VBA@FOSWST.COM).

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*Psalm 18:28*  
*“It is you who lights a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.”*



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Community

# May 2023 WCSD Superintendent's Update



Superintendent A. Russell Hughes

May is filled with excitement for the Walton County School

District! Awards ceremonies, music concerts, art shows, drama performances, and senior activities create the backdrop for the culmination of a year's hard work.

Students will highlight their efforts and showcase their learning as assessments begin across the district. We are proud of our student's dedication and "stick-with-it-ness" as we near the 2022-2023 finish line! If your student participates in assess-

ments this month, please ensure they attend school well-rested and nourished with a healthy breakfast. Having breakfast containing protein, fat, and carbohydrates helps children feel full and remain focused during their exams.

Students' success comes through the partnership of parents, volunteers, and the community. April is the month volunteers are celebrated for the time they share with local Walton County School District schools. In addition, schools throughout the county held volunteer brunches and special lunches and gave appreciation awards to community members who shared time with students and faculty members.

Walton County School District is always seeking interested persons for volunteering and mentoring. If you are interested in volunteering or mentoring in our schools, please visit our web page for more information!

One of the many events volunteers may assist with includes the K-12 Special Olympics. The 2023 event was hosted Friday, April 28, 2023, at Emerald Coast Middle School track field. Students from across the District converged at the Santa Rosa Beach school to enjoy a day of friendly competition. Superin-

tendent Hughes was there supporting student athletic efforts and taking selfies! K-12 student participants finished the day exhausted but happy about a fun-filled day and new friends!

The Rosemary Beach Foundation in collaboration with the Walton County School District will host the 12th Annual Music in Pictures student art awards program on May 4, 2023, in Freeport High School's auditorium.

Music in Pictures is an educational art initiative and juried art contest open to ALL students in grades K-12 in the Walton County school system. Walton County students from 20 Walton County schools created a painting of their interpretation of classical music. This year's Music in Pictures presented three beautiful pieces: Deep River by British composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor, La Mer [I] Movement II by French composer Claude Debussy and The Moldau by Czech composer Bedrich Smetana. From these entries, the judges selected Judges' Awards, Chairman's Awards, and Medalists who will receive their awards on Thursday evening.

Our 12th-grade students from all high schools look forward to their graduation day,

culminating their twelve years of study! Superintendent Hughes, School Board Members, and the educators of Walton County are proud to have a ranking of #3 when it comes to graduating students; it's the Walton County Way! We salute every student achieving this meaningful goal and encourage them to continue pursuing their dreams while always remembering to be E.P.I.C.! The graduation dates across the district have been provided below for those who want to support and encourage the graduating young adults:

- May 18, 2023 - Paxton High School (7 pm)
- May 19, 2023 - Freeport High School (7 pm)
- May 20, 2023 - South Walton High School (7 pm)
- May 23, 2023 - In10sity Magnet School (4 pm)
- Walton High School (7 pm)

District Teachers and staff are looking forward to our Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week coming May 8-13. Thank you to all of the community businesses who contributed to making their week one to remember!



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# May 2023 Coastal Seniors Update

## COASTAL SENIORS OF SOUTH WALTON

### Fridays with Friends - May 12th from 10 AM - Noon

Each "Fridays with Friends" program will be open from 10 a.m. until noon. Coastal Seniors will welcome members, who are 50 years and older, to our office to participate in activities, such as: card games, board games, ping pong, bingo, art classes, exercise classes, etc. If you are interested in any of these activities, please let us know so that our volunteers can prepare. You can contact us by calling 850-280-5342, or by sending an email to: [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com).

**Game Day** at Somerby on Wednesdays May 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Somerby of Santa Rosa Beach is located at 164 W. Hewett Rd., Santa Rosa Beach. Melissa Bailey, CSSW member will host game day. Melissa teaches and plays many games such as Hand & Foot, 5 Crowns, Euchre, Mexican Train Dominoes, and more. Refresh your skills or learn a new game. Local seniors and Walton County snowbirds are welcome! Call/text Sonia at 850-280-5342

or email [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com) if you have questions.

**Chair Yoga** at The Blake in Miramar Beach - May 2nd and 16th at 9:45 a.m. - Join us for our chair yoga classes led by Colleen at The Blake at 90 Ponce De Leon St. in Miramar Beach.

**Art Classes** - Karen Peterson will teach CSSW members Beginner Watercolor Painting on Tuesdays in May (9th, 16th, and 23rd) 9 a.m.-Noon. Cost is \$22 for CSSW members/\$30 for non-members. Sign up by calling 850-280-5342, or by sending an email to: [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com). You will take home a completed painting at the end of each class.

**Monthly Meeting** - Gardening in Florida - May 19th from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Local Master Gardeners will provide helpful tips on gardening in Florida and there will be a plant swap so please bring one with you to participate. A light lunch will be

served.

**Pickleball** - Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex courts - May 10th and 24th at 6:00 p.m. Registration required. You may register at [www.waltonrec.com](http://www.waltonrec.com) by choosing field and court rentals. Email Sandra Gulak at [sowalpickleball@gmail.com](mailto:sowalpickleball@gmail.com) for more information. Open to Walton County residents only. Also, please join us at the Boys and Girls Club (located behind the Coastal Branch Library) for indoor pickleball on Thursdays May 4th, 11th and 18th from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Please join the SoWal Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at [www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org](http://www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org).

Seniors 50 years of age and up residing in or visiting Walton County are invited to join CSSW. Membership is \$20 for individuals, \$30 for family, and \$50 for businesses (your business will be

listed on our home webpage and our Facebook page). You can become a member via email at [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com), or on the website at

[www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org](http://www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org). Also, follow us on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton. Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for active adults and we're looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.



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 Community

# The Seaside School Launches Seacoast Collegiate High School Expansion with NW Florida State College

The Seaside School, Inc., Florida's oldest continuously operated public charter school and #1 combination public charter school in the state of Florida, announced today the launch of the Seacoast Collegiate High School (SCHS) Expansion Project in partnership with Northwest Florida State College (NWFS). This multi-million dollar expansion project will further expand the partnership between SCHS and NWFS by providing a permanent home for SCHS at the South Walton Campus of NWFS as well as developing a high school dual enrollment center for all students in Walton County.



In addition, the new facility will include "The Accelerator" which will offer training, mentoring, and collaboration to new area businesses and entrepreneurs.

Currently, ninth and tenth grades at SCHS operate in five classrooms that are leased from NWFS at the South Walton Campus. Students in eleventh and twelfth grades attend classes on the Niceville Campus of NWFS. With this expansion project, The Seaside School, Inc. will be able to consolidate all high school students at the

NWFS South Walton Campus as well as expand the collegiate programs to more students in Walton County by adding additional instructional space for students in grades nine through twelve and the community.

NWFS is providing 5-acres of land on which The Seaside School, Inc. will construct new educational facilities consisting of three additional buildings for both SCHS and NWFS classrooms, shared lab space,

Despite the growth, SCHS holds strong to their core values of providing a small learning environment with a focus on students' individual learning needs and independence in combination with a collegiate program. Over the last decade, SCHS has

experienced great success and growth with the anticipation of graduating a class of 60 students this spring. The school has consistently had a 100% graduation rate and more students qualifying for the Bright Futures Scholarships than any other high school in Walton County as well as continually earning top academic scores.

"Our school has spent over 25 years supporting our students and their community, said The Seaside School, Inc. Director of Strategic Development, Joy Robbins. "Currently, our high school students are working on earning their Associate of Arts degree, but with this level of growth and expansion, we will be able to offer our students the opportu-

nity to earn an Associate of Science degree with a concentration in Business Management."

The next step in this project is to secure funding and letters of support from stakeholders, community members, and through a variety of philanthropic initiatives led by the Seaside School Foundation whose primary mission is to take a long-term approach to raise, invest, and spend funds in support of The Seaside School, Inc. and to steward those funds so they provide support in perpetuity.

"The Seaside School Foundation is excited to bring our community along in this great adventure that involves the School community and so much more. We are not just building a high

school that will serve only our students, we are building a dual enrollment center that will enroll and serve other high school and college students throughout Walton County."

For more information on the Seacoast Collegiate High School Expansion Project including naming and gift opportunities, campus renderings, and upcoming informational sessions, visit SeasideSchools.net. The Seaside School, Inc., hopes to break ground on the new facilities this year with doors opening to students in 2025.

For more information, visit SeasideSchools.net.



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# 29th Annual Seaside Prize Awarded to Professor Donald Shoup

BY CHRISTY MILLIKEN

The weekend of February 24-26, 2023, the Seaside Institute held the 29th Annual Seaside Prize honoring UCLA's Distinguished Research Professor of Urban Planning, Donald Shoup. The Seaside Prize is awarded annually to a deserving individual or group who has made significant contributions through design that have changed the way we live. Prize winners are thought innovators in concepts, quality, and character of their industry and considered leaders of Contemporary Urban Development and Education, who have made their vision a reality, and ultimately our lives better. Donald Shoup was celebrated for his life's work in Parking Policy as Seaside Founder and Developer,



Robert Davis presented him with the award. Shoup's books *Parking in the City* and *The High Cost of Free Parking*, along with his ongoing research and ideas have made an impact globally and have inspired and challenged many to rethink parking. Parking is the single largest land use in

every city and affects our quality of life more than we realize.

Prize weekend kicked off with a reception at The Court in Seaside, FL. Light bites for the evening were prepared by Black Bear Bread Company and sponsored by The Seaside Merchants, Odd Pelican Brewery, and Distillery 98. Symposia were held in the Lyceum featuring a keynote by Rick Cole, Chief Deputy Controller for the City of

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Los Angeles. Followed by Henry Grabar of *slate.com*, M.Nolan Gray, Research Director, California YIMBY, Stefanos Polyzoides, Architect and Partner at Moule Polyzoides, Norman Garrick, Professor Emeritus, Transportation and Urban Planning at UCONN, and William Fulton, AICP, William Fulton Group. Fulton was also a former student of Donald Shoup. We had a memorable awards ceremony

held at The Chapel at Seaside followed by a dinner at Bud & Alley's Waterfront Dining. Our weekend closed with town tours in Seaside, Rosemary Beach, and Alys Beach, FL, lead by founding architect Andrés Duany, Partner at DPZ Co-Design. Each speaker brought Shoup's work full-circle with their own points about how parking affects so much more than just finding a parking spot.

Donald Shoup has an expansive following known simply as "Shoupistas." If you did not come to Seaside Prize weekend as a Shoupista, you certainly left as one. You may find more about Donald Shoup's work at [shoupdog.com](http://shoupdog.com) and more about the Seaside Institute at [SeasideInstitute.org](http://SeasideInstitute.org).

## OneBlood Drive at The Market Shops May 19th

The Market Shops will host a OneBlood Drive on Friday, May 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The OneBlood Big Red Bus® will be parked in The Market Shops

parking lot, adjacent to Highway 98. All donors will receive a free wellness checkup including blood pressure, temperature, iron count, pulse, cholesterol screening, and

exclusive discounts from select Market Shop locations. ID is required. Visit: [www.themarketshops.com](http://www.themarketshops.com). The Market Shops, 9375 Emerald Coast Parkway, Miramar Beach.



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## Words Matter: Learn to Communicate with your Dog!

BY STEVE KOTOWSKA

Have you ever considered what words you are using with your dog? Of course, we all love to belt out a Good Boy! Good Girl! or Good Dog! to our furry pals. Their faces light up, back-sides wiggle, and they generally seem to love to hear how good they are! This is because we have tied the “good” expression to something super positive like affection, happiness, treats, food, or a toy. They get excited in anticipation of something “good” following your words. You taught them that!

We use that simple phrase to build our relationship with our dogs. Teaching them our language really can be that simple. You see, the dog’s brain, while being complex in structure, like all mammals, is also very limited in many ways. It has a frontal cortex, the part of the brain where higher-level processing and thoughts take place just like humans. However, it is far

less developed than it is in humans. The frontal lobe of a dog’s brain occupies only 10% of the brain while in humans it’s the front third of the brain.

Dogs also have emotions like sadness, fear or happiness, so we must recognize our dogs don’t process too much into the future. Dogs seem to live quite in the moment. They have terrific memory centers, however, and use those memories to process snap decisions for survival. Survival instincts for a dog include



two basic functional questions - how do I stay safe? and, how do I get what I want? They use this over and over every day. They can be subtle in action or over the top in action to survive.

So, the big question of the day becomes, “What words are the hardest for a dog to process?” Well, now that we understand a little more about the way their brain functions we can, with near certainty, assume it is words of affirmation and permission. The two most understood words for a dog - IT’S OK!

These words are permissive words in almost every instance with a dog. However, when used when a dog is fearful, they can be dangerously misused. Many people will attempt to convince the dog to accept the fear by saying “it’s ok.” For instance, when an

anxious dog is jumping up on a human, many will say ‘it’s ok’ and actually pet the dog - reaffirming the unwanted behavior through affection. This makes a dog very confused. It can make humans very frustrated because our empathetic nature doesn’t quite understand the black and white communication a dog needs and understands best. The next time your dog acts fearful, try reassuring them through being a leader and addressing the fear - not always head on, but sometimes by creating distance from the fear and reapproaching it repeatedly while closing the gap, eventually conquering the fear, building trust that you are in control with each approach. With each new approach and sign of fear, simply let the dog know the fear is not necessary and gain a little ground, reset and repeat. It takes time and good communication to build trust. A little bit of distraction as you get closer can work wonders for creating positive outcomes and overcoming fears. I use a bit of food or a toy when possible. Sometimes it is just getting the focus on me and using praise. We inch closer and the dog is none the wiser to the progress we’ve made each time, but it takes hold in the memory center. Eventually, the object of fear no longer matters. An owner’s ability to keep them safe matters!

Words matter. Body posture matters. Leadership matters. Be a great human and think through the process, then act upon it with confidence and patience. Proper communication always strengthens a relationship.

Steve Kotowski is Senior Trainer of What’s Up Dog in Santa Rosa Beach and Miramar Beach, offering Professional Dog Grooming, Dog Training, Boarding, and Doggie Daycare. “What’s up Dog” is the area’s largest independent pet retailer with a focus on holistic food products. Visit [www.bestobedience.com](http://www.bestobedience.com) for more information.

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# South Walton Fire District Joins 'Safety Cloud' Alert System Network

South Walton-area motorists who utilize a navigation app or system during their drive now receive advance-warning alerts from South Walton Fire District apparatus responding to emergencies.

These Safety Cloud alerts aim to better protect motorists and first responders, as well as assist in improving emergency response times, by giving drivers more time to safely comply with Florida's Move Over Law. This law requires motorists to slow



down and move over for emergency vehicles with activated signals.

The Safety Cloud system (www.haasalert.com) alerts drivers who are actively using Waze,

Apple Maps, Google Maps, vehicles equipped with Ford's Blue Oval Intelligence system and any Chrysler, Dodge, Fiat, Jeep, Maserati, or Ram vehicles. Motorists using any of the methods listed will receive a hands-free alert that notifies them of an approaching SWFD emergency vehicle or scene. Safety Cloud developers have stated they are working to add new vehicles and navigation apps onto the platform to increase the number of people receiving alerts.

In March 2023, the HAAS Alert system alerted 4,405 total drivers about 307 incidents involving a responding SWFD apparatus.

SWFD would like to remind motorists to obey all traffic laws while slowing down and moving over for responding emergency vehicles. Also, motorists should ensure that all emergency vehicles have passed before pulling back into the flow of traffic.

## Prepare your Yard for Summertime the Safe Way!

A Few Fire Prevention tips from South Walton Fire District

BY MACKENZIE MCCLINTOCK, SWFD PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The warmer weather is here and that means you may be thinking about getting out into the yard to complete gardening tasks and landscaping. Have you ever taken a moment to consider if your landscape lighting could be posing a fire hazard?

In the past, South Walton Fire District firefighters have responded to fire incidents that were a result of landscape lighting malfunctions or failures.

Fortunately, these incidents are

not typically large fires, but they can be scary for the homeowners involved, and at times, it's difficult to understand why they happen.

Fire hazards should not deter you from utilizing outdoor lighting systems, however, proper care and procedures are imperative in fire prevention.

It's also important to remember that natural landscaping materials, such as pine straw, are highly flammable and cause fire to spread quickly, even after rainfall.

Here are a few fire prevention tips from the South Walton Fire District:

Develop practices to control pests, such as rodents, to avoid damage to electric wiring and equipment.

Ensure all outdoor outlets and fixtures are equipped with weatherproof Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) breakers.

Keep light fixtures clear of debris such as pine straw, leaves, and other combustible materials. Even extension cords placed near pine straw can present a fire safety hazard.

Make use of LED lamps when possible. These lamps burn incredibly cool, are more energy efficient, and they last for a con-

**Landscape Lighting Fire Safety Tips**

- Develop practices to control pests in order to avoid rodent damage to electric wiring and equipment.
- Ensure all outdoor outlets and fixtures are equipped with weatherproof Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) breakers.
- Keep light fixtures clear of debris, such as pine straw and leaves.
- Make use of LED lamps if possible. These lamps burn incredibly cool, are energy efficient, and long-lasting.
- Have covers installed on in-ground lighting fixtures to keep debris from resting directly on bulbs.

Questions? Email [lifesafety@swfd.org](mailto:lifesafety@swfd.org)

siderably longer time.

Install in-ground lighting fixtures with covers to keep debris from resting directly on the bulbs emitting heat.

Qualified lighting technicians know the fire safety precautions to take- it may be worth contact-

ing one to ensure your home is protected if you are uncertain about any of the steps listed.

You can also direct questions to SWFD via email at [lifesafety@swfd.org](mailto:lifesafety@swfd.org), or through our multiple social media channels.

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 Community

# Insights for Investors May 2023



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Should investing be about fear or should it be about optimism? And which is the greater motiva-

tor of behavior and action? We have often heard that perception indeed becomes reality. Investors are bombarded almost daily with messages of fear. As a result some may give up hope at the worst possible time and change their course of action or their plan. We are reminded of the coach and his or her team sticking to their game plan even if they are down early on in the game. What if however it is not early in the game, rather its midway or towards the end? We think, once an investor reviews objective, risk tolerance and time frame, then they compare that with their current strategy and make changes

as needed or wanted.

Investors can become overly worried when one talking head after another speaks about capitulation and that things will go from bad to worse. We think it fair to point out that often the talking head may be the type of professional investor, a hedge fund manager for example, that often can profit in up and down markets and that it is the very volatility they speak to that creates opportunity (with extraordinary risk) for them.

We believe that the individual investor should focus on the greater picture, the entire game, not just a particular slice of it. We look at the long-term returns

and see that stocks are one of the higher returning investments, over time. Over time.

Diversification is critical as well. Bonds can play a part in diversifying a portfolio or perhaps generating income. It is challenging for many to find a timing strategy that outperforms a well thought out buy, hold and adjust as needed strategy.

Many in the media speak of anything but optimism. Some might easily draw the conclusion that it is over and that it is reconciliation time with the financial history of this nation. We don't understand how you can explain away that there is an entire generation (much greater in size) that is following the baby boomers. They are growing their careers, their family, and their lives and consuming. That might help explain why despite 9 straight interest rate hikes that there is still a housing shortage. And there is a worker shortage. Demand is growing or is resilient. Affluence and standard of living have never been greater. Innovation and competitiveness continue to fuel the engine for America and the world.

If a more optimistic, long-term view makes sense, we think investors can build toward and achieve their goals.

As investors contemplate their needs and objectives, we add that we believe that a portfolio should be diversified by security selection as well as asset class and that time frame, risk tolerance, tax status and ultimate objective should be the guiding light in a well-balanced portfolio.

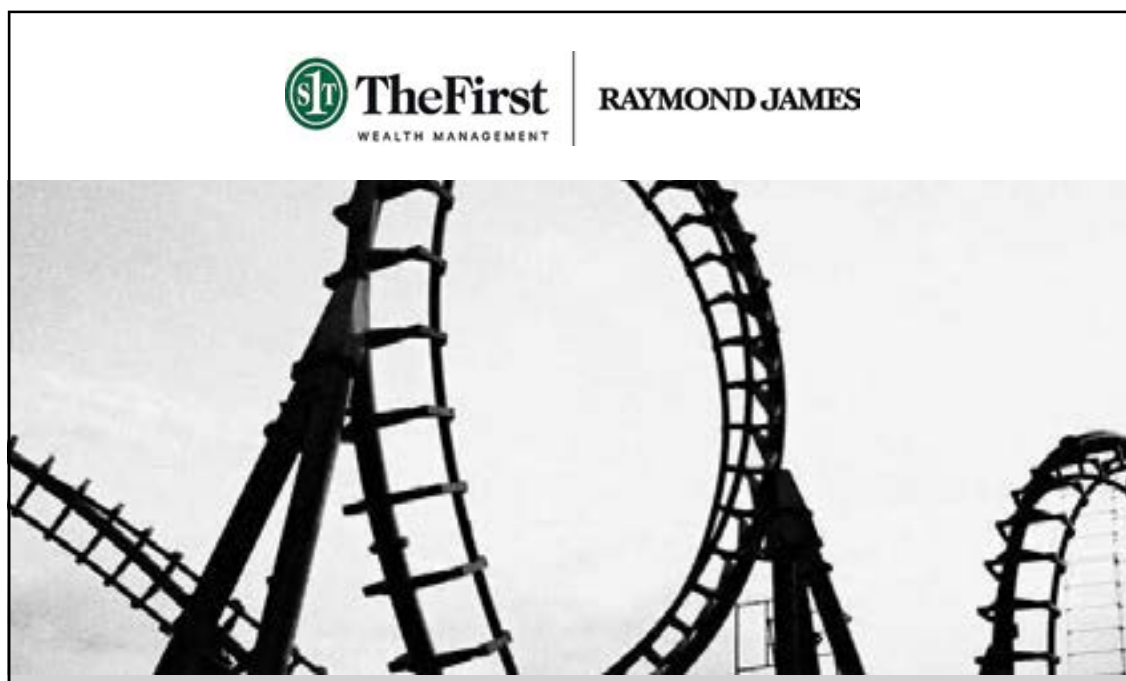
There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk, and unique tax consequences. Investments in municipal securities may not be appropriate for all investors, particularly those who do not stand to benefit from the tax status of the investment. Municipal bond interest is not subject to federal income tax but may be subject to AMT, state or local taxes. U.S. government bonds and Treasuries are guaranteed by the U.S. government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. CDs are insured by the FDIC and offer a fixed rate of return,

whereas the return and principal value of investment securities fluctuate with changes in market conditions. An investment in a money market fund is neither insured nor guaranteed by the FDIC or any other government agency. Although the fund seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1.00 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the fund. A fixed annuity is a long-term, tax-deferred insurance contract designed for retirement. Fixed annuities have limitations. If you decide to take your money out early, you may face fees called surrender charges. Plus, if you're not yet 59½, you may also have to pay an additional 10% tax penalty on top of ordinary income taxes. You should also know that a fixed annuity contains guarantees and protections that are subject to the issuing insurance company's ability to pay for them. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market. Inclusion of this index is for illustrative purposes only. Keep in mind that individuals cannot invest directly in any index, and index performance does not include transactions costs or other fees, which will affect actual investment performance. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected. Diversification and asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Holding investments for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome.

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

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*Views expressed are the current opinion of the author and are subject to change without notice. Information provided is general in nature and is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision and is not a recommendation or a solicitation to buy or sell any security. Past performance is not indicative of future results.*



## Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

Some investors have learned how to ride out the most stomach-churning market cycles. Others follow the urge to jump out mid-ride. So what can you do to play it smart in a roller coaster of a market?

For starters, you can turn to us. We can help you find a clear way forward before fear or concerns take over with a strategy tailored to your situation. In our experience, perspective is the ticket to helping endure the ups and downs as you pursue your financial goals. Contact us to learn how we can help.



**Maurice Stouse**  
Financial Advisor

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**Amy Parrish**  
Financial Advisor

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# Mommy and Me Picnic to Benefit Caring and Sharing of South Walton May 21st

This springtime soiree is scheduled for May 21st at Grand Boulevard.

The month of May typically ushers in picnics, flowers and little girls in beautiful dresses. This May 21st will encompass all of these things and much more, with a Mommy and Me Picnic hosted by La Luna Children's Boutique and presented by The Henry Haus on Grand Boulevard's North Lawn from 3-5pm. This special afternoon party will benefit a worthy cause with all proceeds going to Caring and Sharing of South Walton.

Mothers and their children

will delight in a southern coastal picnic with fare by Blue Mountain Bakery, sweet treats from Kilwin's and Sweet Henrietta's, live music by Tyler Acosta Music, and arts and crafts sponsored by Beau Interiors.

Salty Girls Beach Setups will set the scene with beautiful chairs, blankets and picnic decor. Rose and Co. Flowers will add their special touch with gorgeous floral arrangements. And photographer Lexi Arielle will capture special memories from the day. Guests are encouraged to call La Luna Boutique to schedule a special appointment

for their "mommy and me" attire at 850-368-5654. La Luna will work with moms to select the perfect styles to wear for the day...matching or coordinating but unique to each family.

A limited number of tickets will be available for the "Mommy and Me Picnic" at <https://www.laluna4kids.com>,

for \$100 which includes Mom plus one child. Each additional child is only \$15.

Nashville based artist, Kelly Terrell Art, will also offer her kids' art commission kits in advance and onsite while supplies last for \$50 per kit. For more information about Kelly Terrell Art visit [www.kellyterrellart.com](http://www.kellyterrellart.com).

Sponsorship opportunities are still available by emailing [Laluna4kids@gmail.com](mailto:Laluna4kids@gmail.com). All proceeds from this event will benefit Caring & Sharing of South Walton. To know more about their work in our community, please visit [www.caringandsharingsowal.org](http://www.caringandsharingsowal.org).

## Juneteenth Celebration June 17

The Democratic Women's Club of Walton County in conjunction with the Walton County Democratic Black Caucus, NAACP and Tivoli Historical Society will sponsor a Juneteenth Celebration on June 17 2023 at Douglass Crossroads Park in Ponce De Leon Fl. There will be a short program honoring the date beginning at 10 A.M. After the program there will be a celebration for all ages with food, music, dance as well as games and rides at the newly renovated park that is very child friendly.

The holiday's origin story began in Galveston, Texas, which was the western-most area of the Union in 1865. People were still enslaved in Galves-

ton though they had been, by law, free for over 2 years. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Slaveholders in Texas had kept the information to themselves, extending the period of inhumane treatment of enslaved African Americans. The following year, in 1866, a celebration was had in Galveston Texas, the first Juneteenth observance to recognize freedom from slavery in the U.S. Congress, on June 16, 2021, passed a bill recognizing Juneteenth as a National Holiday and it was signed into law by U.S. President Joe Biden the following day. The public is invited to attend and celebrate.

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# Modus Captured Clothing Opens in Grayton Beach

Well-known photographer and South Walton's 2021 artist of the year, Chandler Williams has expanded his footprint in his Graton Beach shop by opening Modus Captured Clothing, a men's store focused on custom apparel and curated goods from all over the globe.

Williams has been developing his concept over the past few years. With touches of Williams' unique photography, as well as a surf, travel & lifestyle vibe, the store is truly an expansion of the local brand we know as Modus Photo or Modus. For those who value quality, culture, and personal style, Captured Clothing is a unique shopping experience.

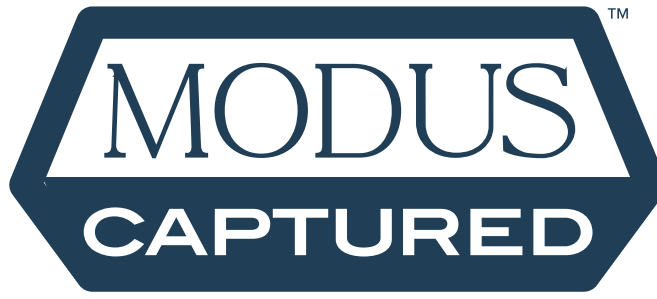
Williams' unique process of printing, stitching and hand sewing his designs is a must see, in person kind of experience. His custom style compliments some of the

basic men's essentials.

With a focus on artisan driven leather goods and a quintessential 'Grayton' atmosphere, it reminds you to get out and travel a little more!

Chandler has dedicated the entire upstairs to customize the retail experience! In an interview, he mentioned reading surfer mag and seeing photographer Aaron Chang's photos printed on shirts as inspiration for his own designs. Williams began printing his own images on shirts back in 2010. Now, fourteen years later, Modus Captured Clothing is born. "We are not a shirt printing company," Chandler said. "But we will offer select services to other artists who are looking to create wearable art."

As an additional part of the experience, customers will be able to sip and shop.



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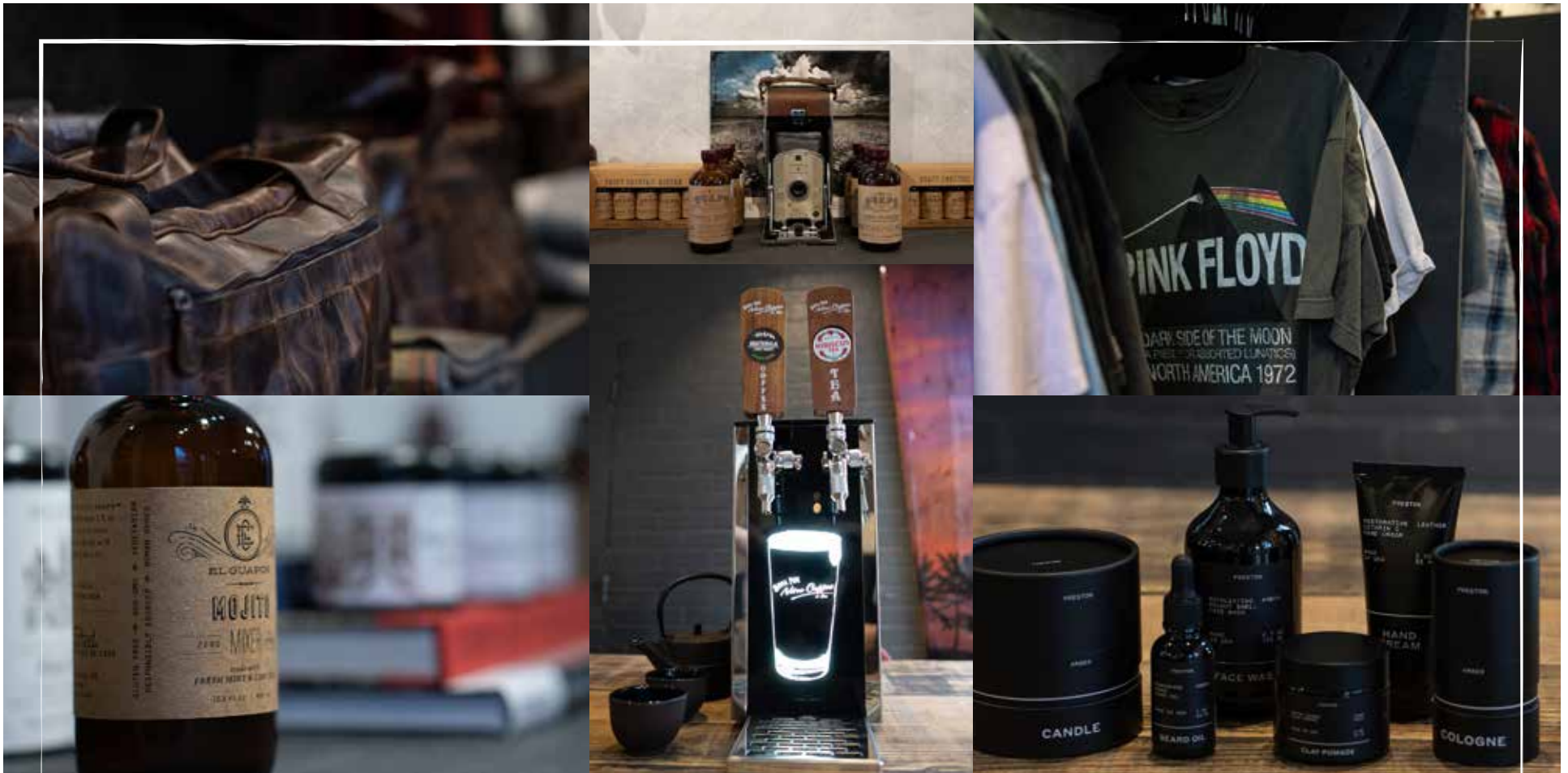


Captured Clothing will be serving nitro cold brew teas and coffees as well as offering the occasional complimentary espresso!

"Don't worry," Chandler says. "Yes, the gallery is still here but we have moved it across the courtyard in the same complex. A huge thank you for all the local support as we are celebrating the 10th year of the Modus Landscape Art Gallery this year."

Grayton Beach is one of the easiest and most convenient beaches and shopping experiences for locals and visitors. The public parking lot and shuttle system has made getting to the beach and the other shops of Grayton extremely accommodating.

Be sure to stop by and experience Modus Captured Clothing located in Grayton Beach at 37 Logan Lane, suite 3.



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Community

# Cafe 180 Set to Open May 22nd

Cafe 180, the newest addition to the coffee scene in Santa Rosa Beach, is set to launch its Grand Opening on May 22nd, 2023; with an open house at 10 am, followed by their ribbon cutting at 11 am. The cafe, which is the brainchild of Pastor Yuriy and Viktoriya Mayba, promises to offer customers a unique coffee experience while also giving back to the community. Located directly adjacent to Impulse Church, in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, the Cafe's team is eager to share their culture of love and fellowship with the community.

Sourcing only the best quality beans, often discovered in small batches from micro-farms found across Brazil and Columbia, The cafe is committed to sourcing its coffee directly from locally focused farmers, ensuring that the people who grow the coffee are paid a fair price for their hard work. In an effort to grow fair business practices abroad,

the Cafe maintains transparency about their relationships with the farmers and just how crucial they are in keeping the rich culture and history of the coffee industry alive, which often can be overlooked. The Cafe demonstrates that you can be a successful business while treating farms equally, and being enthusiastic for their success. In the same spirit, the Cafe's efforts are aimed toward a percentage of every purchase going directly back into the community they adore.

The founders of Cafe 180, Yuriy and Viktoriya, are excited about the grand opening and the opportunity to offer customers a high-quality coffee experience while also making a positive impact on the community. "We believe that every purchase made at Cafe 180 is an opportunity to make an indelible impression in someone's life," they said.

The cafe's menu will feature a range of coffee drinks, includ-



ing espresso, lattes, as well as iced coffees and cold brews; all made with freshly roasted coffee beans. In addition to coffee, the cafe will also offer a selection of pastries,

sandwiches, and other snacks.

Cafe 180's interior is warm and inviting, with cozy seating areas and plenty of natural light. The cafe's name is inspired by the

concept of "180-degree transformation." Yuriy and Viktoriya explained that the idea behind the name is to inspire customers to make positive changes in their lives, just as the cafe is making a positive impact on the community. "We're just thankful to be a part of that," they said.

The grand opening for Cafe 180 is expected to draw a large crowd, with many people eager to try the cafe's coffee and support a good cause. With its commitment to fair trade and community involvement, Cafe 180 is sure to become a beloved fixture in Santa Rosa Beach for years to come.

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# Celebrate Recovery – Helping the Hurting Heal

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

We're all familiar with the concept of ripples – throw a stone into water and ripples form, growing ever wider in scope before they eventually fade. Sometimes, though, impacting lives is more akin to a meteor striking the ocean. The sheer force and size creating, not ripples, but waves of enormous height, affecting lives on a massive scale for many hundreds of miles.

Celebrate Recovery is a biblically based program focused on Jesus, and designed to help heal the hurts, habits, and hangups that many of us drag around with us every day. They use the eight principles Jesus taught in the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter five to bring healing in every aspect of our lives.

It all began in 1991 when a tiny pebble dropped into the ocean. John Baker approached Rick Warren, his pastor at Saddleback Church. John was inspired to share his recovery process with others who were chained to addictions. In just over 30 years, God has blessed this outreach and now there are over 35,000 churches across the world hosting weekly Celebrate Recovery meetings.

Stephanie Wedel is the State Representative for Celebrate Recovery and the Recovery Minister



at Crosspoint Church in Niceville. Her testimony of God's deliverance is a story in and of itself, but suffice it to say that when Jesus stepped in and changed her life, her excitement and love was so meteoric in scope that the lives God has allowed her to reach has been nothing short of miraculous. It reminds me of Jesus' statement about the woman in Luke 7 who poured the expensive perfume over him and washed his feet with her hair. "her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

Stephanie's deliverance greatly impacted her family. "My brother came to me and told me he knew he could change because he saw me do it. That was 6 years ago,

and we got him into a recovery program. He's now the Executive Director of Project Hope Recovery Center – Florida. My dad did the Celebrate Recovery material in prison, and since I'm a state representative for Celebrate Recovery inside jails and prisons I got to share them with him. He was baptized in 2020 and is currently in a Federal halfway house in Pensacola finishing his sentencing for trafficking." Her mom and step-dad are leaders at the south Crestview campus.

Celebrate Recovery is not just for drug and alcohol addiction. The program is for any kind of hurts, habits and hangups. The weekly meetings begin with large group worship, followed by teaching or testimony. Then everyone breaks up into small groups that are men/women specific. Within those are topic specific groups. For women, they have life issues, loss, trauma, food, and addictions. For men: life issues, addictions, welcome home for veterans or active duty. After the small groups, they attend a cross talk café where everyone has the opportunity to get to know each other over a meal.

As Stephanie says, "you see all kinds of people come. There's a diversity of people. For people who think they have a deep relationship with God, you get to see that Celebrate Recovery is a

way for them to become more like Jesus. Celebrate Recovery is a discipleship program on steroids."

The weekly meetings average around 20 people, with about 70% of those who attend Celebrate Recovery unchurched and unbelievers. Then during the meeting, they "get to meet Jesus and then go out and tell others. I get to watch God light them up and light them on fire. It's the coolest thing in the world."

Of course, Stephanie hasn't stopped there. She has just opened a transitional home for women called Freedom House for single women with at least six months of sobriety. It's for women who are leaving home-

lessness, incarceration, human trafficking, or addiction treatment, and need a safe place to live while they are given skills and counseling. You can find out more at [www.freedomlifecompass.org](http://www.freedomlifecompass.org).

Celebrate Recovery isn't a place to wallow in our difficulties and failures, but a place of celebration as God does His supernatural work in our hearts to heal us so we can be more fruitful for Him. Find a local church that hosts a meeting, so you can discover more about the program, by going to [www.celebraterecovery.com](http://www.celebraterecovery.com). You can also email Stephanie at [swedel@crosspoint.church](mailto:swedel@crosspoint.church).



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Community

# Impact 100 of NW Florida: Women Leaders Supporting Local Non Profits

Impact 100 is Recruiting Women in Okaloosa and Walton Counties to Join Them in Supporting Local Nonprofit Organizations.

Impact 100 of Northwest Florida (Impact 100 NWF) is currently recruiting women interested in making a positive impact on the nonprofits in our community during their 2023 Membership Year.

The concept behind Impact100 is simple: 100 women donate \$1,000 each to form a \$100,000 grant that will be awarded to a local nonprofit that has put together a transforma-

tional project intended to take the organization to a new level. Grants are awarded to nonprofits in the following five focus areas:

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

In 2022, the organization had 532 members and awarded five \$100,000 grants. Since the creation of Impact100 Northwest Florida in 2012, over \$4.1 million has been granted to thirty eight local nonprofit groups in our area. One hundred percent

of each member contribution is awarded to nonprofit organizations, with none of that contribution going to administrative costs.

“We are looking forward to providing at least five nonprofits with transformational funding in 2023. The needs of our community continue to increase and the more members that join each year, the more we can support the nonprofits who are doing so much to care for our neighbors in Walton and Okaloosa Counties,” said Carly Barnes, President of Impact 100 of Northwest Florida.



There are several upcoming membership recruitment events that will include presentations by Impact 100 NWF leadership as well as previous grant recipients.

**Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 9:30 - 11am at JoJo's Coffee & Goodness 4652 Highway 20, #102, Niceville, FL 32578**

The organization's membership drive is open through June 15. More details about membership options are available at [www.impactnwf.org](http://www.impactnwf.org).

The mission of Impact100

of Northwest Florida, Inc. is to financially support nonprofit organizations in Okaloosa and Walton Counties by empowering women as philanthropists and leaders, by bridging the geographic areas of our region, and by leveraging the talents of diverse women to be a positive force for good in our communities. More information about the organization and the nonprofits they have supported in the past can be found at [www.impactnwf.org](http://www.impactnwf.org).



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## Alys Beach One Blood Drive Friday May 5th

Alys Beach will host the One-Blood Drive on Friday, May 5 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The OneBlood Big Red Bus® will be parked on the Slip Road at Raw & Juicy. ID required. Appointments are encouraged, visit [https://donor.oneblood.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/1273164](https://donor.oneblood.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/1273164) and use sponsor code 39684. All donors will receive a OneBlood T-shirt, \$20.00 E- Gift Card. Plus, wellness

checkup including blood pressure, temperature, iron count, pulse and cholesterol screening! OneBlood is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community asset responsible for providing safe, available and affordable blood. Generally healthy people ages 16 or older who weigh at least 110 pounds can donate blood. Location: Slip Road at Raw & Juicy, Alys Beach.



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# Join the Bailey Brigade's Battle Against Cancer

BY HEATHER BENNETT EYE

You probably know someone who's had a cancer diagnosis, or know someone who knows someone. It's hard to find anyone who hasn't been touched by cancer in some way. Our community is no different. People are affected everyday.

Michele Bailey, founder of Bailey Brigade, and her family were affected in a big way when her husband Scott passed away in December 2021 from a rare salivary gland cancer. He was only 54. While there are many organizations giving resources to more common specific types of cancer, we need to remember that there is a wide variety of debilitating cancers. Bailey Brigade was started to honor Scott and support locals battling all types of cancer. It's a non-profit organization that provides copay assistance, backpacks with self care items, and scholarships for those wanting to go into the medical field.

All money donated goes to help patients from The Emerald Coast. "Your money stays local," stated Michele, who is working with oncologist Dr. Hayes at Ascension Sacred Heart. Part of the donations go towards helping patients with their copays. Qualifying patients are handed a card at checkout letting them know the Brigade covered their copay that day.

Backpacks provided to patients consist of self care items in themed zip lock bags such as "All Wiped Out" with cleaning and sanitizing wipes along with "Take It Easy Queasy" that comes with anti nausea items to help with the side effects of chemotherapy. The backpacks also come with letters of encouragement and support. Local students have supplied them with letters, but anyone wanting to



offer letters of encouragement can send them to Bailey Brigade. Inside the backpacks are cards with a QR code. The code will take the patients directly to a patient-only patience resource page where they can find assistance with services or discount services for them.

Another way to give back to the community for Bailey Brigade is through their scholarship program. Lukas Burgis was just announced as a scholarship winner. Lukas has also been affected by cancer in his family. He is studying medicine at Florida Atlantic University and holds a 4.6 GPA.

The community has been a huge support for Bailey Brigade. South Walton High Lacrosse and Basketball have both held fundraiser nights. The local Young Professional Networks through the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors held a costume party and silent auction with proceeds benefiting the Brigade. Owners of First Watch opened a new location in Tallahassee and donated all the proceeds from their soft opening weekend to Bailey Brigade. As Scott and Michele's oldest son is their Operations Manager, it was personal for them as well.

"We've been here for 30 years," stated Michele, referring

to Walton County. "Our roots run so deep in the sand. We've seen the community grow and change. The heart of the community has only gotten bigger."

If you are interested in making a donation, you can check out their website at [www.baileybrigade.com](http://www.baileybrigade.com). Monthly subscriptions are encouraged, but one-time donations are always appreciated. It takes approximately \$50 to fill one backpack for a patient. They are always

looking for corporate sponsors as well. Businesses can get their name on backpacks they sponsor, links on the patient resource page, or even a scholarship given in their company name.

Bailey Brigade is gearing up for a fall fundraising event. They are still looking for an outdoor location. If you are interested in donating space, please reach out to Michele at [info@baileybrigade.com](mailto:info@baileybrigade.com)



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Community

# May 2023 Family Friendly Events in South Walton

### May 9

#### ECTC: Spring Cabaret at the Boulevard

Join Emerald Coast Theatre Company for Spring Cabaret at the Boulevard on Tuesday, May 9 at 7:30PM. Mix, mingle and enjoy live musical selections performed by talented actors. All ECTC productions will be staged at ECTC's space located upstairs at 560 Grand Boulevard in Grand Boulevard Town Center, located in Miramar Beach. For additional info, visit [www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org). Emerald Coast Theatre Company, 560 Grand Blvd (Upstairs) Miramar Beach.

#### Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

Welcome to The Village of Baytowne Wharf where live music concerts take place in the Baytowne Events Plaza every Wednesday night from 7-9pm. Various local and regional artists perform throughout the year - see the lineup. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Free and open to the public. Baytowne Wednesday Night Concerts May 2023 | 7PM - 9PM - May 10: Dion Jones & The Neon Tears, May 17: Shenanigans May 24: Casey Kearney, May 31: Horseshoe Kitty. The Village of Baytowne Wharf, 9100 Baytowne Blvd. Miramar Beach.

### May 13-20

#### Longleaf Writers Conference

The Longleaf Writers Conference to take place May 13 - 20 in Seaside, FL as part of Art Month South Walton. The Longleaf Writers Conference includes a full week of workshops, seminars, agent consultations, school outreach, and more. The conference, which takes place in and around the Academic Village in Seaside, FL, provides an opportunity for beginning, intermediate, and advanced writers to celebrate writing, to network, and to hone their craft. 2023 Visiting Authors: Rebecca Makkai, Kwame Dawes, Derrink Harriell, Erika Krouse, January Gill O'Neil, Michael Farris Smith, Matt Bondurant, Seth Brady Tucker, Wendy Rawlings, Alex Glass and Jade Wong-Baxter **Longleaf Writers Conference** is part of Art Month South Walton, an initiative of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County with the purpose to bring communities, organizations and businesses together to present quality arts and entertainment to the community. Spanning the month of May, Art Month will feature visual, performing and literary arts programming in diverse formats and in various venues throughout South Walton.



Visit [www.longleafwritersconference.com](http://www.longleafwritersconference.com) and [www.culturalart-salliance.com/upcoming-events](http://www.culturalart-salliance.com/upcoming-events) for more information. 168 Smolian Circle, Seaside.

### May 15

#### Topsail Hill Preserve State Park: Guided Plant Stroll

Join Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and Master Gardener Bill Kuenstler on the third Monday each month from 9:00a.m. - 11:00a.m for a Guided Plant Stroll. The stroll begins at Tram Stop #2. This program is free with regular park admission. Park programs are made possible by Friends of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park. For more information about the Friends of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, please visit: [www.topsailparkfriends.org](http://www.topsailparkfriends.org) or email [friendsofthsp@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthsp@gmail.com). Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, 7525 W County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach.

### May 13 & 20

#### Sounds of SEASIDE @ Seaside Amphitheater

Enjoy an evening of LIVE music in the Seaside Amphitheater on Saturday, May 13th & May 20 from 3 - 6PM. Sounds of SEASIDE features musicians ready to entertain the whole family. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. May 13 : Max McCann, May 20 : The Wavy Winstons. Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.



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**May 21**

**Locals Last Stand**

The Watersound Origins community will host 30A's annual Locals Last Stand party on Sunday, May 21 from 3 - 7PM. The event will take place at Watersound Town Center Pavilion and will feature live performances by local artists. The concert is FREE and open to the public! **3 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.** || Siren & The Mud-puppies, **4 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.** || Dion Jones & The Neon Tears, **5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.** || Will Thompson Band. Local food trucks and vendors will also be available. Bring lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy an afternoon and evening of fun at the Watersound Town Center. For more info, visit [www.localslaststand.com](http://www.localslaststand.com). Watersound Town Center Pavilion, 85 Origins Main Street Santa Rosa Beach.

**CCA Kids Fishing Tournament in Grayton Beach**

The annual CCA South Walton Kids Fishing Tournament takes place on Sunday, May 21 at Grayton Beach, Florida. Sponsored by the Coastal Conservation Association Florida, the fun begins at 12:00 p.m. Online



registration is open. Online pre-registration is required this year. There will be no walk-ups allowed. Registration is limited to the first 200 kids, ages 2-14. Kids receive a rod&reel combo, tshirt, lunch, bait, and instruction! CCA Florida is a statewide, non-profit marine organization working in an advocacy role to protect the state's marine resources and interests of saltwater anglers. Follow Coastal Conservation of Florida on Facebook for updates on events. Grayton Dunes Beach Access, Defuniak Street South, Grayton Beach.

**May 28**

**Sinfonia Goes Pops at Alys Beach**

Celebrate the Memorial Day holiday weekend in Alys Beach at the Sinfonia Goes Pops concert on Sunday, May 28 at 3PM. Sinfonia Gulf Coast orchestra fea-

turing powerhouse vocalist and recording artist Morgan James with guest Ryan Shaw bring the classic sounds of Memphis alive with Symphonic Soul at this FREE family-friendly music spectacular. Bring blankets or low back chairs and grab a spot on the amphitheater lawn. Sinfonia Gulf Coast | [sinfoniagulfcoast.org](http://sinfoniagulfcoast.org), Learn more at [www.AlysBeach.com](http://www.AlysBeach.com). Alys Beach Amphitheatre, Somerset Street, Alys Beach.

**Seaside Memorial Day Weekend Concert: Isle of Eight**

Celebrate Memorial Day weekend with a performance by Isle of Eight on Sunday, May 28, in the Seaside Amphitheater from 6:30PM to 8PM. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. Sunday, May 28 | 6:30 - 8PM, Isle of Eight is a four-piece rock band from Lexington, Kentucky. They are known for their dynamic live performances, which showcase their high-energy music and passionate stage presence. [Seasidefl.com](http://Seasidefl.com). Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.

**May 19**

**Alys Shoppe Trunk Show: CB Grey**

Alys Shoppe is hosting a Trunk Show featuring CB Grey on Friday, May 20 & Saturday, May 21 from 10AM - 4PM in Alys Beach, Florida. Enjoy bubbly and treats while you browse the collection. CB Grey is a luxury silk collection that offers scarves and other silk accessories that are truly one of a kind. Visit [www.shopcbgrey.com](http://www.shopcbgrey.com). 30 Mark Twain Lane, Alys Beach.

**May 20**

**Biophilia Center: Nothin' Funner Than Summer**

Celebrate Summer with The

Biophilia Center at their Nothin' Funner Than Summer event on Saturday, May 20th from 9AM - 2PM. Spend the day with the whole family enjoying games, animal encounters, endless smiles, and much more. Be sure to bring a towel as some activities include water! Ages 13+ | \$8, Ages 4 - 12 | \$5, Ages 3 & Under | Free. The E.O.Wilson Biophilia Center is a nature preserve in Freeport. The Center's mission is to educate on the importance of biodiversity, to promote sustainability, and to encourage conservation, preservation, and restoration of ecosystems. Learn more and become a member: [eowilsoncenter.org](http://eowilsoncenter.org). E.O.Wilson Biophilia Center, 4956 State Highway 20 E, Freeport.



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# Part 2: Pre Owned Sports Cars Under \$50,000 That Make Great Daily Drivers

By WILL ESTELL

If you consider yourself an automobile connoisseur of any depth, it's almost certain you could probably guess the cars that would make up a list of this title, simply based on common knowledge of what is and isn't a real sports car and what does and doesn't make economic sense for the average person to daily drive.

At the other end of the spectrum, as much as I can appreciate the more exotic makes, you can't include anything made by Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Lotus or a host of other makes on this list. Mostly because even as true sports cars they can't be had for the \$50,000 ceiling here, and even if they could I couldn't—with good conscious— suggest anyone try to daily drive anything that has \$25,000, 15,000-mile service requirements or

(insert used \$30,000 Maserati's here) has a high probability of developing a new problem on the roundtrip to Fresh Market or Starbucks.

## Mazda MX-5

When it comes to true-to-the-definition sports cars there's not much debate among auto aficionados about which one brings the most smiles per miles and dollars: It's almost always hands down Mazda's classic Elan inspired MX-5 roadster. There is a reason more MX-5's are raced on tracks every weekend than any other car in this country. And it's the same reason that the MX-5 is about the only sub-\$40,000 car (new) that the same guy who owns a Porsche 911 GT3, classic Ferrari 328 or Lotus Esprit would still choose to buy for his fun-to-drive, dependable ride, while he keeps the miles off the more ex-



pensive car candy.

Besides being one of the only new(er) cars that still maintains that basic analog, driver-at-one-with-the-road sensation, the two most recent iterations of the MX-5 (internally the NC and the ND cars) provide enough room and comfort (this isn't a Mercedes, however; you're supposed to feel the road under those 45 series tires) to make them great daily drivers – top up or down.

For years, test drivers and auto editors at the likes of Automob-

ile, Road & Track and Car & Driver have called the MX-5 one of the greatest sports cars money can buy. And a lot of that is because you can drive these cars way closer to their limits, revving to 7,000 RPMs, taking sharp S turns at 80 mph and genuinely “driving,” whereas you can't really do that, on a daily basis, in most of the much more expensive, and powerful, sports cars available.

I'd suggest an NC, from 2012 to 2015, in the highly desirable

PRHT (power retractable hard-top) with a 6-speed manual. And if you can find one, a Club edition, with all of the above mentioned, plus the larger wheels, unique front fascia, rear splitter, along with Bilstein shocks and strut tower brace. If you prefer the look of the newer, 2016-present, ND cars, then you can still get in a nicely equipped 1- to 3-year-old version for well under our price point for this article. Either way you go, the cars are ultra-dependable, low cost to maintain, get decent mpg, and will almost certainly be one of the most thrilling and rewarding cars to drive... no matter what other cars you may have owned.

*Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, occasional actor and coastal real estate professional with over 600 published magazine features in an array of genres.*



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 Community

# Walton County Mosquito Control Offers Free Yellow Fly Kit to South Walton Residents

BY TEAHNA RATLIFF

It's that time of year again, when people are being bitten by BITING FLIES! There are 35 species of different flies here in Florida. Deer flies, horse flies, and stable flies deliver a painful bite to large mammals, including people. But, the most common and dreaded fly that people know here in South Walton, is the Yellow Fly. Many of these flies have similar life cycles and behaviors. Florida has the perfect habitat for these flies with the mixture of wetlands and high populations of readily available meals from animals and people.

These flies lay eggs every year in the soil around water. Once a rain event happens the eggs hatch and drop a larva into the water. Larvae are the immature form of an insect. Examples would include maggots, caterpillars, or grubs. They stay in the larvae stage through wintertime, then wiggle their way to more muddy areas to pupate (cocoon stage).

This allows for the perfect time for adults to emerge in the spring. Their life cycle takes about a year to complete. This is how we know when "Yellow fly season" is upon us. Yellow flies are mainly active between May through October, but from traps and residential complaints, we see them as early as April and end by August in South Walton County.

As adults, these flies can normally be found waiting in shaded areas- such as tree lines and bushes waiting for a blood meal to pass. Like mosquitoes, females are the only ones that bite. They need protein in the blood to produce their eggs. While the males mainly feed on pollen, females determine meals through eye sight, but carbon dioxide also plays a part. These flies are mainly active for a few hours after sunrise and a few hours before sunset. Yellow flies are not known to pass any diseases but do deliver a painful bite that some people may have an allergic reaction to.

As far as treating these pesky



biters, mosquito control does NOT spray for yellow flies. Although there have been conflicting resources stating the products

we use can be effective in yellow fly control. We do NOT spray during the day to protect pollinators, such as bees and butterflies. Also, our spray size is designed for the size of a mosquito's body, not a robust fly. As an individual, the best practices are using repellent (with DEET) and wearing long sleeves and light colors while outside. There are also yellow fly sticky traps that resemble

a large mammal. Yellow flies are attracted to dark colors and moving objects. The yellow fly traps hang in the tree line (away from porches or where kids play). The female yellow fly sees a moving object and goes to land for a bite, then gets stuck.

South Walton County Mosquito Control District supplies 1 yellow fly kit per primary resident in their primary home. The resident must reside south of the bay between Bay County and Okaloosa County line and must pre-register on the South Walton County Mosquito Control website before arriving. South Walton County Mosquito Control District will be hosting an event on Saturday May 20, 2023, from 9am-1pm, where residents can drive through to pick up their one free kit. For further information, please go to their website <https://www.southwaltonmosquitocontrol.org/yellow-fly-kit-request> or call (850)267-2112.

## Yellow Fly Kit Saturday Distribution Event



**SOUTH WALTON MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT**  
**774 N. Co Hwy 393**  
**Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459**

**Saturday May 20th**  
**9:00-1:00PM Drive Thru Event**

**Homeowners and renters MUST pre register online**

**Must have proof of address and or lease.**

**ONLY 1 kit for your primary home will be given out.**

**Homeowners/renters must be present for kit.**

**This event is for South Walton residents only and you must live south of the bay and county line to county line.**

**Remember to be nice!**



# MKAF Showcases A Range of Music At 2023 Concerts in The Village

From Classic Rock, Reggae and Disco to Modern Pop, Live Music Series Features Premier Regional and National Musicians and Bands

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) kicked off its highly-anticipated 2023 Concerts in the Village on Thursday, April 20. The area's first live concert series is held each spring on Thursday evenings at the MKAF Dugas Pavilion in Destin. This year's 28th annual family-friendly series runs from April 20 to June 22. The 10-concert live music series will feature premier regional and national musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae, and disco to modern pop.

May concerts include the following:

**Ozomatli** takes the stage May 4. A cacophony of sounds melding salsa, jazz, funk, reggae, and hip hop is Ozomatli. This social-minded ensemble rock band formed in Los Angeles in 1995 to give voice to Latinos, fight for workers' rights, and promote a global unity. After performing around the world, this Latin-pop infusion is ready

to rock Destin. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty military.

May 11 will feature **Lucky Chops – New Day, New Tour**. Lucky Chops has been unleashing high-energy brassy funk on the world since forming in NYC in 2006. The intensity of the band's energy is fueled by their desire to share the healing and inspirational power of music with others. It's your lucky day to see Lucky Chops live in concert. Tickets are \$25 adults/\$20 active-duty military.

May 18 get ready to chill with **Yacht Rock Revue: Reverse Sunset Tour**. This top-notch group of musicians, presented by SiriusXM, trademarked the term "yacht rock," both metaphorically and literally (U.S. Registration Number 3834195). From humble beginnings in a basement, they've rocked on-stage with John Oates, Eddie



Money, and now headline sold-out shows across the country. Come chill to the smooth sounds of West coast-inspired '70s and '80s rock. Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military.

May 25 don't miss **Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James in Symphonic Soul with special guest Ryan Shaw**. Morgan James brings the classic sounds of Memphis accompanied by Sinfonia Gulf Coast. This program is a love letter to one of the great American birthplaces of soul, featuring brand-new arrangements of Memphis classics by Al Green,

Otis Redding, Ann Peebles, Sam, and Dave, and, of course, Elvis. James rounds out the evening with her own Memphis soul originals and storytelling. Hear your favorite soul tunes come to life in a brand-new way that will have you dancing and singing along! Tickets are \$35 adults/\$30 active-duty military.

Gates open at 6 p.m. with concerts beginning at 7 p.m. for this come-as-you-are family-friendly outdoor concert series. Bring a lawn chair, picnic, wine, or purchase food and beverages on-site prepared by featured restaurants and food trucks.

General admission varies per concert. Prices range from \$20 to \$35 for adults. Discounts offered for active-duty military (must show ID). New this year, patrons purchasing tickets in advance of concert day will save \$5 per ticket. Children (12 and under) are free. A limited number

of VIP tables (reserved table for eight guests for the entire season) are available for \$2,250. Corporate VIP tables are \$2,750.

Proceeds will fund the MKAF's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and active/veteran military suffering from visible and invisible injuries in our community.

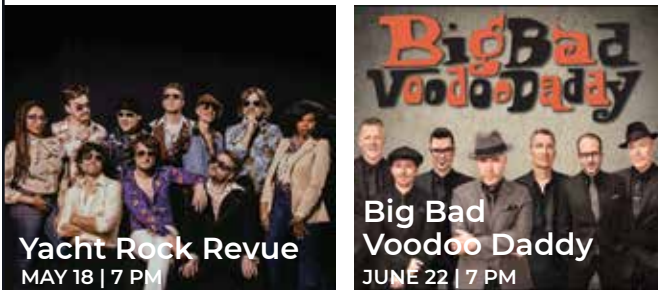
Purchase tickets online at [MKAF.org/events](http://MKAF.org/events). For more information, call (850) 650-2226.

MKAF members enjoy early entry and free admission to every concert as well as discounted pricing to other MKAF events. For more information on MKAF membership, visit [MKAF.org](http://MKAF.org).

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



Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James  
MAY 25 | 7 PM



Yacht Rock Revue  
MAY 18 | 7 PM



Big Bad Voodoo Daddy  
JUNE 22 | 7 PM



Adam Ezra Group  
JUNE 8 | 7 PM



### THURSDAY NIGHTS | APRIL 20 - JUNE 22

Annual Thursday evening concert live music series featuring family-friendly premier musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae and disco to modern pop.

May 4 | Ozomatli

May 11 | Lucky Chops

May 18 | Yacht Rock Revue: Reverse Sunset Tour

May 25 | Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James

June 1 | Gotta Groove Band

June 8 | Adam Ezra Group

June 15 | Journeyman: A Tribute to Eric Clapton

June 22 | Big Bad Voodoo Daddy

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Arts

# Spring and Summer at ECTC

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Spring is here and summer is right around the corner at Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC). I've already started humming along to all of my favorite Sound of Music songs in preparation for our May 5th-14th production. The hardest part for me is not humming along during the show! The excitement from our young cast members is palpable, not just for this production but for all of our upcoming summer camps as well. We're excited too because that means a whole lot of energetic students dancing, singing, acting, and bringing life to our space. We love providing a place where students can participate in creative, team-based

activities that don't involve a screen. There are so many great skills that these kids build while having fun- like teamwork, literacy, confidence, communication, and voice and movement.

Our summer camps start at age 5 (rising Kindergarteners) and go through 12th grade. We offer week-long mini player camps throughout the summer for our youngest students to act, dance, sing, and create art while learning how to put on a production. Our elementary aged children have their choice of singing and dancing in our week-long Camp Showtime camps, or show their spots in our two-week musical theatre camp 101 Dalmatians. We also offer the one week, non-musical camp for our elementary aged students Alice in Wonderland at



three different locations including ECTC, Defuniak Springs, and Gulf Coast State College in Panama City.

Our teens have a variety of choices as well with our one-week Cabaret Comedy camp,

Playwriting camp, and Film camp. We also offer a two-week, non-musical production camp Puffs, a hilarious Harry Potter-esque play. We round out our summer with a fantastic three-week musical theatre intensive offering for the teens—

Grease! Students sharpen their skills while working on a super fun musical that culminates in a fantastic full-length production. Whether you have a student or friend in the show, or you were just "born to hand jive baby," this show is a fun way to end the summer.

If that isn't enough theatre for you, our Broadway on the Boulevard summer spectacular is featured every Thursday night at 8:00pm in Grand Boulevard starting May 25th. You can also stay tuned for summer pop up shows in our air-conditioned space at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs. There's something for everyone at Emerald Coast Theatre Company this summer so be sure to check out our website and sign up for our newsletter at [www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org). See you at the theatre!



ON STAGE  
MAY 5<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> 2023

Don't miss the world's most beloved musical based on the true story of the Von Trapp family. Featuring a trove of cherished songs, including "Climb Every Mountain," "My Favorite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" and the title number "The Sound of Music," this is one inspiring musical that brings joy to audiences of all ages.

Music by Richard Rodgers, Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II,  
Book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse



Experience and training in theatre can improve students' communication, critical thinking, and team-based skills!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



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Tickets or Info, call 850.684.0323 or visit [EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG](http://EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG)

## Underwater Museum of Art Annual Fundraiser May 11th

Join the Cultural Arts Alliance on Wednesday, May 11th for an evening to benefit the Underwater Museum of Art (UMA). The annual Under The Sea UMA Fundraiser takes place at Grand Park in the heart of Grand Boulevard in South Walton, Florida from 6 - 9PM. Guests are invited to view several of the UMA sculptures, enjoy a full cash bar with specialty cocktails, meet and greet with the artists, and taste featured items from popular area restaurants and celebrated chefs. Purchase tickets and learn more: <https://www.culturalartsalliance.com/event-details/under-the-sea-2>

Enjoy live musical entertainment from opening act Storm-folk followed by headliners, The Cleverlys! The Cleverlys are a one-of-a-kind comedy/music



blend. They tour nationally, performing at music venues, PAC'S, and some of the nation's largest festivals like Stagecoach, Telluride, CMA Music Fest and even The Grand Ole Opry. The UMA is a presentation of the CAA's 'Art in Public Spaces' program in partnership with South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA) with the purpose to create marine habitat and expand fishery populations while providing enhanced creative, cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of residents, students and visitors in South Walton. Visit [www.culturalartsalliance.com](http://www.culturalartsalliance.com) for more information.

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# Coastal Branch Library to Host Artwork of Melody Bogle

The Friends of the Walton County Coastal Branch Library are honored to host award-winning artist Melody Bogle from May 1 to July 10, 2023. A member of the Emerald Coast Plein Air Artists, Melody has won 2016 Visit South Walton Artist of the Year and a Best in Show at the Cultural Arts Association's ArtsQuest award, among many other awards.

Her artwork, which includes both oil and pastel paintings, has been exhibited in several local galleries, including the Cultural Arts Alliance's Foster Gallery.

When she was a child, Melody's family vacationed to the Emerald Coast, and the love for the waters and the white dunes started to grow. The family then moved to the area where visits to the beach were more frequent. Her painting in oils began just out of high school. Her drawing skills were recognized by her

father and the search for a teacher began. From that point on art has been a conscious part of her life. Pastels were discovered along the journey and took over as the media of choice.

Upon retirement Melody moved back to the Emerald Coast and to South Walton to those beautiful emerald colored waters, the white dunes and those beautiful lilies floating on the waters of those rare Coastal Dune Lakes. She was introduced to Plein Air painting locally when taking a pastel workshop with Albert Handel. The love of the outdoors and art together brought a new growth to her work. She joined the local Emer-



important objects that are unearthed to be used for publication. She calls herself 'blessed' as her Lord has brought together the love of archeology and art. This exhibit will feature several of Melody's artworks in both oils and pastels with subject matter from Italy, California, and the local Emerald Coast area.

Artists interested in being considered for future exhibits, please contact Dorothea Berkhout at berkhout148@gmail.com. The Coastal Branch library is located at 437 Greenway Trail in Santa Rosa Beach. Open Thursday-Tuesday, 9AM-5PM. Call (850) 267-2809 for more information.

ald Coast Plein Air Painters and went out weekly with the group to paint in many locations in the area.

Her artistic gifts are also

being used in another manner as she volunteers with Associates for Biblical Research and travels to Israel yearly to participate in their dig at Shiloh and draw the

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 Wellness

# Adjusting Life Input to Experience Healthier Output



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG, JOURNEY BRAVELY

A few months ago, I found my brain scattered, tired, and generally tense. When I slowed to reflect, I realized I was carrying stress outside my awareness. Juggling work, home, parenting, relationships, life transitions, emails, texts, news, professional research, social media, etc. was overwhelming my brain. These activities weren't unhealthy, but the output of my life was out of balance. I took a social media break and noticed quickly I felt better. That break has become a more permanent practice as I've remembered that what we put in, our life input, significantly impacts how we show up daily in life, our life output.

Do you ever find yourself trying to make an external change and it just isn't working? Maybe you're trying to reduce stress, increase joy, improve a relationship, or live less overwhelmed. You may keep trying to make adjustments to the output of your

life without slowing down to consider how the input might need to be adjusted. In reality, true change happens from the inside out.

In our fast, achievement-focused, entertainment-hungry culture, it's easy to become desensitized to anxiety-inducing input available daily. You wake up to news, social media, political commentary. You are inundated with messaging about how you aren't enough, you need to be better, you need to have more. You are told who is right, who you should be against, what you should fear, what you should know, and how the world is going to hell in a handbasket. It's hard to be more patient, kind, and peaceful when the input screams to worry more, do more, and be angrier.

The great news is you have the power to evaluate and adjust your input to create life balance. You get to decide the quantity and sources of information. You get to choose the boundaries regarding your time, activities, and practices you engage to pursue more joy and peace. So, what does it look like to begin adjusting your input to experience a healthier output?

### 5 Ways to Practice Adjusting Your Life Input to Experience Healthier Life Output

#### 1. Slow down and notice

**where you are out of balance.** Notice body tension, relationship tension, negative thoughts, unhealthy self-talk, road rage, impatience, irritability, sleep problems, anxiety, over/under eating, overspending, drug/alcohol use, feeling victimized by life.

**2. Evaluate your input.** Take a week to notice and note your input practices. Notice what you're looking at/listening to when you wake, drive, work, in your leisure time, before bed. Check the hour count on your phone use. Notice the hour count on social media, what you follow, and how it makes you feel. Notice the messaging/attitudes of input. Are they fear-based, critical, dehumanizing? Are they encouraging, solution-focused, inspiring?

**3. Curate your input life feed.** Give yourself radical permission to unfollow, quit the show, change the station, distance from relationships, reduce exposure to input that is not a fit with the world view you desire. You don't have to follow things that make you feel irrational fear, insecurity, and hopelessness. It's okay to unfollow positive things and friends if they are impacting you negatively. Try unfollowing negative inputs for 1-2 weeks and make notes about your feelings, mindset, clarity of thought, state

of overwhelm or calm. Keep in mind this can be challenging as your brain may be addicted to the dopamine hit you've been getting from some of the inputs. Push through the discomfort. It's worth it.

**4. Create space.** In place of excessive input, try incorporating an activity or two that creates calm and mental space. Take a walk, look at something beautiful, listen to calming music, be quiet, engage a spiritual practice, garden, hike, go for a bike ride, whatever else works for creating space.

**5. Implement long-term input changes.** Use your collected input data to decide

which things you will let go of long-term and take action steps. Remove apps, unfollow, find a new station, put limits on your phone, etc. Find consistent time to include your space activities. Determine the balance that works and begin practicing. This doesn't need to be perfect. You can continue observing, learning, and making adjustments over time.

Evaluating your input is uncomfortable work but very worth the payoff of living a more balanced, less overwhelmed life. Connect with us for coaching and counseling support along your journey at [www.journeybravely.com](http://www.journeybravely.com).



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# Semaglutide: Weight Loss Magic



By DR. RICHARD CHERN, M.D.

If you haven't heard already there is a new weight loss medication available at a reasonable cost. semaglutide is a GLP-1 receptor agonist which means it activates the GLP-1 receptor. Still confused? It doesn't matter. It has several important actions in the body.

Semaglutide ultimately helps your body lose weight by improv-

ing the regulation of sugar levels and insulin levels in the body. If this sounds like a medication for diabetes instead of weight loss then you would be correct. This class of medications was developed to improve diabetes. Astonishingly, in studies, many of my patients lost significant weight. In fact, up to 30% of their body weight. And, much of the weight stayed off after stopping the medication.

This medication also slows the stomach. Food stays in the stomach longer so you feel full longer. And your stomach gets full faster so you eat less. These medications help people lose significant weight and you lose weight without feeling hungry!

Sounds like magic, right?

I have been seeing patients for over 30 years. I have seen so many weight loss drugs come

on and go. This is the first time I have ever been excited to tell people about a weight loss medication.

So how is it possible this medication is available? Well, this medication was initially Ozempic. The FDA allows a new medication to have a patent, or monopoly, on the medication for many years. They say this gives the company enough time to recoup their cost of development. This medication was being sold for over \$1500/month and was only available to patients with diabetes.

Fortunately for us the drug company had no idea that the medication was going to be so popular and they essentially could not keep up with demand. They ran out of medication! So how is the medication available? The two ways branded medica-

tion can be manufactured by other companies is if the medication's patent has expired OR if the medication is no longer available from the manufacturer. So as soon as the company ran out, the other companies jumped in and started production of the generic equivalent semaglutide. It's possible this price break might end once the drug company gets production online but we just don't know.

If you're interested in losing

significant amounts of weight and keeping it off, without feeling hungry you should give us a call at 850-837-1271. We still have appointments open.

*Dr Richard Chern MD and Sue Griffin ARNP specialize in hormone therapy for both men and women and have been seeing patients in Miramar Beach for 10 years. Dr Chern also teaches hormone therapy to physicians across the county. Give them a call today at 850-837-1271 for your appointment.*



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 Wellness

# What Teens Want Us to Know: Part 3

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

In the next installation of What Teens Want Us to Know, our kids were asked, “How do you wish people took care of you on a bad day?”

It can be so easy to think our kids don’t want us to be involved in helping them feel better, especially if we’re used to being kept at a distance, and sometimes that’s true. More than one teen did say, “I just want to be left alone.”

Others, however, offered purpose in their time of wanting to be alone, and it often had to do with how busy their schedules are. One teen said it would be helpful just to have time to relax and take a break. When there’s no time to slow down, it can compound problems if there isn’t time to assess what changes can be made to alleviate stress. Are we allowing students to participate in making their schedules? Do we allow them to do less when their mental health is in jeopardy?

When students feel depleted, they also “just need peace and quiet to recuperate.” Many students shared that they wanted to talk but when they talked needed to be on their timeline, not ours. “I don’t ever want to talk about it right away. Sit with me, give me some ice cream, and put on a movie. I’ll open up eventually. I’ve just got to process it all first.”

Not everyone needs physi-

cal touch to be comforted but for some, a simple hug makes a greater impact than talking, especially when it’s hard to articulate all the raw emotions clamoring for attention. “Just cuddle me and spend time with me.” When parents recognize their teen is going through a tough time and do something about it, that child knows there’s relief in the hard day.

“Be there, hold me, and tell me it’s going to be okay.”

Of course, sometimes a bad day starts in the home and it’s us they need relief from.

“Just please don’t yell at me. If you handle the situation calmly and want to talk to me about it, I promise I’ll openly communicate with you.”

Unfortunately, a lot of kids are feeling isolated from the people they need comfort from the most and don’t get the chance to process a hard situation. “I don’t usually have people around me any day so I don’t really care if nobody is around me on a bad day.” Are there opportunities we can be more deliberate about being present? Maybe a ride in the car, while you’re getting ready to start or end the day, or at a coffee shop? We can get so caught up in our schedules that we forget to ask simple, but critical questions. Forgetting to do so can be perceived as indifference.

“I wish they cared and said something like, ‘How are you feeling?’”

Another agreed: “Check on me every once in a while and then listen.”

A lot of kids know what they need on a bad day and it can get pretty specific!

“I just want to watch Friends with my mom and eat Publix sushi and cake.”

“A day inside with tea will do the trick. If I’m physically unwell I may need more but it just depends.”

“Make some food and let me be alone.”

It can also be pretty general and open to lots of options.

“Distract me.”

Some of the teens that were getting ready to leave home wanted to feel more equipped to handle hard situations themselves.

“I just want people to take a step back so I can process and

not have to be so dependent on others.”

One participant said, “Don’t sugarcoat it.” It’s hard for any of us to see someone we love have to suffer through tough times but many situations

have to be confronted realistically so these kids have the tools and experience to handle it while they still have the support of our authority, resources and presence.

What your individual teen needs is not always obvious, but the universal theme is they want to be seen in their struggles, known in their process and whatever the age, feel safe.

“Understand me when I have a bad day, comfort me, and support me.”

“Just stand by me.”

“Some days I just need to be



by myself and other days I want to feel protected by being in close proximity to those I love.”

Consider the book, The Five Love Languages of Teenagers by Gary Chapman to know how your teen might uniquely feel loved.

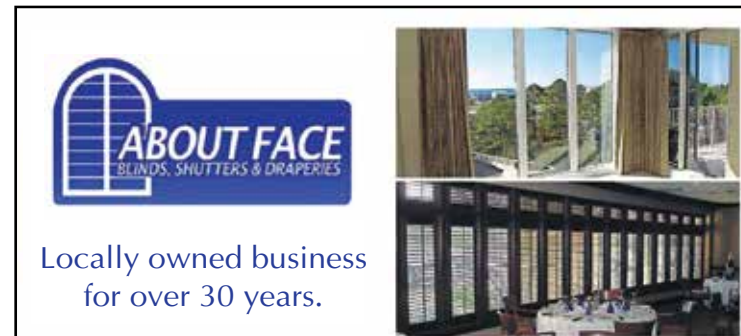
It’s a difficult time being a teen, especially now, when hard days can come from so many different places: home life, academic demands, extracurricular activities, work, relationships, burgeoning feelings, and social media.

Don’t miss those opportunities to offer relief and encouragement to keep going.

“Smile and tell me there’s always tomorrow.”



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# SOF Missions and the Unseen Wounds of War

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Almost every hour, one U.S. veteran commits suicide!

SOF Missions is a non-profit organization that assists and supports active duty and veteran Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their families. Dr. Damon Friedman, a former Special Forces operator, founded the organization when he recognized the need for a support system within the SOF community.

Damon served on active duty for twenty years—five in the Marine Corps and 15 in the Air Force’s special warfare. Damon tells his story of almost becoming a statistic, but some incredible people stepped in to help him. He believed it was his turn to help others. So, his wife, Dayna, and he started SOF Missions in Bagram, Afghanistan, in 2011. SOF Missions aims to empower America’s warriors to find purpose and be resilient.

SOF Missions helps the battle brother, America’s true heroes, find freedom through post-traumatic growth. Many veterans feel hopeless and without purpose, with an inability to reconnect. Damon said, “We are trying to help them to not only get to a better state mentality but to be the best version of themselves.” The program focuses on a whole health, interdisciplinary model. They treat mild traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, insomnia, post-traumatic stress and chronic stress. He continued, “Helping our warriors is a completely systematic approach.”



The Resiliency Project is a four-pillar methodology project: psychological, physical, spiritual and social wellness. “We believe that humans are made up of mind, body, and soul, and our Creator is the designer of the universe. One of the biggest challenges in America is that people do not really know their purpose.” SOF Missions purposes to help those in the program to find their purpose in life. “Our veterans are the treasure of America called upon to change the world for good, to make this world a better place.”

The keynote speaker for this year’s banquet was 37-year veteran Marine Corps Major General James S. “Hammer” Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. General Hartsell pointed out that since 9-11, nearly four million Americans have raised their right hand to defend our Constitution and country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Half of those went to war—two million. He stated, “Those who went to war

were exposed to moral injury. They were exposed to things they would not have been exposed to in a normal life.”

He quoted, “In war, there are no unwounded soldiers,” which emphasizes that all soldiers are wounded in some way, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. The unseen wounds are the least treated but still have a lasting impact on their lives.

Gen. Hartsell talked passionately about everyone’s “life load” and the need to balance military, family and employment life. SOF Missions helps warriors carry the burdens of life load. Everyone has these burdens, and getting out of balance creates trouble. SOF Missions helps veterans balance the psychological, social, physical and spiritual domains. He learned through experience that psychological trauma is the hardest to keep in balance.

Bob Conrad is a 25-year Army Veteran and a local representative with SOF Missions. Bob says, “Attitude-Behavior-Results! It starts with the choice of commitment to impact the lives

of our extended Veteran Community, to reduce suicide, increase resiliency and guide others to thriving, not just surviving! In a purpose-driven organization, that’s called commitment!” Bob has been with SOF for six years in Donor and Strategy Development with a team led by Sherrie Hayes, Kristi Beckman and Annette Beard. The Tampa-based HQ worked hard to increase the passion and participation from 180 in 2022 to 240 supporters in 2023! The Gala is a premier event along the Emerald Coast.

The Gala pays tribute to the brave men and women who fight and sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy. We must emphasize the importance of acknowledging and honoring our heroes, recognizing the responsibility that comes with freedom, and understanding the true meaning of courage. We must never forget or minimize the sacrifices made by our soldiers in service to this country. Their sacrifices should inspire future generations to strive for greatness. We owe it to our heroes to remember and honor their legacy, to appreciate

the liberties they secured for us, and to continue to protect and defend those freedoms for future generations.

SOF Missions relies on the support of donors and volunteers to carry out its mission. A local Regional Support Team can meet with individuals, organizations, and potential sponsors to expand the SOF MISSION passion, commitment and service to our warrior community. Bob Conrad would be happy to meet with anyone wanting to know more about SOF Missions, the RST, and how they might be a part of a fantastic mission and purpose-driven team. For more information, check out [www.sofmissions.org](http://www.sofmissions.org)

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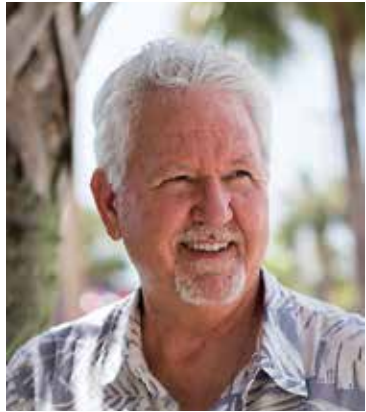
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# A Pastor's Ponderings: Mothers—Servers or Lovers?



By PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’”

“‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary

has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:38-42, NIV)

Mothers serve and provide the loving environment that empowers a life worth living. Thank God for the mothers who give themselves faithfully to their families, jobs, homes, and provide stability in a chaotic world.

But moms, when is it time to stop and focus on Christ? Jesus shows us the key to balancing love and service. Most moms swing between serving and nurturing. Jesus speaks to this common human contradiction.

Martha was doing all the work. Yet Mary gets the commendation. It seems so unfair until you look at it more closely. Martha had invited Jesus into her home and was bustling about making the preparations, but inside her head criticism brewed. “Why do I have to do all the work? Why doesn’t lazy ol’ Mary help around here? Doesn’t anybody care about me? After all, I’m doing all the work.”

Martha’s critical self-talk prompted her to verbalize her accusation against the Lord. “Do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” Can you imagine accusing Christ of not caring? She goes further by commanding the Lord of the Universe to tell her sister to help her. Do you smell the stink of her self-righteous indignation?

Jesus lovingly responds to her need and not to her critical spirit. He understands Martha’s concerns, just as he knows the multitude of needs that press upon mothers. Christ seems to say, “Martha, something more important is happening right now. Mary sits at my feet because she loves me. Why don’t you let go of the busy-work and spend time with me?”

There is nothing wrong with serving. We desperately need servant-hearted people in our lives. But the problem was in the ugly conversation going on in Martha’s heart. Criticism gave birth to self-righteous indignation, manifesting in rebellion to the person she was trying to

honor with her service. People who work too much get tired, resentful, and critical. At some point, we must stop our labors and sit at Jesus’ feet to worship. Make Christ your focus.

The motivation to serve drives many people. According to author Dr. Gary Chapman in *The Five Love Languages*, many people express their love for others by serving. A high percentage of Americans intuitively migrate directly to their task list. This quality is admirable but unable to produce a happy life. Martha is learning this vital principal.

Chapman’s other four “love languages” are also insightful; physical contact, words of affirmation, quality time, and receiving gifts are all employed in Christ’s interaction with Mary and Martha. Mary sat at Christ’s feet as He gave her quality time. Jesus commended Mary and Martha with words of affirmation during the event. The sisters each gave Jesus a gift – Mary worshiped him, and Martha prepared food. Love

pervades this entire event. But Jesus shows us the supreme expression of love is time spent in worship.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism declares, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” No higher love exists than worship. God crafted us with His own hands for this purpose of loving, adoring, and worshipping. We find true fulfillment when we sit at Jesus’ feet.”

Ultimately, serving God is good, but worship is better. We must allow time, space, and focus for loving worship at the feet of Jesus.

*Pastor Dave just released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled “Prodigal Jesus” You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com. Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin.*

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# Road to Redemption: The Story of Andrew Farmer – Waiting and Resting

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Being married is a good thing and being single is a good thing. As the Apostle Paul said, whether you're married or single is good. Serving God and living for Him is the most important thing. For older adults, in Christian circles, being single can be a little difficult. It seems that most church functions are geared toward married couples. Unless, of course, you're a teen-ager or young adult.

Which can be a deterrent for some. Who wants to show up and sit by themselves or feel like they have nothing to contribute in a group of married couples?

Andrew Farmer, originally from Jacksonville, has lived in the Destin area for about 11 years. He was raised in a Christian home with a praying mom. As Andrew says, "you can never outrun a praying mom." For some years he was into partying and drugs and alcohol. But Jesus got ahold of him, and he's been sober for 3 years. "Once you eliminate those things, you have more room

for Jesus."

Andrew admits that it's tough being single. He has a wonderful 12 year-old son whom he loves and focuses on. But being in your mid-thirties and single means he can get lonely, especially on weekends. So, Andrew has learned to find more ways to serve to not only fill up the time, but immerse himself in a Godly environment to assist in his spiritual growth.

"I know God has someone for me. I pray for my future wife." While he waits, Andrew uses the time wisely, seeking to continue to grow stronger spiritually. "Never give up and stay obedient."

Our lives are full of waiting. As children we are impatient to be adults. As adults we're impatient for the light to change or for the line at the grocery store to move. We anticipate and we wait. It's not whether we'll wait, but how we wait that is so important. Way back in Isaiah 30:15, God said this to Israel: "In returning (repentance) and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But



you were unwilling." And we're all familiar with Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

When you think about it, there are numerous places in Scripture where God is inviting us to rest. His desire is to commune with us and walk with us. His rest is a rest from striving and worrying and wearing ourselves out. Which is what we tend to do and then wonder why we're stressed out and unable to feel His presence. The idea that we are strong when we are resting in our Heavenly

Father is astounding and contrary to what the world tells us.

A few verses farther in Isaiah 30, and verse 18, God says this: "Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore He exalts himself to show mercy to you, for the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him." What a statement!

Jesus praised the faith of children and asks that we be like them. Resting and trusting. Happily waiting in His presence, knowing fully that we are cherished.

So, whether you're waiting for God to bring you a spouse,

or waiting for a job interview, or waiting for your life to 'get better', remember that God wants us to choose to rest in Him. That should be our default for how we deal with life every day.

I'm certain Andrew would agree. His default now is to seek Jesus' presence in his life. Finding ways to serve while he waits and rests is the source of his strength.

You can hear Andrew's entire story and listen to many other incredible interviews on the weekly Road to Redemption radio show and podcast at [www.rtrdestiny.com](http://www.rtrdestiny.com).



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Musing



BY SEAN DIETRICH

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

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

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

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

Wartime was one heck of an era to be young. Let me tell ya.

# Sean of the South: Dear Young Person

When we went overseas we were still teenagers, smooth skinned, scared spitless, with government haircuts, wearing brand new wedding rings. We hadn't seen action yet, so we were jittery and lots of us smoked through a week's rations of Luckies in one day.

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

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

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

Speaking of women. We guys were always talking about our sweethearts, wives, and mothers. If you mentioned someone's girl a man was liable to talk for hours about her. And even if you'd already seen his wallet photos be-



fore, you never interrupted a guy talking about his gal. Because eventually you'd be talking about yours.

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

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

The funny thing is, even though their feet were falling off, these men still didn't want

to leave their posts. Many had to be dragged away cussing. That's how committed these guys were.

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

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

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

The Germans had a local radio station that broadcast American stuff like Bing and Frank.

Then, between songs, a German gal talked propaganda over the airwaves to us American GIs in a sexy voice, trying to mess with our heads.

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

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

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

So when we heard the official papers had been signed and the war was over, it was Christmas morning multiplied times a hundred. No. Times a trillion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happy Memorial Day.

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# On Giving Advice



BY KIRK MCCARLEY

As the parent of adult children, one of the disciplines I've tried to stick to has been refraining from giving advice. Without doubt I've fallen short of that aspiration at times.

I have shared with my son, daughter, and their respective spouses that one of the greatest gifts they can give is the act of asking for advice. On those occasions where advice is sought interestingly, my responses are often rhetorical, where the first

comment is to ask them, "what do you think you should do?"

I aim to also say, "thank you for asking for my opinion." To be viewed as a sage of wise counsel and thought is of highest esteem.

Years ago, I worked for a mayor in a small community, an elected official. There was another office holder in a somewhat complementary agency who was garnering a reputation as being outspoken, surly, and often rude. It was vital that the two officials enjoy a compatible working relationship for the sake of not only their respective jurisdictions, but in serving the public well.

The mayor shared his story. "I invited him to lunch. Once seated, as expected he went through a laundry list of things that he found disagreeable: road and bridge issues, law enforcement, and intergovernmental relations. His complaints could

be wearisome, but again I was accustomed to his laments. Amid his soap box, came a sigh and a pause. He hesitated, turned towards me and asked why he was not achieving the successes he had not only campaigned on, but wanted."

He then asked, "What do you believe people think of me?"

The two men exchanged tense eye contact. The mayor replied, "do you really want to know?" The mayor proceeded to say, "then ask me again."

Again, "Tell me what you think people think of me." Now with permission to speak freely the mayor then shared that although his colleague demonstrated a high level of zest, energy, and passion for his role, he had basically isolated himself." The mayor added that as a result, people were hesitant to approach him, thus compromising his ef-

fectiveness. In summary, the mayor said to him, "I believe you are angry." The lines of communication officially opened.

The Legacy Project launched nearly 20 years ago in an effort to collect practical advice for living from many of us who have "been around for a while." The advice ranges from how to be happy on a day-to-day basis, secrets to a successful marriage, and tips on raising children and enjoying a fulfilling career. The act of giving advice found an audience.

One man offered, "One always wants one's children to be happy, and I suppose the most disturbing thing for parents is when they can't see happiness in their adult children's lives or in their marriages. You worry about aspects of their interaction with their partners and when you can see that the way they're interacting is not productive, you

worry about your children."

Another writer shared, "You keep your mouth shut. We made our mistakes, we let them make their mistakes. But I don't give advice unless they really ask for it. I feel I can say most anything I want, except I would not interfere with them, even though I see something that I think should be handled differently."

A graduate of the University of North Texas, Kirk McCarley is a Certified Professional Coach as well as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and SHRM-CP Certified. He also is a Production Assistant for both college football and basketball for ESPN and leads group cycling classes as a Certified Spinning instructor. Contact [kirk@theseedsovercoach.com](mailto:kirk@theseedsovercoach.com), [theseedsovercoach.com](http://theseedsovercoach.com), or call 314-677-8779.



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 Musing

BY RICK MOORE

We called her Sitti, which is the Arabic word for grandmother. She was four feet and eleven inches tall, but that was only when she was wearing high-heels. The driver's seat of her car had two pillows in it for her to sit on. Even while sitting on the pillows, she could still barely see over the

dashboard of the car. The kids in the neighborhood gave her the nickname "Knuckles" because all they could see behind the steering wheel of her car was a set of knuckles driving down the street.

When I was seven years old, my older brothers and I went to live with my grandmother for six months. Not only were my broth-

ers older, they were much taller and stronger than me. Although I am over six feet tall today, during elementary school, I was one of the shortest students in my class. That year, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory debuted in movie theaters, featuring the short people known as the Oompa Loompas. You'll never guess what one of the kids at school nicknamed me. Yes, among the many other nicknames, I was called Oompa Loompa.

When I came home from school sad and dejected, my grandmother asked me what was wrong. I explained how I was picked on for being small. Sitti could obviously relate as she was the smallest adult I had ever known. She told me a saying I had never heard before. She said, "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog." Years later I learned that was a quote from Mark Twain. Thank you Mark Twain for writing that, and thank you Sitti for sharing it with me. I have never forgotten that advice. It applies to so many areas of life. It doesn't matter if someone is smarter than me, richer than me, better looking

than me, or more talented than me. What matters is the passion that burns inside to stand tall and fight for what is right.

Before going to bed that night, Sitti told me a story that took place when she was about ten years old. It happened just prior to her family moving from the

the outside, but we should never ever be small on the inside.

The next day, while walking home from school, I crossed paths with the boy who called me Oompa Loompa. He began to tease me again. As I walked away, he said, "Looks like Oompa Loompa has to go home to Knuckles." I turned around, put my fist an inch from his face and responded, "Say something else about my grandmother and I'll show you some knuckles." I discovered quickly that the boy was all bark and no bite. He said he was just joking and politely went the other way. Yes, I was taught not to fight, but I was also taught to take up for myself. That was the first time I can remember standing tall.

Standing up for yourself doesn't have to be stressful or create conflict. It doesn't have to be in anger or resentment. When you stand up for yourself, others take you more seriously. You'll also start to believe in yourself. Be bold. Be strong. Be brave. Never give up. Be big where it counts: on the inside.

*Rick Moore is Communication Pastor at Destiny Worship Center*



Middle East to the United States. Her father owned a small grocery store. One day, three robbers with swords entered the store demanding her father give them all of his money. Sitti immediately ran to the back of the store. She was chased by one of the robbers, but because she was small enough to sneak through a hole in the back wall of the store, she was able to get the police, stop the robbery, and perhaps save her father's life. As she kissed me good night, she reminded me it's ok to be small on

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# Spring Into an Event-Filled May at Baytowne Wharf!

There's something BIG going on every month it seems at The Village of Baytowne Wharf. And May is no exception!

Baytowne is boomin' all month long with events, activities and fun! The Village and its merchants welcome you to come shop, dine and play! Celebrate, escape and embrace some of the best of Baytowne Wharf at one of the most gorgeous times of the year!

## Welcome Summer During the Memorial Day Celebration Weekend!

**Saturday, May 27th, 7-9 p.m.**  
**Sunday, May 28th, 6-9 p.m.**

Kick off the 100 days of summer as festivities begin on Saturday, May 27th, when a true locals' favorite, Forrest Williams Band, takes the stage at the Events plaza from 7-9 p.m.

On Sunday, enjoy live music from Trest Richerson Band from 6-9 p.m. Free children activities will be from 6-9 p.m. and fireworks at 9 p.m. You won't want to miss the fireworks, live music, shopping, dining and fun all weekend long!

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

**Friday, May 12, 6-9 p.m.**  
**Saturday, May 13 | 1-4 p.m.**  
**Sunday, May 14 | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**

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

To purchase tickets, visit [www.efestevents.com](http://www.efestevents.com).

## Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios Presents a Spring Concert!

**Friday, May 19th 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 19th at 7pm. Location: Baytowne Am-



phitheater! (Next to Zip Line) Will be a night to remember! Come on out and support local talent! Open to the public! No charge. Grab a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening! Can't wait to see you there!

Coach Alissa Steffens is a Performer, Professional Songwriter, Recording Artist and Vocal Coach with a history rich in the Nashville Music Industry! After moving to Sandestin/30a area a few years ago, she continued her work as a Vocal Coach, specializing in Mentorship, Vocal Performance, Songwriting, Artist Development/Career Planning, Acting and Speaking. Alissa works with students regionally, nationally and internationally. Her students sing all different musical genres and range from the Beginner to the Advanced Career Artist. She and her students work on various projects together that involve vocal performance, songwriting, albums, tours, career planning, artist development, commercials, film acting projects, theater, speeches, etc. Alissa has a big heart for giving her students both a voice and a platform.

## Wednesday Night Concert Series Wednesdays, May 3-31, 7-9 p.m.

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

May 3: Jarred McConnell and The High Aces  
May 10: Dion Jones & The Neon Tears  
May 17: Shenanigans  
May 24: Casey Kearney  
May 31: Horseshoe Kitty

FREE to attend.

## Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, May 18, 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 21 - August 6, 7-9 p.m.

Join Baytowne for FREE magic, music and mayhem each Sunday from 7-9 p.m.! Watch as the featured pirate, Captain



Davy, takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage! 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. show times!

## Movie Monday Monday, May 22, 8 p.m.

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

## Boomin' Tuesday Tuesdays, May 23 - Aug. 8, 7:15-9:15 p.m.

Turn your eyes to the sky and watch as we light up the night with a free, breathtaking fireworks show over the Lagoon at 9:15 p.m. Beforehand, dance a little at the DJ Dance Party with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza at 7:15 p.m.!

## Fly Guy Thursday



## Thursdays, May 25 - August 10, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.

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

## The Farmers Market at Baytowne Wharf

Come shop with local farmers, bakers, local fresh seafood and gourmet, beef, local honey, fresh pressed juices and much more all year long, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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!





 Dining

# Historical Seaside Landmark, Pickle's, Celebrates 30 Years in Business

Pickle's, located at 2236 East County Hwy. 30A, is celebrating three decades in business at their original Seaside Central Square location.

Founded in 1993 by Bill and Heavenly Dawson, of The Daw-

son Group, Pickle's began with only 48 square feet and a limited menu consisting of hotdogs, beer, and pickles. The locally owned and operated eatery quickly became famous for their burgers and hand-spun milkshakes.

Throughout the years, Pickle's has become an unofficial landmark in the Seaside community and is one of the few establishments that has remained in the same location along Seaside Square. In 2023, 30A's® Hot



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Spot Awards named Pickle's the Hottest Spot for Burgers.

After 32 years in business, the Dawsons sold their company consisting of the five notable Seaside restaurants, including Dawson's Yogurt, It's Heavenly Shortcakes and Ice Cream, Pickle's, The Shrimp Shack, and Wild Bill's Beach Dogs, to Clark and Ashley Beecher of Houston, Texas.

Since the acquisition, the Beechers along with their local operating partners Baron and Courtney Fields, have remained true to the roots of The Dawson Group while also incorporating innovative systems, additional menu items, modern concepts, and merchandise to each of the restaurants, including Pickle's. They have developed a new brand identity for Pickle's that remains true to its history yet shines a new light on the retro diner that appeals to a younger audience as well as their long-time customers.

"As Texans, there were a lot of special dishes that we loved and wanted to bring to 30A," Courtney Fields said. "We introduced Kolaches, a classic Texas breakfast item, along with breakfast tacos that have turned out to be our top seller every day."

When taking over the business, the Beechers wanted to ensure community support was at the foundation of the company. In Houston, the couple are avid supporters of their alma mater, the University of Houston, along with local organizations like A Shelter for Cancer Families. Ashley currently sits on the board of directors of the Seaside School Foundation and is a passionate supporter of South Walton Academy. As a company, the new owners have made it a priority to get involved with local events whenever they can. Most recently, both the Beechers and Fields participated and won first

place during the Seaside School Foundation's Taste of the Race, the kickoff event for the Seaside School Half Marathon and 5K.

"Whenever we get involved with something, we are all in," Beecher said. "As owners, we want to put our face with the company and be there to meet people and talk to the community."

"It's been important to us from the get-go, so we are always the first ones to sign up for something," Fields said. "We are always looking for new ways to get involved, donate our time, our food, and immerse ourselves in the community."

The newest addition, *The Sandbar* officially opened on February 15, 2023, and guests can now order both their drinks and food from either the bar or restaurant. The Sandbar features craft cocktails, including the Savannah Street Skinny Rita, named after the Beechers' beach home address, along with the Pineapple Express made with local Campesino Rum. The menu also includes craft beer, wine, and frozen drinks.

The Sandbar opens each day at 8 a.m. along with the restaurant and has happy hour daily from 3-5 p.m. offering discounted draft beers, half-off select wines, and \$7 house margaritas.

To learn more about Pickle's and to stay up to date on new merch drops, menu items, and special events or promotions, follow their Instagram and Facebook pages or visit [www.dawson-grouseasidefl.com/pickles](http://www.dawson-grouseasidefl.com/pickles).

"People from all over the world visit Seaside with their families," Beecher said. "We are lucky to be a part of their stay and it is such a privilege to be a small part of their family memories at the beach."



## Healthy Olive Oil Muffins With Coconut Drizzle

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup Persian Lime, Lemon, Blood Orange  
or Unflavored Olive Oil
- 2-3 tablespoons Coconut Balsamic Vinegar (optional)
- 1 cup icing sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger



Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray muffin pans with cooking spray. Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Make a well in the center. In a small bowl, beat the egg with a fork. Add the milk and olive oil.

Pour the wet ingredients all at once into the well in the flour mixture. Mix quickly with a fork until moistened; do not overbeat. The batter will be lumpy. Pour the batter into muffin pans, filling ¾ full. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden around the edges (about 15 minutes for mini-muffins).

When muffins have cooled, combine vinegar\*, icing sugar and ginger in a small bowl and whisk until smooth (make it very thick so add more sugar if you need it). Spoon the glaze into a small zipper plastic bag and cut a very tiny hole in one tip. Squeeze the glaze onto the muffins in small ribbons. Let dry.

\*You can use other white vinegars or even water.

## How is the Quality of Your Olive Oil?

We all hear that olive oil is good for us, but the quality of olive oil can vary vastly between typical grocery store olive oils and true 100% extra virgin olive oils. Extra virgin, by definition, means the olives must be “without defect” and must be crushed within 24 hours of being picked. These olives provide great health benefits – protection against heart disease and cancer, reduction of inflammation, improved cognitive function, and more joint mobility among other things.

However, to be labeled extra virgin, most commercial olive oil bottles only need to contain 12% extra virgin olive oil. The rest can be olive oil made from old,

poor quality and even rancid olives, providing little health benefit. Even worse, it can contain other oils such as soy and canola without listing these oil’s as ingredients.

Choose wisely. Look for the actual crush date and the polyphenols (the most important component of olive oil). If this information is not available, don’t trust the source.

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Four tortilla stuffed with ground beef and covered with cheese dip. Served with rice and beans and guacamole salad.

**#3 Pork Carnitas 12.99**  
Chunks of pork sautéed with onions. Served with rice and beans and guacamole salad.

**#4 Quesadilla Burger 12.99**  
Gringo burger with cheese in a flour tortilla. Served with fries.

**#5 Ruben's Plate 12.99**  
Grilled chicken covered with cheese dip. Served with rice and beans and tortillas.

**#6 Taco Salad 9.99**  
Taco ingredients in a fried tortilla bowl. Delicious!

**#7 Grilled Chicken Quesadilla 10.99**

Grilled rancho chicken with cheese in a flat flour tortilla. Served with rice and beans.

**#8 3 Tacos 9.99**

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**#9 Fajitas - Steak or Chicken 14.99**

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**#10 Rio Salad 13.99**

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**#11 Reuben Burger 11.99**

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**#15 Enchilada Supreme 12.99**

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# May 2023 Music Events in South Walton

## May 6

### Jazz on the Lawn @ Seaside Amphitheater

Enjoy an afternoon of LIVE jazz in the Seaside Amphitheater on Saturday, May 6th from 1 - 7PM. Jazz on the Lawn features a full lineup on jazz musicians ready to entertain the whole family. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. Jazz on the Lawn artists include: La'Roy Bodiford, Ramblin' Roses, Dharma Beats, Kenny Cohen, Kayonne Riley's Implications, Michael Levine Band. Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.



ing Casey Kearney Band every Tuesday in the Garden Room at Red Fish Taco from 6 - 9PM. Tuesdays | 6 - 9PM. Red Fish Taco, 2052 W County Highway 30A, Santa Rosa Beach.

## May 12

### Brandi Carlile's Mothership Weekend

Brandi Carlile's Mothership Weekend will be held at Seascape Resort in Miramar Beach, Florida May 12-14. Brandi Carlile invites you and yours to celebrate Mother's Day in a whole new way - with a 3-day music vacation in Miramar Beach, FL. Enjoy curated activities, unforgettable adventures, and plenty



## Tuesdays, May 9, 16, 23, 30

### Casey Kearney Band @ Red Fish Taco

Rock out to live music featur-

of relaxing beach time during the day before you cozy up together in your reserved Cove each night for a musical journey under the stars. To purchase tickets and learn more, visit [mothership.topeka.live](http://mothership.topeka.live). Artists Include: Brandi Carlile, Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats, Danielle Ponder, Hozier, Mavis Staples, The Milk Carton Kids, Katie Pruitt, Bonnie Raitt, and Fancy Hagood. Seascape Resort, 556 Seascape Drive, Miramar Beach.

## May 10, 17, 24, 31

### Russ Whitten @ Old Florida Fish House

Russ Whitten LIVE from 5 - 9PM at Old Florida Fish House. Throughout the week, catch artists playing inside the coveted bar and lounge as well as in the large outdoor dining space situated

among the palm and oak trees under the twinkling lights next to Eastern Lake. Wednesdays at OFFH: 5 - 9PM | Russ Whitten, 7 - 10PM | Dueling Pianos.

### The Bay Wednesday Night Bonfire: About to Sweat

Come out to The Bay with family and friends every Wednesday night starting at 5PM for dinner, cold drinks and a bonfire with various musicians on the beach of the Choctawhatchee Bay. It's a midweek tradition in South Walton, Florida. May Music: 10 | Queens Ransom, 17 | About to Sweat, 24 | Dikki Du and The Zydeco Krewe, 31 | The New Cahoots. 2415 South Hwy 331, Santa Rosa Beach.

### MKAF Concerts in The Village: Yacht Rock Revue

The Concerts in the Village series returns to the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin, Florida. Music-lovers can enjoy a night under the stars featuring local and national acts. Gates open at 6PM with concerts beginning at 7PM. MKAF members enjoy early entry and free admission to every concert as well as discounted pricing to

other MKAF events. For more information on MKAF membership and to purchase tickets, visit [MKAF.org](http://MKAF.org). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, picnic, wine, or purchase food and beverages on-site prepared by featured restaurants and food truck. Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village, 4323 Commons Dr W, Destin.

### AJ's Grayton Brunch: Crawfish & Live Music

AJ's is the place to be to celebrate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Come for brunch, stay for the music and dancing. Every Sunday from 11AM - 3PM, AJ's brunch is not to be missed. Complete your meal with a mimosa or go all in with their famous Build Your Own Bloody Mary bar. Sunday afternoon essentials include crawfish and cold beers. 11AM - 3PM | Brunch with Bottomless Mimosas, 12PM | LIVE MUSIC: Will & Linda in the Outdoor Courtyard, 12PM | Crawfish Boil. AJ's Grayton Beach, 63 Defuniak Street, Grayton Beach.



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# Studio 237 Music Lessons: Online and In-Person

Studying music is a rewarding experience for students of any age, and in recent years online lessons have made it much, much easier to access. The growing popularity of online music lessons comes with many benefits, like the flexibility to learn from anywhere, at any time, and without the need to travel. However, choosing between in-person and online lessons can be a tough decision to make - each type of lesson comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and it ultimately depends on the student's preferences and lifestyle.

So, which type of lesson is right for you? Here are some factors to consider.

## In-Person Music Lessons

The in-person approach has been the typical method of learning music for centuries. The physical presence of the teacher allows for a more hands-on approach, where they can observe and give feedback on the student's posture, technique, and progress. This can be particularly helpful for beginners who need extra guidance on playing their instrument with optimum comfort and technique, for example keeping the fretting hand relaxed when playing guitar, or



moving the hands and wrists freely on the piano.

In-person lessons also offer a great social aspect. Students can develop respect and friendship with their teachers (and each other in group classes) in order to build a closer community and inspiration to learn. As an added bonus, the accountability of an in-person class motivates the student to show up and perform their best.

## Online Music Lessons

Online lessons can be especially beneficial for those with busy schedules or who travel often. Lessons can happen anywhere, so long as you have your instrument, a device with a camera & microphone, a good WiFi

connection and a quiet space!

Online make-up lessons can also be a fantastic alternative when last-minute disruptions happen, such as bad weather or a car breakdown.

Despite these advantages, online lessons can have their limitations. Technical issues can disrupt the flow of the lesson, and the lack of physical presence can make it difficult for the teacher to observe and correct the student's technique. Additionally, some students may struggle to stay focused without the engaging atmosphere of an in-person class in the music room.

If you need some guidance on getting started with learning online, here are some things to

take into account:

**Setup** - All you'll need is a phone, laptop, or iPad and an app such as Zoom, FaceTime or Skype. Some nice additions might include a webcam and an external microphone, but these are definitely not essential. Ask your teacher if you'll need any resources like paper, pencils or textbooks. It might also be helpful to have access to a printer in order to print out music sheets and worksheets from your teacher.

**Location** - try to choose a quiet space, free from noise like traffic and free from distractions like younger brothers and sisters.

**Scheduling** - though it's easier to reschedule lessons online, try to maintain a consistent routine for your lesson each week and avoid canceling or rescheduling too often.

**Staying focused** - unfortunately, the teacher can't reach through the screen to guide you. Students who are younger may need an attentive parent to stay with them during the lesson to keep them on track.

Ultimately, there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to choosing between in-person and online music lessons. Some students may benefit from a blended approach, with once-a-month in-person lessons for technique observation, and online lessons for convenience the rest of the time. The most important thing is to find a learning method that works best for you, and to be consistent and committed in your practice and progress.

*Studio 237 Music Lessons offers online, in-person or a blended lesson. Give us a call at 850.231.3199 or text 850.797.3546 to ask about designing your best learning experience.*

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Community

# Five Smart Reasons to Work with an Interior Designer

BY DONNA DAUGHERTY

Hiring a professional designer is something to consider if you're building a home, you've just purchased a home, or if your home needs a much-needed update or refresh. They can help you make smart decisions on how to maximize your budget and create the perfect finishing touches that make your home a real showcase. Whether you don't know how to begin to decorate your home, you have an idea but need help tying pieces together, or you simply haven't the time to execute your personal style because of your busy schedule, utilizing a designer just makes sense! Here are five reasons why you should consider working with a designer:

**1: Save You Money** - It might sound funny that hiring someone to help you decorate your home would save you money since you have the additional fee of the designer, however, a designer can help you avoid costly mistakes and help you maximize the value of your home. When planning design, you need to think about textures, materials, cohesion, architecture, cost, durability, space efficiency, scalability, functionality, layout and so many more considerations. Especially when selling your home – interior design is essential when listing your



home. It can help boost buyer appeal and set your home above the competition.

**2: Professional Assessment** - A designer can give you a professional assessment of your situation, that will lead to a solid plan of action. The order of things in

a design plan is key in determining what can be repurposed or replaced. This will not only affect your project timeframe but also help you spend your budget more efficiently. A designer offers an extra set of eyes that are trained to see and notice things that you

may not.

**3. Wide Availability of Resources** - Designers work with multiple vendors that provide a huge range of furnishings that aren't available to the general public. These resources can give you a much wider selection for

design and can help make your space look more pulled together, unique, and ultimately create the wow factor!

**4. Contacts** - In addition to vendor resources, designers have many home improvement industry contacts. They can save homeowners time and headaches trying to identify reliable, cost-efficient contractors for their projects.

**5. Increasing the Value of Your Home** - A decorator can potentially add a great deal to the aesthetic of your home, which in turn can increase your home value. This increased appeal can not only be personally satisfying but exponentially increase the value of your home and speed up the amount of time your home sits on the market before it is sold. The benefit here is two-fold, faster turn-around time, and more money in your pocket.

*Donna Daugherty is the owner of Design At Its Finest, located in Santa Rosa Beach Florida. If you're tackling a design project, I'd love to help! Stay tuned for the next several publications where I will share some design tips that will help turn your home into your own beautiful landscape. Call 850-714-4869 or visit [www.designatitsfinest.com](http://www.designatitsfinest.com) for more information.*



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# Carolina Coastal Interiors Opens in Santa Rosa Beach

Carolina Coastal Interiors (CCI), a centerpiece of High Point, North Carolina - "The Furniture Capital of the World," has opened a new branch store in Santa Rosa Beach. Located next door to VKI Steakhouse along Highway 98 west in the The Landings Shopping Plaza, CCI is owned and operated by Jay Hughes and Kenny Stevens, life-long friends from High Point. Both Jay and Kenny's families have been in the furniture business for generations and have built a well-deserved reputation for excellence and integrity.

"We are a furniture and flooring store dedicated to bringing the best quality products and prices to Santa Rosa Beach," Jay said. "We offer a great selection of furniture and home decor all curated with coastal inspiration in mind."

In addition, their multi-location business gives the company a bulk buying price advantage. As a matter of fact, "just give us a chance, we can guarantee our customers the best deal on the Emerald Coast."

The company is especially proud to display the distinctive "Made in the USA label" on everything in the store, including a large assortment of LVP (Luxury Vinyl Plank).

If you're in the market for flooring or furniture come out to Carolina Coastal and take advantage of their bulk factory direct buying during their grand opening celebration all February long! There's plenty of parking in front of the store, so come out and see for yourself what "made in the USA" still means. "We make delivery and install for a single home and all commercial projects at the best prices possible."

Carolina Coastal Interiors is located at The Landings, 4552 U.S. Hwy 98 W., Santa Rosa Beach. You may contact them by calling or texting Jay at 615.440.0825 or Kenny at 336.688.0960. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The email address is [CarolinaCoastalINT@gmail.com](mailto:CarolinaCoastalINT@gmail.com).



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We offer a selection of home items that are curated with coastal inspiration in mind.



Business

# Emerald Coast Energy Solutions: Mom's Earth Day



BY CHRIS BALZER

## ENERGY TIPS by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

Mom's Earth Day? Sounds made up, right? Earth Day was April 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mother's Day is May 14<sup>th</sup>, only 21 days apart so I thought I would combine the

two and make Mom's Earth Day. Here at ECES, everyday is Earth Day, we increase comfort and lower CO2 emissions saving the planet one home at a time, and perhaps maybe everyday should be Mother's day. With these two great holidays so close together, I had to offer suggestions more than just flowers and homemade cards for mom this Spring.

Air condition is vital, the States are getting warmer and we want mom to be comfortable. When you're over, change the air condition filter. Clogged filters cause strain on the system and can lead to more service calls, costing mom money. Many HVAC professionals suggest using the less expensive filters to allow more air flow and efficiency. These filters do need to be changed more often but cost less. After replacing the air filter you can pour distilled vinegar down the condensate drain line to remove



mildew and grime from the line, also extending time between service calls. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this process, consult a professional. Be sure to dust HVAC vents and fans, these areas build up dust quickly and could be hurting the circulation of airflow as well.

What better way to show your mother love than with savings on energy costs. One of the easiest ways to save energy is to change out incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. LED bulbs can save as much as 75-80% on lighting cost and they can last 10-20 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Replacing 5 frequently used inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home with energy savings LED bulbs could save you about \$75 per year and reduce your CO2

footprint. It's also your turn to tell your mom to shut off the lights when leaving the room. Even with LED bulbs, when you are not in the room, switch off the lights and save energy.

What's tall, green, made of wood and can save energy for your mother? (Hint: a tree) Doing a little landscaping and planting a tree can cut energy costs in the long run by adding shade during the summer months. Trees also help purify the air we breathe by absorbing pollutants and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife, maintaining a balance with nature.

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

If your mom says that her HVAC constantly runs or there are rooms which never get cool, it may be time to schedule an energy inspection by a professional. These professionals can pinpoint areas which are losing energy and costing money. By addressing these areas with energy efficient solutions, you can increase comfort, lower energy bills and lower your CO2 footprint.

Also try keeping our Earth and our Moms in your daily activities and actions.

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

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# Boost Work Performance with the Power of Gratitude



BY BILL MASON

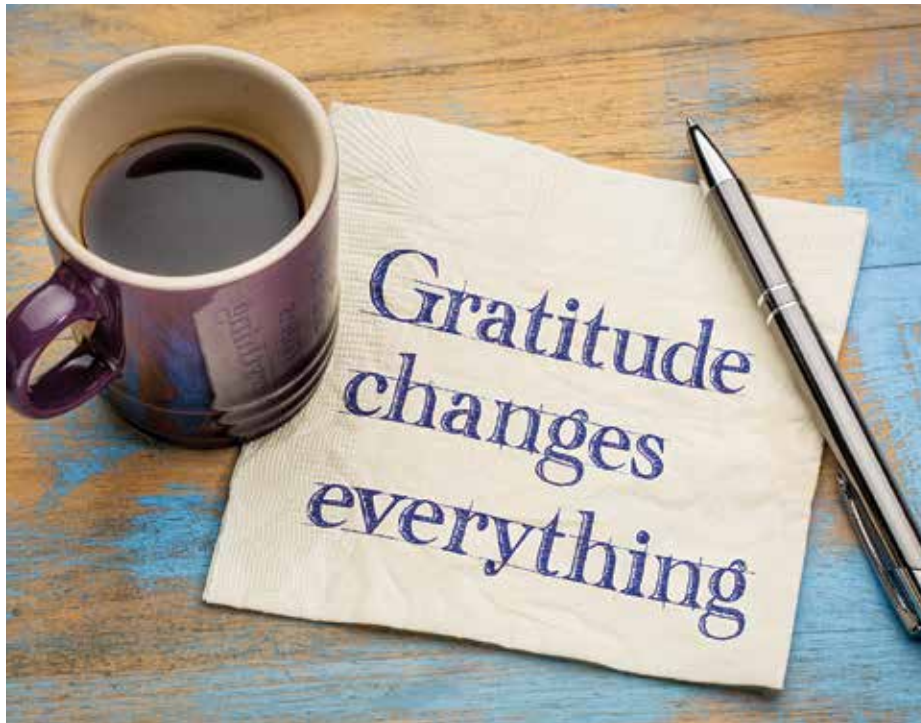
In today's fast-paced work environment, productivity is of utmost importance. We all want to perform at our best and achieve our goals. Fortunately, there is a simple yet powerful way to improve work performance – gratitude.

Expressing gratitude involves showing appreciation for the good things in life, including our work. By doing so, we shift our attention toward the positive things in our life instead of dwelling on what we lack. This change in mindset can greatly affect our performance at work. Essentially, it's about focusing

on gratitude instead of contempt for what we do not have. By changing our mindset, we can transform from feeling like helpless victims at the mercy of the crashing waves to having a victorious outlook that uses the crashing waves to bolster our strength and resilience. Life is happening for our benefit rather than against us for our downfall.

A straightforward way to express gratitude in the workplace is through small acts of kindness. A thank-you note, a compliment, or a small gift can go a long way in showing appreciation for a job well done. When we take the time to acknowledge the hard work and contributions of our colleagues, we create a culture of gratitude that can have a significant impact on our work performance.

Having problems with a colleague, spouse or friend? Take the "30-day Challenge to Improve Your Relationship" that



I give to many of my clients! Starting tomorrow and continuing every day, express gratitude to someone in your life, either verbally or in writing, without expecting anything in return. Examples of gratitude include thanking someone for their actions or tasks, appreciating a

character trait they possess or expressing gratitude for their hard work. Ensure the action is tailored to the individual, such as recognizing their efforts or values. This small gesture can have a big impact on your relationship.

Gratitude is a powerful tool

that can have a significant impact on our work performance. Expressing gratitude can increase job satisfaction, employee engagement, and productivity while improving our mental and emotional well-being. The next time you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take a moment to express gratitude for the good things in your work and life. It can make all the difference.



If you're looking to improve team dynamics, increase productivity, or enhance leadership skills, Rocket Fuel Coach is here to

help! Working with Bill, you can expect to develop a clear vision for your team, create actionable plans for success, and transform into a high-performing team that exceeds expectations. Contact us today at (850) 855-3430 or [bill@rocketfuelcoach.com](mailto:bill@rocketfuelcoach.com).

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Business

# Is Your Insurance Ready for Hurricane Season?



June 1st marks the beginning of hurricane season. Researchers at North Carolina State said the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season will see 11 to 15 named storms forming in the Atlantic basin. The basin includes the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

So, it is time to make sure you're ready for the next round of tropical depressions, storms and hurricanes that visit the Gulf Coast every year.

Do you have what you need when it comes to homeowner's and flood insurance and hurricanes? There are a few things that should be on your radar. If you have these coverages in place, you'll be better equipped to ride out whatever storm blows through.

First on the list is hurricane/wind coverage. Most home

policies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) in Florida include either hurricane, named storm, or wind/hail under a separate deductible. This is preferred since coordination and consistency of coverages is important. Some carriers don't write wind coverage close to the water. So, a stand-alone wind-only policy would be needed. If this is the case, extra care must be taken to avoid any coverage inconsistencies. In a previous article last year, we addressed the differences in hurricane, named storm, and wind/hail coverage. But suffice it to say, when it comes to wind coverage, the best option is hurricane. Under this coverage scenario, the larger deductible in the policy, usually a percentage of the Dwelling Limit, applies to declared hurricane activity, while the smaller deductible in the policy would apply to other wind losses and all other perils in the policy. There are several deductible options available that can have a large impact on what would be your out-of-pocket responsibility if you file a claim.

Make sure you know you have sufficient Dwelling Limit (Coverage A) coverage to re-



build your home in the event of a loss. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured.

Another important coverage is Loss of Use that pays for you to live somewhere else while repairs are being done to your temporarily unlivable home. This goes for rental properties with Loss of Rents coverage as well. Remember, there needs to be direct physical damage to trigger this coverage. Some rental policies don't include Loss of Rents so you will want to read your policy or call your insurance agent so you know for sure.

Another often misunderstood

coverage not offered with each carrier, but always recommended, is Law or Ordinance coverage. Most carriers, if they have it available, offer either 10%, 25% or 50% coverage. This percentage is tied to your Dwelling Limit. If you have extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance coverage is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play.

Another vital policy to have, especially during hurricane season, is flood insurance. Flood and water damage from a wind event are not necessarily the same thing. This coverage is so vital that we will again devote our next month's article to this topic. Although there are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy, it is infrequent. For

most insureds, your flood policy will be a separate policy written through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program), and, unless your lender requires the policy, or you're closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30-day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective. Private flood insurance is an alternative. Many of the private markets in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

We hope this helps ease your concerns this hurricane season, in terms of coverage.

*Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is now Abora Insurance Group. Voted Top in the Market for 10 years in a row, Abora is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Abora can find solutions from a wide variety of the best insurance carriers in the market for Home, Auto and Life insurance on your terms. Call (850) 424.6979 or visit Getabora.com.*

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