



SEPTEMBER 2023
VOL. 8. NO. 4

SOWWAL Life

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International Coastal Cleanup Slated for September 16th in South Walton

Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles, (FOSWST) in partnership with Walton County Tourism, will once again host the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Registration Opens at 8:45 a.m. with Beach Cleanup beginning at 9 a.m. and running until 11 a.m.

International Coastal Cleanup is a worldwide event sponsored by Ocean Conservancy; they engage countries around the globe to organize citizens from large cities to small villages in the cleanup of their oceans, gulfs, lakes, and river beaches. Walton County is one of these coastal areas and has the opportunity to participate with millions across the globe to clean up the coastline and prevent debris from polluting Gulf waters.

The Volunteer Beach Ambassador Team invites all community members and visitors to the Emerald Coast to join in their efforts "with little pomp

and circumstance but rather with a heart for serving our community and our beautiful coastal environment." Please consider joining us at this event for the greater good of Walton County and the health of the marine and bird life that make the Gulf of Mexico their home. FOSWST is asking:

Will you join us? Can we count on you?

The "Friends" will be hosting clean-ups at five Regional Beach Accesses (look for the Coastal Cleanup flags):

Inlet Beach Regional Access, 438 S Orange St., Inlet Beach

Santa Clara Regional Access,

3468 E Co Hwy 30A, Seagrave

Ed Walline Regional Access, 4447 W Co Hwy 30A, Gulf Place

Dune Allen Regional Access, 5999 W Co Hwy 30A,



ECCAC Rebrands to Set the Stage for Exciting New Programs and Community Outreach

ECCAC has revealed glimpses of some very exciting changes via social media over the recent weeks, culminating with the launch of its new website on August 4, 2023. Humbled by consistent growth over the past 23 years, they have taken the next step to update their logo, visual identity, brand messaging, and website to better represent where they are as an organization today—and the vision going forward.

"This is a monumental milestone for ECCAC. We are truly grateful for the support and contributions of the many donors, agency & community partners, volunteers, and team members who have supported our mission and helped us serve our communities over the past two decades. We would not be where we are today without each and every contribution to our cause, and we're so excited about the next chapter." comments Julie Porterfield, Chief Executive Officer of ECCAC.

With their new branding in place, they will continue to rise to the chal-

CLEANUP
continued on page 3

ECCAC REBRANDS
continued on page 2



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ECCAC REBRANDS

continued from page 1

lence of ending child abuse and neglect, providing child-friendly environments and therapies, and educating children and families on critical prevention issues so that not one more child becomes a victim. Their goal is to continue making a lasting and positive impact in the lives of those they serve and they will not waiver until that vision is realized.

Visit their website and follow along on social media to see their full transformation and vision as they enter the next chap-



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ter of ECCAC. And, if you feel called to do so, you can Become a Champion of Hope and join the fight to end child abuse and neglect.

For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit www.eccac.org or call (850) 833-9237. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.



CLEAN UP

continued from page 1

Dune Allen

Miramar Beach Regional Access, 2375 Scenic Gulf Dr., Miramar Beach

"We encourage and welcome locals, private homeowners, and condo/resort Homeowner Associations to join us and organize a cleanup on their private properties," says FOSWST founder and president, Beth Coppedge.

Participants may choose to record their collection data on paper cards provided at each site or by using the Clean Swell App on a Smart device: <http://oceanconservancy.org/clean-swell-faq/>. All participants are encouraged to provide their own trash bags or buckets, gloves, hats, sunscreen, water bottles, etc. There will be limited bags/gloves available for those without.

In past years, Walton County residents and visitors have turned out in large numbers to support the cleaning of our beaches and subsequently the Gulf during the International Coastal Cleanup. Each piece of debris collected is one more piece of trash saved from our ocean systems.

"Ocean trash and plastic pollution are huge threats facing our oceans, marine life, and

beaches," says Coppedge. "International Coastal Cleanup Day is an opportunity to educate residents and visitors about global Clean the Seas initiatives and demonstrate Walton County's commitment to protecting not only our sea turtles but maintaining the pristine beauty of our sugary white sandy beaches for generations to come."

Information about where ICC events occur and the type of trash collected are communicated to the Ocean Conservancy's TIDES database. This trash information and data is used for education and local, national, and worldwide actions and solutions to the ever-growing ocean trash problem.

In 2022, 265 Walton County volunteers participated, and cleaned 35.35 miles of beach, collecting 4,293 items. The Top Ten Items Collected included over 800 cigarette butts along with many plastic straws and stirrers.

We hope you join the Walton County community in their participation in the world's largest volunteer effort on behalf of ocean health.

Visit www.oceanconservancy.org for more information. Tag your relevant social media posts with #Seathechange to help spread the word.

Walton County Board Of County Commissioners Unveils Signage Honoring Community Leaders In Special Ceremony

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners honored esteemed individuals who have made significant contributions to our community at a sign unveiling ceremony on September 6.

One of the highlights of the ceremony was the sign unveiling for "Randall Infinger Fields" at the Wee Care Park. They are named after the late Mr. Randall Infinger, a former Walton County Commissioner, who was instrumental in the creation and development of the Wee Care Park. These multi-use fields stand as a testament to his dedication and contributions to our community.

Additionally, we are pleased to announce the naming of the new entrance road to the Sheriff's Department as "Quinn McMillian Way." This road, currently under construction, will honor former Sheriff Quinn McMillian, who served as the longest-

serving Walton County Sheriff from 1981 to 2001. Sheriff McMillian's remarkable tenure exemplified dedication, leadership, and a deep commitment to public safety.

In addition, the Walton County Board of County Commissioners also unveiled signage for three key legal buildings, paying tribute to the service and commitment of individuals who have dedicated their careers to the legal profession. We will proudly name the Public Defender's Office in honor of the late Mr. John Mooneyham, the State Attorney's Office in honor of the late Mr. Clayton Adkinson, and the Office of the County Attorney in honor of the late Mr. George Ralph Miller.

For more information, please contact Public Information at (850) 892-8155 or pinfo@co.walton.fl.us.

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

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

"Our team works hard to host two of the most competitive annual fishing tournaments in Walton County. We are honored to

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

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

Local broker and owner of Mainsail Realty Company, Clay-

ton Bonjean, took the tournament championship title last year. "This tournament made me a better fisherman because I had to change the way I fish to catch a flounder. I wake up before dawn to go fishing. It is a time of day where my real estate clients aren't

calling and it doesn't interfere with my family time. It's a peaceful start of my day and it is the best time for fishing," says Bonjean.

To learn about tournament rules and to register for the tournament visit www.stinkysbaitshop.com. On the website, you can also

find information about the 17th Annual Spring Pompano Fishing Tournament. Follow tournament progress at Stinky's Bait Shack on Instagram @stinkysbaitshop and Facebook @stinkysbaitshack and visit their website at www.stinkysbaitshop.com.



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 Community

September 2023 WCSD Superintendent's Update



Walton County School District is back in session and moving forward toward the goal of being number one in the state! Although we have celebrated recognition as ranking third in the state, we can't stop there! Students have adjusted to being back in classrooms after the summer break and are working hard to meet their academic requirements. Superintendent Hughes says, "the beginning of the year is always exciting, I enjoy having students back on campuses, they are the heartbeat our school district!"

To keep best practices and cutting-edge educational strategies available to our students, our teachers often participate in professional development trainings. These days are early release half-days and allow our teachers to get instruction in pedagogy and new modalities of teaching which ultimately benefit our students. Teachers participated in the first of several yearly half-days on September 1, 2023, which led into the Labor Day holiday for staff and students.

Parents look for your child's mid-term report on Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Mid-term reports are provided at intervals during the school reporting terms to keep parents and guardians aware of their student's academic progress before final grade reports are given. Parents are encouraged to keep an open line of communication with your student's teacher and be aware of areas of concern in an effort to prevent long-term academic frustration. Parents, please remain informed concerning your child's teachers, school procedures, and guidelines. Check our Facebook page and website

regularly for current information and Superintendent updates.

Student state FAST (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking) assessments have begun for grades Pre-K through 12th. The FAST measures the progress of our students on a regular basis as they matriculate through the school year. This gives our teachers more opportunities to gauge student understanding and mastery that once at the middle or end of a year. Be sure your student is in attendance during these testing periods, well rested and prepared with a healthy breakfast so they are able to do their best work.

Walton County School District supports the academic and extra-curricular growth of all students and encourages all children to pursue all avenues to excellence! September 10-16, 2023 is National Arts in Education Week. Be sure to check your school's web page or bulletins to see what activities they will host in celebration of the education of the whole child!

Fall begins our sports and Athletic events. We encourage our community parents and members to support our school's athletics as much as possible. Students are encouraged and do their best when they see their community come out to support them. Homecoming events are coming soon for South Walton High School and Freeport High School on September 29, 2023. Both of these schools will have a half day in observance homecoming festivities.

Remember, you may always reach out and ask questions through the Let's Talk platform. This community digital tool automatically delivers your text questions to the appropriate personnel for a speedy reply. Text 850.204.9667 or click "contact us" on the WCSD webpage. Stay connected with the Walton County School District and the amazing work we do to educate children. We look forward to an incredible 2023-24!

Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition Needs Your Help!

By HEATHER BENNETT EYE

Do you have an impact on where you live and the environment around you?

The answer is yes! You can have an impact, and the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program is asking for your help. How can you help? How does this program affect you? Let's look at the importance of the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program, the impact of their Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP), and how communities can come together to help the environment in which we all live.

When we think of Choctawhatchee Bay, we think about boating, kayaking, fishing, enjoying a day at Grady Brown Park, or having a meal with family and friends at The Bay or Nick's Seafood. More than that, it's also home to redfish, mullet, flounder, oysters, the endangered giant gulf sturgeon, and of course dolphins, which we all love to watch. The bay is an important part of our ecosystem and economy.

So, what is an estuary? "An estuary is where freshwater (rivers, streams, and the Bay) meet the ocean," explains Sabina Pennington, Public Outreach Specialist with the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program. Beyond the Choctawhatchee Bay is the watershed that feeds the estuary, which is larger than most of us know. It's about 5400 square miles - north as far as Clayton, Alabama, and as far east as Chipley, Florida. "The Estuary Program helps connect people to our waterways so they can understand that water is our most important natural resource and the role water plays for our communities," said Sabina. "We show the wonders of estuaries and the necessary role they have [in] our environment. They aren't just natural marvels; they significantly benefit our communities and bolster our economy. We strive to ensure that everyone, particularly those in underserved communities, can enjoy the beauty of nature and benefit from a clean environment now and for future generations."

If the Estuary Program helps us protect the watershed, the

CCMP is like the standard operating procedure. "It serves as our guiding compass, directing our efforts towards addressing the most pressing priorities and issues in the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed. Think of the CCMP as a roadmap, charting a course to preserve the ecological health and balance of our

meeting, you can email Sabina at spennington@myokaloosa.com for meeting dates and locations. The next meeting will be October 26, 2023. Another opportunity is for High school-age heroes to sign up for our Teen Environmental Action & Community Heroes (TEACH) group. Want to get



coastal areas," explained Sabina. «It creates a to-do list of actions needed to have a positive influence on our future waterways and help preserve our beautiful Emerald Coast. This plan helps provide guidance across political boundaries and shows the commitment of stewardship for the estuary's ecological importance.»

Some of the goals of the CCMP include ensuring our water remains clean and abundant, preserving and nurturing the diverse ecosystems within our region, responsible planning and consideration of land use, spreading awareness and knowledge about our natural resources, and building the strength and capacity of our communities to withstand environmental challenges and response to natural disasters.

So how can you help? We're glad you asked! In October 2023, the Estuary Program will be posting a draft of their CCMP on their website, ChoctawBay.org. They are asking all citizens to review and post comments. The Estuary Program wants to hear from you. Your opinion matters.

If you are interested in learning more about the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program, please visit ChoctawBay.org. You can also join local committees such as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Committee members come from diverse backgrounds, who all care about our waterways. This committee is an important link between the Estuary Program and the public. If you are interested in joining a CAC

involved? Volunteer for events that help spread the message of the Estuary Program and protect our waterways. Below is a list of upcoming events; check out the website for more details, locations, and times.

September Events:

- * September 16th - International Coastal Clean-up 8 - 10 a.m. 6 locations, including Walton County @ Surf Hut (551 Scenic Gulf Dr, Miramar Beach, FL)
- * September 16th - Emerald Coast Native Plant Fair in Valparaiso 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- * September 20th - Schools Across the Panhandle Clean-Up Day (email Sabina to sign up your school)
- * September TBD - Educational Hands-On "Where's My Water" at local libraries
- * September 23rd - Annual Choctawhatchee Bay Family-FUN-Fest at Rocky Bayou State Park 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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Coastal Seniors Update for September

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Water Aerobics at Arium Apartments Pool at 30 MC Davis Loop, Santa Rosa Beach - Mondays, September 4, 11, 18, 25, and Thursdays September 7, 14, 21, and 28 from 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. Reservations are required. Call/text (850) 280-5342 or email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com. Cost is \$5.00. Cash only, please. Pool noodles are available for purchase for an additional \$2. A waiver must be signed if you are attending class for the first time. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early to begin class promptly at 9 a.m. Suggestions for class: Bring a pool noodle, towel, dumbbells, sunscreen, hat, and water shoes (optional).

Fridays with Friends - September 8 and 22 from 10 a.m. to noon - Come play Bridge and Mahjong with friends at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach from 10 a.m. - noon. RSVP to reserve your spot by calling (850) 280-5342, or by sending an email to: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com. Join

us on October 13 at 10 a.m. at Coffeen Nature Reserve, 146 Coffeen Hill Rd in Sandestin. We will take a tour and a mile-long trail hike

Game Day at Somerby on Wednesdays - Wednesdays, September 6, 13, 20, 27, and October 4, 11, 18, and 25 from 2-4 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 if you have questions.

Game Day at the Coastal

Branch Library - Thursdays, September 7, 14, 21, 28, and October 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 2-4 p.m. hosted by Melissa Bailey, CSSW member. The Coastal Branch Library is located at 437 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach.

Art Classes - Karen Peterson will teach Beginner Watercolor Painting on Tuesdays, September 12, 19, 26, and October 3, 10, 17, and 26 from 9 a.m. -noon. The cost is \$20 for CSSW members/\$30 for non-members. Sign up by calling 850-280-5342, or by sending an email to: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com. All supplies are included.

Monthly Meeting - Friday, September 15 - 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Ryan and Shaina Lambert, SKLPTD Personal Training Studio, will talk about their studio dedicated to holistic health

and wellness. A light lunch will be served.

Exercise Classes - Angela Gibson will lead classes on Thursdays October 5, 12, 19, and 26 at 10 a.m. at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$8 per session.

Pickleball - Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex courts - September 13 and 20 at 6 p.m. Registration required. Please register for one date only at www.waltonrec.com by choosing field and court rentals. Email Sandra Gulak at sowalpickleball@gmail.com for more information. Open to Walton County residents only. Also, join us at the Boys and Girls Club Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. beginning September 5. Please join the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more in-

formation and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at 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, or on the website at 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 are looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.



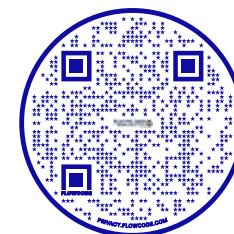
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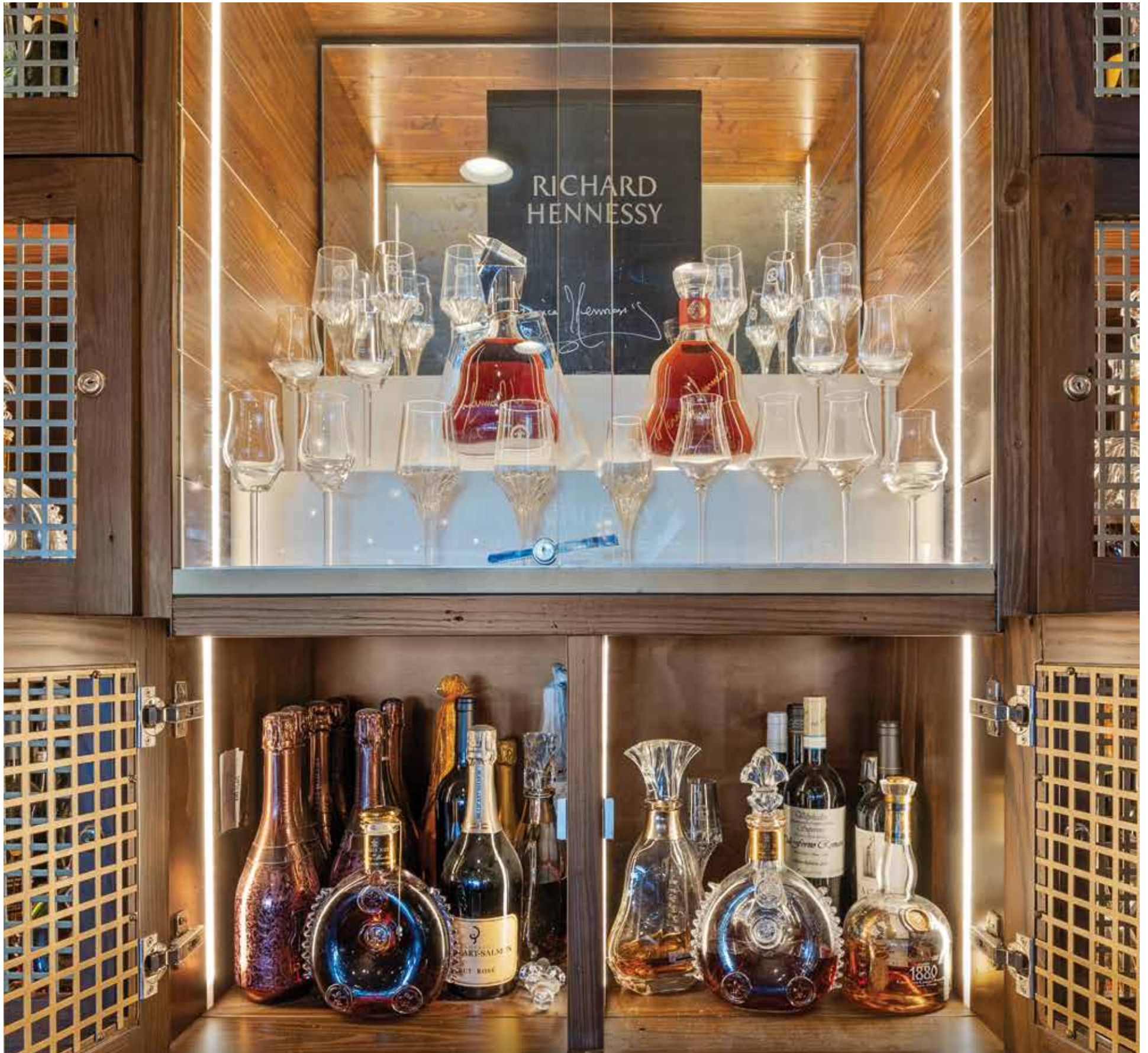
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Emerald Coast Science Center to Hold Annual Women in Science Conference

The Emerald Coast Science Center's Seventh Annual Women in Science Conference is coming up on Tuesday, September 19, at The Place on Beal in Fort Walton Beach. The event is a celebration of women in all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) professions. Pursuing a degree and an occupation in STEM career fields can open countless doors for a lifetime. At the Women in Science Conference, our goal is to inspire the next generation of female scientists, engineers, doctors, and more. Young women will have the opportunity to hear from women in professional STEM fields right here in Okaloosa County, as they enlighten our audience about their careers and deliver advice. This is an excellent opportunity for students of all ages and genders, especially middle school and high school students, to receive first-hand advice and information from local STEM professionals. This event is presented by Emerald Coast Science Center and BAE Systems.

The evening will consist of

inspirational presentations from professional women in STEM careers. This year's speakers include Sabina Pennington, En-

vironmental Public Outreach Specialist, Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program; Dr. Francia Squatrito, surgeon, Bay Foot & Ankle Center; Kristen Picard, software engineer, Beast Code; Darlene Merchant, program manager, BAE Systems; Meya Martin, Senior, Niceville High School. Guests will have a chance to mingle with the speakers and other guest professionals, and all speakers will be a part of an open panel Q&A session for audience members to ask questions. Light refreshments will be provided.

Join us on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM at The Place on Beal, 100 Beal Pkwy NW in Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548. For tickets visit <http://bit.ly/2023womeninscience>. Students are free, Adults are \$10.



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Sea Shul Rings in Jewish New Year with Community and Waves

Inaugural Beachside Rosh Hashanah Celebration for Newly Formed Congregation in Seaside, Florida

Sea Shul, the new vibrant Jewish community in Florida's 30A region, is excited to announce the organization's inaugural Rosh Hashanah celebration: "New Year, New Tide", including a beachside service and semi-formal dinner to be held on Saturday, September 16th, at the stunning Watersound Beach Club.

As part of Sea Shul's Rosh Hashanah weekend festivities, this event aims to offer an extraordinary experience for community members to engage in

the spirit of togetherness and belonging. The setting serves as an ideal environment to form new friendships and reinforce the sense of unity in the community.

Ilisa Eichenbaum, co-chairperson of the events committee, shared, "We've been crafting this event with the sole intention of creating a space where everyone can feel at home, a place to welcome the New Year with a sense of belonging. Our goal is for all participants to discover and form new connections within our Jewish community."

Starting at 6 p.m. with a beachside service led by Rabbi Joshua Lesser, the night then transitions into a delightful Rosh

Hashanah dinner at 7 p.m. within Watersound Beach Club. The dinner will feature a range of entrees catering to all tastes, including traditional Rosh Hashanah dishes such as Challah, apples and honey, and wine.

Rabbi Joshua Lesser remarked, "A Jewish New Year brings with it hope and a promise of new beginnings, and so does the creation of Sea Shul. Sea Shul emphasizes the importance of community, finding our place, and connecting with people because it nourishes our souls. As we usher in a New Year, we welcome new friendships and a sense of belonging. Rosh Hashanah at Sea Shul is not just an event but the foundation of a collective journey.

Early Bird tickets are available until July 31st at \$125 for Adults (Ages 11+); \$45 for Children

(ages 4-10); and Free for Babies (Ages 3 and under). Starting August 1st, General Admission will be \$150 for Adults and \$65 for Children. Sign-ups for the tickets will be exclusive to the Sea Shul email list until August 1st.

"Sea Shul is not just a community, it's a vibrant catalyst for unity and connection," explained Micah Davis, Interim President of Sea Shul. "As we welcome Rosh Hashanah, we're not only celebrating a new year, but the start of an exciting chapter for Sea Shul. We're crafting a dynamic future where every member feels a profound sense of belonging and becomes a key part of our collective journey. Together, we'll foster an environment that embraces warmth, friendship, and forward-thinking growth."

In addition to the "New Year,



New Tide" event, Sea Shul has organized an array of activities for the Rosh Hashanah weekend including a potluck dinner on the first night, Mind and Movement prayer service, and Tashlich service that will be open to the community.

Sea Shul is delighted to invite everyone to share in the joy and traditions of the Jewish New Year. For more information, please visit facebook.com/seashul or contact shalom@seashul.com. Tickets can be purchased at https://seashulRH2023.eventbrite.com.

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Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the Communities of 32459, 32461 and 32413
Circulation: 12,500 households
P.O. Box 1424
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

Editor & Publisher
Dave White
dave@southwalton.life
editor@southwalton.life

Production & Layout
Dawna Shackley
graphics@southwalton.life

Advertising Department
850-399-0228

Advertising Manager
Raymond Cyr
850 797-3546
sales@southwalton.life

Contributing Writers
Heather Bennett
Rita L. Sherwood
850-399-0228

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Community Garden Continues Passion Project

Cultivate Community Gardens (CCG), the first community garden in South Walton, forges ahead with its fall workshop featuring local master gardeners from the University of Florida's local Extension Office. On Saturday, September 30th from 10 a.m. -12 p.m., Cultivate will open its doors to the community to tour the garden and meet with local gardeners. Visitors will also have the opportunity to appreciate the garden's bees, with beekeeping services provided by

honeybee specialists, AA Live Bee Removal.

Take advantage of this information-sharing event and celebrate the successes of South Walton's only community garden. These community events are held to encourage sustainable gardening practices and land stewardship, as well as provide an opportunity for local gardeners to connect and share in their



successes and failures.

The garden continues in its objectives of creating a space for community members to gather and grow, along with continuing its mission of providing a holistic knowledge of nutrition, wellness, and education for all. CCG manages and maintains a pesticide-free, non-GMO community garden located at Padgett Park on JD Miller. The garden

offers 24, 4x12 plots protected in an enclosed and locked area, with irrigation provided. There are several plots currently available which are renewable annually for \$200.00.

To sponsor a plot or make a charitable donation, please visit <https://cultivatecommunitygardens.org/>.

The garden is grateful to its founder, its donors St. Joe Community Foundation & J.W. Couch Foundation, and others for their continued support.

Democratic Women's Club of Walton County Honors Members

The Democratic Women's Club of Walton County is honoring three of our club nominees for and winners of Florida Democratic Women's Club awards. The event will take place on Tuesday, September 19 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Cantina Laredo Restaurant's meeting room on Grand Boulevard in Miramar Beach. The cost is \$25 for a meal and a non-alcoholic drink. Contact Sue Bowden, President of the Democratic Women's Club of Walton County, at [susanbowden4321@](mailto:susanbowden4321@yahoo.com)

[yahoo.com](mailto:susanbowden4321@yahoo.com) for information on how to sign up.

Our honorees are Mary Wolfe, past club president, of Watersound Beach, Sandra Macon of Defuniak Springs, and Evalyn Narramore of Pensacola. Evalyn is the 2023 winner of the state DWC's Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors a member for extraordinary service to the club at the state and local levels. Sandra, who is also a veteran, has been one of the lead organizers of the Black History Parade and Juneteenth celebra-

tions in Defuniak Springs for the past few years and is the winner of the state DWC's Rising Star Award. Mary spearheaded our club's efforts that eradicated \$1,670,498 of medical debt in the Florida panhandle through the RIP program.

We also plan to have Walton County Supervisor of Elections Ryan Messer at our meeting, who will be educating us on the changes to Florida's election laws in preparation for the 2024 elections.



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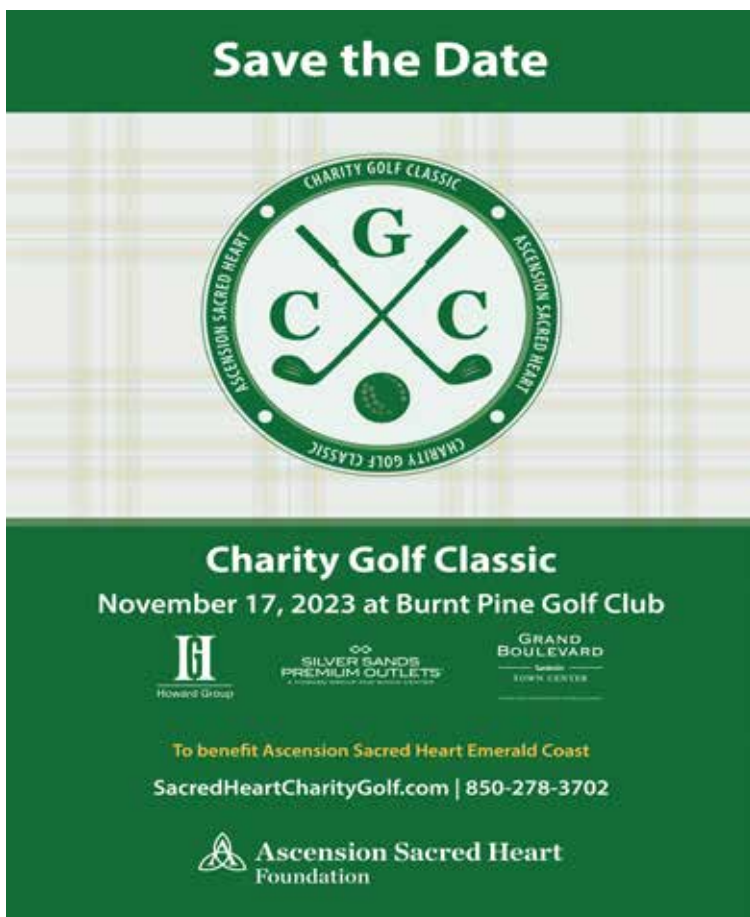
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Insights for Investors: Trends



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

What drove inflation down over the past year?

Inflation, by many official accounts, peaked at over 9% about this time a year ago. Most recently, we have been informed that inflation, based upon CPI, is approaching 3% (currently around 3.2%). The question on many investors' minds is who, or what, has made it happen? According to the Associated Press, it is not one thing, but rather a combination of things.

First, the drop in energy = mainly oil and gas prices. After spiking over 60%, gas prices came down as did a barrel of oil. Next was aggressive action in raising rates on the part of

the Federal Reserve. One year ago, the Federal Funds rate was .25%. Today it is 5.33%. That is one of the fastest rises in U.S. history. When the Fed raises rates, savers and buyers of short-term investments see higher rates in money market funds, CDs and the like. That rate does have an intended effect on slowing borrowing and, thus, slowing the economy = adding to the decline of inflation. Lastly, there is the supply chain. The pandemic caused significant disruption in the development and distribution along the national and international supply chains. Many of those disruptions no longer exist and that, too, has helped bring prices down.

Home prices and mortgage rates are higher for sure. Many "would be" homeowners can no longer afford the note now that mortgage rates are near their highest levels in over 20 years (close to 7% after bottoming at less than 3% in 2020). Housing makes up a significant portion of CPI and, when that slows down, it brings inflation down.

What is The Phillips Curve?

According to the Corporate Financial Institute, the Phillips Curve suggests that when inflation is down, unemployment is

up. Put another way, it suggests that when inflation is up, unemployment is down. Something strange is happening right now: Inflation is down, and unemployment is down (or employment is up, remains high). Why might this be so? There are a couple of points of view we have heard lately. One is from Professor Jeremy Siegel of the Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania). He stated recently on CNBC and notes that productivity is getting stronger, and the economy is growing. Rick Rieder, who is the CIO of Global Fixed Income at Blackrock, said on Wall Street Week recently that with an economy that is 70% services and 70% consumption (consumers), the historical levers of higher rates have not hurt the economy as they have in the past. Also, when it comes to long-term borrowing, Reider points out that a lot of high-tech companies' self-fund versus borrow for their cap ex (capital expenditures budgets). He notes that for sure there have been some parts of the economy hurt (commercial real estate, regional and small banks, some parts of the manufacturing economy), but for the most part, there has not been widespread pain. Hence, we have the cost of living going down, employment remaining resilient and the economy growing.

Is this a trend or a short-term thing?

Is this just a short term thing or is this a trend? We think the answers are multifold: 1) Strides in technology with AI and other innovations continue to bolster growth. 2) Liquidity remains high – a.k.a. there is still a lot of money in the economy in checking and savings accounts. 3) The labor shortage keeps unemployment low. It also looks like – depending upon what you read and believe = that the labor shortage may be here to stay for a while. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population growth rate of the U.S. was 0.4% for the 12-month period ending in July 2022. This means that approximately 1.3 million people were added to the U.S. population during that period. Put another way, the U.S. population is growing at over 100k people per month. That

is a key driver of consumption. However, according to a report by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, there will be around 10,000 people turning 65 each day for the next two decades. This means that approximately 300,000 people are retiring each month in the U.S.

Is the labor shortage here to stay or here just for a while?

We went back in time, and reviewed an article written in 2005 in the ERE newsletter (a newsletter for human resource professionals) that predicted the labor shortages starting in 2010 and going well beyond 2020. They, of course, had no idea that a pandemic was coming. The net result is that baby boomers did retire as predicted, but at an accelerated rate in recent years. Add to that, many companies have demonstrated they encourage employees to retire early at 55. There is also a coming shortage across many employment sectors: Airline pilots and air traffic controllers, for example (we understand mandatory retirement is 65). Significant numbers are at or near these ages. The labor shortage is going to be with us for awhile. Will that prove inflationary? Believe it or not, it has not so far. Wage inflation is not having the impact that many predicted it would have.

What's an investor to do now?

So, where does that leave our investors? We think this is a time where short-term rates offer yield not seen in a long time (savings and money markets over 5%). We also look at equities across the board; not concentrated in any one area and representing opportunities for long-term buy-and-hold (and patient) investors. Fixed income rates (think bonds) have climbed again lately. The increase in longer-term rates is largely due to the U.S. Treasury issuing more bonds (the main lever) and longer dated bonds as well. That will drive yields up and prices down. We think investors could lock in good, long-term yields be they in treasuries, corporate or municipal bonds. We caution investors to always review the duration before investing in a particular bond. CDs certainly

offer significantly higher yields now, but we encourage investors to think about what those represent: Mainly higher yields over shorter terms.

We hear many investing pundits wondering where and when rates will peak. With Federal Funds at 5.33% now, we are aligned with opinions that see them coming down in 2024. We think that will be 3.5 – 4%. — another potential reason to lock in a short-term CD or a longer-term fixed rate bond now. It may be a good idea to complement that with a diversified basket of stocks, as companies will continue to reap the productivity gains we are seeing now.

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: The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd., Destin 32451. Phone: 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.

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Community

Rise of the "Bro-tique": Redefining Men's Retail Experience in South Walton

The world of men's fashion has witnessed a significant transformation in recent years, and with it, a new term has emerged to describe a unique breed of stores: the "Brotique." Combining the words "bro" and "boutique," this catchy nickname perfectly encapsulates the essence of a new era in men's retail. These establishments are not merely stores; they are immersive spaces that cater to the modern man's evolving needs, preferences, and sense of style.

Gone are the days when men's shopping was limited to a few basic options. The emergence of the "brotique" concept marks a departure from the traditional and paves the way for an elevated and personalized shopping experience. These stores have become synonymous with a fresh take on men's fashion, grooming, and lifestyle, providing a haven where men can explore their individuality without compromise. So, what sets Captured Clothing apart

from conventional men's stores? It starts with the ambiance. Step into this brotique, and you'll find yourself in an atmosphere carefully crafted to radiate style, sophistication and masculine energy. The decor, lighting, and overall aesthetic are designed to create an inviting space that appeals to the sensibilities, making you right at home.

The selection of merchandise in Captured is equally distinctive. Curated with experience for the latest trends and timeless classics, offering a range of high-quality clothing, accessories, grooming products, and lifestyle essentials. Every item is handpicked to reflect the desires and aspirations of the discerning gentleman, ensuring that he can find everything he needs to express his unique style and personality.

Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of the "brotique" phenomenon is the personalized attention provided to customers. Unlike their mass-market



counterparts, these stores prioritize individualized service, with knowledgeable staff members who are passionate about being able to help customers. The

"brotique" is more than just a place to buy clothes or grooming products; it has become a destination for men seeking inspiration, community, and a sense of

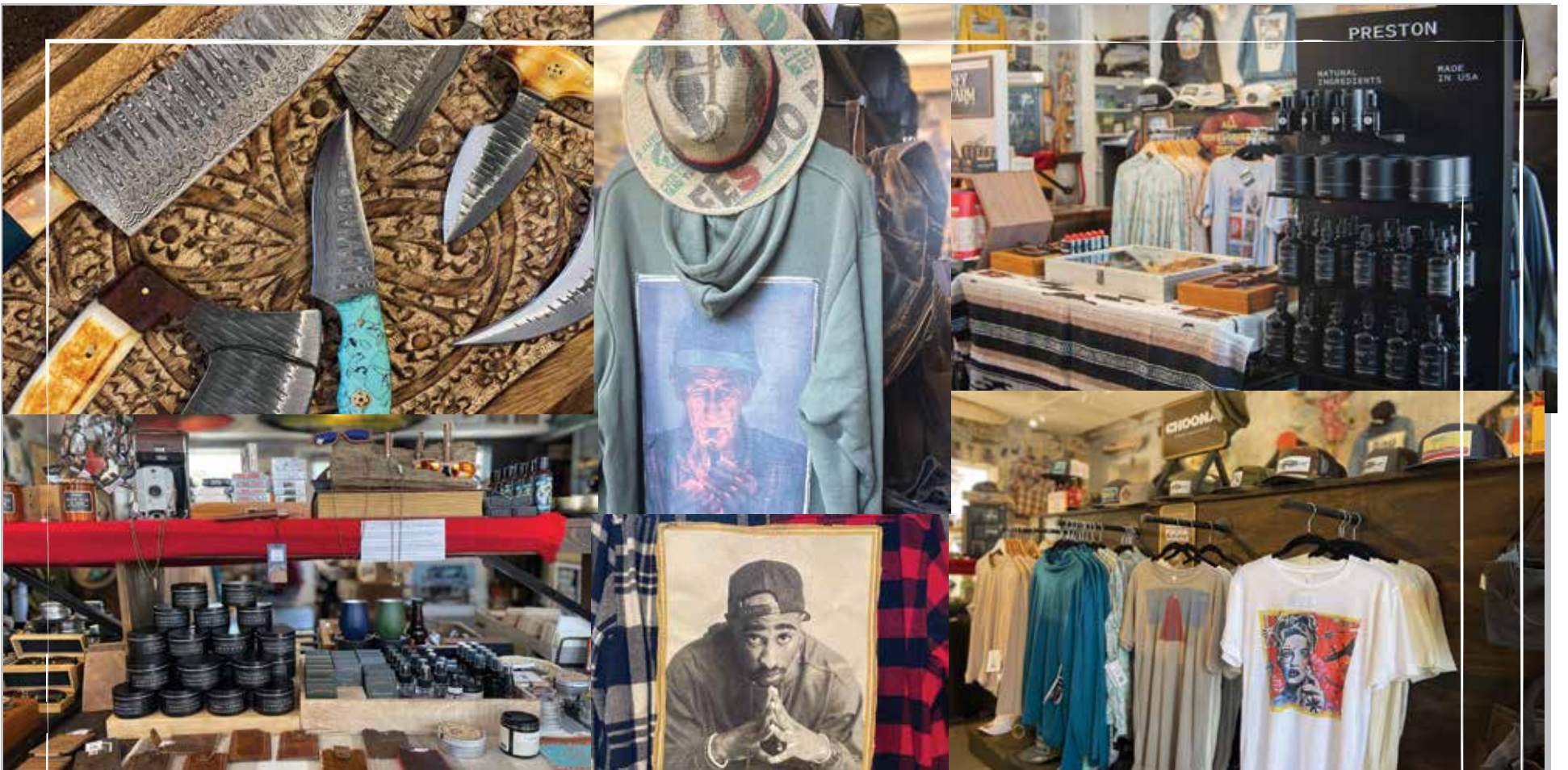
belonging. Many of these stores host events, workshops, and collaborations, creating a platform for men to connect, network, and share their experiences and interests. As the popularity of the "brotique" continues to rise, it has become a game-changer in the retail industry. Its success can be attributed to its ability to adapt to the changing demands and expectations of the modern man, individualized service, and a vibrant community atmosphere.

Here at Captured Clothing we are excited and proud to embrace this new era of mens retail and known as 30A's Bro-tique!

Stay tuned for father son workshops, the launch of the on-line store and much more!

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Community

The Lost City on the "Forgotten Coast"

By JACK SMITH

Port St. Joe is a riddle wrapped in a strange history. It's also one of the best-kept secrets in the state and one of the prettiest towns you'll ever visit. Founded in 1835 as a deepwater port and linked to inland destinations by rail, St. Joseph, aka Port St. Joe, became an important commercial hub in the early 1800s, for a time the largest city in the state of Florida. In 1838, delegates arrived to draw up the first State Constitution in the years leading up to Florida's admission as a state in 1845. But the town's boom ended swiftly: yellow fever

swept through the town in 1841, and a hurricane storm surge a few years later wiped out what remained. The once prosperous town of 12,000 was reduced to only 500 residents. By the mid-1800s, Port St. Joe was a virtual ghost town. It wasn't until 1909 when a new rail track was laid and a new town founded that life began to return to the region.

When walking down Port St. Joe's main street these days, one wouldn't be surprised to run into Barney or Aunt Bee shopping in a local market. Though there's plenty of charm in town, the Cape San Blas area boasts one



of the most beautiful stretches of beaches in America and shouldn't be missed. The "Forgotten Coast" is a name the local chamber of commerce came up with after the paper mill closed to generate some much-needed

hype. Many of the permanent residents wish the forgotten coast would remain just that: "forgotten." But after several visits, I've concluded that "Unforgettable Coast" might hit closer to the mark.

Finding Magic on the "Forgotten Coast"

By JACK SMITH

In the past, you'd wake up in Mexico Beach and swear it was 1955. The town that time forgot got remembered at 1 p.m., October 10, 2018, as Hurricane Michael came ashore, a category five storm packing winds of 160 mph. Today Mexico Beach is

undergoing a mammoth revitalization effort seldom seen on the Forgotten Coast. Its old-world charm is being replaced with brick-and-mortar buildings built to withstand 175 mph winds and rain. The "New" Mexico Beach is a blend of modern-day amenities and classic old-world

Florida, a little slice of paradise featuring white sand beaches, turquoise water, and some of the most downhome people you'll ever meet. This little town casts the sort of spell on visitors that keeps them coming back year after year. Mexico Beach sits right on the line separating East-



ern and Central time zones and offers one of the most unique News Year's Celebrations in the country. Celebrate twice, once in Port St. Joe, and then take the free shuttle to Mexico Beach to ring in the new year again an hour later. Not bad for a town with no stoplights!

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8th Annual Bloody Mary Festival October 14th

The Market Shops 8th Annual Bloody Mary Festival is BACK - Saturday, October 14 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. in Sandestin! Join us on for the The Market Shops 8th Annual Bloody Mary Festival benefiting Habitat for Humanity – Walton County. The annual event will feature unlimited tastes of South Walton’s most creative and innovative bloody marys made with Distillery 98’s Dune Laker Vodka and served by the finest restaurants and bars on the Emerald Coast. There will also be live music, football, lawn games, beer, champagne, local food, shopping, and much more!

For a \$60 donation to attend, guests are invited to enjoy 16 of South Walton’s most coveted bloody marys. Tickets are on sale now and already selling FAST! Get yours before they sell out: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-market-shops-8th-annual-bloody-mary-festival-tickets-600752164897>.

Those already signed up to compete for «Best Bloody Mary in South Walton» include Astons on 98, Camille’s at Crystal



Beach, Chanticleer, Chefs Bistro 30A, Chringo, Faber, Marina Cafe, Ovide, Signature Catering of 30A, Soleil, The Beach House, and The Henderson. A panel of select food critics and local celebrities will judge each bloody mary to select the winners for the most delicious and the most creative. There will also be a highly coveted first-, second-, and third-place People’s Choice Award that is selected by each guest in attendance.

Apart from the bloody marys, there will also be plenty of food from the various restaurants located directly in The Market Shops. For the non-bloody mary

aficionado, there will be local craft brews from Idyll Hounds Brewing Company, spiked seltzer from Palm Folly, champagne from the Bubbly Bar sponsored by Courtyard Marriott Sandestin

at Grand Boulevard, Hyatt Place Sandestin at Grand Boulevard, and Residence Inn Sandestin at Grand Boulevard, along with water at the Hydration Station sponsored by Berkshire Hatha-

way HomeServices PenFed Realty. A Vacayzen lounge area with additional seating and corn-hole games will be set up on the main lawn, along with SEC football streaming on the big screen.

While sipping bloody marys, guests can enjoy a commemorative photo booth sponsored by Legendary Marine, a DJ, a cigar bar, and exclusive shopping opportunities from The Market Shops merchants including Fit2Run. We’ll also have a local live band playing throughout the afternoon.

Restaurants, bars, or catering companies interested in participating in this year’s event, should email jessica@proffittpr.com.



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Community

Caring & Sharing of South Walton and Walton County Sheriff's Office Hold Diaper Drive

During National Diaper Need Awareness Week, September 18-24th

Caring & Sharing along with the Walton County Sheriff's Office will hold its Second Annual Diaper Drive, sponsored by Specialty Roofers, from September 18 - October 6th. Their goal is

to collect a six-month supply of diapers for the community in recognition of National Diaper Need Awareness Week.

"We currently provide over 100 local families with diapers

and wipes each month while they are picking up food from our food pantry," said Caring & Sharing Executive Director, Carly Barnes. "The requests for diapers and wipes often exceed



our Amazon Wish List which will be delivered directly to Caring & Sharing. Amazon Wish List: <https://amzn.to/3eN4SbW>.

"We at Specialty Roofers applaud the work that Caring and Sharing is doing in our community, and want to work with them to help alleviate supply challenges and meet needs in Walton County," said Erin Bakker, Director of Business Development. "The Diaper Drive helps us meet an immediate need and directly impact the community where we work and live, so we are happy to lend a helping hand."

our supplies. Our Annual Diaper Drive helps us engage our generous community to increase the amount of diapers and wipes we have on hand and ultimately help us better serve our clients."

Here's how the community can help Caring and Sharing achieve this year's goal:

First, Walton County Sheriff's Office will participate by hosting their own "Pack the Patrol Car" as they invite the community to donate and drop off diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6 most needed) between September 18-24th at their administrative office on 133 Sheriff Drive in Santa Rosa Beach.

Next, diapers can be dropped off at Caring & Sharing and other participating locations during the same time frame. Participating drop-off locations include Specialty Roofers, Palm Folly, La Luna Children's Boutique, Christ the King Episcopal Church, The Tree House Episcopal Montessori School, Point Washington United Methodist Church and Preschool, South Walton Seahawks, The Rosemary Beach Foundation and Rosemary Beach Cottage Rental Agency. You can also purchase items from

According to the National Diaper Bank Network, one in three U.S. families struggles to provide enough diapers to keep a baby or toddler clean, dry, and healthy. Babies require up to 12 diapers per day, and at a cost of \$70-\$80 per month per baby, diapers quickly become a cost many families simply cannot afford. Without a supply of diapers, babies cannot participate in early childhood education or daycare which in turn means many parents cannot return to work or school.

Visit the Caring & Sharing Facebook Page for more information. Businesses, organizations, or groups also interested in supporting the Diaper Drive may send email inquiries to info@car-ingandsharingsowal.org.



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South Walton Fire District Hosts Annual Pancake Breakfast

South Walton Fire District will host its annual Pancake Breakfast on October 7 and invites the community to attend and enjoy \$5 all-you-can-eat pancakes, as well as celebrate the start of Fire Prevention Week.



ing, a photo booth, fire engine tours, a kids' firefighter combat challenge, and a bounce house.

The proceeds collected at the event benefit SWFD Fire Prevention programs and materials, which SWFD uses throughout the year to educate

the public and provide items like free smoke alarms to the community.

The event will be held at 911

N. County Highway 393, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Several birthday-themed surprises are planned to concurrently celebrate the

agency's 40th anniversary at this year's event. Questions about the event can be directed to info@swfd.org.

Family-friendly activities will be available, such as face paint-

throughout the year to educate




Vote for Your Favorites in the 2024 Perfect in Walton County Awards!

It's time to choose your favorites in the 2024 Perfect in Walton County Awards! The online voting period runs Tuesday, Sept. 5 through Friday, Sept. 22 at perfectinwaltoncounty.com.

The top five nominees with the highest votes in 30 categories have been selected, and now it's time for the final vote! Everyone is encouraged to vote for their favorite businesses, events, and activities online at perfectinwaltoncounty.com.

The finalists with the most votes in each category will be recognized as Diamond, Platinum or Gold winners at the Perfect in Walton County Awards presentation in January 2024. These winners will be promoted in print and online by Walton County Tourism throughout the year.

Voting will remain open until 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 22. Everyone is allowed one vote per email address. Remember, every vote counts!



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Tuesdays and Thursdays

Huck & Lilly @ Seaside Amphitheater

Huck & Lilly will perform LIVE in the Seaside Amphitheater on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks, and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. Singer/songwriters Ken Johnson and Andi Zack-Johnson as Huck and Lilly specialize in music for kids AND the grown-ups who love them! Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.

Wednesdays

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 7-9 p.m. Various local and regional artists perform throughout the year - see the lineup. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Free and open to the public. September 6: Jarred McConnell and The High Aces, September 13: Trest Richerson Band, September 20: She-nanigans, September 27: TBD.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf, Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, 9300 Emerald Coast Parkway, Miramar Beach.

Fridays and Saturdays

Grand Boulevard: Lawn Games in Grand Park

Grand Boulevard invites you to bring the entire family out to enjoy some fun in the sun! Lawn Games will take over Fridays & Saturdays in Grand Park from 4-8 p.m. from Sept. 8th — Oct. 28th. Grab some food and drinks from one of the many restaurants in Grand Boulevard before you settle into a fun round of corn hole, giant lawn chess, checkers, and more. Learn more: grandboulevard.com. 495 Grand Blvd, Miramar Beach.

Saturdays

Sounds of Seaside Concert Series

Enjoy an afternoon of live music in the Seaside Amphitheater on Saturdays from 3-6 p.m. 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. September 2, 16 & 30: The Wavy Winstons, September 9 & 23: Max McCann. Visit www.seasidefl.com for more information. Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.

Saturday, September 16

SoWal International Coastal Cleanup

The Walton County Tourism Department, along with the Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles, will once again host an International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) day on Saturday, Sept. 16 from 9-11 a.m. Both residents and visitors are encouraged to participate. Volunteer Beach Ambassador teams will be hosting teams at five South Walton Regional Beach Accesses listed below:

Inlet Beach Regional Access, 139 S Orange St., Inlet Beach

Santa Clara Regional Access, 3468E Co Hwy 30A, Seagrove

Ed Walline Regional Access, 4447 W Co Hwy 30A, Gulf Place

Dune Allen Regional Access, 5999 W Co Hwy 30A, Dune

Allen

Miramar Beach Regional Access, 2375 Scenic Gulf Dr., Miramar Beach

For more information on South Walton's ICC day please contact Christina Cabral at cabralagain@gmail.com or (615) 232-4700. For more information on International Coastal Cleanup day 2023, please visit the Ocean Conservancy website at www.oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/icc/

Saturday, September 16

Longleaf Restoration Project at Grayton Beach State Park

Join Grayton Beach State Park staff and volunteers to celebrate National Public Lands Day and help restore native longleaf habitat. Longleaf Restoration Project on Saturday, September 16th from 8 a.m. - noon. The project includes hand pulling of sand pines. Email christopher.dixon@floridadep.gov for more information and to sign-up. Attendees are encouraged to bring work gloves, sun protective clothing, sunscreen, bug spray,



close-toed shoes, long pants, & a refillable water bottle. Grayton Beach State Park, 357 Main Park Road, Grayton Beach.

Monday, September 18

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park: Guided Plant Stroll

Join Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and Master Gardener Bill Kuenstler on the third Monday of each month from 9-11 a.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 or

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page

email friendsofthsp@gmail.com. Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, located on the west side of Scenic 30A in South Walton, offers a wide variety of natural resources including 3.2 miles of secluded, white sand beaches with majestic dunes over 25 feet tall. Three rare coastal dune lakes provide excellent freshwater fishing. Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, 7525 W County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach.

Wednesday, September 20

Sinfonia Peter and the Wolf at Seaside

Join Sinfonia Gulf Coast in the Seaside Amphitheater on Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 6 p.m. for Sergei Prokofiev's symphonic fairy tale, Peter and The Wolf performed by the woodwind quintet from Sinfonia Gulf Coast. This event is free and open to the public. Bring blankets and chairs to enjoy. Visit sinfoniagulfcoast.org to learn more. Seaside Amphitheater, 25 Central Square, Seaside.

September 15th - October 1st

Emerald Coast Theatre Company: Million Dollar Quartet

Inspired by the most famous jam session in recording history, this smash-hit musical tells the story of legendary music icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Carl Perkins as they come together on December 4, 1956, at the famous Sun Studios. Tickets and more information can be found at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org 560 Grand Boulevard (Upstairs), Miramar Beach.

Saturday, September 30

Smoke on the Coast BBQ Festival

The Annual Smoke on the Coast BBQ Festival takes place Saturday, September 30 at Destin Commons from 3-6 p.m., Enjoy family fun activities, live music, BBQ sampling, and more. Non-profit organizations and local charities are at the heart of this event. As event-goers enjoy all of the delicious eats the evening offers, they will also be able to learn more about the non-profit organizations and their individual missions. View participating bar-



becue teams and their partnering charities at: DestinCommons.com. Destin Commons, 4100 Legendary Dr., Destin.

Green Thumb Garden Club Is Offering A Sneak Peek Of Their Third Annual Holiday Bazaar

BY KATHLEEN EDGE, PUBLICITY & WEBSITE CHAIR

The September meeting of Green Thumb Garden Club (GTGC) will have attendees creating a variety of holiday items that will be available for sale at their November Holiday Bazaar. The planning committee will provide all the materials needed for our talented, creative

members to make items for the Bazaar. The Holiday Bazaar is the Club's primary scholarship fundraiser. In 2023, GTGC awarded \$5,000 in scholarships to outstanding Walton County students and the Club's goal is to increase that amount in 2024.

A special GTGC members-only pre-sale will provide a sneak peek of some of the fabulous bazaar items. The Septem-

ber 20, 2023, meeting is at the Westwinds Conference Center in Miramar Beach, Florida. It starts with check-in at 9 a.m. and lunch is included in the \$30 fee per attendee.

The third annual GTGC Holiday Bazaar is on November 4, 2023, in the Cantina Laredo rear meeting room and on the enclosed outdoor patio. Bazaar hours are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The past two year's events have been sellouts so be sure to save the date and come early for the best selection.

The Green Thumb Garden Club welcomes new members. The GTGC website www.greenthumbgardenclubinc.org contains detailed information about how to join the Club and details on meetings, activities, and events. For additional infor-

mation, please visit the website or email greenthumbgardenclubinc@gmail.com. The Walton County community is encouraged to join the Green Thumb Garden Club to support its charitable mission while connecting with other members and having fun.



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Mountainfilm Returns to WaterColor Inn

Mountainfilm on Tour returns to WaterColor Inn & Resort's Marina Park Amphitheater Nov. 3-4, with films that reflect Mountainfilm's themes of exploring cultures, preserving environments, and promoting adventure, while using the power of film, art, and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world.

A two-night outdoor film festival dedicated to educating and motivating audiences about issues that matter, WaterColor Resort's 23rd Annual Mountainfilm on Tour brings a selection of culturally rich, adventure-packed, and inspiring documentary films to Northwest Florida.

The films will be shown in Marina Park Amphitheater, which offers a breathtaking outdoor setting against a backdrop of longleaf pines, under a starry sky to enhance the inspiring films. A Mountainfilm presenter will guide the audience through the program, providing insight into the films, filmmakers, and subject matters.

"We're looking forward to another great year partnering with



Mountainfilm to bring some truly incredible films to WaterColor," says Gabrielle Testa, GM of WaterColor Inn & Resort. "This will be our 23rd year hosting the event, and we keep bringing it back because it means so much to our guests and every-

one who returns year after year to be entertained, inspired, and recharged in our beautiful surroundings."

Tickets and lodging packages will be available at www.mountainfilmfl.com starting August 15, 2023, with discounted pricing offered for advance purchase. Tickets must be purchased

in advance, as day-of tickets will not be available this year. Each evening, gates open at 5:45 p.m., with films beginning at 7 p.m. Book by September 30 and a single night is \$40; two nights (weekend rate) are \$65. Prices go up to \$50 for a single night and \$90 for the weekend through No-

vember 2.

Limited-edition 2023 Mountainfilm on Tour at WaterColor Resort shirts will also be available for purchase at a discounted price with online ticket sales and at WaterColor Store ahead of the event. Shirts will also be available for purchase at the event.

Guests who stay at WaterColor Inn during Mountainfilm on Tour can take advantage of a Mountainfilm Festival Package, which will include lodging and tickets to both nights of the event. For new details as they become available, please check www.mountainfilmfl.com. Additional details will also be shared on WaterColor Inn's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/watercolorinn).

WaterColor's Mountainfilm on Tour is hosted by the WaterColor Inn & Resort, in partnership with official sponsors Delta Air Lines, Visit South Walton, WaterColor Community Association, WaterColor Store, Boat-House Paddle Club, Old Florida Outfitters, Myrtie Blue, 30A.com and SoWal.com.



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Cultural Arts Alliance Of Walton County Announces Foster Gallery's Fall Rotation Artists

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) is proud to announce the regional artists recently chosen to exhibit their original work in The Foster Gallery's Fall Rotation, which runs August 15th through November 11th, 2023, in its Miramar Beach Creative Campus location at 13370 Emerald Coast Parkway (US Highway 98).



The selected featured artists are Gisselle Barnhart, Jessica Batson, Dorothea Berkhout, Stephanie Bloyd, Melody Bogle, Melissa Mercer Brown, Gayle Campbell, Chulynda Castellanos, Bill Chambers, Donnelle Clark, Kim Cleveland, Skip Deems, Marlene East, Evelyn Espinoza, Elena Filshitska, Sue Carol Knight, Capri Boyle Jones, Nancy Jones Hayes, Wes Hinds, Lindsay Keeling, Linda Kernick, Susan Lucas, Robyn Martins,

Mindy McClendon, Theresa McInnis, Lennon Michalski, Elizabeth Miles, Lynnette Moody, Linda Kaye Moriarty, Merry Beth Myrick, William Polley, Mary Redmann, Kathy Schumacher, Nicholas Seegel, Kristine Senft, Abhijeet Shrivastava, The Salty Sparrow, Laura Tuvyana, and Karen Williams.

All rotation artists are members of the Cultural Arts Alliance. All works exhibited in the gallery are for sale, many works will be online soon for view-

ing and purchase on the CAA website at CulturalArtsAlliance.com/foster-gallery.

The Foster Gallery is located at 13370 Emerald Coast Parkway (US Hwy 98) and is part of the Miramar Beach Creative Campus featuring regional artist rotations on a quarterly basis as well as special exhibitions. The Foster Gallery at the Miramar Beach Creative Campus will also host artist receptions and openings, workshops in J. Leon Studio, events, and serve as a community gathering point sym-

bolizing the support the CAA strives to give artists in our community, including those who are members of the CAA.

The gallery is open Tuesday - Saturday from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. For more information, including space rental of the Miramar Beach Creative Campus for private events, call (850) 842-3051 or visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.



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You Didn't Earn My Respect



By **STEPHENIE CRAIG,**
JOURNEY BRAVELY

I was talking to a student about a difficult relationship with a teacher. The student didn't like the teacher's communication style and decided the teacher had not earned respect. The student gave less effort and had a negative attitude, because

the teacher was "not worthy of respect." The student ended up with a poor grade, being grounded and not being a great version of self all in the name of withdrawing respect from someone who hadn't earned it. Following the interaction, I started wondering about the cost to ourselves and others when we practice withdrawing respect from others when they displease us or behave in ways that don't align with our values.

It's uncomfortable when we discover someone holds a different view or value that is in fundamental opposition to our way of approaching life. We are left to decide how we will engage this person going forward. Current culture encourages us

to believe respect is earned and only safely given to people who agree with us. Social media and news give us permission to cut off, cut out, publicly shame and withdraw not only respect, but also kindness from anyone who sees things differently. This begins as a way to "hold people accountable" and ends with us finding ourselves being unkind, rude, judgmental, self-righteous, bitter and a version of self that can become unrecognizable.

What if there are two kinds of respect? The traditional definition of respect is holding someone in high esteem or admiration. This type of admiring respect is what we refer to when talking about earning respect. It is based on character, performance and behavioral choices. We choose to bestow admiring respect on some and not on others. The second brand of respect is basic human respect. Basic human respect is the fundamental belief that each human has inherent value and worth regardless of what they believe or how they behave. Basic human respect is born out of respecting self and extending to others the same level of common decency you hope others will extend to you. This respect assumes we do not have the right to subtract from the value of another person regardless of their disagreement with us in word or action.

Basic human respect is freely assumed and not earned or lost.

Our culture is often confusing withdrawal of admiring respect with withdrawal of basic human respect. When we don't admire someone, there is not a significant social cost. When we don't extend basic human respect, we begin to believe we are better, to verbally assault others, to lose compassion, to dehumanize, to oppress, to reduce our character and to blindly engage in hypocrisy—all in the name of withholding respect others aren't doing their job to earn. When we make withholding basic human respect a habit, we find ourselves going down a dark character hole. So, how can we avoid this pitfall?

5 Ways to Practice Extending Basic Human Respect to Others

Extend grace freely because you're going to need it. No matter how hard you try, you will not be perfect and will make mistakes. Your values will not always align with others. You will need others to extend basic human respect to you.

Use judgment as a mirror. Typically, when we feel judgmental of others, there is an internal issue we need to address. Ask yourself what purpose your judgment is serving both inwardly and outwardly.

Try trading judgment for curiosity. Try being curious about others beliefs/behaviors.

Treat others with kindness you would show to your friend or child. You would be kind to your friend or child if they disagreed with you. Treat others in the world with this same level of kindness. Your kindness should be based on who you want to be, not on whether someone else is pleasing you.

Speak to others as equals. You are not better or worse than anyone. Use a tone of voice, words, eye contact and nonverbals that reflect your belief that others are your equal.

Embrace humility. Just because you believe you are right about things doesn't mean you are. Try remembering you are human and you have things to learn from other people. Sometimes we learn the most profound lessons from those who see things differently.

As you pursue a life marked by extending basic human respect to others, remember your internal work is making the world a better, more loving place. Connect with us along your journey of growth for counseling and coaching support at journeybravely.com.




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

how most of us live.

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

This doesn't even touch on the health benefits. Unfortunately, many doctors will tell you hormone therapy is not safe, not proven, and may cause cancer or some other harm. I was taught the

same way. Unfortunately, these doctors are just wrong. They fail to keep up with the medical literature and are unable to consider the possibility that medicine has evolved over the last fifty years. Even the American Heart Association changes blood pressure treatment guidelines every couple of years. It's unfortunate because when doctors disagree it causes confusion and fear in patients.

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

If you struggle with motivation, mood swings, irritability, fatigue, or just don't feel like you're at your optimum then it's time to take care

of yourself. Come get your labs done and let us talk to you about how bio-identical hormone therapy can help different aspects of your life and health. I hope to see you soon.

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



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Fitness Expert Colleen Riddle Releases Fit Pickleballer's Injury Prevention Program to Combat Rising Injury Rates

According to a recent article in Forbes, Americans are projected to spend between \$250 million and \$500 million on costs related to pickleball injuries this year. This alarming statistic underscores the urgency of raising awareness about this topic, making the Fit Pickleballer's Injury Prevention Program an essential solution for players seeking to protect their health and well-being.

This groundbreaking initiative is designed to elevate pickleball

players' performance while safeguarding against injuries, creating a new era of health and vitality in the dynamic world of pickleball, the fastest-growing sport in America.

The Fit Pickleballer's Injury Prevention Program is a comprehensive fitness solution, meticulously crafted to cater to the unique needs of pickleball players. With over 17 years of expertise in the fitness industry, founder Colleen Riddle has designed a program that seamlessly integrates fitness principles with the

dynamic world of pickleball.

Riddle's program features innovative hands-free bands that target pickleball-specific muscles, enhancing strength, agility, and overall gameplay. Tailored at-home workout videos, each taking less than 7 minutes, are designed to prevent injuries and boost on-court performance.

For more information about the Fit Pickleballer's Injury Prevention Program, please visit www.fitpickleballer.com.

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Navigating the Complexities of Healthcare in Walton County



BY CHRISTIAN REGALADO

Driving along Hwy 98 there is one thing I am consistently noticing: new construction. It seems every mile along 98 and 30A there are new buildings popping up. It's not just commercial buildings. We are seeing it all from new subdivisions to apartment complexes to large shopping centers. The thing we are not seeing enough of at the moment are new doctors' offices.

One of the primary challenges that our growing population faces is the strain on healthcare facilities and resources. Hospitals, clinics, and medical practices that were designed to serve a smaller number of people now find themselves grappling with an increased demand for services. Longer wait times, difficulty in securing appointments, and overcrowded emergency rooms have become commonplace. This not only affects the quality of care but also the overall patient experience.

However, it's not all doom and gloom. We still live in an incredible area and more and more infrastructure is coming to

accommodate these needs, eventually. What is important now is to understand what all of your healthcare options are and who you can contact to navigate those complexities.

If you are new to Walton County, welcome! There is so much to love here. Obviously, we have stunning beaches and a relaxed lifestyle, but our vibrant community is also home to some of the friendliest people you will meet. That being said, you are likely going to need a new healthcare plan. If you currently are enrolled in a group plan you have 63 days to update your coverage. If you are currently enrolled in Medicare, you have 60 days to update your plan after the month you report your move. Now the hard part is finding a great doctor who is accepting new patients. This is just one of the ways an independent broker can help.

As of this writing, we still don't have access to the 2024 individual plans. I expect to be able to see those in October just before the November 1st open enrollment period.

If you are aging into Medicare in the next few months, you don't want to wait until the last minute. As a reminder, for those of you turning 65 or retiring and coming off your employer plan, if you are not collecting social security, you need to request your Medicare card with both parts A & B. You must be enrolled in both in order to add a Medicare Supplement plan or a Medicare Advantage plan.

You can initiate your enrollment up to three months before you want your plan to go into effect. For example, if you are turning 65 in January, you should request your Medicare card in October. After you apply, which can be done at a Social Security office or online at www.ssa.gov/medicare, it will take at least 30 days to process your application. You can't apply for an Advantage Plan without your Medicare number showing both Parts A &

B effective dates, which are typically the first day of your birth month.

If you stayed on an employer plan after age 65, my recommendation is to request your Medicare card three months before you want your Medicare plan to go into effect.

For those of you on Medicare Advantage plans and Prescription Drug Plans if you want to make any changes, don't forget the AEP (Annual Election Pe-

riod) is October 15th to December 7th. If you need help with any of this, please call us!

One way to make sure that you receive a plan that fits your needs best is to work with a local and independent, certified Medicare broker like us. Give us a call if we can help! Our services are free and we are happy to answer any questions you may have. Christian Regalado, christian@evergreenhealthins.com, (850) 687-7606



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A Pastor's Ponderings: **Someone Greater**



BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

Imagine a God who moves the moon that guides the ocean waves to break on our shores. Imagine a God who flicked a match igniting the Sun into a

blazing ball of fire, heating a solar system, producing a planet as an incubator for humanity. Imagine a God who is closer to you than the breath in your lungs or the thoughts in your head.

God is greater than all that. I remember as a child attending Sunday School where I saw God on a funky used flannel board. I heard Him in starchy old hymns in a sanctuary where I was told to hush and be still. The stiff, soulless sermons talked about life and love, but did little to show it.

God is greater than that. He's bigger than buildings, more loving than a handshake and more truthful than a sermon. Creeds



and doctrinal statements describe Him but can't contain Him. A God who transcends buildings and creeds is who I aim to know.

As a child, I memorized the Ten Commandments in Sunday School and learned how a whale

swallowed Noah. I learned how Christ bled and died before His resurrection. I washed that down with jellybeans and colorful hard-boiled eggs. God is bigger than that

We need sound doctrine and build-

ings where we can gather to worship God, but He is so much greater than all that.

The popular worship song "So Will I" touches the majesty of the Lord in music and reveals our only proper response:

*God of creation, there at the start
before the beginning of time.
With no point of reference, You spoke
to the dark
And fleshed out the wonder of light.
And as You speak, a hundred billion
galaxies are born.
In the vapor of Your breath the
planets form.
If the stars were made to worship, so
will I.
I can see Your heart in everything
You've made Every burning star A
signal fire of grace
If creation sings Your praises, so
will I.
So, will I. Will you?*

Forbes magazine recently

published an article by Ethan Siegal describing the James Webb Space Telescope. This device can see light from at least 13 billion light years away, located in galaxies 33 billion light years away. Scientists now estimate there are two trillion galaxies. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is a small to medium six galaxy and has approximately four billion stars. If there are four billion stars each in two trillion galaxies, how many stars would that be? My brain is starting to hurt.

If God is that big, how can He remember me? It stretches my faith to think the God who created this universe can know me intimately. Yes, God is all that and more. He has a Son.

The Bible says Christ spoke the worlds into existence—all two trillion times four billion of them. He is also the Word who came to us in human form. Equal to God in every way, yet He humbled Himself to die for the salvation of humanity.

The third verse of "So Will I" brings us down from the majesty of the heavens to the delinquency in our hearts:

*God of salvation, You chased down
my heart
Through all my failure and pride.
On a hill You created the Light of the
world
Abandoned in darkness to die.
And as You speak, A hundred billion
failures disappear.
Where You lost Your life so I could
find it here.
If You left the grave behind You, so
will I.*

When you stand before a God like that, what do you do? Worship Him for who He is. Worship Him for giving us His Son. Worship Him for the life He wants to give you. So, will I.

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

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READ MORE BELOW ABOUT HOW EACH CUP OF COFFEE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.



Bill McKissick – Sufficient Grace

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

I remember coming across a statement by a preacher who lived in the last century. He was expressing his position on prayer for healing. He believed it was detrimental to the sick person to pray for their healing because their suffering and pain were more important to their spiritual growth than God healing them would be. That was a different perspective for sure.

When you think about it, hasn't God used our most painful and excruciating moments to teach us important spiritual truths? Spiritual truths of eternal significance. When we're at our lowest and most dependent on our Heavenly Father, we're in a prime position to listen. He's been known to whisper some of the most amazing revelations to the hurting.

Bill McKissick, owner of Legendary Marina, moved to the area from New Orleans in 1996. Bill doesn't leave God at home when he leaves for work. Prayers are offered up in their meetings and they occasionally have Bible studies available.

Bill says he starts every morning thanking God for loving him and asking God to help him show love to others. It wasn't always like this, though. Some years ago, Bill graduated from religion to relationship. "I had to learn how to love God. Now that's what I live and work for. God has brought great peace and joy into my life. Faith is what guides me through each day."

Bill has life-threatening kidney issues. He's currently on dialysis and needs a kidney transplant. On the surface that sounds quite discouraging and stressful, but not for Bill. "I have faith in God. Maybe I'll get a kidney, and maybe I won't. It's okay whatever God decides."

You may wonder how Bill maintains his faith. He says



that with God's love comes faith and there's nothing that can remove that. "God has me in His hands. I talk to Him all day, and the beauty is that I've learned to listen. There's really nothing to it – just listen."

which gave Bill the perfect opening to share his faith. "When they start asking me questions, God speaks through me."

Out of His steadfast love and compassion for His children, God heals. He relieves pain and

As Bill says, you have a choice to make every morning. When you spend your time thinking about and trusting your Heavenly Father, there is no room for worry.

Because of his health issues, Bill has plenty of opportunities to share his faith. He gets to tell others about the Gospel all the time. "Indirectly, it's a blessing having the health problems."

He recalls one time when he was watching a video while sitting in dialysis, and he was getting emotional. The tech guy asked him if he was alright,

fixes what is broken. He dries tears and calms fears. And out of that same steadfast love and compassion for His children, God chooses not to heal. At least in this life. Our purpose in remaining here on earth is to be salt and light. As Jesus said – the fields are ripe for harvest. Pray that God will send out workers into His harvest field.

And we also know that God delights in using the weak things of the world to accomplish His purposes and plans. He always sees us. He always understands what we're going through. And our ultimate healing will be when we finally get to see Him face-to-face.

So, whether God's purpose for your life is to heal you or to shower you with grace during your trial, continue to keep your eyes on Jesus. "I work as hard as I can, then God will take it the rest of the way. God has done unbelievable things."

You can hear Bill McKissick's entire story and listen to many other incredible interviews on the weekly Road to Redemption radio show and podcast at www.rtrdestiny.com



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 Musing

Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Recently, it came to my attention that I was one of the remaining four Americans who had not seen “Barbie.” In case you’re one of the other three, “Barbie” is a wildly popular movie that is making waves in all the headlines.

The New York Times recently said that “Barbie” is “...about becoming your own hero.” CNN stated that “Barbie” is “...Important for normalizing women’s health.” Toisto Magazine called “Barbie” the “most important film of the year.”

“Barbie” has reportedly impressed the Hollywood establishment because it proved that, to produce a hit movie you don’t need computer graphics, elaborate CGI effects, and a

huge production budget to create hype. All you need is a huge promotional budget to create hype.

So I decided to see “Barbie” with my friend Dan, a former law-enforcement officer, who asked me to accompany him and his two daughters.

I haven’t been to the theater in a long time. I think the last movie I saw was “Steel Magnolias.” Mostly, because my people weren’t big movie goers. We were sanctified Baptists who did not believe in going to the movies for fear that it could lead to mixed bathing.

When we got there, the first thing I noticed was that lots of young women were there to see “Barbie.” I could tell this because they were all dressed in neon pink.

“I’ve seen ‘Barbie’ four times,” one 22-year-old woman told me. “It’s just a great movie, with an important message.”

I asked the young woman what this message was, exactly.

“Um,” she went on, “like, it’s about, like... Like. I don’t know. You just have to see it.”

Another group of teenage women stood in line with their boyfriends. The young women had already seen “Barbie” twice. This was their boyfriends’ first time.



“We made our boyfriends come with us this time,” said one the girls. “Because it’s a super good movie.”

“Oh my God,” said another young lady. “So good.”

Most of the boyfriends were clad in Barbie-themed, festive clothes. I asked one of the boys whether he was excited to see the movie and I asked whether I could quote him in a column I would be writing.

He gave me a sincere but thoughtful answer by saying, “My girlfriend made me wear these pink pants.”

So we waited in a long line because it was a weekend, and everyone was at the theater. Some were there to see the new Indiana Jones movie, which features an 81-year-old Harrison Ford starring in “Indiana Jones Takes a Nap.”

Other movie goers were there

to see “Oppenheimer” a film about J. Robert Oppenheimer, who invented the atomic bomb. The film is directed by Christopher Nolan, a director who critics hail for blending “thrill rides with thoughtful narratives which pose complex and pressing ethical questions” such as, “When will this movie be over so I can go pee?”

We purchased our tickets for “Barbie,” and went into the dark theater. Once we nestled into our seats, the movie began, and I can honestly tell you I did not move a muscle for the duration of the film.

Namely, because my feet were glued to the floor because of movie-theater-floor gunk, which is an adhesive consisting of decade-old soft drink spills and petrified candy.

The movie began. The screen featured stunning set

design, elaborate dance sequences, and wild costumes. The first thought I was struck with was, “Man, I’m really old.”

Because most of the starring cast was comfortably in their early 20s, with fit bodies that did not contain a thimble-full of adipose tissue. And every other word in their scripted sentences was “like.”

Admittedly, I am also out of touch with popular culture, so I, like, didn’t get most of the, like, jokes.

Dan’s daughters, however, were laughing with everyone else. Meantime, I was looking around wondering when, exactly, did movie theaters quit using ushers with flashlights. And what happened to the Wurlitzer organ?

The apex of the movie was a stirring scene which featured the movie’s title song, “What Was I Made For,” recorded by Billie Eilish, which had many in the theater sobbing. Admittedly, I was weeping too. Although, to be fair, I was crying because my ticket cost more than a three-bedroom beach condo.

When the film ended, we exited and passed the gaggle of teenage boyfriends, lingering in the lobby.

“Please don’t write about me wearing pink pants,” one boyfriend said.

Which I would never do.



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Conquering Fears



A scourge of my adolescence was the rotary dial phone. For one, the absence of caller ID often lent an anxious surprise as to whose voice would be on the other end of the line. Moving into teen years the anxiety was only heightened if the sound being received was that of a young lady. Terrible, much more terrible than that, was the utter fear associated with the instance of calling the girl and asking her out for a date, and the expectation of rejection and subsequent embarrassment.

Dragging the phone attached to the long cord into my bedroom several feet down the hall I recall almost willing a magical intervention that would dial the seven numbers for me and provide its own perfect voice on my behalf. More than a few times I would spend untold minutes and even an hour or two staring at the device before deciding to “let it go for this evening and try again tomorrow.”

Funny that I was sharing these episodes with a neighbor friend and learned that she had suffered through the same experiences from the opposite perspective—waiting and hoping that the boy would call.

Well, many years later the good news for both of us is that we are now long time happily married and no longer engage in that game. Still, that time in life brings back memories of other

palpating moments:

- Class presentations.
- Distribution of test scores or worse, report cards.
- Being at the free throw line for two shots, your team trailing by one and one second left on the clock.

Later in life, the instances of nervousness can morph into:

- Will she marry me?
- Will I be selected for the promotion?
- Do we relocate for a job opportunity?
- What do the results of the blood test indicate?

Beyond these instances of momentary nerves that just about all of us face and have faced are the more paralyzing episodes of anxiety and panic. I must admit that through my own life, I have faced those debilitating struggles.

- Avoiding certain social situations.
- Unprovoked instances of rapid heart rate and hyperventilation, caused by overactive adrenaline.
- A sense of impending doom, feelings of being out of control.
- Fear of being fearful.
- At times visualizing a destitute, bleak future.

Desperate for solutions, I was fortunate to locate the services of skilled counselors who walked

alongside and steadied me during the darkest days. These days, on the occasions when I sense the onset of challenging periods of mental warfare, some of the tools that are helpful include:

- Engagement. Activity for me is vital to mental health. Rest is critical, but idleness can be an enemy.
- Exercise. Some of my best moments and creative thoughts come during aerobic or strength training or cycling.
- Writing. Journaling, putting thoughts on paper, even writing this very piece is cathartic.
- Connection. Who might need to be encouraged through text, phone call, or breaking bread?
- Laughter. What lightens the mood or generates humor, who has a unique presence? At a recent wedding, the bride appeared to struggle with panic in the middle of the ceremony. Rather than be overwhelmed, she approached it with a sense of humor and made it through. I admired that.

Very importantly believing that my own struggles can and will be a critical resource for another soul at some opportune time in the future.

Anxieties for many can be overwhelming and for some debilitating. Should you often find yourself overcome with a kind of

fear that goes beyond the temporary condition of the moment, causes you to alter or avoid usual activities, or brings about withdrawal, I urge and encourage you to seek the assistance of a qualified behavioral counselor or therapist. You are precious; when you make it to the brighter side, which you will, someone else will need you to be there for them. Plan now to do that.

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@theseedsowercoach.com, theseedsowercoach.com, or call 314-677-8779.



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 Dining

Restaurant Review: The Old Florida Fish House

The Old Florida Fish House is a charming and historic restaurant on 30A in Seagrove Beach. Nestled along the pristine shores of Eastern Lake, a rare coastal dune lake, the Fish House offers lakeside dining with views of the Gulf. Steeped in tradition and brimming with character, this iconic fish house

has been a beloved fixture of the local 30A community since 2005. With its rustic ambiance, delectable seafood, and breathtaking views, it continues to enchant visitors from far and wide.

Since its founding, the Fish House's menu and ambiance have evolved and improved. Old oak trees adorned with Spanish

moss still greet guests entering the grounds. While outside seating has always been available with viewing areas by the lake, the Fish House has continued to enhance its grounds with lush gardens, romantic café lights, and flickering tiki torches. Inside the Old Florida Fish House, the weathered wooden walls

adorned with fishing nets, vintage photographs, and local art evoke a sense of nostalgia.

Three kitchens offer guests a wide variety of delectable dishes. All are scratch kitchens, meaning



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all ingredients are prepared in-house. The main kitchen continues to serve fresh gulf-caught seafood, such as grouper and red snapper. Recognizing the health and flavor benefits of humanely and sustainably raised food, the Fish House serves Joyce Farms chicken, Upper Iowa Farms certified angus beef, and regionally grown produce.

The Fish House's expert chefs, Thomas Stuckenberg and Ron White, pay homage to traditional recipes, while also infusing their own creative flair to create a truly memorable dining experience. In addition to traditional seafood dishes, each night the chefs prepare features using the best seasonal ingredients. Recently, a fishing boat captain called Chef Thomas at four in the morning to offer a rare catch of scorpion fish. Thomas immediately agreed to buy the entire catch, and later that night whole baked scorpion fish stuffed with organic vegetables was on the menu.

The sushi kitchen and bar,

led by Chef DJ McCracken, is the second kitchen at the Fish House. As one of the top sushi chefs in the Southeast, Chef DJ combines exceptional skill with the freshest sushi ingredients to provide a one-of-a-kind culinary experience. DJ sources the best sushi ingredients from all over the world, including BlueFin tuna from the Mediterranean and Japan, Scallops and uni from Hokkaido Japan, and A-5 wagyu beef from all over Japan. A local buyer bids on tuna, uni, scallops, and wagyu at the Toyosu market in Japan each week. The week's purchases are flown in overnight to the Fish House.

The Fish House continues to source the finest available exotic and rare ingredients. Last December the Fish House was the first restaurant in the US to purchase an entire wagyu cow from Japan. The cow was a Champion, raised in the Gifu prefecture in Japan. Its trophy still adorns a wall behind the sushi bar. This year, the Fish House was selected to be one of approximately 50 restaurants in the US to be certified to serve Kobe beef from Japan. There are only six other restaurants in Florida certified to sell Kobe in Florida. In addition to Hida and Kobe beef, the Fish House offers Snow Beef from Chateau Uenae, Miyazaki Beef, as well as Olive fed and Drunken Wagyu.

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The third kitchen at the Fish House is the Oyster Bar, which sources the best oysters from all over the US and Canada. Butter and parmesan-drenched grilled oysters are the main attraction for those who enjoy them New Orleans style. Raw oysters are sourced from the best providers available during the optimal harvest and season, including Canada, Virginia, and the Gulf.

In addition to serving delicious food from multiple kitchens, the Fish House offers several unique ways to experience the Old Florida lifestyle. One highlight is its open-air patio, providing panoramic views of Eastern Lake and glittering Gulf waters. As you savor your meal, you can bask in the golden rays of the sun, and feel the gentle sea breeze while listening to live music performed by local musicians. In the fall and spring, fire pits provide a cozy warmth for cool evenings. It's a mesmerizing setting that captures the essence of 30A and old Florida charm.

Inside there are several different dining areas, including the lower dining room with views of Eastern Lake, the sushi bar and

the oyster bar. The renovated main bar is inside, where live music is performed most nights, year-round. In its third year at the Fish House, dueling pianos is a popular show that runs up to five nights per week, depending on the season. On other nights, local favorites perform both inside and outside, depending on the weather. The main bar also features one of the most extensive liquor and wine selections on 30A. The Fish House prides itself on custom barrel selections and hard-to-find wine, bourbon, whiskey, and tequila.

The Old Florida Fish House is more than just a restaurant; it's a gathering place where friendships are forged and memories are made. Locals and tourists alike come together to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions. Live music fills the air, adding an extra layer of merriment to the festivities.

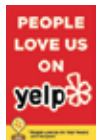
Guest convenience is also a priority. Reservations are accepted year-round, including for large groups. This allows guests to avoid long waits if they are able to plan ahead. Complimentary valet parking is avail-

able during peak times to ensure all guests are able to park with minimal inconvenience. Outdoor activities entertain all ages, such as corn hole and ring toss. The Fish House dock is a great place to watch the sunset and take pictures with the lake and Gulf in the background. Shops are available on the property for gifts, toys, and souvenirs. Next door, Coastside 30A offers retail items, as well as craft beer and fine wine. Beach Bean Coffee serves up quality coffee and food during the day.

In a time that is constantly evolving, the Old Florida Fish House stands as a testament to the importance of preserving history and tradition, while growing and evolving to meet changing tastes and palates. It is a place where the past meets the present, where stories are shared, and where the simple pleasures of good food and good company reign supreme. Whether you're a seafood enthusiast, a history buff, or simply seeking an authentic Florida experience, the Old Florida Fish House is a must-visit destination that will captivate your senses and leave a lasting impression.

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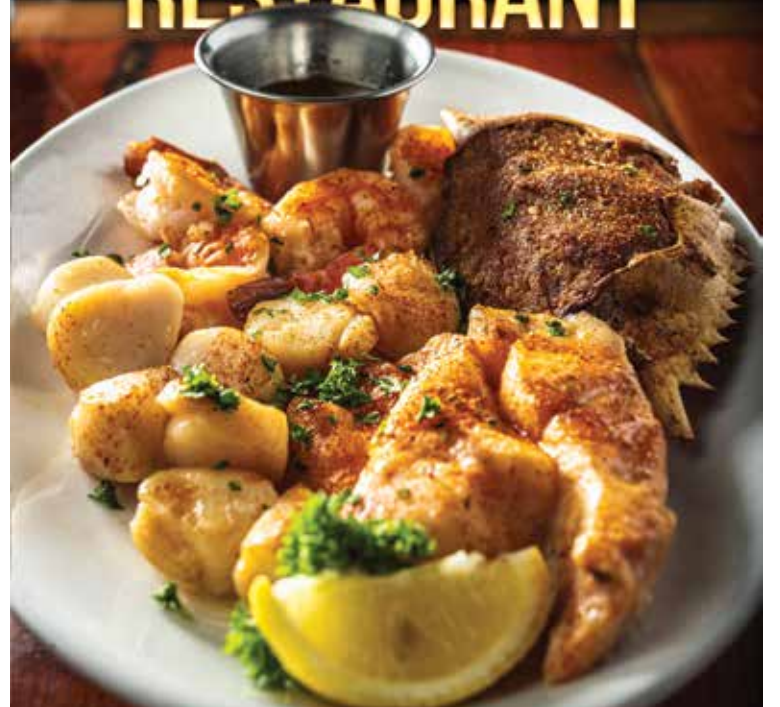
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Music

The Million Dollar Quartet

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ECTC

Picture it; America—1956. A gallon of gas is 29 cents and a glass bottle of Coca Cola costs you a nickel. Grace Kelly becomes Princess Grace of Monaco and new products on the market include Play Doh, Comet Cleanser and a funny little dice game called Yahtzee. It is also the year a relatively unknown Elvis Presley explodes onto the scene at the tender age of 21. The term “catapults” might even be more apt. 1956 is a rock-n-roll pot of water that is just beginning to boil, and then Elvis comes along and cranks up the heat.

He released five songs to top the Billboard pop charts that year including “Heartbreak Hotel,” “I Want You, I Need You, I Love You,” “Don’t Be Cruel,” “Hound Dog” and “Love Me Tender.”

On Nov. 15, 1956, the movie “Love Me Tender” was released, and not long after that on Dec. 4, 1956, Elvis stopped by Memphis-based Sun Records Studios to have a chat with owner Sam

Phillips, also known as the man who invented rock-n-roll. It just so happened that Rockabilly artist Carl Perkins, who originally wrote and performed “Blue Suede Shoes,” was there to lay down some tracks. Wild piano man Jerry Lee Lewis was brought in to help fill out those tracks with his distinctive sound. Oh, and there was someone else there, too—a popular country singer named Johnny Cash.

These four legendary musicians proceeded to have an impromptu jam session that included gospel, hymns, rockabilly, country and a little rock-n-roll thrown in for good measure. Sam Phillips had the presence of mind to leave the tapes running, and managed to get a recording of this epic jam session that made the Memphis newspapers the next day with the headline



“Million Dollar Quartet.”

The actual recording wasn’t released until 1981 and, even then, only in Europe. It wasn’t until 1990 that the complete recordings were released in America. The musical, which is based on this once-in-a-lifetime con-

vergence of some of the greatest musical talent in American history, premiered in Chicago in 2008 to rave reviews and eventually went to Broadway.

I am absolutely thrilled that this incredible, based-on-a-true-story musical is the opening show

for Emerald Coast Theatre Company’s 11th Season! The music makes this show great, but the story behind the music is what gives this show a magical texture. We, as the audience, have the privilege of knowing that this event was an ephemeral, once-in-a-lifetime happening. For those guys, it was just another Tuesday. What a stroke of genius for Sam Phillips to have the gift of foresight and capture the moment for all of us to savor years later. And just as brilliant that Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux saw the magic in the story and wrote a show about it. Get your tickets soon because Elvis will be in the building on September 15th through October 1st.

The great thing about ECTC’s premiere of this toe-tapping musical is that you have more than one random Tuesday afternoon to catch it. As the King would say, “It’s now or never.”



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Studio 237 Meet the Voice Teacher: MaryKate Cary

MaryKate Cary is a classically trained vocalist with studies in gospel, jazz, and pop. In the fall of 2022, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in General Music along with special studies in Music Entrepreneurship from Florida State University. Her passion is to empower youth through music and community support.



Over the years, music engulfed MaryKate inside and outside the classroom. Since the age of thirteen, she has been a part of many choral ensembles, musical theater ensembles, vocal

recitals, and solo performance opportunities in Noirmoutier,

France. In Northwest Florida, she was actively engaged for six years managing clubs and programs for academia and four years as the Director of Choreography for musical theater programs. MaryKate says, "I have always enjoyed the thrill of performing and also find voice teaching just as exciting and rewarding." She loves sharing the joyful experience of music with others.

Singing songs that she enjoys has always been a safe place for her. Through trials and tribulations, music has been her sup-

port. MaryKate believes that "Music is medicine for the soul". She knows the healing elements of song and desires to enrich the souls of others with the power of music. Her mindful positivity and uplifting personality are refreshing. MaryKate says, "I highly value spirituality, joy, and community."

Recently, MaryKate has joined Ray and Lisa Cyr at Studio 237 Music Lessons in Santa Rosa Beach to provide Voice Lessons for students of all ages and experience levels. Her diverse background and experience have

provided enough knowledge to enable students to improve their vocal ability and sound better after a season of instructions. MaryKate is a gifted performer and teacher who understands the training each individual will need to develop their voice and gifting.

For more information about voice lessons, call or text Ray Cyr at (850) 797-3546 or leave a message at (850) 231-3199. See more about MaryKate on our website at: www.studio237music.com/teachers

The Remarkable Benefits of Voice Lessons

Whether you're an aspiring vocalist or simply looking to enhance your communication skills, voice lessons offer a multitude of advantages. From building self-confidence to improving overall communication, voice lessons provide a well-rounded set of benefits that can positively impact various aspects of your life.

Enhanced Vocal Ability: The most apparent advantage of voice lessons is improved singing proficiency. Skilled vocal coaches guide students through proper techniques, helping them develop a healthy voice, with a wider vocal range, better pitch control, and greater tonal clarity. Lessons are uniquely crafted for the student.

Boosted Self-Confidence: Voice lessons are more than just about hitting the right notes; they encourage self-assurance. As students witness their progress, their self-esteem grows, empowering them not only on stage but in everyday interactions as well.

Effective Communication:

Voice training emphasizes clear articulation, projection, and modulation. These skills are transferable to public speaking, presentations, and professional communication, enabling individuals to captivate audiences and convey messages more effectively.

Stress Relief and Expression: Singing is a natural stress reliever. Voice lessons provide a creative outlet where emotions can be channeled through music, serving as a form of emotional release and promoting mental well-being.

The benefits of voice lessons extend beyond the realm of music. They encompass personal growth, improved communication skills, and emotional well-being. Whether you desire to improve your singing abilities or simply aim to amplify your self-assuredness, voice lessons offer a holistic approach to self-improvement. The voice is a powerful instrument that can unlock a world of opportunities, both in the realm of music and in your everyday life.



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Community

Live Music in September

Old Florida Fish House

For over a decade, Old Florida Fish House has proudly featured local live music. Catch artists playing inside the coveted bar and lounge area as well as in the large outdoor dining space situated among the palm and oak trees under the twinkling lights next to Eastern Lake.

Catch Russ Whitten at 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays in September; Michael David at 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; Alex Napier at 7 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays; Dueling Pianos at 7 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. 33 Heron's Watch Way, Seagrave Beach.

Local Catch

Live music has been a part of Local Catch's identity from the beginning. For years, Sundays at the Catch have long been a highlight of the "Sunday Funday" festivities throughout South Walton featuring local and visiting musicians alike. Catch the Forrest Williams Band

on Tuesdays and Thursdays in September. Alex Napier & The Daybreak Trio play on Sundays, September 10th and 24th. 3711 W. County Highway 30A, Santa Rosa Beach.

FOOW Sunday Brunch & Live Music

Sunday Brunch at FOOW –



Fish Out of Water in WaterColor – means live music and bottomless mimosas. The Gulf front restaurant invites you to dine on brunch favorites Sundays from 8 a.m.- 2 p.m. paired with live music from 11 a.m.- 2 p.m. Sept. 3: Megan Ashley, Sept. 10: Otha Allen, Sept. 17: Kyle Lamonica, Sept. 24: Stevie Monce. 34 Goldenrod Circle, Santa Rosa Beach.

The Red Bar Jazz Band @ The Red Bar

SoWal visitors and locals love the Red Bar, a jumpin' little joint off of Scenic 30A in the cozy laid-back beach town of Grayton Beach. The Red Bar Jazz Band plays Tuesdays through Saturdays from 5:30-9 p.m. The party gets cranked up a notch after the dinner crowd thins creating a more funky atmosphere. Follow The Red Bar on Facebook to find out about more bands throughout the month. The Red Bar, 70 Hotz Ave. Grayton Beach.

The Bay

Come out to The Bay with family and friends every Wednesday night starting at 5 p.m. 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. Sept. 6: Sunshine Wranglers, Sept. 13: The New Cahoots, Sept. 20: Queens Ransom, Sept. 27: Drew Young. Sunday Pickin' @ The Bay features The Sand Ole' Opry with Mike Whitty & Friends on stage from 4-8 p.m. 2415 South Hwy 331, Santa Rosa Beach.

Red Fish Taco

Live music is a central component of Red Fish Taco's festive atmosphere! Rock out to local and visiting musicians almost every day of the week in their outside Garden Room - where tacos are tasty and the margaritas come in different flavors and sizes. September's lineup includes Casey Kearney every Tuesday, Outro every Wednesday, and many other great bands throughout the month from 6-9 p.m. Get the complete schedule at redfishtaco.com. 2052 W Country Hwy 30A, Red Fish Village, Blue Mountain Beach.



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PC 30A Class Topics Include:

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- The Pacific Air War
- Tech Trends: ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence
- The Magic of the Memoir

Tallahassee ZOOM Topics Include:

- Race Matters in the Supreme Court 1787-2023
- Immigrants Stories of Jazz, Rock and Popular Culture
- Write, Speak, Listen to French for Regional Travel
- Goya: The Birth of a Modern Artist

More Classes Being Added!

~Exciting News and Bonus Offers~

Author Events

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featuring Dr. Tim Chapin Presenting "People and Housing and Jobs, Oh My!: A Look at the Sunshine State"

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Five Things To Do Before a Storm

By JULIE A. MARTIN,
LICENSED AGENT FL

It's the middle of summer, and you just heard on the radio that a Category 4 storm is about to hit in your area. What should you do to prepare? Stocking up on non-perishable food and bottled water is a given and also batteries. Those are both good preventative measures. But, what will you do if the storm hits your house? How can you minimize damage to your home and to your other possessions?

The first thing you should do is call your insurance agent and ask for a copy of both your declarations page and your policy jacket. You should do this both for your home and for your vehicles. If you have boats, motorcycles, an RV or any other contrivance or dwellings, get all of your policy documents together in one place. Familiarize yourself with your deductibles, coverages and any exclusions or limitations. You should do this

regularly anyway, because once a storm is in the box, no coverage can be changed, altered or reinstated. If there is a payment due, pay it. You might be unable to do so later, if the timing of the storm coincides with a cancellation or the expiration of your policy.

The second thing you should do is take pictures and videos of the inside and outside of your home and email them to yourself. This is to show what your house looked like BEFORE anything happened. If you recently purchased big ticket items like new furniture or an entertainment center, email yourself any receipts you might have for the more expensive items in your home. In the event of a loss, receipts, photos and videos will aid the adjusters in processing your claim in a fair and timely manner.

The third thing to do is go out into your yard, front and back, and think about anything that can become a projectile. Winds upwards of 120 miles per hour



can turn even a 6 oz. can of soup into a weapon. The more things that you can bring into the garage or a shed, the less they will be likely to fly into one of your windows or the side of your house. The things that you are unable to bring into your garage, lay them on their side as close to the back of the house as possible, or the shed. Try to tie them down with rope so it is less likely to fly away and either damage your home or hurt someone. Anything on your patio? Bring it into the house or into your garage, if you have one.

If you have hurricane shutters or windows, you are already ahead of the game. But, if you

do not, boarding up your windows is a good close second. You might need to go to Home Depot or Lowe's where they have both the lumber and the clips/screws to board up the windows tightly. Do some research before you do this, because there is a right and wrong way to board up your house against the possibility of storm damage.

The last thing to do is make sure you have a battery-operated

charger for your phone, so that in the event you do get hit, you can communicate with your family, and call the agent and insurance company for help in putting in your claim. Get gas before the storm. Don't just top it off. If you have three vehicles, take them to the station one by one and fill them all up. The first thing that happens after a hurricane is a localized shortage of goods, and you don't want to have to scramble around at the last minute and go without. If you prepare yourself, your home and your vehicles well in advance of the upcoming storm, you can breathe a sigh of relief that even if the storm hits, you have done everything you can to prevent against further loss.

TO READ ONLINE SOUTHWALTON.LIFE

Wes Herndon at Austons on 98 Wednesday, Sept. 13

Like so many, Wes Herndon feels he has a story to tell and the best way for him to do that is with a guitar in hand, and a mic in front of him. Catch his performance at Austons on 98, 125 Poinciana Blvd, Miramar Beach. Visit wesherndonofficial.com to learn more about Wes.

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The Fail-Proof 4-Step Guide To Choosing The Best Vacation Rental Manager

By ASLI THEOBALD, MS

For absentee owners, below is the 4-step fail-proof recipe for generating the best returns on vacation rental investments without headaches:

1. Find a manager who will list your home on the Airbnb and VRBO vacation rental booking platforms, avoiding all the local management companies that only list the homes they manage on their own personal websites. All of these “big” local companies are way smaller and less popular than the world’s biggest international booking platforms Airbnb and VRBO. Utilizing the world’s top 2 most popular booking platforms and this alone will generate the maximum exposure needed to generate maximum returns.

2. There are 2 reasons why the “big” local 30A vacation rental companies often list the homes they manage only on their personal websites. The first reason, obviously, is not to have to pay a commission to Airbnb and VRBO, despite lower profits for owners. The second reason most local management companies avoid using Airbnb and VRBO is to prevent

homeowners from seeing any negative reviews that may ac-

cumulate on these platforms not under their control. If any vacationer leaves a bad review on Airbnb or VRBO, that review must stay there, whereas any bad review left on the local company’s own website almost always immediately gets removed, which is why most local management company listings often show very few reviews even for homes listed for years. This is quite unfortunate, as not having an abundance of good reviews fails to utilize the most important trust factor. This discourages countless vacationers from booking, causing huge losses.

3. To find the best manager for your rental investment, I recommend looking for the most highly rated managers on Airbnb and/or VRBO, since nothing can give you a better idea of how well a manager has been performing than an abundance of great reviews from actual guests. Visit Airbnb.com or VRBO.com, perform a broad search for vacation homes in Santa Rosa Beach, sort the search results by highest ratings, and click on the profiles of the managers that come up at the top. Select and message the best managers who have the best review ratings despite having a fairly large number of total

reviews for all homes managed (e.g.: Dream Home 30A has been able to maintain a 4.9-star rating despite having accumulated around 500 reviews, consistently never having failed for more than 5 years). When you message these most successful managers using Airbnb or VRBO’s messenger and ask if they’d like to also manage your rental, you’re likely to get quick responses as Airbnb and VRBO grade managers on their response time.

4. If you can get your home listed and managed by one of the most successful managers on the world’s biggest booking platforms, your listing will immediately get featured on that platform’s search results due to the way the platform’s ranking algorithm elevates the homes listed by the most highly rated managers. As your highly-rated manager causes your home to acquire many great reviews, more and more vacationers will trust and book your home, causing your successful investment to rake in increasing returns.

Asli (“Ashley”) Theobald is the owner/operator of Dream Home 30A. Call 850-867-5449 now to start making maximum profits as described above.

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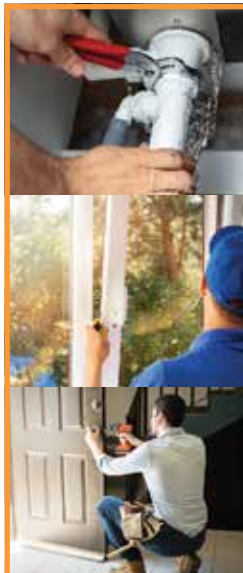
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