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South WALTON Life

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Volunteer Beach Ambassador Program Gearing Up for 2024 Sea Turtle Nesting Season!

The Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles (FOSWST) Volunteer Beach Ambassador (VBA) program began in the Spring of 2016 with a dedicated group of 30 volunteers that has grown to a team of over 200 volunteers for the 2024 season!

May 1 is officially the beginning of nesting season for Florida's Sea Turtles. Each year, thousands of sea turtles nest on Florida's beaches. Florida beaches are the number one place for sea turtle nests in North America from

May to October. Northwest Florida beaches attract many endangered species including Green, Loggerhead, Leatherback and Kemps Ridley. A female will return to the beach where she was born to lay her



eggs. "If you're lucky enough to see it, it's incredible to watch a 300-400 pound Loggerhead Sea Turtle crawl up the beach, which is no easy task, dig an 18-20 inch hole, deposit her eggs, and then cover

them back up with sand and pat it all down, all with only her back flippers," says Beth Coppedge, President of the FOSWST organization. The whole process takes between 30-60 minutes. However, there

are many hazards and further complications for a Momma sea turtle coming back to the beach to lay her hatchlings.

And that's why the educational efforts of the VBAs are so important. The message is pretty simple: Help Keep our beaches **Clean, Dark and Flat** so sea turtles can nest successfully. Everyone benefits from clean beaches, and since most of Florida's sea turtles nest at night, it is important to keep our beaches dark because bright lights can disorient nesting turtles and hatchlings. **Filling in holes on the beach** is also important so we don't impede "Momma" from reaching her

FOSWST
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Walton County Seeks Community Input on Growth and Development

The Residents and businesses in Walton County can help plan the future of their communities through a new initiative, Plan for Walton 2040.

"Walton County is a unique place, with world-famous beaches and resort towns, charming historic sites, large areas of conservation, and beautiful rural farmland," says Plan for Walton 2040 Project Lead Marina Khoury. "Those areas all have their own character and a sense of community. Future growth in these communities, and the intensity of that growth, should reflect those values. Walton County also is a special place for DPZ as we have been helping to guide development there for the past 40 years."

Plan for Walton 2040 is part of an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the county's Comprehensive Plan, a state-mandated long-range plan that must be updated every seven years. The planning effort includes a

WALTON 2040
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Community

FOSWST

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destination.

VBA's greet our locals and visitors along the beaches, scenic bike paths and throughout our community. While greeting everyone visiting our beaches, the main job of a VBA is to educate them on beach etiquette and county beach ordinances, specifically those codes that directly impact the preservation and safety of our nesting sea turtles. They also pick up trash, fill in holes in the sand, and flatten any sand-castles/art at the end of the day.

There is no requirement on where or when to volunteer. You pick your favorite beach, time and day, and just show up. Stu-

dents under 18 may also join but must be accompanied by a parent who is also a VBA. Community service hours are logged for each student.

Recruiting is taking place now for the 2024 season. Upon completing a training session and joining the FOSWST (\$5 membership fee), you will be provided with a branded shirt and name tag. Training is held in the Walton County's Visitors Center's Conference Room. The upcoming training dates are scheduled for Saturday, May 18 and May 25 from 9:30-10:30 AM.

Check out their website at friendsofswseaturtles.org for additional information on how to join the FOSWST organization as a Volunteer.



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WALTON 2040

continued from page 1

major emphasis on community outreach and engagement to ensure that residents, businesses, and stakeholders have the chance to share their ideas and opinions. This input will be combined with the technical team's assessment to create a long-range vision plan to guide Walton County's future growth and development.

To conduct the review and planning effort, the Walton County Commission has engaged a team of consultants led by DPZ CoDesign. DPZ may be familiar to long-time residents as they helped author the Trust Plan in the 1980s and also planned and designed the town of Seaside, among others. The consulting team includes experts in transportation, green infrastructure, environmental planning, land economics, zoning analysis and legal review.

On the website, www.PlanForWalton2040.com, residents can learn more about the planning process, sign up for email updates, and take an initial survey to share their ideas and preferences for Walton County's future. Plan for Walton 2040 also has a Facebook page of the same name where residents can ask questions and engage in the process.

"For this plan to be successful, we need to hear from the wide array of people who work, live or recreate in Walton County. So we invite everyone to visit the website, take our survey, sign up for email updates, and plan to attend all or part of the charrette meetings in May," said Khoury.

In addition to the website, so-

cial media, and email outreach, the planning team hosted a week-long workshop in Walton County from May 1-8, 2024. That workshop, a "charrette," included public presentations, workshops on specific topics such as environment and transportation, an open-studio time where stakeholders interacted with members of the planning team, and "pop-up" outreach efforts in different areas of the County.

For more information, visit www.PlanForWalton2040.com or email info@PlanForWalton2040.com.




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Our Ad & Editorial Deadline is the 20th of each month for the following month's issue.

Building Resilience with the Walton County CERT Program

BY HEATHER BENNETT EYE

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program was started in the '80s by the Los Angeles Fire Department when they realized the need for support in the event of a large-scale disaster. They wanted to give people the proper training to help others without putting themselves in harms way. FEMA formalized the training program in 1993, which is now available across the United States. The CERT training program prepares everyday people like you and me to help families and neighbors in the event of a disaster so we're able to provide support and immediate assistance before first responders arrive.



Our Walton County CERT program is under the umbrella of Walton County Emergency Management, the entity responsible for all aspects of disaster including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery for all types of natural, technological or man-made hazards. It operates out of an old Cold War bunker in DeFuniak Springs. The program is a 501(c)(3) all-hazards department consisting of volunteers who assist where there's a need. It began in 2017 and has grown to over 200 trained individuals, with 150 volunteers who are active for large-scale events and about 60 volunteers who are more active and readily available for non-di-



saster events as well. "The reason why CERT exists, is so our community is more resilient and more prepared," said Catie Feeny, Operations Coordinator for Walton County.

Non-Disaster events are what they call "Blue Sky" activities. These can be anything from assisting community events with traffic control or first aid stations to attending outreach events, helping around the bunker, organizing disaster supplies, and assisting with office functions such

as filing. "Gray Sky" activities are more disaster response events such as human needs assessments after house fires alongside the American Red Cross, assisting in the Emergency Operations Center, answering phones in the Community Information Center, and distributing supplies such as food, water, and ice. "We are the pieces behind the scenes that make sure that when big does get big, and it's beyond the capacity of the first responders, we can be there to support them so they get what they need," stated Catie.

The CERT team also focuses on helping people post-disaster, thinking about what people need in the weeks and months ahead, and making sure they are able to transition back to normalcy as soon as possible. "We're the little worker bees behind the scenes," said Catie. Volunteers will help EOC staff keep track of resources, recovering resources that are no longer needed and moving them around to where there's still a need.

Volunteers come from all types of backgrounds. Some people are professional volunteers, who volunteer more hours than their

regular work hours, and there are also retirees, lawyers, and doctors. "We have some folks who are in their 70s. It doesn't matter your age or ability, there's a spot for everybody," said Catie. "The CERT program is an incredible opportunity not only to give back to your community but also to make lifelong friends. There are people from all walks of life, all different professions. You can find your friends here."

If you're interested in learning more about CERT, you can take an online class IS-317: Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams, offered through FEMA. The Walton County CERT program offers in-person volunteer training 3 times a year. The next session will be offered this summer. The classes teach basic skills for fire operations, fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, disaster medical operations and terrorism. It's offered on Tuesday and Thursday evenings over two weeks with a Saturday practicum where you can put your skills to the test.

CERT

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 Community

Preparing for a Safe Summer at the Beach

BY: MACKENZIE MCCLINTOCK,
SWFD Public Information Officer

As the weather warms up and many individuals head to the beach, South Walton Fire District (SWFD) wants to remind the community about the proper precautions to take to make summer safer.

SWFD's firefighters and lifeguards experience a significant uptick in preventable medical incidents during the summer months. Many times, these events happen without warning and do not discriminate between individuals who are long-time Florida locals, or first-time visitors to the area.

"Anyone can fall victim to impacts of the Florida heat," said SWFD Beach Safety Director David Vaughan. "When you combine that hot weather with dangerous surf, we start to experience incredibly busy and difficult days. Unfortunately, it doesn't take long for a nice day at the beach to end in tragedy, and that's what we're trying to prevent."

The Gulf of Mexico does have smaller surf compared to other beaches across the coun-

try, however, the waves are not the primary danger to swimmers. Instead, rip currents pose the most significant threat.

"Each year, it's estimated rip currents are responsible for approximately 100 deaths in the United States," Vaughan said. "These deaths are

preventable. It starts with an understanding that any open body of water poses a threat to swimmers and demands your respect."

Often incorrectly referred to as "riptides" or "undertow," rip currents typically form due to a break in the sandbar, as well as near structures such as jetties and piers.

A rip current's size and speed can vary depending on the day's conditions, but one thing remains the same: even elite swimmers can't outlast the grip of the rip.

"It's the panic that kills people," Vaughan said. "A swimmer realizes they aren't making any progress toward shore and suddenly, they start to swim straight



toward shore not realizing they are swimming against the current. This is a race that no one can win."

Instead, SWFD lifeguards recommend a swimmer remains calm, relaxes their body, and allows themselves to float to conserve their energy. Then, they can wave back to shore or yell for help. Strong swimmers also can consider swimming parallel to shore to break out of the rip current.

"Rip currents often have a natural dispersion point where the current comes to an end and will essentially spit you out back into a section of breaking waves," Vaughan said. "At this point, you



indicate the presence of a rip current.

4. Debris and foam- a trail of marine debris or sea foam being pulled in a line out to sea can show the rip current's pattern or trail.

"The best defense to prevent a rip current-related drowning is to swim near a lifeguard," Vaughan explained. "When an emergency happens, you must account for the time it will take for someone to call 911 and send help to your location. Our sole purpose is to keep people safe at the beach and the closer you can get to us, the quicker we can be there to help."

SWFD staffs 15 lifeguard towers across the 26 miles of South Walton's coastline. For a better understanding of lifeguard tower locations, rip current safety, and daily beach condition updates, follow the South Walton Fire District on Facebook or Instagram, or visit www.swfd.org.

Anyone interested in joining SWFD's team and serving the community as a beach lifeguard can email career@swfd.org to learn more about career opportunities.

may find yourself close to the sandbar on our beaches, where the water is shallow, and you are able to stand or rest."

Some clues that rip currents may be present include:

1. The color of the beach warning flags. Rip currents are more likely to be present on days of single red or double red flag conditions, however, they can also be present on a yellow flag day.

2. Differences in water color- rip currents are often darker in color than the water immediately surrounding them.

3. Irregular water texture- areas where waves are not breaking or appear disorganized can




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Coastal Seniors Update for May



Chair Yoga Classes at the Blake in Miramar Beach – Tuesdays, May 7, 21 and June 4 at 9:45 a.m. 90 Ponce De Leon St. RSVP to (850) 650-5000 to register.

Game Day at Somerby on Wednesdays – Wednesdays, May 8, 15, 22, and 29, and June 5 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.

Monthly Meeting – Friday, May 17 - 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Jennifer Crawford, Keller-Williams Emerald Coast, will speak about “I’m a Trustee, Now What?” Jennifer will educate seniors about being trustees. Call (850)280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com to reserve your spot. Held at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach and a light lunch will be served.

Exercise Classes – Angela Gibson will lead classes on Tuesdays, May 7, 14, 21, 28, and June 4 at 10 a.m. and Thurs-

days, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and June 6 at 10 a.m., at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$5 per session. R.S.V.P to coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com.

Tai Chi Classes – Thursdays, May 9, 16, 23 at 1 p.m. Antony Barlett will lead the classes. Cost is \$10 per class. Held at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Call (850) 280-5342 to reserve your spot, or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com.

Water Aerobics at Watersound Fountains – Join us Mondays and Wednesdays. Mondays, May 6, 13, 20 and June 3. Wednesdays, May 8, 15, 22, 29 and June 5 at 10 a.m., at Watersound Fountains, 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. Cost is \$5.00 per class, cash or check preferred. A hat, sunscreen, and towel are suggested. Space is limited and reservations are required. Call (850) 280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com.

Pickleball – Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex courts Wednesdays, May 15, and 29 at 6 p.m. Registration is required. Register for one date only at [\[www.walton-rec.com\]\(http://www.walton-rec.com\) by choosing field and court rentals. Open to Walton County residents only. Email Sandy Gulak at \[sowalpickleball@gmail.com\]\(mailto:sowalpickleball@gmail.com\) for more info and with questions. Please join](http://www.walton-</p>
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the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org.



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Psalm 18:28
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Anglers Invited to Cash-in at Charity Fishing Tournament

Anglers, novice to professional, are invited to cast their luck in the Specialty Spot Tournament on Saturday, May 18th for \$6000 in cash prizes. The charity redfish and trout tournament is presented by Specialty Roofers and benefits the Wright Fight for Cystic Fibrosis.

“We are excited about this tournament because it combines two of our passions – fishing and giving back to the community,” Erin Bakker, marketing director at Specialty Roofers, said. “We hope everyone has a great time for an even greater cause.”

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

The Specialty Spot Tournament benefits The Wright Fight for Cystic Fibrosis. Specialty Roofers aims to draw awareness and support for the fight for cystic fibrosis by highlighting locals, William and Magen Wright, whose twin sons,

Merrit and Campbell were born with cystic fibrosis. All proceeds from the event will go toward the Wright family’s fundraising efforts for the Cystic Fibrosis Fund.

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

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

Specialty Roofers has earned a reputation for being one of the best roofing companies in Northwest Florida. Local accolades include 2018, 2019 and 2020 Finest of the Emerald Coast by Northwest Florida Daily News, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Best of the Emerald Coast by Emerald Coast Magazine and Best in Niceville for several years. SRI has a local reputation for giving back to the com-

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

The legendary hit makers Atlanta Rhythm Section and Orleans team up to bring their melodic magic to Mattie Kelly Arts Center June 29th in Niceville. The two iconic bands dominated the 70’s & 80’s charts—Atlanta Rhythm Section with top 10 hits “So Into You,” “Imaginary Lover,” “Doraville,” “I’m Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight,” “Champagne Jam,” “Angel,” “Do It Or Die” and “Spooky”—Orleans with the unforgettable radio hits “Still The One,” “Dance With Me” and “Love Takes Time.”

Their classic songs still resonate with audiences of all ages thanks to continued



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

Thinking of Selling Your Home?

10 Marketing Strategies the John Martin Group does to achieve the **Highest price** in the **Shortest time**.

By JOHN H. MARTIN

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4. Host Exclusive Open Houses and Events: We organize exclusive open houses and events for potential buyers, real estate agents, and local influencers.

5. Highlight Unique Features: We identify and highlight the unique features of the home, such as architectural details, stunning views, or eco-friendly upgrades. Emphasizing these aspects can set the property apart from others on the market and attract discerning buyers.

6. Utilize Influencer Marketing: Our team partners with

local influencers, bloggers and other experts to promote the property through their social media channels or blogs. Their endorsement can add credibility and reach a wider audience.

7. Create Compelling Video Content: We produce engaging video content showcasing the property, neighborhood amenities, and lifestyle. Video tours, testimonials from happy residents, and neighborhood highlights can help potential buyers connect emotionally with the home.

8. Network with Local Real Estate Agents: We are always building relationships with local real estate agents and are highly resourceful in getting agents to view your property.

9. Utilize Drone Photography for Aerial Views: Our team incorporates drone photography to capture stunning aerial views of the property and surrounding area. This can showcase the home's location, proximity to amenities, and highlight unique selling points.

10. Offer Flexible Viewing Options: We accommodate po-

tential buyers with flexible viewing options such as virtual tours, 3D walkthroughs, and private showings outside of traditional hours. Making it convenient for buyers to view the property can lead to quicker sales and higher offers.

We are also highly resourceful working with vacation renters and their agencies to get qualified buyers in your property. This is highly important to selling your property in peak rental months.

By implementing these strategies, we can effectively market your home to attract qualified buyers, generate interest, and ultimately sell for the highest price possible in the least amount of time with minimal hassle.

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ANGLERS

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MAY 18TH, 2024

Community

First Annual Knights of Columbus Charity Golf Tournament Raises Funds for Local Nonprofits

The First Annual Knights of Columbus Council 17689 Charity Golf Tournament was held Saturday, April 27, 2024, at The Links at Sandestin. The event benefitted Caring & Sharing of South Walton, Point Washington Medical Clinic and Healing Paws for Warriors.

The setting and the day were beautiful beginning with registration, raffles, coffee and donuts, welcome messaging and rules for a 10 a.m. Shotgun Scramble format event. A Happy Hour and Awards presentations followed at the Clubhouse.

Several unique elements were planned and delivered for the players. At four locations, golfers and volunteers were treated to local favorite dishes prepared by on-course food station partners, Jackacuda's and Chef's Bistro 30A.

Numerous sponsors contributed heavily to the cause and their presence was felt in many creative ways throughout the property. Local philanthropists, Steve and Lynn Dugas were es-

pecially generous.

Every par-3 hole offered great prizes for as many as three players who may have been lucky enough to make an ace, including a \$10,000 prize at the signature 12th hole at the entrance to Sandestin. No aces were made, although one player hit the pin at 12!

The Live Virtual Auction for the event ran for a week and closed on Monday the 29. Nearly 50 items were provided by generous individuals and companies, ranging from luxury travel and local beach accommodations to art and event and food and wine packages, golf tee times at local country clubs, boutique and spa offerings and even exquisitely-made hardwood furniture provided by a local craftsman.



Left - Chris Ruyan / Jackacuda's. Center - Tom Stipes / Knights of Columbus Tournament Director. Right - Craig Collins / Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort.

the Knights of Columbus, affiliated with Saint Rita Catholic Church in Santa Rosa Beach. The Knights are the service arm of almost every Catholic church in the nation, providing direct financial support to millions of people on an annual basis – for over 130 years now.

Tournament Director Tom Stipes – a Knight and Parishioner - said, "Our goal was to create as much revenue as we possibly could, given our short planning runway, then to establish an exceptional event experience for our players and sponsors, properly manage expenses and, finally, to deliver all proceeds to help those in need who are right here on the Emerald Coast. We're proud to say we exceeded all original goals hand-

ily and for that we are humbled and honored to provide this relief. Of course, we wouldn't have been able to execute the event on-site without the commitment of those Knights of Columbus members who stepped up, under the direction of Operations Lead Dave Delahoussaye."

All Mission Partners were represented on-site and players and volunteers were able to meet with them and hear their stories.

Additionally, Father Michael Hartley was on hand to deliver several prayers relevant to the setting and the occasion. And when play commenced he took his talents to the sixth hole where he served as cannon master – shooting golf balls 325 yards down the fairway with a patented air cannon made just for this purpose. Each team got to use his tee shot and put them in position to make eagle on a very difficult par 4.

"The fellowship we fostered today, held in a fun setting and

All of these efforts were imagined, planned and executed by

Coast. We're proud to say we exceeded all original goals hand-

KOC
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SAINT RITA
CATHOLIC CHURCH



ST. JOSEPH THE WORKMAN
COUNCIL 17689



Thank You!



To all of those who supported our first-year event: we thank you for your collective investments made to help heal and enrich those who are currently in need amongst us.

Knights of Columbus Council 17689

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A Mother's Day Tribute to My Sister

By LORI LEATH SMITH,
PUBLISHER

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

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

As Wes and Lauren ("Bebe") grew, Lisa lived her life around them and saw to their every need (and many wants), trying



her best, later as a single mom, to rearrange her schedule, her events and all so that she could be a hands-on mom – whether it was soccer games, track meets, football games, cheer leading competitions, art shows, musical performances – she did her best to be an involved mom, making the choice every day to

put her children in front of herself...and still does to this day.

I once saw something written: It takes someone brave to be a mother, someone strong to raise a child and someone special to love someone other than herself. How true that is of my sister! I might add, however, it takes a strong mom to be an overcomer, even through the loss of her precious child.

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

Wes was one of the greatest gifts she was ever given. She

loved Wes with every fiber in her body and he was all she dreamt her son would be. And then, in an instant, he was no longer here. Things are still fresh for her. Wes was killed only a few months ago. A senseless, out-of-order death such as this one can break a person. But not my Sissy. She is coping with grace, compassion for others who have experienced the same and is doing her best to balance the pain and guilt of outliving Wes with the desire to live in a way that honors him and his time here. There are very challenging days. But, ultimately, she finds hope and security in our creator, and knows she will see her son again one day.

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

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

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

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

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

PLEASE VISIT SOUTHWALTON.LIFE TO READ THIS ISSUE ONLINE



MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Ahmed Rezk, M.D. Karen Riggs, APRN
Dr. Ashley Reynolds, M.D. Kristi Householder, APRN



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Community

Caterpillars and Fruit

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

He didn't know it, but someone planted the milkweed he was chomping on. He didn't know the lady who researched and planned

the small flower bed and bought the milkweed specifically for him and his brothers and sisters, anticipating that the scent of the milkweed would float on the breeze

and bring Monarch mommas around to lay their eggs.

You see, the homeowner had a dream for her own Garden of Eden, as it were, and she labored

to make it an attractive place for butterflies and bees and hummingbirds. Each plant was carefully selected and placed, watered and encouraged daily.

In a couple of weeks or so, the well-fed Monarch caterpillars with their tell-tale yellow and black and white stripes were ready for the next stage in their life's journey, and overnight they began to disappear, one by one. The lady who had watched over them so religiously was surprised, then saddened when she couldn't find them clinging to a partially eaten leaf. Upon doing more research, she discovered that it's common for Monarch caterpillars to leave their host plant when it's time to form their chrysalis and begin their metamorphosis. Some have been known to travel as far as 30 feet to find a spot safe from predators.

She knew that birds wouldn't bother them since the milkweed they fed on produced a protective toxic substance in them. But our Florida Panhandle lizards and frogs are immune, so it was entirely possible that 'her' caterpillars had been gobbled up as someone's dinner.

You can be sure that the lady looked everywhere and on every plant throughout her yard, hoping to find even one chrysalis, but to no avail. She was disappointed but also elated that she had at least, hopefully, done her part in perpetuating the beloved Monarch species.

Mothers are a lot like that when you think about it. The



Hebrew word for Mother is 'Ima' and comes from the root word 'em'. "This root word is profound, suggesting that a mother is a wellspring of life, wisdom, and tradition, emphasizing her role as the primary influence in the social and spiritual fabric of the family." (Hananya Naftali from his article What Does the Hebrew Word for 'Mother' Really Mean?)

We plan for our baby's arrival down to the smallest detail. We feed and clothe, teach and comfort. Mothers are the nurturers. That's the way God made us. We listen and wipe away tears as we gather our little ones into our arms soothing away the pain. We instruct and discipline. Our end goal is for our caterpillar children to grow up and move away. To become good people, good neigh-

CATERPILLARS

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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



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!

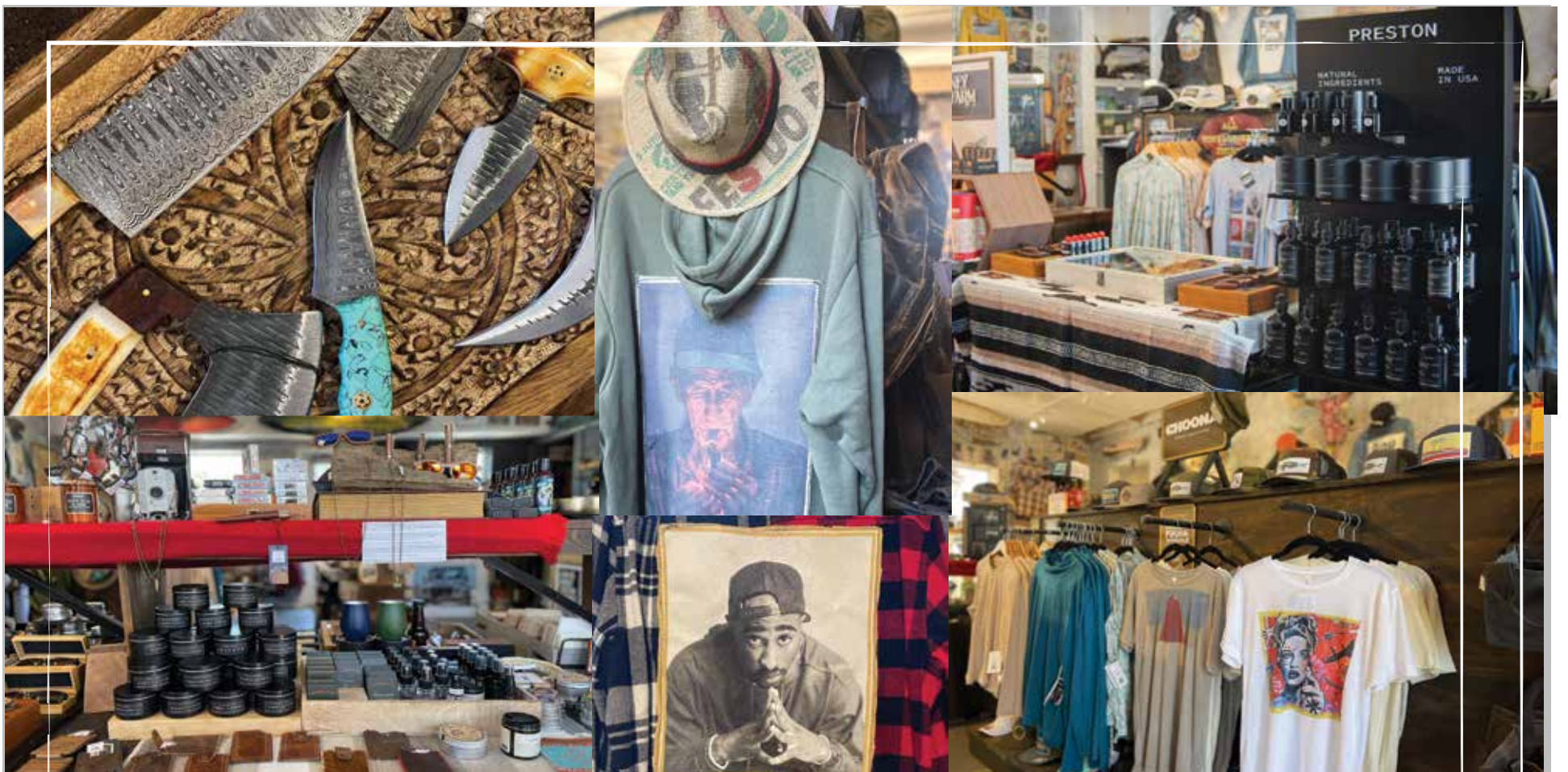
Captured Clothing has custom apparel and curated goods from all over the globe.

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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



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

BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

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

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

We can start with the monetary (money supply) stimulus from the Federal Reserve's balance sheet. That is the assets it owns because it bought bonds on the open market with the

newly produced money supply. By buying the bonds it injects money into the economy. Would you believe that at the start of the Great Recession/financial crisis of 2008 that it stood at \$900 billion? It grew to \$3.8 trillion (2019) pre-pandemic and then peaked at \$8.9 trillion in March of 2022.

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

Of course, federal spending has an impact as well albeit a two-sided effect: 1) It provides economic stimulus but 2) it also drives up deficits, the debt and borrowing costs for the US government. The US Treasury has had the luxury of paying less the 3% on all of debt held by the public (about 30% of that is held by overseas buyers). We take note that this year the Treasury has to refinance almost a quarter of that, about \$7 trillion. There are a lot of new Treasuries hitting the market and the Treasury will have to pay higher rates than it was paying. One recent impact has been the steady rise in yield of the bellwether US Treasury 10-year note. Why are yields going up? When there is a lot of new supply and not a commensurate growth in demand, the price goes down and the yield goes up. At this writing it is at 4.66% and at the start of the year it was closer to 4%. Most of this move was recent and stocks correspondingly sold off. One mitigating factor is the strength of the US dollar. Its year-to-date increase in value is

4.5% (after an increase of 2% for all of 2023). That can have a positive impact for demand for dollar denominated securities like U.S. Treasuries and even though rates are up, can keep borrowing cost lower in the long run.

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

So, we come down to a few questions: 1) Will the continued drawdown in monetary stimulus eventually lead to lower growth overall because the excess money is drying up? 2) Can the U.S. address its deficit growth? We think yes and the answer lies in healthy and fair, entitlement reform. We believe Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid (the biggest drivers of government spending) can and will be fixed because they can be fixed. 3) Can the U.S. put a lid on public debt and outgrow it with GDP?

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

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

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA), commonly known as "The Dow," is an index representing 30 stocks of companies maintained and reviewed by the editors of the Wall Street Journal. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is considered representative of the U.S. stock market. US government bonds and treasury bills are guaranteed by the US government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. US government bonds are issued and guaranteed as to the timely payment of principal and interest by the federal government. Investing in oil involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors. International investing involves special risks, including currency fluctuations, differing financial accounting standards,

and possible political and economic volatility.

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

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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

Immerse Yourself In The World Of Art This May During Art Month Walton County

Ignite Your Creative Spark During Our Month-Long Celebration Of The Arts

Art Month Walton County, an initiative led by the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) of Walton County and sponsored in part by Visit South Walton, has a full month of creative offerings for May. "Dine + Dive" fundraiser for the Underwater Museum of Art and the 36th Annual Arts-Quest Fine Arts Festival already kicked off the month, but there's still time to catch the Longleaf Writers Conference, Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, Mary Poppins at Emerald Coast Theatre Company, Emerald Coast Storytellers events, Sinfonia Goes Pop in Alys Beach, and more. All happenings are part of the Art Month mission to bring together communities, organizations and businesses to present quality and diverse arts entertainment.

The Foster Gallery at the Miramar Beach Creative Campus, is the CAA's professional artist collective showcasing over 40 ro-



tating regional artists and special exhibitions, is currently featuring the work of the Spring Rotation artists in addition to a Special Exhibition of select works by fine photographer Patrick McFeeley scheduled to run through May 31, 2024. Patrick has spent the past three decades exploring and capturing the Island of Maui bringing to the world the now iconic Jaws Maui, home to some of the largest waves in the world and capturing natural beauty that draws visitors from around the world. The devastating wild-

fires of 2023 that destroyed the town of Lahaina, Maui forced Patrick to leave his beloved island to start over. With the support of friends and family these images represent some of the beauty, majesty, and peace that is the Island of Maui. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The annual Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Concerts in the Village series continues May 9, 16, 23 and 30. Each Thursday evening concert features family-friendly premier musicians

and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae and disco to modern pop. Visit MKAF.org for the complete lineup and to purchase tickets.

Mary Poppins, presented by Emerald Coast Theatre Company, opened May 3, but you can still catch performances through May 19. Sprinkle a spoonful of sugar on your spring with the delightful and enchanting Mary Poppins! This show is "practically perfect in every way" for all ages and feels like a "jolly holiday" with friends and fam-

ily. Don't miss this supercalifragilisticexpialidocious show that will lift your spirits and leave you feeling like you want to go "fly a kite!" Performances are Friday, May 3, through Sunday, May 19. For tickets and more information regarding performance dates and times, visit EmeraldCoastTheatre.org.

The Emerald Coast Storytellers join the Art Month lineup this year on May 9 with an Open Mic Night at The Miramar Beach Creative Campus. Listen along to brave local storytellers as they share their written and spoken tales. Doors will open at 5 p.m. and stories will begin at 6 p.m. sharp. For more information and tickets, visit EmeraldCoastStorytellers.com.

The 12th Annual Longleaf Writers Conference will take place in Seaside, Fla and in other

ART

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ART

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venues May 11 through 18, featuring award-winning, visiting authors Adam Johnson and Maggie Smith with other special guests including literary agents Martha Wydysh, Anjali Singh, and Duvall Osteen. Full conference registrations and a la carte seminars are available, along with options to participate in special events throughout the week, including personal consultations, readings and more. Register and purchase tickets online at LongleafWritersConference.com.

Celebrating its 17th anniversary, Digital Graffiti is a one-of-a-kind projection art festival where artists use the latest digital technologies to project their original works onto the white walls of Alys Beach. This year's event takes place Friday, May

17 and Saturday, May 18. Each year, the festival attracts international digital artists, filmmakers, musicians, interactive designers, photographers, VJs, producers, celebrities, agency executives and fans of art, technology and architecture. Visit DigitalGraffiti.com for tickets and details.

Sinfonia Gulf Coast presents Jurassic Park in Concert featuring visually stunning imagery and groundbreaking special effects, this epic action-packed adventure pits man against prehistoric predators in the ultimate battle for survival. Sheer movie magic 65 million years in the making, bring the entire family to experience Jurassic Park in Concert as never before: projected in HD with Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing John Williams' iconic score live to picture. Welcome... to Jurassic Park in Concert! Tickets are \$30-\$55. Purchase online

at SinfoniaGulfCoast.org.

Celebrate the Memorial Day holiday weekend in Alys Beach at the Sinfonia Goes Pops concert on Sunday, May 26 at 7:30 p.m. Sinfonia Gulf Coast orchestra will bring the classic sounds of Memphis alive with Symphonic Soul at this FREE family-friendly music spectacular. Bring blankets or low-back chairs and grab a spot on the amphitheater lawn. For more information visit SinfoniaGulfCoast.org or AlysBeach.com.

Come experience the more intimate side of Emerald Coast Storytellers: face to face, pen to paper, fingers to keys on Thursday, May 30. No matter where you are on your own writing journey, this event is open to all. We'll be at the CAA's Bayou Arts Center armed with our pens, journals, and laptops, and ready to talk shop and get to work.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a brief discussion followed by breakout time to work on individual projects or an optional writing prompt. The event is free to attend, but rsvp's are encouraged. For more information, visit EmeraldCoastStorytellers.com.

Art Month Walton sponsors include Visit South Walton,

Grand Boulevard Town Center, Florida Arts & Culture, Alys Beach and Emerald Coast Magazine. Additional event sponsors are listed on individual event websites. For more information on all Art Month events, please visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com/art-month.

CATERPILLARS

continued from page 10

bors, good workers. But mostly, men and women of God, contribute in a positive way to make the world a better and safer place.

Today, things are looking bleaker and bleaker with violence and hatred on the rise. As followers of Jesus, we know these things must happen, but we still grieve as we see it occurring. But the mother in us, that God-given, nurturing spirit, compels us to rise above

everything that is happening and point our children to the only One who can make sense of it all.

In Galatians, the Apostle Paul teaches us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. This fruit is essential to victoriously navigate the treacherous world we find ourselves in. As mothers, we are commissioned to redeem every day that we have with our children, teaching them these important truths, so when they are

ready for the next stage in their life journey, they are prepared.

When our caterpillar children are thoroughly trained, then as they journey into the next phase of their metamorphosis, they can be the light dispelling the darkness around them. So, mommas out there, keep the faith, hold the line, and never grow weary of telling your children again and again about Jesus and how they can have forgiveness of sins.



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Community

Small Business Connect Hosts "The Power of Facebook Groups" with Gary Redden on May 22nd

The Small Business Connect Business Networking will host "The Power of Facebook Groups" presented by Gary Redden, CEO of DestinDirect.com and PC-BeachesDirect.com. Gary has extensive experience with using Facebook groups and has earned distinction as a "top producer" with Facebook, opening up a series of benefits including access to Facebook's AI programs to signif-

icantly reduce the cost of maintenance of the various Facebook groups he manages.

The presentation is on Wednesday, May 22 from 12-1:15 p.m. at the Destiny Worship Center in Miramar Beach. The program is free and open to the public.

Small Business Connect is a Free business networking group meeting each Wednesday at Destiny Worship Center in Miramar Beach. The

group has been meeting for the past 9 years, sharing referrals and offering small business support in a Christian environment. The group meets at noon for lunch, which can be purchased at the DWC café for only \$8 (includes salads, delicious sandwiches, a side and a drink). You need not be a member of the church to attend.

Small Business Connect has no fees or extensive requirements and is a non-exclusive type group. If you are interested in attending please contact Dave White, Dave@Southwalton.life or or call Minh Nguyen at (850) 376-3412 for more information.



Scholarship Awards, Landscape Awards and a Member Celebration Will Highlight the May Meeting of the Green Thumb Garden Club

By KATHLEEN EDGE, PUBLICITY & WEBSITE CHAIR

In honor of Mrs. Frank Mercer, a former President of Green Thumb Garden Club, the Mercer Scholarship has been awarded to student(s) from Walton County for over four decades. The qualified student(s) must be currently enrolled or have been accepted by a college, university, or technical school and have a major in horticulture.

The \$5,000 scholarship is funded through donations from generous GTGC members, fundraising events, and the Walton County community. The 2024 recipient will attend and receive their award at the May 2024 meeting. Additional Green Thumb Garden Club scholarships will be awarded to participants in 4H Camp Timpoochee and E.O. Wilson Biophilia Naturalists Outdoor programs.

The May 15, 2024, meeting is at Sandestin Westwinds Conference Center in Miramar Beach, Florida. Check-in begins at 9:30



a.m. and lunch is included in the \$30 fee for members and guests. With a meeting theme of Petals, Pearls, and Prosecco; attendees are encouraged to wear their finest spring attire; a prize will be given for the "Best Hat" at the event.

The 2024 GTGC Landscape Awards will also be given out at the May meeting. Eight judges, including a master gardener, recently completed nine in-person home visits to the nominees in five categories. An Award of Merit is also given to a GTGC member, recognizing them for their love of gardening and the creation of a beautiful home environment all year around.

Green Thumb Garden Club always welcomes new members. Please visit the Green Thumb Garden Club website to learn about our charitable mission, how to join and details on meetings, activities, and events. The website address is greenthumbgardenclubinc.org or send an email to greenthumbgardenclubinc@gmail.com.

The Green Thumb Garden Club, Inc., located in Walton County, Florida, is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to stimulate interest in the beautification of Walton County, furthering the education of its members and the public in botany, community beautification, conservation of natural resources, environmental awareness, floral design, gardening, horticulture, and nature studies and instill in our youth the love of gardening and respect for the environment.

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SEASIDE Institute™ and the New Urbanism Movement

By **KIMBERLY STANLEY,**
SEASIDE INSTITUTE™

In an era where urban sprawl isolates individuals and threatens to engulf the very essence of community, New Urbanism aims to create a positive change. This design movement works toward fostering vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods. Rooted in the belief that the built environment greatly influences a person's quality of life, New Urbanism is not merely a planning philosophy. It's a mission, aimed at bringing together communities and the local economy to be better equipped for future generations.

At its core, New Urbanism is about creating walkable, mixed-use communities that focus on human interaction and environmental stewardship. This means creating or recreating neighborhoods where residents can live, work, and play. This reduces the need for relying on automobiles as the only source of transportation and promotes healthier, more active lifestyles. Streets are designed to be pedestrian-friendly and walking or riding bikes is the norm, rather than

the exception. The structural elements of each community are planned with sustainability in mind, using materials or techniques that will be resilient to changes in the population and the environment.

SEASIDE®, Florida, with its pastel-colored cottages, quaint brick streets, and vibrant town center, serves as a living testament to the transformative outcome of using New Urbanism design principles. Founded in the 1980s by Robert and Daryl Davis, this thriving beach town was designed by architects Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. It is the birthplace of New Urbanism and embodies the essence of walkable, mixed-use development, promoting a strong sense of community.

SEASIDE Institute™, the town's non-profit organization, stands as a beacon of innovation. The Institute is dedicated to promoting the principles of connectivity, adaptability, and sustainability that define the New Urbanist movement. Connectivity lies at the heart of New Urbanism, fostering social and

economic growth. By utilizing a more compact, human-centric type of space, residents can access essential services, daily amenities, and public gathering spots, helping avoid long commutes



and promoting a sense of inclusiveness.

Adaptability allows neighborhoods to evolve and thrive in the face of changing needs, accommodating new residents and businesses without sacrificing the character and charm that defines the area. Sustainability is arguably the most critical aspect, with a focus on helping rather than harming the environment and

promoting resilience in the face of climate change. From green building practices and renewable energy to better transportation options and enhanced utility management, New Urbanist design.

They collaborate with organizations and entities to address topics such as coastal resilience, preservation of our natural habitat, responsible planning for new developments, creative design, and local culture.

SEASIDE®'s influence and design philosophy has been demonstrated worldwide. From Charleston, South Carolina to Seabrook, Washington and across the globe to Poundbury, England and beyond, the evidence of responsible forward progression can speak for itself. People who feel safer and can live a healthier lifestyle have a better quality of life, both physically and mentally. With continued dedication and creative vision, the future of our neighborhoods looks brighter and realistically attainable.

For more information about partnership opportunities or to become a member of SEASIDE Institute™, please visit www.seasideinstitute.org or email k.stanley@seasideinstitute.org.



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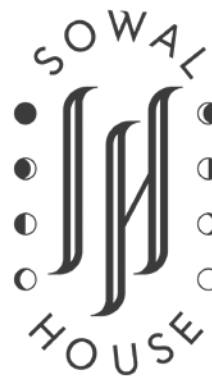
Empowering Local Artists: Inside the Mission of the SOWAL Foundation

Headquartered at SOWAL House in Rosemary Beach, the SOWAL Foundation, also known as SOFO, serves as a vibrant hub for artistic expression and community empowerment. As a registered 501(C)(3) organization, SOFO is dedicated to uplifting and empowering local artists, fashion designers, and filmmakers, playing a vital role in cultivating

a thriving arts community in our area.

Founded on the principles of fostering creative growth and providing essential resources, SOFO advocates for the artistic expression of our talented community members. Through a variety of initiatives and events, they create opportunities for artists to showcase their talents and connect with

audiences. One of the highlights of SOFO's weekly events is Open Mic Night, held every other Tuesday. Musicians, comedians, and performers of all kinds take the stage to share their talents with a supportive audience, creating a celebration of creativity and community.



Walton”, which reimagines coastal scenes as bustling metropolises, blurring the lines between nature and urbanism.

Additionally, SOFO presents Sand Up Comedy events, including the annual Sand Up Comedy Festival, which brings top comedians from across the country for uproarious performances. Stand-up headliners perform solo shows throughout the year, bringing laughter and joy to audiences year-round.

Through their dedication to empowering local artists and fostering creative growth, the SOWAL Foundation continues to make a meaningful impact on our community. By providing resources, advocating for artistic expression, and creating opportunities for artists, they help build a more vibrant and connected arts community in Walton County and beyond.

To RSVP to upcoming SOFO events, visit www.sowalhouse.com/orbiter. For more information on SOFO, visit www.sowal-foundation.org

Alternating with Open Mic Night is Karaoke Night, offering aspiring singers and seasoned performers a chance to shine in a fun and relaxed atmosphere.

Monthly Songwriter's Spotlight nights shine a light on local talent, with artists chosen from the talent showcased at Open Mic Night. These events provide a unique opportunity for up-and-coming musicians to showcase their original songs and connect with music lovers in our community.

SOFO's commitment to the arts extends to quarterly art exhibitions through Mercado Public Gallery, featuring innovative collections like Dave King's “Saint

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WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Festival of the Arts is one of the Southeast's premier festivals and showcases more than 100 artists from across the U.S.

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

The 29th annual Festival will be held on Saturday, Oct. 26, and Sunday, Oct. 27 in the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin.

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

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

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

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

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

Visit www.mkaf.org for Artist Application, Rules of Participation, and Poster Art entry forms.

Call (850) 650-2226 or email mkaf.org for more information.

Seasons Change



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

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

We start with one of the most important phases, the reading and research quarter. This is the time when Nathanael and I read a portion of the stacks and stacks of plays we have in our home library. Our desks at work and our counters at home become the staging area for “must reads” and “maybes” along with every color sticky note to mark our thoughts about each one. Then we order more scripts and do the same thing with them too. This leads to the next phase of impassioned debate and deliberation. Did I mention “impassioned debate?” We discuss each story and its nuances, (always calmly and rationally without throwing any scripts across the room) the characters, the writing, the music, and the overall cohesion of each show choice within the full season. We present our first draft picks and some other top choices to our executive staff for input and collaboration before settling on our new line up.

The next phase is securing production rights and graphic design for all of the show posters and media which leads up to the big announcement of what’s coming in the new season! We aim to get this information out in the spring, well ahead of when we actually launch the new season in the fall. The final large

slice kicks off on opening night with a dynamic fall musical and all of the anticipation that a new season brings.

One of the most exciting moments for our patrons is the big spring announcement that happens ahead of the new season—and that day is here! I’m thrilled to present the upcoming 2024-25 Season 12 at Emerald Coast Theatre Company!

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

All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914, our holiday show, is an a cappella masterpiece. This remarkable true story is told in the words and songs of the men who lived it. Every Brilliant Thing, an interactive show with depth and humor, premieres during January. The story centers around a young boy as he attempts to ease his mother’s depression by creating a list of all the best things in the world worth living for. Everyone’s favorite man-eating plant, sadistic dentist, and meek yet heroic shopkeeper will also make an appearance next January/February in Little Shop of Horrors.

Always a Bridesmaid, a hilarious “Golden Girls” style romp where four friends have sworn to keep their promise to be in each other’s weddings no matter what, rounds out our winter offerings in February/March. And finally, the can’t miss transformation of the eternally pink Elle Woods in **Legally Blonde: The Musical** is the perfect spring show to end our Season 12! We also have two spring shows specifically geared towards our younger audience members. P.D. Eastman’s classic children’s book **Go, Dog. Go!** comes to life on stage like a pop-up book full of big and little doggy music fun for the whole family. We are also offering **The Tortoise and the Hare: Fast Friends, Slow Foes**, a madcap re-telling of the classic, complete with all the forest animals and a pesky possum who just wants to join the fun.



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

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

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 Community

Family-Friendly Events in South Walton May 2024

Destin Rotary Club Cajun Crawfish Bash May 17

The Rotary Club of Destin will host its annual Cajun Crawfish Bash on Friday, May 17 from 5:30-9 p.m. at Mezcal Mexican Grill inside The Towne Centre at Seascape. The Rotary Club of Destin is known for serving up the best Cajun crawfish, libations and live music. This event is suitable for families of all ages and open to the public.

Back by popular demand is Fais Do-Do Band performing their unique genre of zydeco music. Integrating a blend of R&B, soul, brass band, reggae, hip hop, ska, rock and Afro-Caribbean, you are guaranteed to be dancing!

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/12th-annual-destin-rotary-cajun-crawfish-bash-tickets-809681949507>

Fresh crawfish from Louisiana will be dished up with the traditional potatoes, sausage and corn on the cob. For those who don't crave crawfish, there will also be grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and rotisserie chicken prepared fresh on-site.

Event proceeds benefit young families in need and The Rotary Club of Destin Scholarship Fund.

DeFuniak Springs LakeFest May 17-18

Celebrate LakeFest in downtown DeFuniak Springs Friday, May 17 and Saturday, May 18 2024. This annual event is loaded with activities the whole family will love on the water and banks of beautiful Lake DeFuniak, one of the world's rare, naturally round spring-fed lakes.

The 2024 event is comprised of a fish fry, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, toy duck hunts, hilarious Cardboard Boat Races, and the thrill of watching hydro-flight athletes performing for the crowds. There will be live entertainment, waterslides, a dunking booth, and many other activities in the Kids Zone, a variety of food and merchandise vendors, educational vendors, and exhibits, and the 2024 LakeFest Car Show "Under the Oaks" sponsored by Krewe de Yak.

View the schedule, register for the triathlon, and see who will perform live at the 2024 Lake-

Fest: defuniaksprings.net/1101/LakeFest.

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park Guided Plant Stroll May 20

Join Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and Master Gardener Bill Kuenstler on the third Monday 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, visit topsailparkfriends.org.

Biophilia Center: Nothin' Funnier Than Summer May 25

Celebrate Summer with The Biophilia Center at their Nothin' Funnier Than Summer event on Saturday, May 25th from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Spend the day with the whole family enjoying thrilling animal encounters, bouncy houses, mouth-watering food trucks, exciting games, awesome raffles, and so much more! Be sure to bring a towel as some activities include water! Learn more and become a member: ewilsoncenter.org.

Scallyway Sundays at Baytowne Wharf

Join Sandestin's Village of Baytowne Wharf for magic, music, and mayhem! Watch as featured pirate Captain Davy takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage at 7 p.m. & 8 p.m. Sundays, May 19 - August 4. Admission is FREE and open to the public.

Movie Mondays at The Village of Baytowne Wharf

Bring your lawn chair or blanket and cozy up on the Events Plaza Lawn for a featured film. Free and open to the public. Movies start at 7:15 p.m. May 20: SCOOB!; May 27: Playing With Fire.

Huck & Lilly @ Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays

Huck & Lilly will perform LIVE in the Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 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!

The REP Pinocchio in Rosemary Beach Wednesdays

The Seaside REP Theatre presents Pinocchio, kids theatre every Wednesday at St. Augustine Green in Rosemary Beach at 6:30 p.m., May 22 - August 7. Presented by The Merchants of Rosemary Beach, this complimentary event will entertain the entire family. Join Pinocchio as he embarks on a journey like no other, encountering a cast of unforgettable characters and getting into trouble at every turn. With hilarious hijinks and heartwarming moments, Pinocchio discovers the true meaning of courage, kindness, following your dreams, and the magic that lives within.

Baytowne Wharf Boomin' Tuesdays & DJ Dance Party

The Village of Baytowne Wharf is hosting a Boomin' Tuesday extravaganza every week. Enjoy singing and dancing with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events

EVENTS

continued to page 21



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EVENTS

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Plaza from 7:15-9:15 p.m. Then watch as they light up the night sky with a breathtaking fireworks show over the lagoon at 9:15 p.m.!

Fly Guy Thursdays at Baytowne Wharf

Enjoy shows from fly-board extraordinaire Ben Merrell over the lagoon on Thursdays, May 23rd - August 8th from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Watch as he soars to the sky and makes waves on Thursday nights in The Village of Baytowne

Wharf. Admission is FREE and open to the public.

Grand Boulevard Lawn Games

Grand Boulevard invites you to bring the entire family out to enjoy some fun in the sun! Summer Lawn Games will take over Grand Park from 5 - 8:30 p.m. daily, May 25 through August 10th. 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.



Father Michael Hartley served as official cannon master – shooting golf balls 325 yards down the fairway at the Knights of Columbus charity Tournament held on Saturday, April 27 at the Links in Sandestin

KOC

continued from page 8

all to set up a series of contributions to our Mission Partners was outstanding. We know everyone had a great time and is looking forward to next year," said Father Hartley.

Speaking of next year, the

dates aren't announced but Stipes assured us that there will be a second Annual Charity Golf Tournament and expansion is always a goal following a successful inaugural event.

Stipes added, "The professional staff at Sandestin and the ease of operating at The Links

have convinced us that this is exactly where we want to be. They are our partners and we thank them for all of their support and operational efforts".

For more details go to www.golfkoc.com.

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JURASSIC PARK IN CONCERT advertisement featuring logos for Amblin Entertainment, Universal, Florida Arts & Culture, Hancock Whitney, South Walton Florida, Silver Sands Premium Outlets, and Sinfonia Gulf Coast. Includes event details for Saturday, May 18 at 7:30 PM at Destin-FWB Convention Center, and a QR code to buy tickets.

Arts

Cultural Arts Alliance Receives National Endowment For The Arts Funds For Point Washington Medical Clinic Partnership

Additional Partner Projects Recently Unveiled Throughout Walton County

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) is pleased to announce it has been approved by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for a Grants for Arts project award of \$20,000. This matching grant will support public art and arts education at the Point Washington Medical Clinic. In total, the NEA will award 958 Grants for Arts Proj-

ects awards totaling more than \$27.1 million that were announced as part of its first round of fiscal year 2024 grants.

“The NEA is delighted to announce this grant to the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA), which is helping contribute to the strength and well-being of the arts sector and local community,” said National Endow-

ment for the Arts Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. “We are pleased to be able to support this community and help create an environment where all people have the opportunity to live artful lives.” For more information on other projects included in the NEA’s grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

As part of its mission to foster the inclusive and collaborative advancement of the Arts in Walton County, the CAA establishes program partnerships with mission-aligned nonprofit and for-profit organizations in support of its vision for a thriving Walton County in which everyone can experience the power of the Arts. In this spirit, the partnership between the PWMC and the CAA’s Art in Public Spaces program serves to enhance the interior beauty of the clinic’s new facility by bringing in 2D and 3D works by local artists, large scale murals and an exterior sculpture by Anthony Heinz-May, crafted with oak material from the surrounding natural landscape. Participating artists include Francisco Adaro, Melody Bogle, Lynn Crow, Doug Foltz, Justin Gaffrey, Ashley Longshore, Mindy McClendon, Bailey Miller, Sarah

Page, Nicolaus Seegel, Dorothy Starbuck, Allison Wickey, Arix Zalace and Jamie Zimchek. The collaboration will grow to include rotating exhibitions, arts education, and interactive art activities for children and adults.



The NEA funds awarded require a one-to-one match and the organizations are actively seeking financial contributions to support this initiative. If you are interested in learning more about this meaningful opportunity, contact Gabby Callaway at gabby@culturalartsalliance.com.

In addition to the art installations at the clinic, a new 11’ x 30’ mural created by local artist Sarah Page and funded by the St. Joe Community Foundation was recently installed at The Pavilion at Watersound® Town Center. The abstract design serves as a backdrop for events and gatherings and evokes movement and play in a space that is a major

focal point of the Watersound® community.

The mural adds to the CAA’s growing Art in Public Spaces program that includes the nation’s first Underwater Museum of Art, the Watersound® Monarch Art Trail, artworks throughout Walton County as well as planned installations at the upcoming U.S. Highway 98 Pedestrian Underpass.

As part of the CAA’s ongoing partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Walton County, the CAA facilitated the donation of a large-scale mural that was installed in an interior hallway of the South Walton Club. The artwork, donated by the Watersound Inn, is by renowned Southern artist duo Patterson & Barnes whose compositions incorporate the use of many mediums including acrylic, watercolor, India ink, collage and constructions. The CAA and Boys & Girls Club wish to thank the St. Joe Company, Watersound Inn, and Blue Water Property Management for their sponsorship of this project.

For more information about the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County, call (850) 622-5970 or visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.



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Taylor Swift's Ode to Florida Mentions Destin

BY KIM HARPER

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

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

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

"The hurricane with my name when it came

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Rumours ATL:
A Fleetwood Mac Tribute



Gotta Groove Band



Mitch Malloy



Haley Reinhart



Adam Ezra Group


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Wellness

Check Your Alignment



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

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

yourself and others down.

Day to day life can be overwhelming and distracting from the bigger picture of who you want to be. Often, you might find yourself doing the next thing without creating space to be intentional about your values. When you don't know what you value, you don't know who you want to be. And when you aren't clear about who you want to be, your choices and behavior are likely to take you down destructive paths you did not intend to travel. When your lifestyle is out of alignment with your values and who you want to be, life becomes less fulfilling, less hopeful, less focused and less purposeful. Life lived out of alignment can also bring destructive patterns

like addiction, failure to tend to relationships and lack of self-awareness about how your behavior is impacting yourself and others.

So, how do you know if you are out of alignment and what can you do about it?

6 Ways to Check Your Alignment

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

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

Reflect. Notice what is contributing to your alignment struggle. Are you under stress?

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

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

Repair. Take ownership of your unaligned behavior's negative impact on yourself and others. Make amends. Apologize directly. Receive forgiveness. Communicate adjustments you will make. "I'm sorry I told you I would help you and then I backed out at the last minute. I'm realizing I have a tendency to say yes, because I don't want to hurt people's feelings and then I don't follow through. It will be



better for me to say no up front and I'm going to work on improving in this area."

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

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



Stephanie Craig, LCSW
Therapist
918-221-9987 | stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com

Todd Craig
Life & Leadership Coach
918-740-1232 | todd@journeybravely.com

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Medicare Additional Offerings



By CHRISTIAN REGALADO

There are a variety of ancillary (other) services available to Medicare recipients. The most common are dental, vision and hearing. These are not included in original Medicare but do come with most Advantage plans.

If you selected to stay on original Medicare with a Supplement plan which covers roughly 20% of medical costs that Medicare doesn't, you will have to buy separate plans to receive this coverage just like having to buy a prescription drug plan.

If you select a Medicare Advantage plan, you probably have these,

and other benefits not offered by original Medicare. There are many other ancillary benefits not offered by Medicare and most Advantage plans. Some of the most popular are short-term insurance, hospital insurance, cancer coverage, and death benefits. In many cases, these are just a form of term life insurance that would provide a cash payment based on the plan that you select.

There are too many options to mention in this article, so my goal is to do a quick overview of additional coverage that is available. Personally, I've had my parents enrolled in cancer coverage for many years. It is very affordable, about \$20-30 per month. Recent statistics show that 50% of those who get cancer are over the age of 60. Recently, a client of mine required a hip replacement. This surgery which normally would cost \$30,000 to \$40,000 for a total hip replacement didn't cost her anything based on the Medicare Advantage plan she was on. I realized how fortunate she was to have the Medicare Advantage plan she

enrolled in.

In the past, I have been reluctant to mention additional insurance coverage to my clients that I enrolled in a Supplement or Advantage plan. I now realize that it is my job to make people aware of additional protection available to them. They can decide if additional coverage is in their interest and fits into their budget.

Lastly, there is a product called, "Final Expense" which allows someone to make their own funeral arrangements and prepay them. Perhaps it's because I personally don't care to think about my "final expense" but again, this is not my

decision. Each client should have the option of knowing that there is a product that would cover expenses when they are gone and not

leave these decisions to their family members. I have just mentioned the ancillary products that most folks are interested in and admit that in the past I haven't made my clients aware of these options unless they asked about them. I think it was because I felt uncomfortable "selling" more coverage but now, based on recent experience, I believe I owe it to all my clients to make them aware that more protection is available at reasonable prices should they

feel the need. However, I can only mention these products if they are selected on the Scope of Appointment form that needs to be signed before we speak about coverage.

Medicare offers wonderful protection for those who have medical needs, but it doesn't always cover everything. There are ways to increase your protection. Ask me and I will be happy to go over your options. Remember, there is no extra cost to you for choosing our services. Call us anytime!

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Musing

Pastor's Ponderings: Mindful



BY PETE HYDE

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit was hovering over the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

The tired traveler rolled his suitcase to the car in the pre-dawn darkness. He returned to

the hotel lobby for a four-star breakfast buffet before continuing his journey. The city streets were almost vacant. The interstate highway was even less populated. Occasional headlights signaled other travelers were on the move as well. The road was dark and lonely taillights disappeared over the hill in front of him.

The morning was cool and crisp. The sky was crystal clear. The heavens were spangled with so many stars it looked like silver and gold dust cast across black velvet. "Thank you, Lord," was the whispered prayer.

In a rest area, a gaggle of trucks had stopped for the night. The trailer lights made the area look like a neighborhood already decked out for Christmas. Praise music from an unidentified radio station played loudly. The traveler was glad no one was in the

car listening to him sing along. "Thank you, Lord," was the audible, musical prayer.

The sky began to shade from black to grey and the miles clicked along. The change in light showed wispy ground fog hugging the cool earth in the pastures, along stream beds and farm ponds. As the interstate crossed a large lake, the water was hauntingly still, mirroring the brightening sky. An occasional light from inside a lake house sparkled its morning reflection as a compliment to the stars in heaven. "Thank you, Lord," was prayed again.

The traveler was glad it was getting light. After more than twelve hours of driving the day before and three more hours facing him this morning, the light of dawn was a welcome energizer. The eastern sky in the rearview mirror began to turn blue. Or-

anges and reds promised a grand sunrise. "Thank you, Lord."

The hillsides began to show their fall wardrobe as the sunlight pierced the darkness of night. Reds, oranges, yellows, greens and browns sweated the hillside on this cool morning, competing with the sunrise in a beauty contest between parts of God's created order. The traveler pulled off for a moment just to take in the glory and sip the last of his cold, gourmet hotel coffee. He didn't linger long because the miles and a not-so-pleasant business awaited him at the end of his journey. "Thank you, Lord," was spoken out loud in the early morning stillness.

A truck whizzed past the traveler and left a smell he hadn't smelled for years. It reminded him of many years of living in cattle country. It was a not-so-welcomed energizer. The miles

clicked off, God's glory and grandeur shown more magnificently with each passing mile.

Then it happened. The sun broke through the horizon in a blazing ball of yellow and orange. Its light struck the hillside dressed in all its fall glory. It almost took the traveler's breath away. "And God said, 'Let there be light!! And there was light and God saw that it was good. The traveler almost yelled, "Thank You, Lord!!!"

Then he remembered the psalmist's words: "Who is man that You are mindful of him." He settled in for the rest of his journey mindful that God had blessed him and was mindful of him right here and right now. "Thank you, Lord."

Rev. Pete Hyde is the retired Pastor of the Santa Rosa Beach Community Church

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CERT

continued from page 3

Other ways the CERT program is helping Walton County stay prepared is through HERricane Florida | Landfall: Walton County, Walton County Emergency Management's free, week-long girl's day camp where girls (7th - 9th grade) will train in disaster preparedness, leadership, career exploration and professional development. They will be mentored by female leaders from local, state, national and private sector response agencies. There will also be a county-wide Preparedness Town Hall hosted on June 6 from 6-8 p.m. at the South Walton Annex at 31 Coastal Centre Blvd in Santa Rosa Beach.

"We just want to make Walton County better. We want to make Walton County more resilient, to be able to help our neighbors do it safely, and build a community that can rely on each other," said Catie. "We have no control over Mother Nature, and she is way more powerful than we are. What we have control over is being able to make sure both our visitors and our residents are prepared."

If you'd like to learn more about the CERT program, please visit <https://www.co.walton.fl.us/1208/Community-Emergency-Response-Teams-CERT>. If you'd like to make a donation, you can make a donation through the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

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BY SEAN DIETRICH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

yours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Those of us overseas immedi-

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

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

People were partying everywhere from San Bernardino to

Flatbush. Big cities, little towns, and the rural parts between. There were ticker tape parades, auto processions, and girls would kiss any guy in government clothes.

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

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

a three-day weekend of barbecues and Budweiser.

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

Happy Memorial Day.

Sean of the South: Memorial Day



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Musing

Road to Redemption: Jose Aguilar

BY VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Our father Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden way back in the beginning to be its keeper. His job was to tend and protect the Garden, to ensure that everything was as it should be. He was the caretaker and guardian. Things have certainly changed over the last 6000 years since he took the fruit Eve offered him, plunging mankind into death

and separation from God. But men, for the most part, retained that position of protector and provider throughout the ages.

However, over the past several decades in particular, masculinity has been attacked, and men have been made to feel that their God-given role is a thing of the distant past. Chivalry is not only dead, but women today act as if they don't want to have anything to do

with it. This direct lie of Satan has done irreparable damage to countless relationships, destroying families where trust has been eroded.

Jose Aguilar was born in Texas and in 2005, he and his family relocated to the Destin area. He didn't know Jesus at the time, although his mom always encouraged him to attend church. His mom would admonish him and



He and his wife began attending Destiny church, and after joining a small group, his wife finally discovered who her husband really was. God was doing work in his heart and changing him into the Godly husband and father his family so desperately needed. "Sometimes men don't know how much damage they're doing to their wives. Only God can heal what was damaged. We must accept what we did wrong and choose to change our behavior."

Now, Jose says, "I have no shame or guilt. I've been set free. There's redemption and His name is Jesus."

As God knows, when men accept the place of leadership in the home, watching over and protecting those under his care, relationships flourish, children are calmer and wives are content. When a wife knows her husband, though certainly not perfect, is dedicated to providing for and guarding her and her children, it changes people at their core level.

Jose now is privileged to be the father of not one daughter, but two. And God has blessed his business so that he is able to spend more time speaking to his customers about the wonderful things God has done for him.

"When God cleaned up my life, it made my children's lives better. Now blessings are being passed down through the generations." What God is doing in Jose's life, He can do in yours.

You can hear Jose Aguilar's entire interview and listen to many other incredible stories on the weekly Road to Redemption radio show and podcast at www.rtrdestiny.com

say that he needed to get his life aligned with Christ. But he dismissed her words. Never underestimate the power of a praying mother.

Fast forward to 2019, and Jose had married the love of his life. He always wanted a daughter, so when his wife became pregnant, they were very happy. Jose's precious wife lost the baby and ended up suffering four miscarriages. And instead of grieving with her and encouraging her, something snapped in him. "I didn't understand, and became really sour, and I stepped outside of my marriage." He abandoned his role of protector and guardian when he allowed his own grief to take center stage. Two weeks later, a still, small voice told him to go back home. The voice said - "you're going to find what you need if you go back home." That's when he and his wife discovered they were pregnant again. Even after Jose's wife was six months along, he still couldn't believe he would actually, finally, be a dad.

Jose finally reached a point where he said to God - "I give up." And that's when his life changed because that's what God was waiting for Jose to say.



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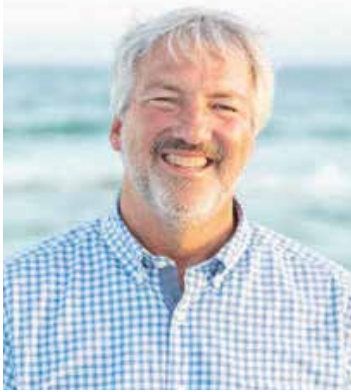
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The Trouble with Missing Appointments



BY KIRK MCCARLEY

My coaching colleague was bemoaning his meeting “no shows.” I don’t know the proportion of his scheduled appointments that were failing to materialize either in person, virtually, or over the phone, but I sensed his irritation. Not only is there the time that was spent in preparation for the meeting but also the forfeiture of “time” that might well have been devoted to another valuable pursuit.

In not just our profession, but many others I understand the frustration. The attorney who has blocked out an hour to meet with a new client about establishing a trust. The carpenter who

reports to a residential address to install a cabinet and upon arriving learns no one is at home.

Many doctor’s offices post a disclaimer that a missed medical appointment remains billable. Even with that, a study conducted ten years ago and published in the National Library of Medicine indicated that over one out of six scheduled medical office engagements are simply skipped. Last year, that cost our healthcare system over \$150 billion.

I coach many of my clients on career development and job interview skills. I have observed that even in a relatively “tight” labor market employment, especially in mid-level management positions on up, landing a job can be challenging. Even in that climate, USA Today reports that anywhere between 20 and 50% of job applicants don’t show for their initial job interview. Most fail to even contact the employer.

I admit that there have been occasions when I committed the infraction of missing an appointment. A kid got sick. Times got mixed up. Car troubles or traf-

fic snarls ensued. I didn’t write down the time or forgot. Even with legitimate reasons, it was still embarrassing, particularly if it was an instance of my own late “excuse me.”

Please, if you’re not able to fulfill the commitment of the engagement that was scheduled, demonstrate the courtesy of a contact!

As for those of us who rely on commitment to meetings for our livelihood, what are some things we can do to improve our own batting average?

- Reminders in advance of meetings are helpful. I send a text the day before. Some businesses provide an automated phone call or email.
- If a client has not appeared at my meeting within five minutes of the scheduled starting time, I will text them to verify I can plan on their attendance.
- There are enterprises that consider a missed appointment billable unless notification is received at least 24 hours in advance. Still other businesses handle this practice delicately, not wanting to appear punitive.
- Should an appointment be missed, some businesses will follow up with their client within 24 hours, to verify that the customer is first, ok, but second to attempt to reschedule. I would note, however, that a pattern of continued absences may lead to eventually severing the relationship.
- When reasonable, avoid scheduling out more than 14 days in advance, appreciating the fragility of long-range attention spans.
- State the purpose of the upcoming meeting or appointment in the invite. Share an outline of anticipated key talking points.
- Provide an easy scheduling system through digital online, Calendly, or a similar resource. Best, allow clients to

schedule their own appointment times.

There can be times, such as with a sales call, that the marketing representative may have misread the prospective client. As a note to that salesperson, discern if you’re making a connection with the prospect to where you are confident there is mutual agreement for follow-up. Absent that, the probability of being stood up increases. If the sale or connection is not made initially, a transaction handled deftly can greatly increase the odds of not only a successful meeting but a future sale and the addition of a new client down the road.

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



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 Dining

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The Best Basil Pesto

Ingredients

Makes 1 cup

- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino cheese
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 packed cups fresh basil leaves
- 2/3 cup Extra virgin olive oil + more as needed

Preparation

Combine the basil, garlic, and pine nuts in a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add 1/2 of the oil and process until fully incorporated and smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

Add all of the remaining oil and cheese, and pulse until smooth.

Tip: Keep in a glass jar, tightly sealed for ease of use and freshness, as well as easy clean up.

Tip: If wanting a lighter pesto, try a ratio of about two parts low-sodium organic chicken or vegetable broth to two parts of olive oil. Broth is naturally low in fat and calories.

Garlic Chicken

3 plump organic boneless skinless chicken breasts, sliced in half vertically to make 6, then lightly pounded for even cooking

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh basil

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
ground sea salt and ground pepper

Season chicken on each side with salt and pepper, fresh basil, minced garlic, and drizzle both sides with olive oil, massaging the meat with your fingers. Put chicken in a gallon size ziplock bag, and refrigerate for an hour. Clean the grate on grill using vegetable oil on a paper towel, rubbing back and forth. This will keep the chicken from sticking. Turn to medium-high heat.

Remove the chicken from the fridge, lay the chicken onto the grill and close the top. It only takes chicken breasts a few minutes per side over direct medium-high heat to both brown and be cooked through at the same time. After two minutes, flip the chicken and close the top again. Remove from heat immediately, place on a clean cutting board and let stand for 3-5 minutes before cutting into one-inch pieces. Check the meat by inserting an instant-read thermometer into the middle of the breast. The chicken is done when it hits 160°F, so pull it off early at 150-155°F, as upon the mandatory rest off the grill, the meat temperature will continue to rise by at least 5°F.

Top with basil pesto and serve with your favorite salad.

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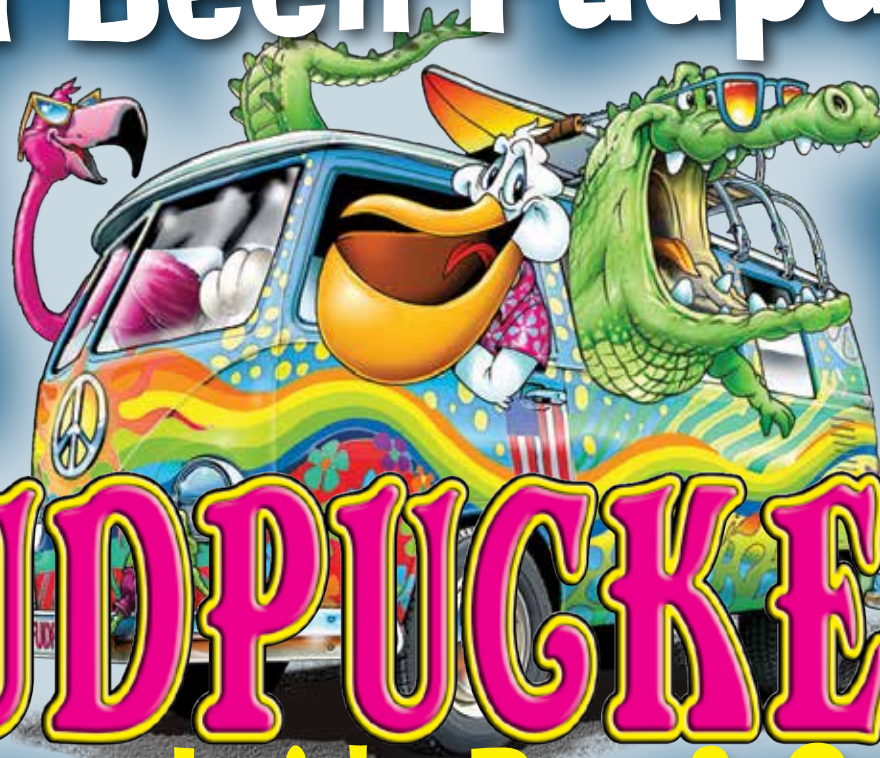
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Music

South Walton Live Music Scene

Old Florida Fish House Weekdays

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. Visit www.oldfloridafishhouse.com.

FOOW Live Music Fridays and Sunday Brunch

Enjoy live music on Fridays and for Sunday Brunch at FOOW - Fish Out of Water. The Gulf front restaurant invites you to delicious dining paired with live music. Visit foow30a.com.

AJ's Grayton Brunch, Live Music & Crawfish Boil Sunday Funday

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brate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Come for brunch, stay for the music and dancing. Every Sunday from 11 a.m. til 3 p.m., AJ's brunch is not to be missed. Complete your meal with a mimosa or go all in with their famous Build Your Own Bloody Mary bar. Enjoy live music with Will & Linda 12-4 p.m. and Pickled Pickers on the Main Stage at 5 p.m. Check ajs-grayton.com for other live music throughout the week.

Shunk Gulley

Shunk Gulley is a premier location on 30A for live music, brining in artists from around the gulf coast, and furthe. Whether you just want to relax to indie guitar players or upbeat party songs, the talented musicians know the vibe of the area. Visit www.shunkgulley.com.

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. 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.

Jazz on the Lawn at Seaside Amphitheater May 12

Join Seaside for an unforgettable day of smooth tunes on Sunday, May 12 at the annual Jazz on the Lawn concert. A favorite among locals and visitors alike, Jazz on the Lawn offers a fantastic lineup that will keep you grooving all day long into the evening. The first band will perform at 1 pm, with the final band beginning at 9 p.m. Cabana Man will provide umbrellas, so bring lawn chairs and towels for a day filled with fun. Learn more: seasidefl.com.

Sounds of Seaside Concert Series

Enjoy an evening of live music in the Seaside Amphitheater on Wednesdays. Sounds of SEASIDE features musicians ready to entertain the whole family. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. May 15: Max McCann. May

22: Roman Street. Visit seasidefl.com for more details.

Rosemary Beach Summer Concert Series

The Summer Concert Series returns on Monday nights, May 20 - August 5, beginning at 7 p.m. held on St. Augustine Green in Rosemary Beach. Bring your chairs and blankets and enjoy the night filled with great music. Each week is a different show so catch as many as you can!

Lineup:

- May 20: Jeff Carter Band
- May 27: Rubiks Groove
- June 3: The Wildlife Specials
- June 10: Barry Fish Band
- June 17: Still Standing (Elton John Tribute)
- June 24: JSG Band
- July 1: Sons of Saints
- July 8: Run Katie Run
- July 15: MECO
- July 22: Joey Shaling & the Paisley Blues Band
- July 29: Boukou Groove
- August 5: Anthony Peebles Band

Alys Beach Concert Series

Come on out for great live music during the Alys Beach Concert Series from 6 - 8PM on Wednesday nights, May 29 thru July 31. Bring a blanket or your favorite chair to the Alys Beach Amphitheatre. Concerts are free and open to the public. Learn more at www.AlysBeach.com.

Lineup:

- May 29: The Sunshine Wranglers

- June 5: Los Locos Band
- June 12: Longleaf Drive
- June 19: Sand Ole Opry with Mike Whitty
- June 16: Prodigal Blues Band
- July 3: Corey Hall
- July 10: Weston Hine & the Palmettos
- July 17: Cadillac Willy
- July 24: Beach Mountain Blues Band
- July 31: Anthony Peebles

Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

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.

- May 8: Duchess
- May 15: Cadillac Willy
- May 22: Casey Kearney
- May 29: Smith Distillery

MKAF Concerts in the Village Thursdays

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

- May 9: Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute
- May 16: Gotta Groove Band
- May 23: Mitch Malloy
- May 30: Haley Reinhart

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Summer Music Lessons at Studio 237

Summer is a great time to keep your playing skills sharp, try a new instrument, or begin your music-learning journey. This summer beginning on June 3, Studio 237 Music Lessons is offering lessons on piano, keyboards, guitar (acoustic, electric, and bass), ukulele, voice, and violin. During the summer, there is more room for flexibility for the student to choose days and weeks that fit best with their needs. Teachers have provided the studio with their available times and are excited to help people of all ages develop their unique musical passion and skills. We are also open in the summer Monday through Friday.

Unlike our spring and winter semesters, the summer semester is a more relaxed and carefree time of learning without the added stress of daily school and sports activities. As a result, we have created some idea packages below for you to consider:

The Basics Our first package is for those who desire to attend their lesson once a week (for the weeks of your availabil-

ity) as a continuation of lessons, an opportunity to try a new instrument, a refresher of previous skills, or even a sort of advanced class such as learning riffs, scales, and new performance techniques



for already accomplished performers. Those who might have an audition coming up for this fall would benefit greatly from a basics or the next package which is a master class.

Master Class is for those early intermediate to advanced players who desire to go to take their performances to the next level. This level may dive a little deeper into topics such as proper

technique, theory as it applies to your instrument, practice, stage performance, songwriting, how to sing and play at the same time, balance, interpretation, understanding and feeling rhythm, developing your voice and/or style, focus, and memorization techniques. Master Class can be taken several times a week or as a weekly lesson concept.

A Taste of Music This package is for those who would like to take a month's worth of lessons in one week! No instrument, no worries, we have instruments here during the lesson for you to use. Some of our students started this way. Beginners will begin learning how to play an instrument or instruments for several days in an entire week (two or as many as five days). This is

a great way to discover your interest and reveal what you may be in for if you desire to continue lessons in the fall semester.

Let us help you shape your package to fit your summertime schedule. There are a multitude of options to meet your needs such as taking a 30, 45, or 60-minute lesson as many times a week as you desire beginning when you are ready in June and/or July. You may take lessons on one, two, or more different instruments. There are instruments that tend to complement each other such as voice lessons along with piano or guitar/ukulele.

Here is our listing of available teachers this summer: (lessons are paused during the week of July 4)

Mary Kate Cary: voice and

beginner piano lessons.

Don Dirkin Jr.: electric lead guitar and acoustic guitar,

Helmut Dimmel: piano

Linda Chung: violin, viola

Scott Gilmore: (June only) classical or acoustic guitar and ukulele, songwriting for kids.

Gregg Shapiro: bass guitar and beginner guitar.

We are ready today, for you to call us to reserve your special time. Our teachers bio's are located on our website at Studio237Music.com/all-teachers-listing. Call (850) 231-3199 or (850) 797-3546 or email Studio237Music@gmail.com.



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 Business



By CHRIS BALZER

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

Air conditioning is vital, spring and summer months are getting

warmer and we want Mom to be comfortable. When you visit your mom, help change the air condition filter. Clogged filters cause strain on the system and can lead to more service calls, costing mom money. Many HVAC professionals suggest using the less expensive filters to allow more air flow and efficiency. These filters do need to be changed more often but cost less. After replacing the air filter, pour distilled vinegar down the condensate drain line to remove mildew and grime from the line, as well as extending time between service calls. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this process, consult a professional. Don't forget to dust HVAC vents and fans. These areas build up dust quickly and could be hurting the circulation

of airflow as well.

What better way to show your mother love than with savings on energy costs. One of the easiest ways to save energy is to change out incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. LED bulbs can save as much as 75-80 percent on lighting cost and they can last 10-20 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Replacing five frequently used inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home with energy savings LED bulbs could save you about \$75 per year and reduce your CO2 footprint. It's also your turn to tell Mom to shut off the lights when leaving the room. Even with LED bulbs, when you are not in the room, switch off the lights and save energy.

What's tall, green, made of

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

Buy mom a power strip and plug in energy vampire electronics like cell phone chargers and other electronics which don't

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

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

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

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

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

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Our Ad & Editorial Deadline is the 20th of each month for the following month's issue.

Condo Insurance and Claims



By JULIE A. MARTIN

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

Hypothetical situation: Due to a roof leak that was not discovered, the ceiling collapses in a condo unit, with the ceiling dry wall pieces landing on furniture in the living room and dining room. In addition to the drywall damage to the ceiling, there is now mold in the unit that spreads on whatever it lands

on as well as the other areas of the home.

In this situation, up until several years ago, insureds would put the claim in with their carrier and then wait for the carrier to subrogate against the condo association. Now however, carriers opt to take care of the parts of the claim that the unit owner is responsible for, i.e. contents, additional living expenses and mold.

For the areas that the association is responsible for, the carrier will deny those parts of

arising from property your COA is responsible for, your best bet is to get a copy of the Master Property policy for your building, along with a copy of their certificate of insurance, as well as a copy of your declarations page.

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

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

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

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

COA-Condo Association is responsible for the exterior walls and the roof. If there is a claim



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Adult Events in South Walton

11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest May 10-12

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

Don't miss out on the 11th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest, a celebration of flavor, culture and community in the heart of Sandestin®. Secure your spot today! Purchase tickets online

at ww.efestevents.com. A portion of the proceeds will benefit two worthy causes: the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and the Sandestin® Foundation for Kids, making every taco and tequila sip count towards a greater good.

Farm & Fire Tequila Tasting & Pairing Night May 16

Farm & Fire is thrilled to announce a Tequila Tasting & Pairing Night. Guests will join us at the copper bar for an intimate gathering to talk and taste through four exceptional Tequilas on May 16th from 6-8 p.m. A small prix fixe menu of thoughtfully prepared pairings will round out each tasting, with specialty cocktails available for purchase in addition to the flight. Purchase tickets and learn more: farmandfire.eventcalendarapp.com.

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 Business

Senior Living Community In Watersound Opens Doors To Residents

Watersound Fountains is an independent living community owned by The St. Joe's Company and managed by Watermark Retirement Communities

Watersound Fountains, a 148-apartment resort-style independent living community located in Inlet Beach, Fla. has opened its doors to residents. The community, which was developed through a joint venture with The St. Joe's Company,

Watermark Retirement Communities and BRW Origins, is the first free-standing independent living community in Watersound.

"We are so excited to welcome residents to our brand new community," said Melissa

Adams, Executive Director of Watersound Fountains. "For many residents, this marks the next phase of retirement, where they can relax and rediscover their passions – or find new ones. Our proximity to Watersound Origins also means mom and dad can be close to family while maintaining their independence and living a meaningful and fulfilling life."

Watersound Fountains is located near the Watersound Origins community, less than a mile east of the famed Scenic Highway 30A. Amenities include a swimming pool, fitness studio, salon and spa, wellness center, indoor golf simulator, and outdoor putting green. The community boasts four signature restaurants, which serve fare ranging from steaks and wine to casual grab-and-go meals, all prepared in-house daily.

Watersound Fountains is managed by Watermark Retirement Communities, a top-10 senior housing provider in the nation. Unique to Watermark is the 360Well program, which offers opportunities for health, education, and exploration with a focus on individual interests and objectives. Residents can also enjoy enriching classes



through Watermark's award-winning Watermark University or exciting daytrips organized through the Extraordinary Outings program.

"With Watermark, there is always something new to discover," said Adams. "On any given day, residents can attend a painting class or wine tasting, or take a trip to the beach with their neighbors. Our programs and events are also tailored to their unique interests, which creates an environment where each individual can thrive."

In addition to the full calendar of community events, Watersound Fountains offers residents a 24-hour concierge to assist with reservations to local restaurants, theaters, galleries, and concerts. Concierge-style healthcare, including onsite medical clinics and in-home healthcare services, is also available through a partnership with

Curana Health.

Over the next several weeks, the first 20 residents will move into the community, including Gerry Mayes, who has vacationed in the Walton County area for years. Mayes' family lives in the area and she moved from Oklahoma to be near them full-time.

"I love being near my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the amenities here at the community are wonderful," said Mayes. "The staff is also so helpful and kind and I've loved meeting new people."

Watersound Fountains is now open and taking reservations. Floor plans range from studio- to two-bedroom apartments. For more information, visit <https://watersound.watermarkcommunities.com>.



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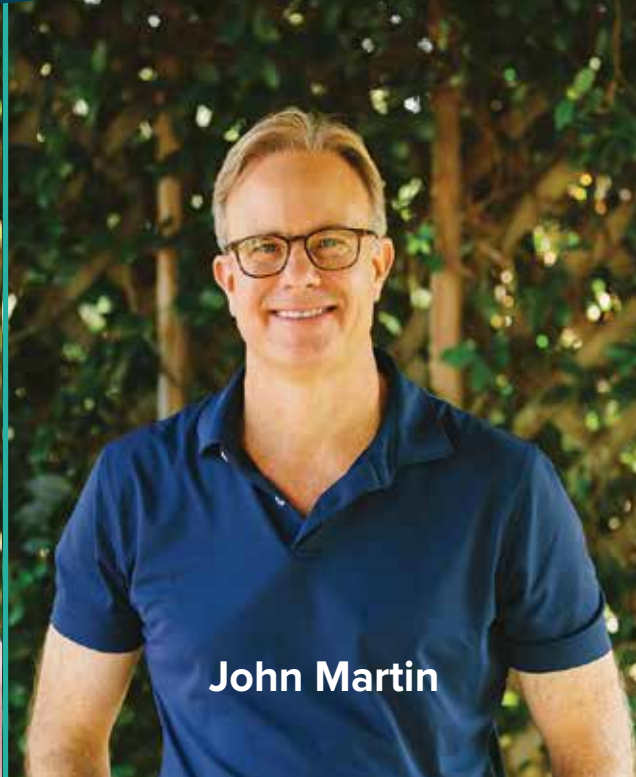


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