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# SOWAL Life

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## Anything Can Happen at ECTC!

BY NATHANAEL FISHER, ECTC  
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/COFOUNDER

Last year, Season 11 ended with a beautiful and magical show - Mary Poppins. Hillary Marshall Anthony and Vincent Pelligrino, along with 20 other cast members and a spectacular creative team co-created a wealth of magical, heartwarming and inspirational moments on our stage for you, our ECTC community. My favorite moment of the show was during Act II when every cast member took the stage and the full company sang with full hearts "Anything Can Happen." Here are just a few of the impactful lyrics:

*If you reach for the stars  
All you get are the stars.  
But we've found a whole new spin!  
If you reach for the heavens  
You get the stars thrown in -  
Anything can happen if you let it!*

While we were in tech rehearsals for Mary Poppins, I asked the cast to put themselves and their dreams into the number as they sang, and



A Midsummers Night's Dream, Theatre Thursdays,  
Grand Boulevard - 2015

to really imagine and believe that anything could happen for them—and we would believe right along with them. This idea of dreams coming true is personal for me. If you read my article in last year's program, you learned about "How ECTC Came to Be" (you can find this article on our website under "Theatre Thoughts"). As I consider the history of ECTC since its beginning in October of 2012, it is clear to us...Anything CAN Happen.

We launched our first program in January of 2013 with an after-school theatre class of 10 students at Destin Elementary School. The following summer we produced a theatre camp at Destin Elementary with 30 students in a non-musical production of Aladdin. Anna had our 6-month old daughter, Zoe, as well as our 6-year-old twins, Mia and Bella, in tow as she gathered props and designed costumes for 30 students! Ora Wolfgram, a bright eyed 11-year-old girl,

played Aladdin's cat. The playwright took liberties in creating many roles for kids—hence Aladdin had a cat. Her only text was "meow," and she delivered that meow with so much subtext each time that the audience knew exactly what that cat was saying. Ora is a professional artist now, and in a beautiful twist of fate, she is serving as ECTC's resident Props Artisan and Stage Manager. We were blown away at the time that our 10 students had grown to 30 (and a cat)... anything can happen!

Summer of 2013, we launched the Family Theatre programs at HarborWalk Village and the Village of Baytowne Wharf. I wrote energetic, three-actor plays, with engaging audience interaction for these sites. I pitched Jamie Hall, Marketing Director for Harborwalk Village at the time, the idea of a Family Theatre show, and she said, "I'll pay you for two performances, and provide tech support. If I like it, I'll book you

**ECTC**

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## Membership Keeps Arts FUN-ded

Will YOU Join Us?

BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

Looking for fun? You have arrived. As a member of Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), you are already aboard the "bus to fun town."

Take it from the MKAF's CEO of Fun, Demetrius Fuller.

"We really want to up our fun factor in all we do—including raising awareness and funding. Our tagline is Membership Keeps Arts FUN-ded," Fuller explains.

To realize our vision to "enhance

**MKAF**

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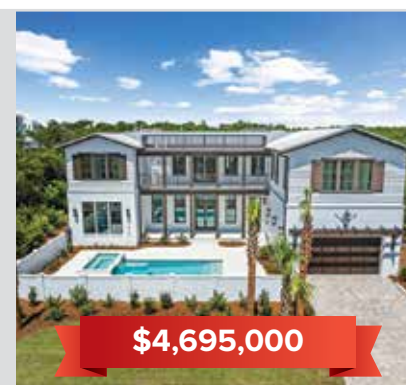
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 Community

## ECTC

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for the summer.” After watching more than 100 people engage in “Pirate Pete and the Case of the Missing Fisherman” while dancing, laughing and having a great time, I asked her, “Well, what’s the schedule? Your audience loved that show!” We were booked with our first gig.

While getting to know this community again (Anna grew up here), we were aware of the wonderful work that StageCrafters was doing in Fort Walton Beach, the great programming at Seaside REP, and the strong theater presence in Bay County with The Martin and Kaleidoscope Theaters. With the growth of the Destin, Miramar Beach and Santa Rosa Beach communities, it seemed like there was an opportunity to complement the theatre scene with professional theatre programming in Destin and Miramar Beach. So, in summer of 2014, Anna and I again started knocking on doors. Who had an empty retail space or event space that would allow us to produce a show? A Dickens

Christmas is a three-actor adaptation of A Christmas Carol that I wrote to help launch our professional theatre, and HarborWalk Village and Sandestin both blessed us with event spaces for that inaugural production. 367 people attended the performances of that show and ECTC’s productions for adults and families were launched...anything can happen!

During the first three years of the organization, we stored all the props and costumes we acquired in our garage, the carport was used as the scene and paint shop, and our Chevy Traverse was the work van. We had plastic bins and foldable dollies. One of my most vivid memories is dropping Anna off to teach a class with Miss Darla while I took care of our 8-year-old twins and two-year-old baby. There they were walking down the sidewalk in 90° weather, dolly and bins in tow with a full heart and determination to teach theatre to their students. In the summer of 2015, Stacey Brady, Marketing Director at Grand Boulevard, hired ECTC to produce a 45-minute adaptation of Shakespeare’s A

Midsummer’s Night Dream for Theatre Thursdays in the Grand Park. The following year, Stacey and her team were gracious enough to let us use the space that is now Williams Sonoma for some additional professional theatre shows and kids classes. These were humble beginnings for sure, but Anna and I were already seeing the benefits for kids and patrons. The long days, hard work and lugging all the “stuff” around was so worth it when we heard how people’s lives were changing for the better.

In addition to producing shows and camps, I was working as an adjunct professor at UWF in Pensacola as well as at Gulf Coast State College in Panama City. During this time, as I drove from one end of Highway 98 to the other and worked on productions in between, I just kept looking for empty spaces. The prayer in my heart was to have a home for ECTC. One day while driving by Grand Boulevard it hit me: every building had second floors that had offices built out, but the 560 building looked empty. Every time I drove by, I considered the idea, “What if that was a space for us?” We already had a great relationship with Grand Boulevard; what were the possibilities? One night while driving by with Anna, I pointed to it. “Anna, see that building? See how it’s dark, and how every other building on the second floor has lights but that one?” She nodded with a small smile of understanding. “They haven’t built out that space yet and I really feel like we are going to be there one day.” “How do you know?” she



Bruce Collier and Teance Blackburn, Bakersfield Mist February, 2017

asked. “I just have a feeling; I’m not saying it’s a word from God or anything, I just have this really strong feeling we are going to be there one day.”

In August of 2016, I got the call from Stacey Brady. “Hey Nathanael, can you and Anna meet me at the 560 Building at Grand Boulevard?” We walked upstairs into the empty, echoey expanse and she said, “Well, it’s 17,600 square feet. Think you can use it?” “Yes!” Anna and I exclaimed as we burst into happy tears. As I recount this story, I can’t help but think of some of the lyrics referenced earlier: If you reach for the heavens, you get the stars thrown in — ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

When we moved into 560 Grand Boulevard, I was still paid part time with ECTC while volunteering full time. Anna was hired as an independent contractor per teaching or costuming gig and volunteering the rest of the time as well when she wasn’t at her regular job teaching 4th grade. With a grant from the St. Joe Community Foundation, we bought curtains and tracking to divide off the performance space. A grant from the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County covered additional theater lighting,

and with some amazing volunteer help from friends at University of West Florida – Glenn Breed and Phillip Brulotte – we moved in and prepared to open Constellations, our first show in the new space.

Because audience members need a place to sit, we filled this need with donated white folding chairs. Monica Bowes owned an event company and offered her event chairs whenever I wanted as long as I was able to come get them myself and they weren’t in use for an event. By this time, my Father in Law, Jerry Ogle, had donated an old Ford truck to ECTC. So, every time we did a show at the Market Shops, the Williams Sonoma space at Grand Boulevard, and even the first couple of shows at 560 Grand Boulevard, off I would go in the old Ford to pick up one to 200 foldable white event chairs, and, of course, to return them the day after the production run ended. Soon after moving into 560 Grand Boulevard, with generous donations from Eric and Teresa Bolton and Doug and Jan Best, we were able to purchase our soft, cushy, black chairs and some sound equipment! For a time, these chairs set in rows on ground level worked. But, one day we had a few hundred children at a Field Trip production of Flat Stanley the Musical, and the kids on the back two to three rows were sitting on their knees and standing up. They simply could not see, because all of our nice cushioned chairs were ground level. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant funding we were hoping for to purchase risers. Later that week, I was having lunch with Shirley Simpson and we were discussing how unfortunate it was that we didn’t get the grant money. Mrs. Simpson asked me, “Well, how much do you need for the risers?” I replied with the amount. She returned with, “You’ve got it!” WHAT?!!! To this day, Shirley and I recount this story, her joy in being able to have such a positive impact on ECTC and my overwhelmed reaction at her news. If you know me, then you know that I responded with some breathless wonder and a few tears – truly, anything CAN happen!

Since 2016, the partnership with Grand Boulevard for the space has been a dream come true. Our first season there, Season 4 (2016-2017), we produced two to three actor shows and

## Publisher’s Note:

This year, \$32 million was cut from Florida’s state cultural arts budget. The impact was immediately felt statewide by 600 organizations as well as additional businesses. Some art organizations had to shut their doors. This unprecedented slash of funds means supporting the arts at the local level is more important now than perhaps ever.

According to an impact 2022 study by Florida Arts & Culture, Florida’s cultural arts generated 91,270 jobs and \$694 million in revenue, with an overall economic impact of \$5.8 billion. As a tourist destination, the arts and tourism go hand in hand. The arts elevate every community’s Quality of Place. To defund that impacts the local experience our tourists travel here to enjoy, but more importantly, these cuts to organizations with education outreach programs have a direct impact on our local community, namely our children.

How can you help? Play your part. Donate. Purchase a ticket to attend a play or concert. Volunteer at an art festival. Own a business? Consider sponsoring an event or, better yet, an art organization’s entire season. You will enjoy marketing exposure for your business and the bonus of positively impacting the Quality of Place of your community. Some organizations, such as Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and Emerald Coast Theatre Co. featured here, are membership based. Consider joining. The benefits far exceed the cost. And you are sure to meet many new folks who will kindly remember your philanthropy—and pay it forward.

To do our part, in this and upcoming editions, we are sharing a series of articles spotlighting the missions of some of our local art organizations, so our readers can better understand what they contribute to our communities and the significant economic and social impacts the arts have, both as a driver of tourism and in fostering local communities, particularly for children, the military and educational outreach programs. I believe, when you hear their stories, you’ll agree.



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The ECTC Board Touring 560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200, August, 2016



Shirley Simpson and Nathanael Fisher

no musicals: Constellations, A Dickens Christmas and Bakersfield Mist. We had a little over 1,800 people attend those three productions, 1,745 people attended our educational program performances, and we had about 470 education program registrations. I had just become full time with the company, but still supplemented by continuing to adjunct at Gulf Coast State College and UWF, Anna was still hired as needed as an independent contractor and volunteered the rest of the time, and our team was filled out with some amazing independent contractors like Bridgett Bryant, Darla Briganti, Cana Strong and others.

Fast forward to the end of Season 11 and looking forward

to Season 12 – we are now producing shows with casts of up to 22 actors; we had over 13,000 people attend Season 11 professional and Family Theatre productions, over 3,100 people attend the educational theatre productions, and 769 registration in our educational theatre programs including the satellite programs in DeFuniak Springs, Freeport and Panama City. Our team has grown to eight, full-time employees, including Anna and I, and one part-time employee. And, we're looking forward to another season of spectacular professional and educational theatre with the goal of serving our community with excellence! ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

While we were celebrating our 10-year anniversary, we were being interviewed by Zandra Wolfgram for an article in a local magazine. She asked Anna and I, “So, Year 10! Is it ‘Mission Accomplished?’” Anna and I looked at each other and laughed – “Mission just getting started! We are not done dreaming!” We still feel that way. Look at the last 11 years, look what’s happened, look how YOU our community has embraced us. We are so incredibly grateful for everything that has happened, but with YOUR help there is more. Will you dream with us, will you believe with us that even still...ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!?!?

## Citizens Beware: Deceptive Advertising in Political Campaigns

You may be receiving emails or seeing Facebook posts that appear as “WalCo,” or “Walton County Breaking News.” These emails and posts bear the Walton County seal and can be quite deceptive.

They appear to be politically motivated and often include untrue and offensive statements about various Walton County residents, elected officials and candidates. These statements are false, misleading and outrageous. It appears to be a smear campaign designed to benefit certain political candidates.

Please be aware of any correspondence that comes from WalCo, AKA John Walton, etc.

They have illegally obtained email addresses from the county database. If you “click” on any prompts, such as LEARN MORE or SIGN

UP, you enable them to access the personal information contained within your phone or PC.

Please advise your family and friends of the dangers of this deceptive tactic. Do not join or click on any links contained in these emails or you risk compromising your own personal security.

Remember to rely on reputable news sources and consider that misinformation campaigns are rampant during election cycles. Don’t become a victim - learn about each candidate at Votewalton.gov or attend the upcoming candidate forums to hear from each candidate personally and choose the candidates you feel are best suited to lead our county.

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 Community

# Walton County School District October 2024



**Superintendent A. Russell Hughes**

Students and staff have settled into new routines and procedures while looking forward to the cooler days of Fall. Our students are continuing to move forward academically while building a culture of character and high achievement throughout Walton County School District, proven by Superintendent A. Russell Hughes' proud announcement that Walton School District is one of 13 high-performing school districts in the state and one of only five to earn the honor for five consecutive years.

The theme for the Walton County School District's work this year is "*EPI-lympi-C – In the Boat for the Goal*," a reflection of the teamwork, consistency, and excellence shown in the Olympic games. With this theme in mind, each school will work together to achieve classroom, school, and district educational goals, which may include criteria such as higher test scores or better attendance.

We are moving swiftly toward the end of the first nine weeks of this year! Students received mid-term reports on September 11 with nine weeks reports soon to be distributed. Parents, please ensure you check in with your child's teacher regarding their progress. Keeping in contact with your student's instructors minimizes surprises at reporting time. Collaborating on strategies to assist your child's academic growth improves grades and student self-esteem. Our school district values parental input, and we want you to partner with us in educating students. Parents and the

community may ask questions through the *Let's Talk platform*. This community digital tool automatically delivers your text questions to the appropriate personnel for a speedy reply. Text **(850) 204-9667** or click "*contact us*" on the WCSD webpage.

Our schools participated in recognition or remembrance ceremonies of the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York and Patriots Day. Although the event occurred over twenty years ago, the great sacrifice of first responders and the immense number of casualties continue to make this one of the most memorable events in U.S. history.

Our Fall extra-curricular sports are active across the district, and schools are ramping up for their Homecoming celebrations. South Walton High School and Walton High School celebrated Homecoming on September 20 and September 27 respectively. Freeport High School looks forward to celebrating October 18 while Paxton

School will celebrate Homecoming on January 24, 2025. Come out to any game and support our student-athletes as they participate in team competitions!

National Bullying Month occurs each year in October to bring global awareness to the issue. October 7 is the 18th annual World Day of Bullying Prevention. October 16 is Unity Day, a time to unite around kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Our schools will bring attention to and highlight the importance of these characteristics in a way fitting for their campus. Parents may choose this time to discuss bullying and prevention with their child. Remember, Walton County School District discourages unhealthy interactions and utilizes the "See Something, Say Something" model throughout its campuses.

October is also National Dropout Prevention Month. WCSD is continually implementing strategies to improve opportunities for all students to fully develop the academic, so-

cial, work, and healthy life skills needed to graduate from high school and lead productive lives. Our Career and Technical Education programs provide education and information that help our students gain the knowledge and skills they need to choose and pursue a career path. It is one of our district's highest priorities to prepare our students to participate in our community as productive and responsible citizens.

Walton County Fair will open October 14-19, 2024. Student creativity and ingenuity will be showcased during participation in Livestock and Agriculture competitions, as well as student Visual Art competitions in grades K-12. We encourage everyone to stop by the FAIR and visit the school booths and our WCSD booth in the main entrance hall. There will be guaranteed fun and entertainment for all!

We are "*In the Boat for the Goal*" as we look forward to an incredible 2024-25!

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# Coastal Seniors Update for October

## COASTAL SENIORS OF SOUTH WALTON

**Chair Yoga Classes at the Blake in Miramar Beach** - Tuesdays, October 1 and 15, and November 5 and 19 at 9:45 a.m. at the Blake, 90 Ponce De Leon St. in Miramar Beach. RSVP at (850) 650-5000 to register.

**Monthly Meeting** - Coastal Seniors will meet Friday, October 18 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Ryan Mims, Florida Department of Health in Walton County with new family practice residents from the UF Residency Program will be guest speakers talking about cancer prevention and early detection. Jennifer Crawford, Keller Williams Emerald Coast will provide lunch. R.S.V.P. (850) 280-5342 or email: [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com).

**Exercise Classes** - Angela Gibson will lead classes on Tuesdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and November 5 and 12 at 10 a.m. and on Thursdays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and November 7 and 14 at 10 a.m. at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach.

**Water Aerobics at Watersound Fountains** - Join us on Mondays, October 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Also on Wednesdays, October 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 10:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. All sessions are at Watersound Fountains, 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. Cost is \$5 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](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com).

**Pickleball** - Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex courts on Wednesday, October 2, and 16 at 6 p.m. Registration required. Register at [www.waltonrec.com](http://www.waltonrec.com). 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 the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at [www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org](http://www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org).

**Art Classes** - Watercolor Painting Class - Karen Peterson will begin classes on Friday, October 4, 11, 25, and November 1 from 8:45 a.m. - noon. Classes are held at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$15 for CSSW members and \$30 for non-members. Space is limited so call (850) 280-5342 to reserve your spot, or email: [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com). All supplies are included.

Seniors 50 years of age and up residing in or visiting Walton County are invited to join CSSW. Membership is \$30 for individuals, \$40 for family, and \$75 for businesses (your business will be listed on our home webpage and our Facebook page). You can

become a member via email at [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com), or on the website at

[www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org](http://www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org). Also, follow us on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton. Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit 501© (3) organization for active adults and we are looking for

dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors. Media Contact: Jim Wilson, Director, Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. T: 404-432-6037 Email: [jim\\_wilson@bellsouth.net](mailto:jim_wilson@bellsouth.net)



 Community
**MKAF***continued from page 1*

and inspire every life through arts and culture,” it takes community support. As Fuller explains, individual giving has always been the rock bed of MKAF.

“Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation was initially started from the Arts Guild Lunch attended by local art lovers and evolved into the huge support system of volunteers, patrons and sponsors we have today. Membership is the backbone of MKAF and a direct tie to the community. Taking part as an individual member helps to support the arts education and outreach that Mattie Kelly is known for,” Fuller says.

Melanie Moore is the Director of Art Education and couldn't agree more. This year, she has plans to complete nearly 160 custom ArtsReach programs. From teaching artists, residencies, workshops, touring performances and summer camps, each offering is designed to uniquely benefit a range of diverse populations from the needs of K-12 students, children and adults with special needs to veteran and active-duty military

service members.

“We're connecting with and providing creative opportunities for populations that lack access to art,” Moore explains. “We tailor our programs to those who uniquely benefit from different ways of learning innovative and unique programming. We want to share the arts and a love of the arts with everyone we can and with the best programming we possibly can.”

And this is where you come in.

MKAF cannot deliver quality arts programming like the annual Festival of the Arts in the fall, the 10-week Concerts in the Village in the spring, not to mention its year-round ArtsReach community outreach initiatives without the community's help. So please join us.

“Membership is affordable, and the benefits are fun,” assures Fuller. “Where else can you spend \$150 and get access to 15 concerts, a Festival of the Arts pass, plus discounts on MKAF events? You just can't.”

There are several new MKAF membership levels from just \$75.

**Art Nouveau (40 years old and under) Single \$75** – For those 40 years of age and under.

Member benefits include admission to all of the Spring Concerts in the Village and Festival of the Arts, plus preferred pricing to all MKAF events.

**Pop Art – Single \$150 or Double \$250** – Member ben-



efits include admission to all of the spring and fall Concerts in the Village and Festival of the Arts, plus preferred pricing to all MKAF events. This category is available as a single or reduced fee for couple who reside in the same residence.

**Renaissance Single \$250** – Includes all member benefits of the Pop Art category plus a VIP Table seat at all of the Concerts in the Village, table is assigned upon arrival. (This is a limited membership category and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.)

**Impresario Single \$500** – Includes all member benefits of the Pop Art category plus a preferred VIP Table seating at all of the Concerts in the Village, plus 10 general admission tickets to use at any Concerts in the Village or Festival of the Arts. (This is a limited membership category and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.)

Plus, pledging your support is easy to do. Simply go to the MKAF website and sign up on the home page.

Supporting MKAF means you are a champion of the arts. Since forming in 1995, MKAF has impacted 420,000 through our ArtsReach programs.

You will be helping to support this special MKAF memory shared by Melanie Moore of Hands On with Zig, an MKAF ArtsReach partner who presents interactive educational based music events with multicultural themes:

One of my favorite memories working with Zig was after visiting the ARC of Walton County. Zig begins each program by introducing himself and sharing some things about his life as a musician/composer/educator based in Nashville. After two

hours of all of the clients learning to play percussion instruments of various genres (including country music) and making music as an ensemble, I saw that some of the participants were huddled in a group off to the side. It seems that they deduced that since Zig is from Nashville, and as a musician, that he must know Crystal Gale, and asked if he could bring her with him next time, as one of them was actually named after Crystal Gale. Zig explained that he did not know her personally, so it would most likely be him returning by himself in the future. However, when Zig returned to Nashville, he did work his connections and reached out to her. Needless to say, Crystal Gale sent an autographed photo to the ARC and it now holds pride of place. Needless to say, her namesake was moved to tears. What many may not realize is that when Zig comes to visit, and everyone learns to play an instrument as part of “the band,” they become the stars of their own show, and feel like they are a part of something special.



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# Camp Helen State Park Welcomes Fall

BY RACHEL C. WILLIS

It's pumpkin season! There's no better place to pick out the perfect orange gourd this fall than Camp Helen State Park, home of Lake Powell, the largest coastal dune lake in the northern hemisphere. Each fall, they host the largest pumpkin patch on the Emerald Coast, along with Americana Concerts in the winter, movie nights, an egg hunt in the spring and other fundraisers and events throughout the year.

The Friends of Camp Helen is the official CSO (Citizen Support Organization) for Camp Helen State Park. As a 501(c)3, the primary initiatives of the FOCH are preserving, maintaining, and improving the park through volunteer projects, community events and fundraising. There are thirteen community members serving on the Board of Directors at present.

While kayak/SUP rentals generate operational revenue for the organization, the annual pumpkin patch is their primary fundraiser, with Americana Concerts being second.

The money raised one Fall funded the accessibility mats on the path to the beach.

Currently, the park needs multiple historical structural repairs/restorations, a new tractor, a new cart, as well as other repairs and equipment, while the FOCH needs to replace its kayak fleet.

With the money from fundraisers and partnerships with sponsors such as Visit Panama City Beach and Good Pedals Bike Rentals, they provide FREE community events, such as an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt and movie nights in the park.

The Friends of Camp Helen's ninth Annual Pumpkin Patch officially opened Saturday, September 28 at 9 a.m. and will remain open daily from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. throughout October.

For the first time ever, customers can purchase native plants such as dune sunflowers, Indian blanket flowers, Blazing Stars, Milkweed, Butterfly Bush, and Muhly Grass, in addition to pumpkins, an assortment of gourds, and Camp Helen branded merchandise.

Environmental partners as well as Seacoast High School students and Girl Scout Troop #10303 coordinate the activities and volunteers from the community manage the patch.



The youth volunteers create games and crafts and help guests in the patch. Under the direction and supervision of their science teacher, Annette Railey,

the Seacoast kids create and lead activities and games, while the Girl Scouts manage crafts. The younger volunteers also enjoy helping customers take their pumpkins and plants to their vehicles.

Prior to the 1940s there was nothing in the way of development along this stretch of beach, for miles in either direction. William Comer purchased the 183.5-acre property from Mrs. Hicks in 1945 and turned it into Avondale Mills- Camp Helen,

creating a vacation retreat for the employees of the mills. Sadly, a fire in 1986 at the Avondale Mill in Sylacauga shut the mill down and subsequently Camp Helen.

It had been an extremely popular destination. For four decades while the land was operating as a vacation retreat, tens of thousands of people visited Camp Helen and fell in love with Panama City Beach and the Emerald Coast. Families subsequently decided to purchase their own piece of property so that they could build their own "beach vacation cottage." This spurred the growth and development of this area and adjacent communities as the "vacation destination" that it is known as today.

With all the growth in the area, the Friends of Camp Helen CSO believes in the importance of educating the public about the natural resources and wildlife that make up the unique ecosystem surrounding Lake Powell, the largest coastal dune lake in the Northern Hemisphere.

Executive Director Courtney Harper explains, "With interpretive programs and hands-on learning, we hope to inspire others to spend time here and fall in love with Camp Helen as much as we have. The more people we teach, the more they can teach and motivate others to preserve what is left of our precious ecosystem."

Each Saturday, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. kids and their families can learn more about the park and how to take care of the resources from environmental community partners, including Panama City Beach Turtle Watch, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, Shorebird program, Bay County Audubon, Beach Mosquito, Bay Breeze Bait and Tackle, master gardeners, Gulf World Marine

## PUMPKINS

*continued on page 19*

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Community

# Seagrove Garden Club Begins Year with 9/11 Remembrance

A meeting date of Sept. 11 served as inspiration for the first meeting of the Seagrove Garden Club's 2024-25 season.

Air Force veteran Steven W. Dalbey recounted his 9/11 experience working at the Pentagon that tragic day for nearly 50 garden club members and guests gathered at Pazzo Italiano res-

taurant where they greeted the club's new board, led by president Marie Spafford of Santa Rosa Beach.

Workers were aware that two planes had slammed into the World Trade Center towers in New York when, at 9:37 a.m., the Pentagon building shook, Dalbey said. He knew immedi-



ately that the shaking was unlike previous minor earthquakes and likely an act of terrorism. He ordered an evacuation of his office. Entering the corridor to leave, he remembers smelling smoke and jet fuel. Among the thousands killed that day were 125 Pentagon workers and 64 passengers on the hijacked airliner.

Despite the chaos as New York and Washington D.C., reeled from the attack, Dalbey said Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld ordered Pentagon employees to return to their desks the very next day to show

the strength of the U.S. military even as a fire continued to smolder in parts of the building. Dalbey also spoke at length about how many U.S. government agencies responded to the terrorist attack to better prepare and confront future threats, leading to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security in 2002.

In October, club members will see a different type of inspirational program, with a holiday decoration demonstration from floral designer Kirby Holt, owner of Blossoms in Chipley. In the new year, members will learn about healthy food options from Michelle Frickey, owner of For the Health of It. Other meeting topics in 2025 include the medical benefits of honey, a plant exchange and presentation from the Florida Native Plant Society and a tour of gardens at Watersound Origins.

In addition to an annual holiday fundraiser, members voted in September to resume Charity of the Month activity where members bring specific items to be donated to local groups. Members are encouraged to bring boxes of diapers to the next meeting which will be held

Oct. 9 at Watersound Fountains. The club is also known locally for its weekly Flower Shuttle effort where members repurpose donated flowers into small arrangements that are delivered to numerous facilities in Santa Rosa Beach.

"As the new president of Seagrove Garden Club, I have high hopes for our members and new members to participate in giving back to our community through the gift of flowers. Repurposing flowers from events brightens the day of many recipients at senior living facilities, cancer treatment centers, the hospital and a rehabilitation facility," Spafford said. "SGC is a great organization to meet new people and to give back."

The garden club was established in 1963. Since becoming a tax-exempt organization in 2019, Seagrove Garden Club has raised more than \$75,000 to support dozens of local charities in Walton, Bay and Okaloosa counties, especially those that assist children and families. For more information on Seagrove Garden Club activities and membership, please visit the Facebook page.

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# 30A Cats "Cat Daddies" Screening Event and Fundraiser October 30

Join 30A Cats at The Big Chill 30A on Wednesday, October 30 at 5 p.m. for a film and fundraiser!



The event features a silent auction, a raffle for some great items, and a screening of the documentary Cat Daddies, a heartwarming and tender portrait of a diverse group of men whose lives have been forever changed by their love of cats. Costume optional! Are you feral or fancy!?

30A Cats is an animal rescue service focused on TNR (trapping, neutering, releasing), finding loving homes for the kittens and cats they rehab, and community education. Learn more at 30Acats.org

To Sponsor or Donate

We are looking for sponsors and auction items! Let us know if you or your business would like to contribute by emailing us at 30acats@gmail.com. This event provides a heartwarming and tender portrait of a diverse group of men whose lives have been forever changed by their love of cats. Cat Daddies takes us on an inspiring journey all across the United States during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when people desperately needed hope and companionship.



These nine "cat dads" come from all walks of life - a firefighter, a truck driver, a Hollywood stuntman, an ad executive turned cat rescuer, a police officer, a software engineer, an actor/Instagram influencer, a school teacher and an

undocumented and disabled immigrant living on the streets of New York City. They couldn't be any more different, but each of them has a compelling story to tell and all share unconditional love for their beloved cats.

A refreshing and timely exploration of modern masculinity, Cat Daddies shows us how being a "cat person" has no gender, and that the unlikely bond between man and cat is here to stay.

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**October 30th**



BeGenerous Inc.  
7th Annual Event  
November 9th, 2024  
6:00 pm-8:30 pm

SAVE THE DATE

## BeGenerous Inc. to host 7th Annual Fundraiser in November

Get ready for an unforgettable evening of fellowship, worship and fundraising at The Gathering in the Garden! This year's highly anticipated event will be hosted on November 9 from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at the stunning new venue, Drive the Coast in Santa Rosa Beach, providing ample indoor and outdoor space to welcome an even larger crowd of community members.

The evening will kick off at 6 p.m. with inspiring live worship, creating the perfect atmosphere for a night filled with praise and thanksgiving. Following worship, attendees will indulge in a delicious catered meal prepared by a local culinary chef setting the stage for a memorable night.

One of the most exciting aspects of the Gathering is the si-

lent and live auction. With a wide array of enticing items up for bid, there's something for everyone! Whether you're a seasoned auction-goer or just looking for a fun way to support our mission, this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Your participation directly helps sustain BeGenerous through the year.

Moreover, the Gathering will showcase impactful testimonies that will undoubtedly inspire and touch attendees. Listen to personal accounts of how BeGenerous served the women and children in our program and discover the continuous efforts being made at BeGenerous..

Mark your calendars for November 9th and come join us for a night of community,celebration and giving back!

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Community

# Breaking Out the Big Guns at the 3rd Annual Westonwood Ranch Sporting Clay Tournament Presented by Specialty Roofers

Westonwood Ranch will be holding its third annual Sporting Clay Tournament Fundraiser on Friday, November 8, 2024, at the Bay County Shooting Range with the support of Specialty Roofers.

“We are excited to have great teams representing so many of our local businesses and corporations rallying around our mission to support individuals with developmental differences” said Lindy

Wood, Founder and President of Westonwood Ranch. “At the end of the day, it is all about the kids that we serve but there will be one team that will walk away with a modest trophy and bragging rights” says Wood.

Often described as “golf with a shotgun”, sporting clay shooting is one of the fastest-growing shotgun sports in the United States. Unlike trap and skeet shooting,

which are games of repeatable target presentations, sporting clays simulate the unpredictability of field shooting.

Bay County Shooting Range features a fully automated 18-station sporting clay course, including tower-level presentations mimicking high-flying geese or ducks with ground-level stations flushing partridge, pheasants, rabbits, and other ground targets.

This year's sporting clay event

is expected to feature over 140 sports shooters. This is a unique charity event in our area and a fantastic opportunity for sponsors to incentivize employees, entertain business prospects, or just be a part of an important mission. This year's event aims to raise much-needed funds for therapeutic program scholarships for teens and young adults affected with Autism, Down Syndrome and other related developmental dis-

abilities in Walton, Okaloosa and Bay Counties.

“We are looking forward to getting back to the Bay County Range once again to share valuable time with supporters, sponsors and stakeholders in a non-traditional way. We are grateful to Specialty Roofers, along with our other generous community sponsors for helping to make this event possible,” said Wood.

## FWC Charges Seven for Multiple Fishing Net and Resource Violations In Walton County

On Sept.9, seven individuals were arrested by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers and charged with seven felonies and 21 misdemeanors related to the possession, use and size of monofilament nets, and possession of illegally harvested fish. The seven were observed harvesting fish with a monofilament



net larger than Florida's legal size of 500 square feet. It is unlawful to take or harvest, or to attempt to take or harvest, any

marine life in Florida's nearshore and inshore waters with any net containing more than 500 square feet of mesh area. The use of gill

nets and other entangling nets of any size are prohibited in all Florida waters.

FWC officers in Walton County responded to a report of several subjects deploying a monofilament net on Choctawhatchee Bay. The officers observed the individuals attempting to harvest fish with a large net for over an hour. The officers conducted an inspection, revealing a 599-square-foot monofilament entangling net staked in the water with multiple fish ensnared.

“This is the second monofilament entangling net case in as many weeks; fish are running, and folks are not playing by the rules,” said Maj. Robby Creech, FWC Northwest Region Commander. “Fishing is not only a way of life around here, but also a livelihood. Poaching in this way causes a ripple effect on the resources and the community.”

For statute information pertaining to net fishing in Florida, visit FLrules.org and click on “Rule Chapter: 68B-4.”

Join us on Friday, November 8, 2024 at the Bay County Shooting Range for the 3rd Annual Sport Clay Shooting Tournament benefitting Westonwood Ranch. Presented and sponsored by Specialty Roofers, we welcome local businesses to choose a sponsorship, gather a 4 man team and join us for this event!



Scan the QR code or visit specialtyroofers.com to sign up!



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

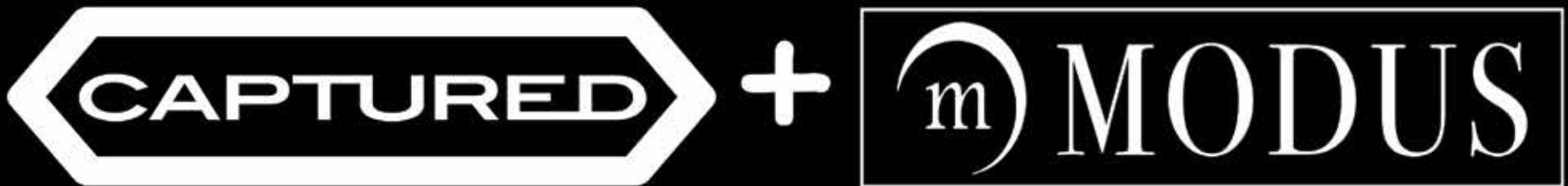
belonging. Many of these stores host events, workshops, and collaborations, creating a platform for men to connect, network, and share their experiences and interests. As the popularity of the "brotique" continues to rise, it has become a game-changer in the retail industry. Its success can be attributed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

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

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

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# Caring & Sharing of South Walton Hosts Third Annual Diaper Drive During National Diaper Need Awareness Week

Caring & Sharing of South Walton is hosting their Third Annual Diaper Drive sponsored by Specialty Roofers and co-hosted by the Walton County Sheriff's Office from September 15 - October 15.

"Currently, we provide more than 190 Walton County families in need with an average of 6,645 diapers a month. The needs greatly outweigh our supplies, so we need the community's help," said Caring & Sharing Executive Director, Carly Barnes.

According to the National Diaper Bank Network, 1 in 2 U.S. families struggles to provide enough diapers to keep a baby or toddler clean, dry, and healthy. Without a supply of diapers, babies cannot participate in early childhood education or daycare which in turn means many parents cannot return to work or school. 3 in 5 U.S. families miss work or school due to lack of sufficient diapers.

"Our most needed sizes are 4, 5, and 6. We have set a goal to collect six month's worth of diapers for our community in celebration of National Diaper Need Awareness Week," added Barnes.

You can help Caring & Sharing achieve this year's goal in a variety of ways.

Diaper and baby wipe donations can be dropped off at participating local businesses and churches including Diaper Drive

Sponsor, Specialty Roofers, along with Christ the King Episcopal Church, St. Rita's Church, The Preschool at Point Washington, Point Washington United Methodist Church, Freeport Presbyterian Church, and Freeport Public Library.

The public can "Pack the Patrol Car" with the Walton County Sheriff's Office by donating and dropping off diapers between September 15 and October 15, Monday through Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.. at their administrative office on 133 Sheriff Drive in Santa Rosa Beach.

Donors can also purchase items from the nonprofit's Amazon Wish List, which will be delivered directly to Caring & Sharing. Amazon Wish List: <https://amzn.to/3eN4SbW>

By working together and engaging in simple actions, our community can draw attention to the issue of diaper need in the U.S. and in Walton County, and ensure that all babies have access to clean diapers.

If your business, organization or group is interested in supporting the Diaper Drive, please email [info@caringandsharingsowal.org](mailto:info@caringandsharingsowal.org).

Caring and Sharing of South Walton provides crisis relief to our neighbors in need in Walton County through financial assistance, food, counseling, and case management. Founded in 1994,

the organization serves over 700 local families each month. Caring & Sharing of South Walton also operates a Thrift Store. Sales in the Thrift Store help cover

operating expenses and generate funds to help clients with food, prescriptions and utilities. Items for sale in the Thrift Store include clothing, housewares,

bedding, furniture, electronics and books. For more information about Caring & Sharing of South Walton visit [www.caringandsharingsowal.org](http://www.caringandsharingsowal.org)

## Community Kitchen Coming to Freeport!

The Freeport Community Kitchen, a unique space-sharing concept for budding culinary professionals, is coming to Freeport in January 2025.

The idea for a space-sharing kitchen is the brainchild of Freeport resident Joseph "Joe" Cass, who believes many budding entrepreneurs have great ideas but lack the investment capital a full-service kitchen would require. Joe says, "Space sharing is very popular in big cities, where rents are very ex-

pensive. For a small monthly fee, a caterer, chef or baker can book time in the kitchen and test market their ideas, without a major cash investment. Depending on time requirements, costs range from \$500 to \$1000 per month."

Applications for rental space are now being accepted. Call Joe Cass at (603) 812-8331 or email [FreeportCommunityKitchen@gmail.com](mailto:FreeportCommunityKitchen@gmail.com) for more information.



Community

# Walton Recycle Drop-Off Station to be Relocated

According to Walton County Environmental Services Director Billy McKee, a Recycle Drop-Off Station located at Moll Drive and U.S. 98 is no longer under county ownership and is permanently closed. No recyclable material, debris, or trash of any kind should be left there.

“We need the public’s cooperation in keeping this area clean and free of illegal dumping,” said McKee.

The Moll Drive property was swapped with a private landowner in exchange for a parcel adjacent to Helen McCall Park to provide additional public parking.

The recycling containers that were at the Moll Drive site have been relocated to the Blue Mountain Beach (Public Works Dist. 5) storage

and stockpile yard at 970 South County Highway 83 in Santa Rosa Beach. This location is adjacent to the TDC Beach Operations Facility and is just inside the gate on the right.

Please note that only recyclable materials should be brought to the recycle locations and all materials (cardboard, aluminum

cans, plastic bottles, and paper) must be put inside the appropriate containers and not left on the ground.

This site does not accept any household garbage, food waste, junk, or any construction debris.

Other locations that can be used to drop-off recyclable materials in South Walton include:

- Blue Mountain Pit - 970 S Co. Hwy 83, Santa Rosa Beach (SRB)

- Sandestin Resort - Administration Dr., Miramar Beach
- Topsail Preserve State Park - 7525 W Co. Hwy. 30A, SRB
- South Walton Courthouse Annex - 31 Coastal Centre Blvd., SRB
- South Walton Sports Complex - 240 M.C. Davis Blvd., SRB

For more information, contact Walton County Environmental Services, 1118 Institution Road, DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32433 or call 850-892-8180.



# Green Thumb’s Junior Gardeners Program Continues to Support Local Youth

Green Thumb Garden Club’s Junior Gardeners Program was started in 1993. Four years ago, GTGC partnered with Butler Elementary School in Santa Rosa Beach to continue the program with fourth and fifth graders. For the 2024/2025 school year, Butler Elementary has 23 students in their Junior Gardeners Club.

The program started with two raised beds, but it was immediately apparent that two beds would be insufficient to support the overwhelming response from students

and parents wanting to participate in the Program. With support from Walton County, who supplied the labor and dirt, there are now six raised beds at the school.

The Junior Gardeners meet the second Wednesday of every month. GTGC has been very fortunate to have one dedicated teacher who has been willing to be at every meeting since the program’s inception. A Master Gardener member of the Green Thumb Garden Club volunteered to develop the classroom



and planting syllabus. She, along with five to six additional GTGC members, supports the monthly classroom instruction and planting/harvesting activities.

Financial support comes from Club members and the commu-

nity. The donations are used to purchase students’ gloves, tools, seeds and plants. The program’s success is because of the ongoing commitment and collaboration between Walton County, Butler Elementary School, and dedicated members of the Green Thumb Garden Club. The Junior Gardener Program is a wonderful opportunity to teach young students the love of gardening and respect for the environment.

If you are interested in this program or other GTGC programs,

Green Thumb Garden Club welcomes new members. The website www.greenthumbgardenclubinc.org contains detailed information about how to join the Club and details on meetings, activities, and events. For additional information, please visit the website or email greenthumbgardenclubinc@gmail.com. The Walton County community is encouraged to join Green Thumb Garden Club to support its charitable mission while connecting with other members and having fun.



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# Fore Her Nonprofit Tees Off with 12th Annual Golf Outing

## Benefitting Local Women with Breast Cancer

Fore Her invites golfers and philanthropists alike to tee off for a great cause with a fun-filled day at their 12th Annual Fore Her Golf Outing presented by Emerald Coast Hospice Care on Friday, October 25 at The Links Golf Club at Sandestin. Check-in and registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. with Tee-Off at 9:30 a.m., and the afterparty at Sunset Bay Cafe directly across the street from The Links.

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Golf Outing is a timely way to honor and celebrate survivors while raising money for women and men undergoing breast cancer treatments. Fore Her is a local nonprofit that raises funds through events like these to provide financial aid and resources for women and men with breast cancer.

In its 12th year, this annual event features an 18-hole day of golf as the centerpiece, a silent auction, prizes, food, and drinks at holes, and the 19th Hole Afterparty. Also, this year a lucky player will have a chance to

win a hole-in-one prize, a new 2024 Buick Envista Sport Touring from David Scott Lee Buick GMC.

Golfers will start their day with breakfast and Bloody Marys from Sunset Bay Cafe sponsored by Builders First Source, then enjoy lunch on “the turn” by Centennial Bank. After a day of golf, it’s an easy stroll over to Sunset Bay Cafe for the “19th Hole Afterparty,” sponsored by Emerald Bay Plumbing, with live music by Rob Romans, fabulous prizes, a silent auction, heavy hors d’ oeuvres, drinks and delectable treats from Sweet Henrietta’s.

Registration is now open and fees as of October 1 are \$200 per golfer and \$800 for a team of four. To register, visit <https://www.foreher.org/golfouting>.

“Last year, Fore Her raised close to \$30,000 at the Golf Outing to help local breast cancer patients in need and we paid for living and medical expenses with those funds raised for breast cancer patients while they were undergoing treatment. So far



this year, we have paid out over \$35,000 in living expenses for breast cancer patients in financial need while undergoing treatment, and we continue to make a difference with our support groups and educational materials,” says Amy Walsh, Founder of Fore Her. “The support of our community makes a life-changing impact on the families we help.”

A huge thanks to Fore Her Golf Outing 2024 Sponsors: Emerald Coast Hospice Care (Presenting), Emerald Bay Plumbing (19th Hole After

Party), Terri’s Interiors (Lunch Sponsor), Ft. Walton Beach Winn Supply, Plumbing and Hvac (Scoreboard), Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa (Drink Cart), Cook Family Dentistry (Practice Putting Green), Builders FirstSource (Bloody Mary Bar), David Scott Lee Crestview Buick, GMC (Hole in One), Silver Sands Premium Outlets (Registration Table), Clear Title & Escrow 30A (Longest Drive), First National Bank (Closets to the Pin), James Moody, MD with Destin Surgery Clinic (Silent Auction). Hole Sponsors: The

Blake, Watersound Closings & Escrow, Renasant Bank, New York Life, Own at the Beach Team, Bob and Barbra Carver, Sweet Henrietta’s, EPGX Emerald Prints and Graphics. Donors: Boo Media, The Links Golf Club at Sandestin, Sunset Bay Cafe and Centennial Bank.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and if you can't sponsor or golf, please consider volunteering. Reach out to Amy Walsh at [amy@foreher.org](mailto:amy@foreher.org) to find out more.



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 Community



# Fall Fest

Fun for the Whole Family at the Saint Rita Catholic Church Family Life Center

Come join us for Fall Fest from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 26, 2024 at the Saint Rita Catholic Church Family Life Center, located at 22 Saint Rita Lane, Santa Rosa Beach, FL. This fall favorite event offers a variety of activities for the whole family to enjoy.

Carnival games, children's costume contest, food trucks, live music, raffle prizes, candy, and a silent auction, all benefiting Saint Rita kids, youth, and adult ministries serving the communities of South Walton.

For more information, please visit [saintrita-parish.org](http://saintrita-parish.org).



# All Sports Association Announces Urban Meyer as Guest Speaker for Annual Banquet

All Sports Association has announced that Urban Meyer will be the guest speaker for its 56th Annual All Sports Awards Banquet, set for February 21st, 2025. This banquet is a key event for the association, honoring outstanding athletes and people who have significantly contributed to youth sports in the area.

Urban Meyer, who has won 3 national championships at the University of Florida and Ohio State University, brings extensive knowledge and dedication to athletics. His participation is expected to enhance the event, giving attendees valuable insights into sports leadership and dedication.

Held every February, the Annual Awards Banquet celebrates top athletes from high school, college, amateur, professional, and Special Olympic levels. It also acknowledges individuals who have made notable efforts in promoting youth activities. Several prestigious awards are given out, including the Wuerffel Trophy, the Colonel Al Byrne Award and the Taylor Haugen Trophy.

The Wuerffel Trophy is awarded to a college football

player who shines not only on the field but also in community service and academics. The Colonel Al Byrne Award goes to a local individual who has shown exceptional support for youth sports. The Taylor Haugen Trophy, established in memory of Taylor Reid Haugen, a Niceville High School wide receiver who tragically passed away from football injuries in 2009, is awarded to an area athlete who best demonstrates a balance between academics, athleticism, leadership, community service and faith.

Based in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, the All Sports Association is a non-profit organization focused on supporting local youth sports programs. Founded in 1970, the association has raised over \$2 million in the last ten years, thanks to its volunteers and supporters. These funds help various youth sports organizations and charitable causes, fostering the development of young athletes.

Key beneficiaries include the Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast, Special Olympics Florida-Ocala, Eleanor J. Johnson Youth Center, and Oka-

loosa Walton FCA. The association's dedication to youth sports and community development is also seen in its Hall of Fame, which honors individuals who've made significant contributions to sports in Northwest Florida.

For those interested in attending or supporting the event, more information is available on the official website and their Facebook page.

All Sports Association continues to celebrate and support youth athletics. The 56th Annual Awards Banquet promises to be another memorable event that aligns with their mission of fostering community spirit through sports. "This event is more than just a celebration; it's a testament to the hard work and dedication of our young athletes and the community that supports them. Having Urban Meyer speak adds an extra layer of inspiration that we hope will resonate with everyone involved," Bowyer said.

Those who want to reach out directly for more personalized inquiries or further information, feel free to contact them at <https://www.allsportsassociation.com/contact-us/>.

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## Spotlight On

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At Elizabeth Erin Designs, we are more than just a full-service Residential, Commercial, and Vacation Rental Interior Design Firm – we bring your dreams to life. For over 21 years, clients across the U.S. have trusted us to transform their spaces into functional, beautiful reflections of their vision, and we take that responsibility to heart. While we proudly serve clients nationwide, we have local design experts right here in your community, with designers in the Destin area of Florida, the Rochester area of New York, and central Iowa. No matter where you're located, our team is ready to bring our trusted design process to you.



When I founded Elizabeth Erin Designs, my mission was clear: to exceed expectations and be a trusted partner throughout the design process. From luxury vacation rentals in Florida to commercial spaces in New York, our nationwide and local clientele count on us to deliver high-end designs that perfectly reflect their goals. Acting as the crucial bridge between you and your contractor, we ensure every aspect of your project is executed with precision, care, and excellence – down to the smallest detail, including stunning 3-D walkthroughs and documentation that rival HGTV.



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Experience Trust, Integrity, and Lasting Design – Locally and Beyond. With over two decades of experience and projects spanning from coast to coast, we've earned a reputation for trust, integrity, and extraordinary design. As featured in [Insert Major Publication], our trendsetting designs continue to push the boundaries of what's possible. At Elizabeth Erin Designs, it's not just about creating beautiful spaces – it's about building lasting relationships. When you choose us, you're not just hiring a design firm – you're gaining a lifelong partner dedicated to making your current and future projects truly unforgettable.



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 Community

## Tony Anderson:

To make Walton stronger for everybody, we must say “yes” to big ideas.

Expanding public beach accesses, reducing traffic, and building parks and ballfields have been key priorities for Tony Anderson throughout his service as Walton County Commissioner for District 5.

In announcing his campaign for reelection, Anderson, a Republican, said that county government must continue to take aggressive action on these important “quality of life” issues.

“Like all of America, Walton County faces challenges,” Anderson said. “Young people want better job opportunities with higher wages. Families want better parks and sports facilities for their kids. Most residents want our beaches open to all. And everyone wants relief from traffic.”

Anderson said he’s well-positioned to address these challenges because he’s built coalitions of residents to tackle tough challenges before. He pointed to Walton County’s fight for Customary Use, which he strongly supported, and the county’s his-



toric investments in South Walton projects during his tenure as commissioner.

“We put aside negativity and worked together to build or break ground on three new beach accesses, three new parking facilities, and new feeder roads in South Walton,” he said. “We also purchased 220 acres

of land to manage stormwater, resurfaced major roadways, and expanded Helen McCall Park and the South Walton Sports Complex—all while cutting property tax rates.”

Now, Anderson wants the county to accelerate efforts to secure state and federal grants to expedite infrastructure proj-



ects, improve cell phone service countywide, and protect the Choctawhatchee Bay. He also supports securing the Boys & Girls Club property in South Walton to create more youth sports options, and he backs building a new sports complex for children in North Walton.

On economic development, Anderson says he will work to

attract new aviation, avionics, technology and logistics businesses to Walton County’s business parks in DeFuniak Springs, Freeport and Mossy Head to create higher-paying private sector jobs. He also indicated that he will propose another reduction in property tax rates next year to offset the burden of inflation.

“The vast majority of Walton County residents are hardworking people who just want their tax dollars used productively, and many of those folks don’t have time to show up at meetings. I’m in this job for them,” Anderson said. “You simply cannot get things done for people if you only listen to the folks who shout, ‘no’.”

Anderson was raised in Walton County, worked in the county his entire life and raised his three children — Colby, Logan, and Keagan — here. Now, his three grandchildren call Walton County home, too.

Learn more about Tony Anderson at [VoteTony24.com](http://VoteTony24.com).

# TONY ANDERSON

★ REPUBLICAN FOR WALTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER ★

**I grew up in Walton County, raised my kids here, and worked here my whole life. Now, my three grandchildren call Walton County home.**

By bringing people together, we can make all of Walton County’s communities stronger. That’s why I am running for re-election as your Walton County Commissioner this November.

With your support, I will work to cut property tax rates again, create new private-sector jobs, fight for public beaches, modernize our infrastructure, and expand parks and recreation. You can read my full plan at [VoteTony24.com](http://VoteTony24.com).

I hope I can earn your vote, and I thank you in advance for your consideration.

*Tony*





## Eagle Springs Golf and Recreation Center: Continuing the Celebration

Following our tremendously successful 100-year anniversary celebration on August 17, 2024, Eagle Springs Golf and Recreation Center is excited to announce our next community initiative.

### New Installation

In the first week of October, we will be unveiling an installation featuring 22 panels that showcase the rich history and natural beauty of our beloved golf course.

### Lake Naming Contest

As part of this initiative, we're inviting our community to participate in a special naming contest for the five lakes at the center of our 18-hole course. This is your chance to leave a lasting mark on Eagle Springs!

Stay tuned for more details on how to submit your lake name ideas and be part of Eagle Springs' next century of golfing excellence.

## PUMPKINS

*continued from 7*

Institute, Emerald and Forgotten Coast Adventures, and more.

Some programs will have touch tanks with live species and other displays, while others will lead wildlife crafts. The trail bingo game (located in the Visitor's Center) helps families explore the park while learning more about the natural resources.

Master Gardeners will also be available to help plan Fall gardens when purchasing native plants in the patch. Guests can learn about the different pollinators for the plants. There will be educational material on birds, butterflies, and bees.

Every Saturday will also feature games, glitter tattoos, and a QR code-led scavenger hunt throughout the park to learn about the history at Camp Helen, highlighting several structures on the National Register of Historic Places.

With evidence of Civil War

salt sheds and Indigenous people, Camp Helen and Lake Powell boast a rich history in addition to sensitive natural resources and wildlife habitats, creating a fun atmosphere to explore and learn.

Kayak rentals remain open for reservations and walk ins, fishing clinics continue every Saturday, and Gelato Love food truck is returning Saturdays and Sundays in the patch. Kayaks and fishing are bookable online at [www.friendsofcamp Helen.org](http://www.friendsofcamp Helen.org).

All activities in the patch are FREE and all proceeds from pumpkins, plants, and merchandise benefit the Friends of Camp Helen for park improvements and community events.

Harper reminds everyone, "When you purchase your pumpkin from our patch, ALL of the money stays inside Camp Helen so we can continue these programs supporting the park and community."

\*Admission to Camp Helen State Park is \$4 per vehicle and \$2 per bicycle/pedestrian.

# THEO BEACH TOWELS

## NOW ON SALE!



Check out the new beach towels at **Pecan Jacks** in Santa Rosa Beach. All Theo-inspired products benefit the educational mission of the **Friends South Walton Sea Turtles** nonprofit organization.



## 100 Years of Golf!

Eagle Springs Golf Course and Recreational Center is a 190 acre site located in DeFuniak Springs. The Club currently offers an 18-hole Golf Course, Public Swimming Pool and Clubhouse. Future expansion will include fishing docks, walking trails, basketball courts, tennis courts and much more. Eagle Springs Golf Course is available to host your tournaments and the Clubhouse is available for rent for parties, birthdays and weddings.

*All Junior Golfers (15 and Under) play golf FREE.*

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 Community

## Florida SBDC at UWF Presents “When Banks Say No”

It's tough for small businesses to get funding. In fact, 75-80% of small business loan requests are denied by banks. So, what's a small business owner to do when the bank says no? Find alternative funding sources! “When Banks Say No”, presented on October 9 from 2:00 to 3:15 PM, provides an overview of alternative funding options for small business owners who need money to start, support or grow their businesses. Takeaways from and Benefits of Attending this webinar include:

1. Hope! A “no” from the bank is not the end of the road. There are many options available for nearly any business situation.
2. Understanding! We'll explain many funding options that banks just don't offer. One might be just what you need!
3. Direction! When you identify one or two loan options that work for you, you can take the steps towards acquiring that

money to start or support or grow your business.

Presenter: S. Boyd Karren, Managing Partner, Otro Financial. No fee. To register, visit sbdc.uwf.edu and open “Training & Events”. Sponsored by Wells Fargo.

### Florida SBDC at UWF Presents “Starting a Business”

You have an idea for a business. Develop your business idea with the Florida SBDC's “Starting a Business” workshop on October 16 from 9 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. In this workshop, we will discuss the details of launching your new venture, including how to determine feasibility and legal structures, licensing and permitting, funding options for your business and basic marketing strategies to help you get started! Location: UWF Emerald Coast Campus, 1170 Martin Luther King Jr

Blvd, Bldg 2, Rm 221, Fort Walton Beach, 32547. Fee: \$50. To register, visit sbdc.uwf.edu and open “Training & Events”. Presented by Jennifer Rohus, Business Consultant, Florida SBDC at UWF. Sponsored by Wells Fargo.



### Florida SBDC at UWF Presents “A Roadmap to Small Business Funding”

Join us October 17 from 9 – 10 a.m. online for “A Roadmap to Small Business Funding” and take the first step towards securing the financial foundation your business needs to thrive. Whether you're a seasoned entrepreneur

or just starting your journey, this webinar provides actionable insights that will propel your business toward success. Don't miss this opportunity to map out your path to small business funding excellence! No fee. To register, visit sbdc.uwf.edu and open “Training & Events”. Presenters: Lyndsey Blanks, Business Banker, Hancock Whitney; Marsha Asbury-Turner, Business Development Officer, Florida First Capital Finance Corporation; Kelly Massey, Regional Director, Florida SBDC at UWF. Sponsored by Wells Fargo.

### Florida SBDC at UWF Presents “Demystifying AI for Business Owners”

Demystify the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and unlock its potential for your business in our workshop, “Demystifying AI for Business Owners” presented on October 29 from 9:00 – 10:00

AM. Tailored for entrepreneurs and business leaders, this session provides a clear and accessible overview of AI technologies and their practical applications. Explore real-world examples, understand how AI can enhance decision-making, automate processes, and gain a competitive edge. From machine learning to natural language processing, we'll break down the complexity of AI, empowering you to make informed decisions about integrating these technologies into your business strategy. Join us for an enlightening journey into the world of AI, demystifying the buzzwords and equipping you with the knowledge to harness AI for business success. Online webinar. No fee. To register, visit sbdc.uwf.edu and open “Training & Events”. Presented by Russell Hale, CEO, SNH Technologies. Sponsored by Wells Fargo.

## Rotary Club of South Walton Announces Annual Purple Pinky Day

According to Rotary International, polio is a paralyzing and potentially fatal disease that still threatens children in some parts of the world. It can be prevented by vaccines, but it is not curable. Unlike most diseases, it can be eradicated. It has also been reported recently that there has been at least one occurrence of

polio in Gaza.

Rotary and its partners have driven the effort to eradicate polio worldwide for more than 30 years. Rotary's Polio Plus program was the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication by vaccinating children on a massive scale. As a core partner, Rotary focuses on advocacy, fundrais-

ing, volunteer recruitment, and awareness building.

Since 1988, polio cases have been reduced by 99.9%. To eradicate polio, newborns have to be vaccinated as soon as possible. That is where the Purple Pinky initiative comes in. October 24 is the 2024 Purple Pinky Spectacular. The initiative gets its

name from the fact that children, once vaccinated, have their pinky fingers dipped in a purple dye.

On October 24, volunteers from Rotary of South Walton are working to raise \$2,000 to help “End Polio Now”. Rotary of South Walton, along with Donut Hole at their Inlet Beach and Santa Rosa Beach locations

ask that you preorder or stop by to pick up a box of donuts and make your donation or get two donuts for \$5.

For further information, please contact Marilyn Van Order at (615) 419-0323 or marilynvanorder@gmail.com.

## 850 Midlife and Hydrate 30A to Host Screening of The M Factor

850 Midlife and Hydrate 30A will be hosting a watch party in The Chapel of 30A on October 17 at 6 p.m. featuring the PBS documentary, “The (M) Factor: Shredding the Silence on Menopause”. This film explores the hidden impact of menopause on women's lives. Menopause has ramifications beyond just an individual woman's well-being. The far-ranging results of women enduring untreated menopause include billions of dollars in lost wages, upended careers, family disruptions, and emotional chaos.

With evidence-based information, the film empowers women

to make informed health decisions and aims to remove the stigma surrounding menopause and aging.

This feature-length documentary film, centers on the lived experiences of women across the U.S. Cameras follow women into their doctors' offices, at work, and in their homes to expose the challenges they face—including racial biases, gender-ignorant care, inequitable structures and systems, and barriers due to the lack of basic midlife healthcare research. The women featured here open up about their experiences and share their stories of enduring

debilitating symptoms while being ignored, ridiculed and/or shamed—and left untreated.

Now there's a movement to fix the broken system, change the culture and transform our future. “The (M) Factor” turns the spotlight on the progress being made. With input from emboldened physicians, healthcare advocates and leaders in the menopause movement, the film focuses on what is being done to address this public health crisis and offers solutions that can be replicated in medical communities and workplaces across the country.





# Get Out the Christian Vote!



BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

As we approach election day on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 22-year veteran and mother Lisa Robertson, an advocate for Get Out the Christian Vote, has a question for all those who are considering not getting out to vote: What kind of future do you want for your children and the generations to follow?

Charlie Kirk recently posted, 'If we're silent, nothing may happen to us. But, it will most certainly happen to our children in the future and that has stuck with me. We had a meeting on September 13th that showed the movie, A Letter to the American Church (a film adaptation to Eric Metaxas' book by the same name), and Mao, Stalin, and Hitler were able to come into that kind of power through three critical and strategic areas: For one, if they could control the pastors,

they could control the people. Second, if they could take away land and possessions, they could control us. Finally, if they could get to the children, then they could change the trajectory of the future. That's what they did and we are seeing evidence that this is happening now."

Already, there is evidence that the Church is not participating in what is sure to be a pivotal election. 50% of Christians are not even registered to vote and many who are already thinking about not voting on election day. In the 2020 election, more than 25 million Christians chose not to vote. Lisa is concerned too that while there's still time, many pastors aren't actively advocating for Christian participation in the election process, because of the misconception that this would be seen as a political leaning in a house of worship. What she is hoping for, however, is that churches would set aside the discussion about politics from the pulpit, and recognize that the Biblical responsibility still exists for each Christian to participate in the governing bodies of our

country.

"Even as early as Genesis, we are given authority. Isaiah 29:2 says that when the righteous are in authority and become great, the people rejoice, but when the wicked man rules, the people groan and sigh. Speaking about voting is not political, but acknowledging that everyone who believes in the Gospel needs to preach the Gospel, not just in words but in actions. It's how we decide what we want as the moral center of our government and the kind of country we ultimately want for our children. If we want them to have the freedom to gather in a house of worship, to have freedom of speech, to be taught to work hard, that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that they have a right to work toward owning land, it is going to be through the election process we make that happen. We do that by showing up to vote."

Lisa acknowledges that not everyone has the time to volunteer for the political affiliations they support and that there are so many important needs that

take the forefront of the average American family. What families can do, however, is available to all.

"After 22 years of being in the military, I still feel a call to duty and serving my community but I understand everybody's busy, and it's hard for people to get involved, especially now. Times are tough, things are so expensive, and people are just trying to do the best they can to get food on the table for their children. What we can still do though, is to be salt and light as the Bible calls us to be. We can still pray, gather together, and encourage one another to show up for this election's outcome in leadership and initiatives like Amendment 4."

What we seem to be learning from traditional and social media alike is not to vote for who would best run our country, but for what image we like best. In the minutiae of agendas that lean toward blue or red, it has kept the voting public from taking any action and it is so critical to show up and participate in our right to vote. Our vote is a declaration of

the future we want to see.

"We need to show God's love and have leaders who love this country's freedoms, support our rights as individuals to worship and speak freely, and who will give our younger generation hope again. They need to know that they have a purpose, a place in society and that working for your family and community is a good thing. Everything free comes with some kind of attachment, whether it be physical or psychological, and not all attachments are good for us.

It's easier to fight for our rights now because when they're lost, it's way harder to get them back."

If you would like to join Get Out the Christian Vote for their next meeting, it will be on Monday, October 7th from 6-8 pm at 6757 U.S. Hwy. 98, 2nd floor in Santa Rosa Beach. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with light refreshments. If you have any questions, contact Lisa Sanders Robertson on Facebook or you can call 850-737-0226 or email lisarobertson610@icloud.com.

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



## Watch Party

The joy of the Democratic Women's Club was multiplied when a nice crowd gathered for a Watch Party of the Harris-Trump debate on September 10 at Hammock Bay Lake

Club. There was laughter and food as they watched the lady of the hour, Presidential candidate Kamala Harris, fill not Biden's shoes, but her own stilettos.

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# SEASIDE Institute™ Presents an Evening of Inspiration with Ray Gindroz

BY KIMBERLY STANLEY,  
SEASIDE INSTITUTE

SEASIDE Institute™ recently held their Speaker Series, an event where distinguished speakers and authors engage in discussions with the public. The series opened with Ray Gindroz, a renowned architect celebrated for his passionate advocacy of new urbanism. Gindroz’s presentation offered an in-depth look at his latest project, a compilation of sketches featured in his recent book, *Taking a Pen For a Walk*.

The book serves as both a visual diary and a thoughtful exploration of urban environments, providing a unique perspective

on familiar places through the eyes of an artist. For Gindroz, the publication marks the realization of a long-held dream to gather his sketches from around the globe into a single volume, allowing readers to experience his journey through unique spaces and places. During the presentation, Gindroz stated that he believes the town of Seaside is a *città delle idee* or “city of ideas” as it has evolved over the decades due to a compilation of ideas and best practices recommended by experts from around the globe. The foreword of his book was written by SEASIDE® cofounder, Robert Davis.

In an era where routine can



Ray Gindroz and Seaside Cofounder, Robert Davis. Photo Credit: Christy Milliken

lead to complacency, discovering new places through an artistic lens offers a refreshing perspective. *Taking a Pen For a Walk* celebrates the art of drawing and Gindroz encourages readers to “take their pens for a walk” through cities and communities, exploring intricacies and uncovering their hidden narratives, one line at a time. He views sketching not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a way to engage with and understand the

complexities of urban spaces.

Gindroz’s sketches capture the essence of urban environments, from the detailed architecture of historic cathedrals to the subtle charm of everyday buildings. Each sketch invites readers to reflect on the relationship between structures, streets, and their inhabitants, shedding light on the elements that define good design and the interactions people have with their surroundings.

Through themes such as “conversation” and “connection”, Gindroz examines various facets of urban life, including the statements made by buildings and the historical layers embedded in cityscapes. His approach encourages readers to ponder the deeper meanings of the spaces we inhabit and their impact on our experiences. Gindroz believes hand-drawing these scenes is an essential skill that nurtures creativity, understanding, and a profound connection to the built environment—skills that are increasingly overshadowed by the digital age.

Looking ahead, Gindroz’s

forthcoming book, tentatively titled *City Building for People*, promises to explore the social and perceptual dimensions of urban design in even greater depth. Through this work, he aims to inspire architects and urban planners to create spaces that prioritize the needs and experiences of their inhabitants.

After Gindroz’s talk, attendees had the opportunity to chat with the author while having their books signed at Sundog Books before they took part in a cocktail reception at 87 Central. The reception was sponsored in part by VIE® Magazine.

SEASIDE Institute™ remains committed to fostering connections among individuals and organizations who share a passion for community and environmental stewardship. Through initiatives like the Speaker Series, the nonprofit continues to inspire sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant communities, nurturing a world where every corner reflects a story of connection. For more information or to become a member, visit [seaside-institute.org](http://seaside-institute.org).

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# What's on 30ATV?

30A Television is excited to announce a new partnership with the popular YouTube channel, The First Timers. This collaboration will bring The First Timers' extensive library of high-quality content vlog style videos to a broader audience through 30A Media's syndicated network, including dedicated apps for Roku, Fire TV, and Free Ad-Supported TV (FAST) channels. You can see their channel at [www.30alive.com](http://www.30alive.com) and in 30ATV apps.

This partnership marks a significant expansion in 30A Media's content offerings, providing viewers with engaging and informative content from The First Timers, a channel known for its unique and relatable experiences. From travel adventures to first-time challenges and cool

places to see and visit, The First Timers has captivated audiences with their genuine, entertaining, and educational content.

Through this collaboration, 30A Media will develop and launch dedicated apps on Roku and Fire TV, making it easier for viewers to access The First Timers' content on their favorite devices. Additionally, the partnership will see The First Timers' videos syndicated across 30A Media's (30ATV) FAST channels, increasing the reach and visibility of the content to viewers worldwide.

"We are thrilled to partner with The First Timers to bring their incredible content to a



larger audience," said Paul Vizard, CEO at 30A Media. "This partnership aligns perfectly with our mission to provide diverse and engaging content across multiple platforms. By building these new apps and expanding our 30ATV FAST channels, we are ensuring that viewers have even more ways to enjoy the high-quality programming that both 30A Media and The First

Timers are known for."

David and Terry, the owners of The First Timers YouTube channel, expressed their excitement about the partnership, saying, "We've always believed that our adventures could inspire and entertain a wide audience, and this partnership with 30A Media is a dream come true. We're excited to see our content reach new viewers through Roku, Fire TV, and FAST channels. Our primary focus is on the Emerald Coast of Florida, but we have various travel series' that span the globe. While we enjoy capturing our real reactions to new experiences, we also focus

on telling the story of business, business owners, and interesting community members. This partnership is a huge step in the right direction for all of our fellow First Timers and we can't wait to bring more content to a new audience.

This collaboration is expected to enhance both 30A Media's and The First Timers' brand presence, opening up new opportunities for content distribution and viewer engagement. The new apps and syndication on FAST channels will be rolled out in the coming months, with updates and additional content releases planned throughout the year.

For more information about this partnership, please visit [www.30A.Media](http://www.30A.Media), to see the channel, visit [www.30A.TV](http://www.30A.TV)

# Pipe Hitter Foundation to Host Exclusive "Operator For a Day" Training Fundraiser to Benefit Foundation

Retired Navy SEAL and Founder of Pipe Hitter Foundation Eddie Gallagher is hosting an exclusive and immersive training experience on Saturday, October 12, to raise support for service members and first responders via The Pipe Hitter

Foundation. This special event will be held at Stronghold SOF Solutions in Defuniak Springs and gives attendees a glimpse into what our country's best go through on a daily basis to be at the highest state of readiness. Bernie Kerik, formerly the New

York Police Commissioner, will be attending as a special guest along with other highly trained military special operators

"Operator For a Day" is a day of special training and unique programming to raise support for Pipe Hitter Foundation's fight

to protect our service members and first responders who put their lives on the line. The event includes immersive demos and training and concludes with a re-

ception and dinner. The last day to purchase tickets is October 8.

To see the full event schedule and RSVP, visit <https://donor-box.org/events/682254>

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# Family Friendly Events

## Upcoming Events in South Walton: October 2024

### Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou Oct. 11

Step into the magical world of artist George Rodrigue's "Loup-garou," or Blue Dog, at Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's (MKAF) Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou. This special Artful Dining fundraising event, presented by Churchill Oaks and NTS Interiors by Marisol Gullo Interiors, will be held in the clubhouse at Churchill Oaks in Santa Rosa Beach on Friday, Oct. 11, at 6 p.m. A limited number of seats are available. Tickets are \$295 per person. MKAF members save \$20. Not yet a member? Go to [MKAF.org](http://MKAF.org) to select an annual membership starting from just \$75 per person. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach initiatives serving local K-12 students, individuals with disabilities and active-duty military and veterans throughout NWFL and the Southeast.

### 16th Annual Baytowne Wharf Beer Festival Oct. 11-12

American specialty beers from throughout the nation will be available for participants to sample and savor. The grand, craft beer tasting event on Saturday, Oct. 12, will feature more than 200 domestic and international craft beers available for sampling. For tickets, visit [baytownebeerfestival.com](http://baytownebeerfestival.com). Live Music: Friday, 6-8 p.m.: Duchess; Saturday: 2-5 p.m.: Below Alabama

### Bloody Mary Festival Oct. 12

Local bars and restaurants will be serving the finest Bloodys on the Emerald Coast at The Market Shops at Sandestin, made with Distillery 98 Dune Laker Vodka. Along with plenty of delicious drinks, there will also be live music by Catalyst, football, cold beer, local food from merchants, shopping and so much more! Tickets \$60 in advance; \$75 at the door. For details and tickets, visit [themarketshops.com/bloody-mary-festival](http://themarketshops.com/bloody-mary-festival).

### Watersound Origins Porchfest Oct. 13

The Watersound Origins community will host the annual Watersound Origins Porchfest on Sunday, October 13 from 3-6 p.m. This event will take place throughout Watersound Origins on the front porches and lawns of the community. This event is FREE and open to the public. Bring a lawn chair and friends and be ready for an afternoon of good music, good people, and good neighbors. Live music includes Sammy Strudgeon 3 p.m., Gabbee 3 p.m., Dion Jones & the Neon Trees 3 p.m., Jared Herzog 4:30 p.m., 30A Songwriters Festival Stage: The Pink Stones 5 p.m.

### Walton County Fair Oct 14-19

Walton County Fair 2024 takes place October 14 - 19 at the Fair Grounds in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. Lots of family fun for the week! Visit [waltoncountyfair.com](http://waltoncountyfair.com) for the schedule of events, rides, pricing, youth activities, contest



entries, live entertainment, and more! The fair prides itself on continuing to update the areas for exhibits and entertainment. Exhibits at the fair still include animal, art, agriculture, handicrafts, potted plants, photography, and canned foods divisions. Children also have the opportunity to showcase their skills and talents with animals, speeches and educational posters. Entertainment is a big deal at the fair. Each year the building is filled with music - from gospel to country and western performers. The gospel singing on Saturday night has become a great hit and much-

anticipated event.

### Champagne Under the Stars at Henderson Beach Resort Oct. 18

This exclusive soiree promises an unforgettable night of opulence and indulgence under the enchanting glow of a starlit sky. The rooftop transforms into a haven of exquisite taste, where a luxurious six-course dining experience awaits. Imagine delectable champagne harmonizing with decadent culinary creations featuring truffles, all while you immerse yourself in the captivating ambiance of a

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Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.



# Family Friendly Events



balmy southern evening. Tickets: [www.hendersonbeachresort.com/events/henderson-2024-dinner-series-bubbles-truffles-and-stars](http://www.hendersonbeachresort.com/events/henderson-2024-dinner-series-bubbles-truffles-and-stars).

### DCWAF 8th Annual Harvest Wine & Food Festival Oct. 17-20

Step into a world of culinary delight at the Harvest Wine & Food Festival, an annual event hosted in WaterColor by the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF), October 17-20. This four-day celebration features an array of exquisite wine dinners, the renowned Grand Tasting, a delightful cocktail brunch, and much more. For tickets, visit [dcwaf.org](http://dcwaf.org).

### Alys Beach Fall Festival Oct. 25

Join family and friends in the Alys Beach Amphitheatre on Friday, October 25 as we celebrate the spookiest time of year on 30A at the Alys Beach Fall Festival! With activities for all goblins and ghouls beginning at 4:30 p.m., enjoy fall crafts, face painting, a photobooth and more – all to the tune of 30A favorites, Huck & Lilly! Bring your blankets to cozy up to watch Casper on the big screen, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Merchants of Alys will be handing out treats! Costumes are welcome and encouraged, but not required for trick or treating.

### Arty Kick Off Party | Festival of the Arts Oct. 25

This year's 29th annual celebration of art, food, music and family fun begins on Friday, Oct. 25, at 6 p.m. with the Arty Kick Off Party on the Piazza Plaza Henderson Beach Resort. Mix and mingle with Festival artists, watch award-winning featured guest artist Melanie Moore paint live, and enjoy live music by Coconut Radio, light bites, creative cocktail by Black Sheep Tequila and cash bar.

\$50 per person (includes two drink tickets for cash bar); MKAF members save 10%. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach community outreach education initiatives.

### Seaside Oktoberfest Oct. 26

Celebrate the season in Seaside at the Oktoberfest Celebration! Beginning at 1 p.m. in Central Square on Saturday, Oct. 26th in Seaside, enjoy drinks, hotdogs, and live polka music. Come early to catch the annual Halloweener Derby on the Lyceum Lawn. Check-in and registration will start at 9:15 a.m. with the first races kicking off at 10 a.m. Costume contest to follow the Derby Race. For 2024 Seaside Halloweener registration and race + contest rules, visit [seasidefl.com/seaside-halloweener-derby](http://seasidefl.com/seaside-halloweener-derby).



### 29th Annual Festival of the Arts Oct. 26-27

The Festival of the Arts, produced by Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), is a celebration of art, music, food and family fun. Head to the Cultural Arts Village in Destin Saturday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to browse original artwork by more than 100 premier artists from across the U.S. (and Europe!). Watch live artist demos, hear live music, enter the art drawing, purchase souvenir Festival merchandise, enjoy hands-on creative children's activities, street performers, snap a keepsake "masterpiece" photo, savor food

truck fare, sip beer, wine, Bloody Mary's and more. Join in the festivities by casting your vote for the People's Choice Award (Saturday). FREE admission. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach community outreach education initiatives.

### Witches of South Walton Charity Ride Oct. 31

The Witches of South Walton are set to ride in the 21st Annual Witch Ride this October! Every year, the Witches decorate bikes and fly throughout their commu-

nities. These Witches dress to impress, decorate their bikes/brooms and have a wicked fun Halloween celebration. The ride will leave from Gulf Place on Tuesday,

*Continued on page 29*

# ATTENTION REPUBLICANS

## It's Time

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# Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County Announces Installation of 10 Murals In U.S. Highway 98 Pedestrian Underpass

U.S. Highway 98 Pedestrian Underpass Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County Announces Installation of 10 Murals In U.S. Highway 98 Pedestrian Underpass

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) is proud to announce that original murals commissioned and created by 10 local artists were recently installed on the

walls of Walton County's first pedestrian underpass at U.S. Highway 98 in Inlet Beach, which opened to the public over Labor Day weekend. The 136-foot-long underpass



Mural photo courtesy of Spring Run Media

frames the east end of Walton County at the high-traffic corner of Hwy. 98 and County Hwy. 30A, both designated scenic corridors.

The installation includes artworks by Francisco Adaro, Katherine Boggs, Heather Clements, Bradley Copeland, Olga Guy, Wes Hinds, Sarah Page, Andy Saczynski, Andrea Scurto and Lindsay Tobias. Artists were selected from the CAA's pre-vetted Public Artist Directory and each created a mural measuring 20 ft wide x 8 ft high.

The public art component is part of the Florida Department of Transportation's greater \$5.6 million Underpass project and was created in collaboration with Scenic Walton, Walton County Board of County Commissioners, and Walton County Tourism Department. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, St. Joe Community Foundation, Rosemary Beach Realty, Market 30A, 30A.com, Morning Star Foundation, 30Avenue, Howard Group, and John and Nina Freer.

"After years of planning and collaboration, we are excited to unveil these works of art in an underpass that will provide safe passage to so many Walton County residents

and visitors," said CAA President & CEO Jennifer Steele. "The murals wonderfully express the theme of connectivity and relationship among humans, nature, and our built environment, and the CAA is grateful to be a part of this important project that provides connection for our community."

The installation will grow to include Underwater Museum of Art (UMA) replica sculptures, including Common Chord from Vince Tatum sponsored by St. Joe Community Foundation, Let's Not Blow This from Kevin Reilly sponsored by Rosemary Beach Realty, and The Grayt Pineapple from Rachel Herring McCord, that will be installed on the north and south entrances of the underpass in late fall 2024. Produced in partnership with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association, the UMA was the first Art in Public Spaces project for the CAA.

The CAA's Art in Public Spaces Program is designed to foster collaboration, celebrate community, encourage tourism and exploration, stimulate the economy, and enhance the physical environment as well as the unique culture and beauty of Walton County. For more information, visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.

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# Emerald Coast Parkinson's Educational Event

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive, neurological disease that is the fastest-growing and second most common neurodegenerative disease in the United States. Parkinson's diminishes the body's ability to make Dopamine, a neurotransmitter critical for making smooth, coordinated motion. Currently, there is no known cause or cure but we are on the cusp of finding various biomarkers to help the medical community properly diagnose the disease.

One million of the world's ten million people with Parkinson's live in the United States and over 66,000 Floridians currently are diagnosed with Parkinson's. Every six minutes someone new is diagnosed with Parkinson's, a uniquely human disease, which often has not only motor symptoms (Tremor, Rigidity, & Slowness of Motion) but also non-motor symptoms (Apathy/Depression, Drooling, & Orthostatic Hypotension), as well.

The Emerald Coast, more specifically, Bay and Walton Counties, together have approximately three thousand people with Parkinson's. Unfortunately,

this region is in the middle of a Movement Disorder Specialist "desert", with the two closest Movement Disorder Specialists located in Pensacola and Tallahassee.

Panama City Beach at least has a Parkinson's Support Group, started in 2021, called 3085Thrive, with the name derived from the Longitude and Latitude of Panama City Beach (30/85) and the word THRIVE, which we intend to do, despite having Parkinson's ([www.3085Thrive.com](http://www.3085Thrive.com)).

3085Thrive will be hosting the first-ever Emerald Coast Parkinson's Educational Event on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at Woodlawn Church (219 Alf Coleman) from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The symposium will feature over 15 Vendors who offer products or services that assist people living with Parkinson's. There will also be three nationally known speakers present to discuss topics such as understanding the grief associated with the disease, Care Partner Burn Out and to provide a summary of the latest Parkinson's research initiatives from Movement Disorder Specialists.

The event will also be offered in a virtual webinar format with a Q&A format.

Please contact Greg Ritscher, 3085Thrive support group leader, at [gregritscher@gmail.com](mailto:gregritscher@gmail.com) or (303) 875-8117 for more information.



**JERSEY BOYS**  
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Sundays & Wednesdays at 2pm

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Tickets or info, call 850.684.0323 or visit [EmeraldCoastTheatre.org](http://EmeraldCoastTheatre.org)  
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## Celebrate the Arts with *Festive Fall Events*

**Best of the Emerald Coast** \*MKAF is the 2024 Charity Beneficiary  
OCT 10 | 6 PM | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

**Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou:  
An Evening with Wendy Rodrigue**  
OCT 11 | 6 PM | Churchill Oaks | Santa Rosa Beach

**Arty Kick Off Party & 29th Annual Festival of the Arts**  
OCT 25 | 6 PM | Henderson Beach Resort | Destin  
OCT 26 | 9 AM - 5 PM & OCT 27 | 10 AM - 4 PM | Dugas Pavilion Green in Destin

[Purchase Tickets at MKAF.org/Events](http://PurchaseTicketsatMKAF.org/Events)

Proceeds from all events benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach education and community engagement initiatives.







# Ecco Water: Bringing Clean, Safe Drinking Water to Santa Rosa Beach

Thirsty for a cold glass of water that can rival leading bottled brands for taste? Lee and Mona Skidmore have been providing delicious, clean and safe water to the Santa Rosa Beach community for over 30 years. Lee is the owner of Ecowater of Santa Rosa Beach, and, with the help of his specialists, he's been bringing clean water to homes and commercial establishments using reverse osmosis, lawn systems, as well as filters for city and well water for three decades. Home water filtration systems can provide easy access to secure, clean drinking water, and Ecowater can make the installation process a breeze.

Home water filtration systems are designed to eliminate various contaminants present in tap water. Contaminated water can harbor bacteria and parasites that lead to waterborne diseases. It can also include chlorine, lead, and other impurities that may pose health

risks. A good filtration system removes these harmful substances, resulting in cleaner and safer drinking water. This protection is particularly essential for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and individuals with compromised immune systems. These systems also enhance the taste of water making it more appealing and encouraging increased water consumption.

Additionally, by installing a home water filtration system, individuals can reduce their reliance on bottled water, leading to a decrease in plastic usage. It's a sustainable choice that benefits both personal health and the planet.

While the initial investment in a home water filtration system may seem significant, it proves to be cost-effective in the long run. Compared to continually purchasing bottled water or relying on other costly water purification methods, a



filtration system offers a more economical solution for maintaining a safe and clean water supply. There's no need to rely on store-bought water or wait for deliveries. This accessibility encourages individuals to stay hydrated and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Knowing that the water consumed at home is free from contaminants provides peace of mind. It eliminates concerns about the quality of tap water and ensures that every glass of water is a step towards better

health and is a proactive measure to secure access to clean and safe drinking water. From health benefits to environmental considerations, the advantages of such systems make them a worthwhile investment for individuals and families seeking a reliable and sustainable water source at home.

Since 2010, Lee has provided Hanish water systems, a best-seller, with 10-year installation-service-and maintenance agreements. For information on this and other popular mod-

els like the Crest-10 Ecowater of Santa Rosa Beach, contact the Ecowater office located at 76 Lynn Drive in Santa Rosa Beach. For more information email [ecowaterSRB@Media-combb.net](mailto:ecowaterSRB@Media-combb.net) or call (850) 267-0500 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.



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# Jessie's Epiphany

By VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Jessie was never sure whose fault it was. The self-help book said to look at the common denominator. That wasn't encouraging. She was by all appearances comfortable and successful, but inside, not so much.

Her entire life was spent beating herself for not being better. A better friend or mother or daughter. She could go for days or weeks without thinking about calling or texting. She did stellar work, accomplishing the bulk of her to-do list within the first couple of hours because of her laser focus.

Jessie always said – if I can find a pattern and understand the assignment, I can plow through a list rapidly. But for some reason, her co-workers never seemed to want to spend time with her. She had this way of speaking her mind, which apparently made others uncomfortable. She couldn't fig-

ure that out. Weren't they having a discussion? Why isn't it ok to express an opinion?

One day, while scrolling through Instagram, clips about autism kept popping up and as she watched the short videos, a light bulb went off. Her entire childhood replayed itself in her mind's eye. So that's why she was the way she was! It all made sense now.

The extreme introverted personality coupled with high empathy. The overstimulation and subsequent meltdowns in situations where lights and noise and activity overwhelmed her. The love of being alone, avoiding group settings, living in a quiet home with everything in its place. Walking the other way to avoid speaking with a neighbor. Unreasonable pushback against change she didn't initiate. Rewatching or rereading the same movie series or book repeatedly for months, then obsessing about something

else until she had wrung every last bit of knowledge and interest out of it.

Jessie suddenly realized she wasn't supposed to beat herself up about not being like other people. God made her brain neuro-divergent for a reason. She always said – my brain works in a straight line, so I can reach a conclusion and solve a problem quickly.

But that has some societal drawbacks. Like pretending (masking) to act like everyone around her in order to fit in, which doesn't work well in the long run. It's exhausting pretending to be interested in subjects that actually bore you to death, knowing that no one is interested in truly finding and implementing a solution.

She recalled all the various groups she'd joined over the years and lost interest in after a few months. She wanted to discuss topics. She wanted to find solutions. She wanted to know what

others were thinking. And for some reason, the majority seemed to be put off by that.

Which has caused Jessie no small amount of sorrow over the years. Her fixed desire has been to serve God and use her spiritual gifts. However, there are high hurdles to overcome when you're autistic. Just "joining a group" isn't so easy. Where will they meet? Will there be food? How long will it last? Can I leave when I want? It's so difficult to initiate conversation. Autistic people don't tend to have large groups of friends, so finding your niche can be difficult.

But God didn't say it would be easy. He expects us to actively search for opportunities to exercise our spiritual gifts. So, Jessie continues to lean in – intentionally placing herself in uncomfortable situations, learning what she can, and serving where she can.

Being autistic might be a reason that fitting in is difficult, but it can't be an excuse for not putting in the effort. Our Heavenly Father has good works for each of His children to perform, that build up the Body of Christ. Our human eyes can only see the next step, but that's ok, because God sees the whole picture and is thrilled with our participation in His plan, even when we feel it's more struggle than success. Sometimes our personal growth is as important as the task itself.

Jessie no longer worries over her "lack" but embraces the personality and brain her Heavenly Father chose for her. The more she understands autism, the more grace she gives herself. She knows without a doubt she is cherished and dearly loved and unique. And believing that has made all the difference.

## EVENTS

*continued from page 25*

October 31 between 6:45-7:15 a.m. The Witches will again be riding to support the mission of Children's Volunteer Health Network (CVHN). Event registration at [Register.WitchRide.com](http://Register.WitchRide.com). Get more details at [www.witchesof-southwalton.com](http://www.witchesof-southwalton.com).

### Eggs on the Beach Nov. 2

Eggs on the Beach is celebrating its 10th Anniversary Nov. 2, and is partnering with two well-known brands—Tony Chachere's Seasonings and Angel's Envy—to enhance the cooking competition. Presented by Bay Breeze Patio, the beloved annual event will include more categories for cook teams to compete in, and more opportunities for tasters to sample delicious bites and beverages. Held at Seascape Towne Center in Miramar Beach, cook teams will be smoking, grilling and baking their favorite dishes on the Big Green Egg while tasters sample the delicious bites and vote for their favorites, while supporting two local causes—Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Food for Thought. Taster tickets: \$50 in advance; \$60 day of. Visit [www.EggsOnTheBeach.com](http://www.EggsOnTheBeach.com).

### Contractors Connect Networking Event Nov. 14

Contractors, subcontractors and other specialists in the building

industry are invited to attend Contractors Connect, on Thursday, Nov. 14, 5- 7 p.m. at AJ's Grayton Beach. Presented by Builders First-Source of the Emerald Coast, the cost is \$20 and includes one free draft beer, light appetizers, and the opportunity to win multiple door prizes. Attendees will have

an opportunity to connect with representatives from Contractors Connect Industry Partners, Savi Flooring & Tile, Frammer Jacks and Painter Jacks; and Networking Sponsors, Dunlap & Shipman, Westlake Royal Building Products and Decks & Docks Company.



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 Wellness

# Book Review of James Clear's "Atomic Habits"

BY MICHAEL McMANUS LCSW.

As a therapist, I love this book as it outlines simple, basic and effective ways to facilitate change in your life.

Get ready to unlock the secrets of habit formation with "Atomic Habits" a book that's part science, part self-help, and quite transformative! If you've ever found yourself stuck in a cycle of bad habits or longing for that elusive "better version"

of yourself, this book will assist you in that journey.

From the very first pages, Clear captivates readers with his engaging storytelling and relatable anecdotes. He introduces the idea that small changes—like the size of an atom—can lead to astonishing results over time. Imagine transforming your life by simply improving by 1% each day. It sounds so manageable, doesn't it? Clear effectively dispels the myth that you



need to overhaul your entire existence overnight. Instead, he champions the power of tiny tweaks that can snowball into significant accomplishments.

One of the highlights of the book is its catchy framework: the Four Laws of Behavior

Change — cue, craving, response, and reward. Clear illustrates how understanding these components can help you break bad habits and cultivate good ones. It's as if he's handed you a cheat sheet for mastering your own behavior!

Clear's writing is peppered with memorable stories and insights from various fields, keeping readers entertained while they learn. He shares the journey of athletes, artists, and even historical figures, making the principles of habit formation feel both accessible and inspiring. You'll find yourself nodding along, thinking, "If they can do it, so can I!"

Beyond the practical strategies, what really resonates is

Clear's emphasis on identity. He encourages readers to shift their self-perception, suggesting that true change comes when you start seeing yourself as the person you want to become. It's a powerful reminder that change isn't just about what we do—it's about who we believe we are.

The book also tackles the importance of environment. Clear suggests that if you want to change your habits, you need to design your surroundings to make good habits easier and bad habits harder. It's a simple yet brilliant idea that can lead to major lifestyle shifts—like putting your gym clothes by the door or hiding that tempting chocolate stash!

In conclusion, "Atomic Habits" is a delightful blend of wisdom, practicality, and inspiration. James Clear has crafted a roadmap for anyone looking to build better habits and break free from the chains of self-doubt. So, if you're ready to embark on a journey grab this book and get started. Your future self will thank you!

Michael McManus LCSW is a therapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida and can be reached at (850) 837-0123 or Psychotherapy30A.com.

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Best of Emerald Coast 2016 & 2017  





BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Our oldest son walked away from us and into his dorm just before we headed out of town after the first college move in. The symbolic moment of him walking away from his childhood and into his adulthood wasn't lost on me and brought some tears. Now we begin the redefining of a new version of life and relationship as we navigate simultaneous joy, gratitude, grief, pride and excitement.

Many parents have gone before us launching kids. We listened, cared and expressed compassion. However, without having walked the road ourselves, we didn't deeply understand that particular experience. We couldn't know until we knew. Now, we see this family transition with new eyes, fresh emotions and have a deeper empathy to offer those who come after us. We will send a thoughtful text, take a mom for lunch, tell a Dad he might feel sadder than he is expecting, give longer hugs, and check on people weeks after the move in.

While pain isn't unique to the human experience, we all walk through different brands of pain at different moments. Your pain is your own and needs its own space to be felt and processed.

And, your pain journey can also be an invitation to care for others with similar pain in uniquely empathic ways. If you've walked through divorce, you understand what those walk-

ing through divorce might be feeling and needing. If you've walked through cancer diagnosis, you understand what those walking through cancer might be feeling and needing.

So, how do you use your experience to extend care and empathy to others walking a similar road to the one you've walked?

**10 Ways to Care for Others from Your Experience:**

**Give your personal pain space.** Take the time to understand your experience, feel your feelings, and reflect on what you're learning. Seek support as you process your pain.

**Notice the pain of others.** Be aware and curious about pain others might be experiencing. Extend compassion broadly to others while noticing when a person's pain might align more closely to something you've experienced.

**Remember your experience.** Remember how you felt in your body and thoughts in the midst of pain. What did you need? What would have helped you feel seen and cared for? Explore remembering your pain as a brainstorm while also being mindful that each person may have different needs.

**Listen with validation.** Ask curious, open ended questions. How are you feeling lately? What is this like for you on the inside? How are you navigating this transition emotionally? Then remind the person their feelings are normal. I understand why you're feeling sad, this is really sad.

**Ask how you can support them.** Sometimes people aren't quite sure what they need but other times they can tell you clearly. Remember to ask.

**Offer encouraging words.** Send a card, text or call letting them know you are thinking about them and care about their



experience.

**Offer practical gestures.** Deliver dinner, take them to coffee, take them a basket of snacks, provide house cleaning services.

**Offer kindness.** Send flowers, a thoughtful item through the mail, leave something thoughtful on their porch.

**Offer your presence.** Offer a hug, to sit with someone and listen, invite them on a walk, or offer to do something they enjoy.

**Follow up.** Put reminders in your calendar and/or reach out

to check in when you think of the person consistently over time.

Your understanding and empathy can be a meaningful gift to someone else walking through hard things. Remember the care you offer is for the other person and not to fill a need in yourself to provide care. And, at the same time, providing empathic care to others does often result in deeper healing within you.

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 Wellness

# October Medicare Opportunities



BY CHRISTIAN REGALADO

October is a special month for those with Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans. Brokers are allowed to start discussing 2025 plans with clients beginning October

1, and you can apply for next year's plans beginning October 15. This year, you'll want to have enrollment season on your radar.

The Inflation Protection Act changed how Medicare prescription drug plans are covered by insurance companies. It reduces the out-of-pocket maximum Medicare beneficiaries can spend for prescription drugs from \$8000 in 2024 to \$2000 in 2025, and payments can be made in installments over the year. This is a great benefit for those who need expensive drugs. The downside is insurance companies will look to recoup their

revenue losses by increasing premiums and copays on the larger pool of consumers.

By now, if you are on an Advantage Plan or Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), you should have received your Annual Notice of Change, outlining the areas where your current plan will see changes next year. It has been reported that up to 80% of Advantage and PDP clients (instead of the typical 25%) will shop for a new plan this season because of all the changes happening for 2025. Brokers expect to be very busy, so call to schedule your appointment early if you can.

Some Advantage Plans that you may wish to consider include Part B Rebate plans which reduce your Part B premium, in

some cases, by over \$160 per month. It is a limited benefits plan, but for those who don't tend to use their benefits, this is a way to save money. If you are



one of over 50% who qualifies for a Chronic Needs plan, you may be attracted to a plan offering those targeted benefits.

If you are on a Medicare Supplement and a PDP plan for prescriptions, your Supplement plan's benefits remain unchanged, but your PDP plan's premium will probably go up, and there may be formulary

changes, which is the list of drugs covered. There could also be changes to drug tier levels and which drug tiers include a deductible. I'm told that many, but not all, plans will continue to have tiers 1 & 2 (generic drugs) exempt from the drug deductible.

In short, be careful when renewing your Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans this year. If you're taking prescription drugs, it's important to compare coverage. There are new tools that compare the cost of specific prescriptions across available plans. And we would be happy to help you.

My expectations are that from October until the end of AEP, which is December 7, brokers and insurance companies will be very busy. If you are working with a broker (and remember their services are free to you), it's important to schedule a time to go over your plan options and your prescription drug information.

November begins open enrollment for individuals, so now is a great opportunity for seniors to get ahead of the game for 2025.

Should you need help, give us a call. Our services are free and as independent brokers, our job is to help you find the plan that works best for you. I am certified with many different insurance carriers, and I am happy to answer your questions and assist any way I can.

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# Grace and Gumbo

By HEATHER BENNETT EYE

Our community was able to fill their bellies and souls at the Path of Grace Gumbo, Chili and Give Cook-off held on October 5, 2024, at New Life Church in Santa Rosa Beach. There was live music, ministry, testimonies and more. Guests were also able to vote on the best gumbo and chili along the Emerald Coast.

The Gumbo, Chili and Give Cook-off is one of several events they've hosted this year for their Path of Grace - Rebuilding Lives Campaign to raise money for the construction of a 28,000 square foot dormitory that will allow them to add an additional 50 beds.

So far, they've raised \$2.5 million toward their \$8 million goal. We anticipate the cook-off contributed significantly towards that goal. "These events that we're holding open the door to double the amount of women we'll be able to help," said Path of Grace Administrative Manager Marissa Martin. "We get phone calls daily, but we're maxed out so we're having to turn people away just because we don't have the room."

Since 2009, Path of Grace has help women transform their lives. They are a nonprofit



organization that provides a faith-based, long-term sober living environment with Christ-centered teachings, along

with Alcoholics Anonymous, addiction counseling and celebrating recovery. Their 16 to 24-month residential program helps women regain their self-confidence and self-worth by leading them to have a relationship with God and teaching them important life skills and work ethic for a successful future.

"This program really works," said Marissa, who also graduated from Path of Grace. "If you stay the full 2 years, and you work your program, this place works."

Our community consistently shows up to support those in recovery and we hope you will consider donating. You can view more about the Path of Grace - Rebuilding Lives Campaign to raise funds for expansion here, [https://youtu.be/\\_uhymMV2IEo?si=wXjoojcJaANq42L-](https://youtu.be/_uhymMV2IEo?si=wXjoojcJaANq42L-)

To learn more about Path of Grace's recovery program, testimonies, projects and events, you can visit <https://www.pathof-grace.net>. Be on the lookout for more in-

formation on the Path of Grace Gala being held in December.



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Musing

# Discernment



BY KIRK MCCARLEY

Best-selling author Jacob Morgan wrote that we become who surrounds us.

“If you surround yourself with negative people, you’ll become negative. But if you surround yourself with successful, growth-minded people, you’ll become successful too.

I experienced this firsthand. For years, I surrounded myself with those who didn’t support or encourage me and who brought me down instead of supporting my dreams. And over time, I realized that my mindset was changing to match theirs.

I realized I had to make a change. I got rid of a lot of people

in my circle and chose to surround myself with positive people who encouraged my new ideas, personally and professionally. And it made all the difference in my goals and growth.

The habits of the people you surround yourself with rub off on you. Who you surround yourself with reflects who you are and who you can become.”

In the book of Galatians, Paul encourages alignment with the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How do you identify those possessing these traits?

First, start with trial and error. I was introduced to a person, and we considered a business relationship. We had a couple of discussions to get to know one another. During our second meeting, I discerned a feeling in my gut that this prospective relationship was not going to be mutually beneficial for either of us. The hoped-for synergy simply didn’t exist. We each felt that way, respected our instincts, and verbalized it. The moral is that the honest conversation did not sever our

connection: in fact, we agreed to collaborate on a different project down the road. Your gut is worth trusting.

Second, does their presence and example seem to help unlock your potential instead of holding you back? For the past year I have been engaged in a book project, with that piece on schedule to come out later this fall. Earlier, the editor had returned my first manuscript with literally hundreds of grammatical corrections and suggestions. My initial reaction was defensive, but after stepping back to more carefully review and rationalize I eventually came to agree with probably 99% of her recommendations. Though it may have hurt a little bit, she made my publication stronger and more coherent. More importantly, she did it respectfully. Should I have another project down the road, I will use her services again.

There are other questions to consider when discerning relationships:

1. Does this person help make you a better version of yourself?
2. Do they build you up or tear you down?

3. Do they help you see things from a different perspective without tempting you to forfeit your values?

4. How do their values align with yours?

5. Does there seem to be a balance of giving and receiving? That does not necessarily equate to who talks the most and least. Could it be that by allowing them time to speak and be heard, they benefit, while you also absorb pieces of valuable wisdom and insight?

One of my best bosses was a gifted orator. In fact, given a 60-minute discussion, his words likely absorbed 58 minutes of our time together. Yet from those orations, I learned and applied many of his philosophies. I was further amazed that at the conclusion of those discussions, he was often able to almost magically “read” my reactions, thoughts, and opinions. I still wonder how he did that.

Barbara Huson, a wealth coach, suggests that we surround ourselves with five types of people:

1. People who firmly believe in you.
2. Trusted friends who have your back.

3. People who have been “there” and can show you the way.

4. Messengers, those who have information useful to you.

5. Naysayers, because they will challenge you to achieve beyond what you may think is possible.

It’s never too late to become an even better version of ourselves. Who do you want to become? Then surround yourself with people who will help you get there.

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



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# A Pastor's Ponderings: On Eagle's Wings



REV. PETE HYDE SERVES AS CHAPLAIN WITH THE SOUTH WALTON FIRE DISTRICT

The morning was still and serene. The sun had been up an hour or so and the air was thick with gulf humidity. The bay stretched out before us like a sheet of mirrored glass pushing its way into infinity as we backed the trailer into the water to launch the jet skis. We put on our life vests and headed out for a few hours on the water.

Other than the passing of an occasional car the morning was quiet. The silence was broken by the whistle of an osprey circling gently, yet intently about a hundred yards out into the bay. The morning hunt was on. Almost in the same location the surface of the water suddenly churned. Dorsal fins pierced the surface and circled with knife-like precision. A pod of dolphins had rounded up a school of fish and were enjoying their breakfast.

The osprey, seizing the opportunity, whistled, tucked her wings to her side and began a quick dive. About halfway to the water she pulled up. An answer to her whistle was heard. Above her circled two smaller ospreys. This morning's hunt was not just about breakfast. School had started. It was time for the kids to learn how to hunt and begin to fend for themselves. Another whistle came from atop a mast of an old sailboat listing to one side and full of the brown brackish water of the bay. Dad was supervising. (That's what dads do you know. They leave the hard work to Mom and stand off at a distance to make sure the job is being done right.)

The dolphins ate their fill of breakfast and the water returned to a mirror-like shine. The three ospreys circled and whistled to one another. Mom would tuck her wings and begin a dive. The

children would watch and learn. Each time she would pull up. They needed to watch and learn and do it on their own. She couldn't do it for them anymore. It was time.

Finally, one of the young birds tucked its wings and streaked downward piercing the calm surface, shattering the mirror of the surface with a big splash. It came up empty handed. A whistle of encouragement came from atop the sailboat mast. Mom called back to him and Dad became silent. The other young osprey made a circle, tucked its wings and headed toward the water. Just at the surface of the water, it pulled up just slicing the top of the water with its talons. Mom whistled. It whistled back.

The scene played out for a few minutes. Circle, tuck, dive. Circle, tuck, dive. Each time with no results. Mom let out a series of whistles. Was she impatient or had she noticed that her children had enough disappointment today? Who knows.

She came in low across the water at high speed and effortlessly climbed into a graceful circle. In moment her wings were tucked as she rocketed downward, broke the surface of the water with a huge splash and came up with a fish almost as long as she was. With her wet wings struggling hard against the weight of the water and the fish, she whistled, turned the fish in the direction of her flight to decrease the drag and headed toward an unseen nest. The young ones followed at a distance. Dad left his perch and followed behind.

I was reminded of one of my favorite scriptures. "Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up on wings as eagles." God, through his Spirit, circles above us and around us watching as any loving parent watches their children. He lets us stumble, fail and fall. But God is always near and will whistle encouragement to us, swoop down when we have had enough, catch us on his wings and bring back into his arms when we have strayed too far or struggled too much.

Whatever your struggle today, know that: God will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of God and hold you in the palm of his hand." Amen.



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 Musing



# Op-Ed: Amendment 4—Not What it Seems

By “DOC” DOUG STAUFFER

The most controversial issue on the November ballot is Amendment 4, titled the “Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion.” Abortion is, unfortunately, divisive, but this amendment is deceptive. This change to the state’s Constitution would forever alter Florida. While Amendment 4 is being marketed as a means to “restore reproductive rights,” in reality, it allows unlimited abortion, strips away parental consent laws, and removes doctors from the equation.

### The Deceptive Language of Amendment 4

Amendment 4 does not define one term used in the amendment. All constitutional amendments are carefully crafted with

specific terms and detailed language, leaving less room for misinterpretation. Amendment 4, however, has no such clarity. Words like “viability,” “health” and “healthcare provider” are undefined. This opens the door to extreme interpretations that will be exploited by lawyers, making abortion in Florida a legal quagmire.

For instance, the term “viability” typically refers to the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 22-24 weeks. However, Amendment 4 leaves this term up for interpretation. This ambiguity creates one of the many dangerous loopholes.

The phrase “patient’s health” is equally concerning, which could be defined as physical, mental, emotional, and even financial well-being. By using vague and undefined language, Amendment 4 will allow abortion at any stage during the nine months if the “health” of the mother is deemed at risk. That “risk” could include emotional stress or financial strain. The life of the mother is already covered.

### Parental Consent Stripped Away

Amendment 4 attacks the family, because it obscures its impact on parental consent laws. While its proponents argue that “parental notification” remains intact, the reality is that this amendment, if passed, would repeal Florida’s parental consent laws. Think about it! Every other medical procedure performed on a minor requires parental consent—why should abortion be the ONLY exception?

### Who’s Behind the Amendment?

Florida voters should ask themselves: Who stands to benefit from this radical amendment? Groups like Planned Parenthood, the ACLU and the Open Society Fund, led by George Soros, have poured millions of dollars into this initiative. These are not grassroots organizations, but well-funded, out-of-state interests determined to make an example of Florida by creating an abortion destination state.

In 2022, Michigan passed a similar state constitutional

amendment. What has followed are taxpayer-funded abortions and the removal of all restrictions, including late-term abortions. If Amendment 4 passes, Florida will follow the same path, forcing taxpayers to pay the bill and allowing abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Even most proponents of abortion do not believe in third-trimester abortions.

### Why This Amendment is Too Extreme for Florida

Amendment 4, as an amendment to the Constitution, will result in an almost irreversible outcome. Once enshrined in the state Constitution, our elected representatives will be powerless to fix any problems. If passed, this amendment would turn Florida into a haven for limitless abortions, drawing individuals from states with more common-sense abortion guidelines. The lack of definitions and legal loopholes would enrich attorneys, sparking years of costly litigation. The taxpayers will be adversely affected and have no hope of finding a solution.

### A Call for Informed Voting

The supporters of Amendment 4 want to deceive voters into thinking that the amendment’s real outcomes are unknown. Floridians deserve to be fully informed, not misled by deceptive language and hidden agendas. If parents no longer must give permission for a juvenile to have an abortion, be honest!

During all the heated rhetoric surrounding Amendment 4, one crucial element is often overlooked: love and understanding for the women who have experienced abortion. While some may be satisfied with their decision, others carry a lifetime of regret, and every time this issue ignites another firestorm, those emotions are stirred anew. As we engage in this important debate, let us not forget that compassion must remain at the heart of our conversations. Regardless of our views, every person, including those who have walked this difficult path, deserves our love, respect and empathy.



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# Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

When I was a kid, my mother believed in angels, but I didn't. I was on the fence about angels. I didn't believe in hocus pocus. My thought was, if angels were real, then why were they always the worst team in the Major Leagues?



My mother used to say, "When you get older, you will believe."

"How can you be so sure?" I asked.

"Because, when you're older there will be moments in your life when you cannot logically explain things without believing."

Mothers.

But then I started writing. And almost immediately, I started receiving stories from people.

Like this one: The young woman was in her car. It was midnight. The two-lane highway was desolate.

Her Impala struck a deer. It wasn't just a deer. It was an animal about the size of a subtropical continent. Her car spun. The automobile went into the opposite lane.

An oncoming vehicle struck her. She blacked out.

The next thing she remembers is a man helping her from the car. He lifted her out. He placed her against the guardrail. "You're going to be okay," he said.

When the paramedics found her, she was asking where the man went. "Ma'am," the EMTs explained, "Nobody travels this highway at this time of night."

That's when she looked at what used to be her car. It was a pile of soot. If she would have been inside, she would have been permanently checked into the Horizontal Hilton.

And here's another. The man worked at a commercial factory. He was overseeing huge production machines. And when one of the machines started acting

up, one of his workers, a young woman, tried to fix the mechanical problem herself.

The employee had her arm inside the machine when one of the hydraulic levers pinned her arm inside the machine and was about to sever her limb.

The foreman was trying to help, so were the others, but they were incapable. That's when a young man, dressed in jeans and T-shirt, showed up. Using his brute strength, the young man

released the hydraulic arms and freed the woman.

"There was no way any human could have moved these hydraulic machines," said the old foreman. "He would have had to be superhuman."

When the woman was freed, she was in shock. They splashed cold water on her face. And when the employees looked for the woman's hero, to thank him, nobody could find him. Nobody knew who he was.

Wait. I'm not done.

There was a young woman of 12 who was swimming across the lake where her family lived. She was doing it on a dare. Her friends had dared her to swim more than a mile across the slough. When she reached the middle point, she began to get tired and couldn't go on. Her swimming turned into dog paddling. Her dog paddling turned into drowning.

There was a man in a boat who arrived and dragged her into his skiff. He rowed her to shore. And when they found her, there was an empty boat on the shore that nobody recognized. There were no identifying registration numbers on the boat. No identifying characteristics. The man was nowhere to be found.

Today, the woman is 64 years old. Her family still owns and uses that boat.

I tell you all this because about 10 years ago, I finally broke down and wrote my first story about the supernatural. It was a story told to me by an old man who claimed an angel saved his life.

Within 24 hours, I had re-

ceived more angel stories than I knew what to do with. The stories had been emailed to me from all parts. Even from far, faraway places like Indonesia, Chile, and Milwaukee.

Currently, I still receive dozens of angel stories per week. I have received them from every state in

the Union, and most European countries. I have thousands in my possession. I share them from time to time, even though I have no business doing so—I'm not what you'd call an inspirational writer. I'm more of a Pabst Blue Ribbon enthusiast. Mostly, I share these stories because I don't know

what else to do with them.

So anyway, a few days ago, I shared another angel story. Whereupon my mother immediately called me and said, "I thought you didn't believe in angels."

Well. You know mothers. They just love to rub it in.



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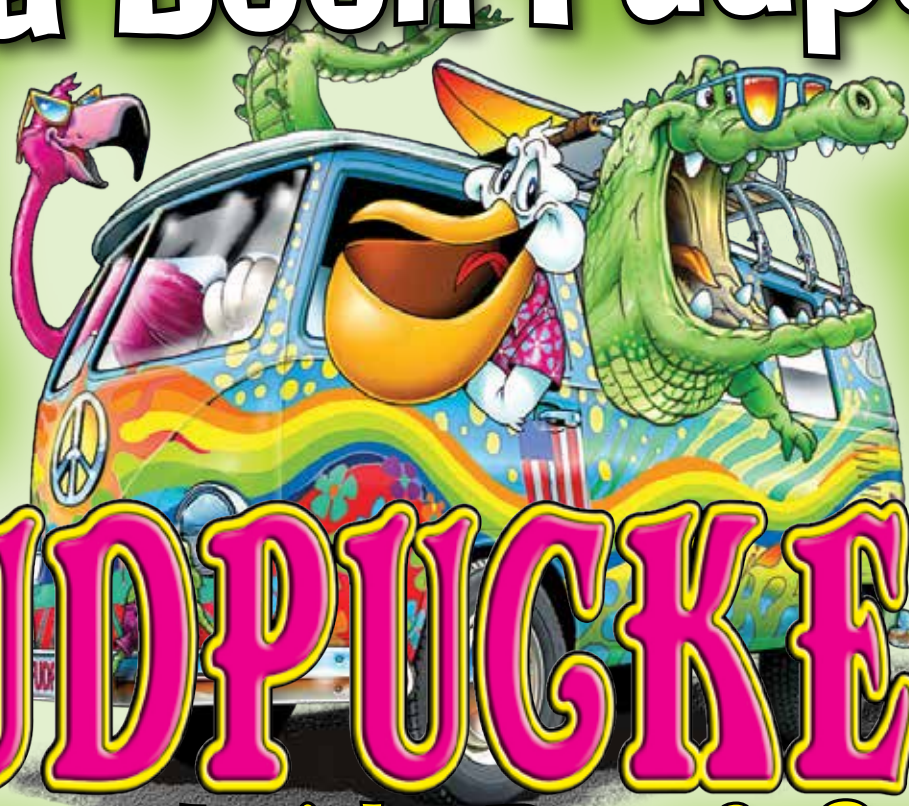
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# Sts. Markella and Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church Announces Upcoming Greek Festival

The parishioners of Saints Markella and Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church are preparing to welcome visitors from far and wide to the annual Greek Festival, from October 18 -20. Once again, the event will be held on the beautiful grounds of the Church at 104 Bryn Mawr Boulevard, from 4 - 8:00 p.m. on Friday, October 18, and from 11a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, October 19, and 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, October 20.

Though the Church is the home to parishioners of many different ethnic backgrounds, this remains a marvelous opportunity for the community of the Panhandle to enjoy the sights, sounds, and flavors of Greece. There will be music, Greek dancing, vendors' booths, and – of course – some of the most delicious Greek food (prepared by loving hands) for your enjoyment. Not to be missed are the scrumptious desserts, best enjoyed with a Greek coffee. There will also be activities for children. All are welcome to attend. The Church tours this year will also give you an opportunity to view

the newly completed interior dome icons.

Please come and bring your friends to the Church grounds. The setting will allow you to

think for a while that you have been transported to Greece, sitting under a canopy, enjoying delicious food with family and friends, while music and dancers

provide you with enchanting entertainment. It is an event not to be missed.

For more information, please

contact, please check our website: website - <https://www.greekfestfwb.com/> or contact the Church Office at (850) 244-0822.

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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](http://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](http://foow30a.com).

### AJ's Grayton Brunch, Live Music & Sunday Funday

AJ's is the place to be to celebrate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Come for brunch, stay for the music and dancing. Every Sunday from 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 [ajsgrayton.com](http://ajsgrayton.com) for other live music throughout the week.

### Shunk Gulley

Shunk Gulley is a premier location on 30A for live music, bringing in artists from around the Gulf Coast and beyond. 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](http://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. Mike brings in new musicians to play every week.

Wednesday nights:  
Oct. 9: Sugarcane Jane  
Oct. 16: Tanner Gray  
Oct. 23: John Mark Turner, Dave P and Friends  
Oct. 30: The Sunshine Wranglers

### 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. Visit [seasidefl.com](http://seasidefl.com) for more details.

Oct. 9: Boukou Groove  
Oct. 16: Max McCann  
Oct. 23: Fred Domulot  
Oct. 30: Max McCann

### 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 - check the lineup. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Free and open to the public.

Oct. 9: Casey Kearney  
Oct. 16: Six Piece Suits  
Oct. 23: Below Alabama  
Oct. 30: Forrest Williams Band

## Award-Winning Gospel Group Legacy Five To Play Benefit Concert on October 11th at Good News Church for Caring and Sharing of South Walton

Tickets are now on sale!

Tickets are now on sale for Legacy Five, a Dove award-winning Southern Gospel group performing at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 11 at Good News Church. This very special concert will benefit Caring & Sharing of South Walton and is graciously sponsored by The Crawford Family.

The rich four and five-part harmony that Legacy Five has become noted for is the result of a masterful weaving together of

five unique and versatile talents.

Tickets are \$15 and doors open at 6:30 p.m. for general admission. VIP tickets are \$100 and include preferred seating plus a Meet and Greet at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for VIP ticket holders. Tickets are available at <https://legacyfive2025.eventbrite.com>.

"Caring & Sharing is a blessing to many in Walton County," says Jennifer Crawford, Sponsor and long-time supporter of Caring & Sharing. "Sharing a

night of Dove Award-winning, Legacy Five music to raise funds seemed like a night of joy and we are so thrilled to bring back this amazing opportunity to the community."

"Having Legacy Five come back for a second year to perform for our community is such a huge blessing and all thanks to The Crawford Family," says Carly Barnes, Executive Director of Caring & Sharing of South Walton. "All proceeds from the concert will directly



enable us to further meet the growing needs of our neighbors."

To contribute to the concert, volunteer, or to donate directly to Caring and Sharing visit [www.servesowal.com](http://www.servesowal.com). All proceeds benefit Caring and Sharing of South Walton.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Email [Carly@caringandsharingsowal.org](mailto:Carly@caringandsharingsowal.org). All proceeds benefit Caring & Sharing of South Walton.

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# Successful Practice Habits

Developing effective practice habits is crucial for music students to make steady progress and achieve their musical goals. Here are some key strategies to help music students establish a productive practice routine:

## Set a Regular Schedule

Consistency is key when it comes to practicing music. Establish a daily practice schedule and stick to it as much as possible. Even short, regular practice sessions are more beneficial than sporadic longer ones. Choose a time when you're typically alert and free from distractions.

## Create an Optimal Practice Environment

Choose a specific area in your home for practice. Keep your instrument, music stand, and other necessary materials readily accessible. Eliminate potential distractions by turning off electronic devices or finding a quiet space.

## Warm Up Properly

Always start your practice session with a proper warm-up. This could include long tones, scales, or simple exercises to loosen up your muscles and prepare your mind for focused practice.

## Set Specific Goals

Before each practice session, define clear, achievable goals. These could be mastering a particular section of a piece,

improving a specific technique, or memorizing scales. Having concrete objectives gives your practice purpose and direction. Review your teacher's personalized lesson plan weekly.

## Break Down Challenging Sections

When faced with difficult passages, break them down into smaller, manageable parts. Practice these sections slowly and gradually increase the tempo as you gain proficiency. This approach allows for more focused and effective practice.

## Use a Metronome

A metronome is an invaluable tool for developing a strong sense of rhythm and timing. Incorporate it into your practice routine, especially when working on challenging rhythmic passages or trying to increase your playing speed. A variety of metronome phone or iPad apps are available for download. I like to use Pro Metronome.

## Practice Mindfully

Avoid mindless repetition. Instead, focus intently on each note, rhythm, and expression as you practice. Mindful practice fosters better musical understanding and helps develop a deeper connection with your instrument.

## Vary Your Practice Routine

To keep your practice sessions engaging and effective, incorporate variety. Alternate between technical exercises, sight-reading, repertoire work, and creative activities like improvisation or composition.

## Record and Listen to Yourself

Regularly record your practice sessions using your cell phone or other device. Listening back to these recordings can help you identify areas that need improvement.

## Seek Feedback

If you're taking lessons, communicate with your teacher about your practice routine and any challenges you're facing. They can provide ideas and advice to improve your practice habits.

## Practice Slowly

When learning a new song or working on difficult parts, practice at a slow tempo, and try to focus on accuracy and proper technique before gradually increasing the speed.

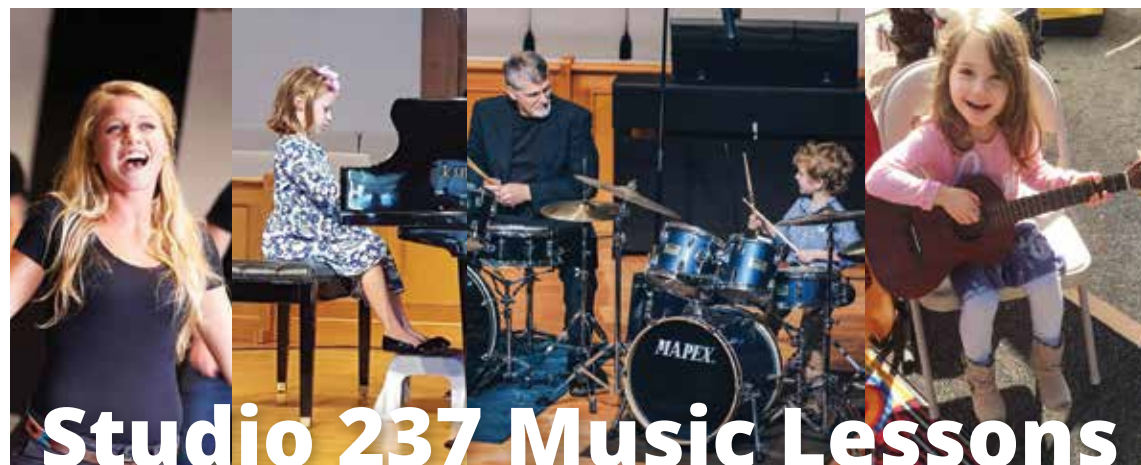
Conclude your practice session by playing something you enjoy or have already mastered. This leaves you with a positive feeling and motivates you to return to practice the next day. By incorporating these strategies into their practice routine, music students can develop good habits that lead to consistent improvement and musical growth.



Remember, effective practice is about quality, not just quantity. With dedication and smart practice techniques, students can make significant strides in their musical journey.

Located in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, Studio 237 Music offers private lessons on piano, drums, ukulele, classical, acoustic or

electric guitar, bass guitar and voice lessons. For more information and/or schedule lessons, call Ray or Lisa Cyr at (850) 231-3199 or text at (850) 797-3546. Check out our Website at [www.Studio237Music.com](http://www.Studio237Music.com). Email us at [studio237music@gmail.com](mailto:studio237music@gmail.com).



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 Music



By MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

**Estate Planning – What are the Basics Everyone Should Know?**

Planning for the passing of your estate – everything that you have come to own in this life, is something that all of us will need to do. It is said that the formal process of estate planning is only done by about one-third of people. The question is: should everyone have an estate plan (and do estate planning)? To answer

that question, we will review what are considered the basics.

The first is that you need a will. A will sets out your wishes for your assets. Additionally, it usually appoints someone to oversee your estate. That could be an executor (a man) and executrix (a woman) or an administrator (either a man or a woman). The most important thing to remember about a will is that the court (known as the probate court) must review and

rule on the will. This does take some time – a few weeks up to a year and usually comes at a cost (court cost and attorney cost). The court gives the administrator a document that gives them the authority to go about distributing assets.

The second would be a (durable) power of attorney. This is a document that allows you to appoint someone to act on your behalf for financial and other (non-medical) matters. Durable means that it can be in place if you do not have the capacity to act. It is important to note that the DPOA ceases to exist upon your passing.

The third and fourth pieces concern your health (vs. your wealth). Those are first a living will which details what your preference for medical treatment should you not be able to provide that decision. This includes the decision of life support and also an advanced medical directive or durable power of attorney for health where you have appointed someone to make decisions regarding your medical treatment.

The final would be a trust (and there are several versions of trusts). Essentially the trust establishes a beneficiary so that your directions are followed regarding who the beneficiaries are to be for assets that you have put into your trust. Many people put their homes in a trust as well.

We encourage investors to ensure they have beneficiaries for all their assets. That is automatically offered on retirement accounts like IRAs and 401ks. A trust is similar in that you can name a beneficiary.

The objective is for those who wish to be able to spare their heirs the probate process and transfer their assets to the intended recipients upon their passing.

There are alternatives of course, such as transfer on death for an investment (non-retirement) account or payment on death (POD) for a bank account.

These may or may not have limitations, so it is wise to seek proper legal counsel before proceeding.

The above information is shared for information purposes only and should not be relied upon as legal or tax advice. While it is derived from sources we deem reliable, it does not take the place of proper legal and tax counsel.

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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# Private Flood Insurance vs. FEMA Flood Insurance

## What's the Difference?



By JULIE A. MARTIN

There are two types of personal primary flood insurance in the State of Florida. One is FEMA Flood insurance, in which a standard carrier will offer you up to \$250,000 on the Dwelling and up to \$100,000 in Contents. Those are the maximum flood limits that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will allow on a policy issued under

the National Flood Insurance Program.

If you have a FEMA flood policy, you have two deductibles, one on the Dwelling and one on the Contents. FEMA has a standing rule that if you go more than 30 days without flood coverage, and you wish to purchase a new flood policy through NFIP, there will be a 30-day wait after binding until the coverage becomes effective.

What if the total insurable replacement cost of your home is more than \$250,000? What happens if there is a flood and you have only the \$250,000 with which to cover your home in the event of a flood loss, such as happened last year with Hurricane Ian? FEMA also has excess flood insurance available, but it's not easy to get. Several carriers have stopped writing excess flood in certain areas of the state, and those with NFIP policies have a coverage gap that may cost them in the event of a flood.

Private flood insurance offers more comprehensive coverage and is specifically designed to give you the amount of insurance you need in order to protect your home, which is one of the most important, and expensive assets, you will ever have. Private flood will often offer limits as high as \$4 million on the Dwelling and up to \$500,000 in Contents.

There is one deductible for the loss itself, rather than separate deductibles for Dwelling and for Contents. Private flood also offers an endorsement for Additional Living Expenses, which National Flood Insurance policies do not offer. Private flood coverage may also be more

expensive than NFIP flood insurance, but it covers more of your home than NFIP does. Another advantage to Private flood is that if you don't have flood insurance right now, but you need to get insurance quickly, Private flood has only a 10-day wait, rather than the 30-day wait required by FEMA when there is a lapse in coverage.

Which option is the best for you depends on the size, quality and total insurable replacement cost of your home. Your agent is best suited to help you determine the total insurable replacement cost of your home by performing a Replacement Cost Estimator, using your square footage,

year built, roof type, roof shape, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, flooring types, etc. If your replacement cost is more than \$250,000, you may wish to consider Private flood as a viable option in order to avoid a gap in coverage. If your home is smaller, the National Insurance Flood program might be the best option for you.

Whichever option you choose, it is important to have flood insurance in Florida, as we live on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the ocean or Gulf of Mexico. If you believe your home is not in a flood zone, I must remind you dear reader, water doesn't know that.

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 Business



# It's Not Easy Being Green

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

BY CHRIS BALZER

“It’s not easy being green,” once sung a very wise Frog. What does “Being Green” mean? Being green covers many different elements: reducing, reusing and recycling; not littering; living sustainably; conserving energy; conserving materials; going zero-waste; fair-trade and ethical production; being carbon neutral; organic crop growing; be-

ing chemical-free; going off the grid... It makes sense why Kermit said it’s not easy being green and



can be overwhelming.

To me, being green is respecting our environment by keeping it clean, using our resources the right way without wasting them and take actions to reduce our carbon footprint. Taking simple steps, like turning off the lights in rooms and turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth can and does make a difference. To move the needle further towards being green we have been taking some aggressive actions listed above to make change. In the late 1970s, we were alerted that our ozone layer had a hole, and that hole was growing. The ozone

layer is 9 to 19 miles in the atmosphere and protects our planet from the sun’s harsh UV rays. This layer protects ecosystems, plants, animals and us. There is good news. In October 2019, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) reported that our ozone layer hole is the smallest recorded. What?! Yes, the ozone is actually shrinking because of the changes we made along with ideal weather conditions. The ozone hole does fluctuate regularly. Scientists expect the ozone hole to shrink to the size it was in 1980 by 2070.

Being energy efficient is going green. Everything has a carbon footprint or can be linked to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. One way we can be green is by buying local, using fewer resources to get the product or service to you. At ECES we focus on homes which on average pro-

duce 7.5 tons of CO2 emissions. By taking actions to increase energy efficiency, you increase your comfort and reduce your CO2 footprint. These actions include properly air sealing your home. These unintended gaps and cracks cause poor air quality and loose energy costing you money. Having the right insulation is important. If your home was built in or before 2004, your attic’s home may be under-insulated. New construction codes now has increased the required attic insulation R value by 61% to R-30. Radiant Barriers are becoming a vital component to energy efficiency. By adding a radiant barrier along with additional insulation in the attic which reflects 97% of radiant heat and can reduce your attic’s temperature by 30 to 40 degrees in the summer making your duct work and insulation more efficient. This saves money and increases your comfort. Another way to become more energy efficient is through our windows. Replacing windows can be expensive. There are virtually clear window films which reflect 94% of radiant heat and almost all of the harsh UV rays, increasing comfort and the life of furniture and flooring. These films won’t change the architecture and are great for sunrooms, store fronts or restaurants. Another area to consider is the crawl space under our home. These areas go unmonitored and traditionally use a batt insulation and netting which unfortunately fails over time causing energy loss.

There are many ways we can become more energy efficient, be Green, increase comfort and save money. It takes awareness and a professional with tools and knowledge to identify these areas and educate on ways to become more energy efficient and be Green like Kermit.

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

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### Air Conditioning

**AIRE SERVE HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING**  
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www.beachsideac.com

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### Attorneys

**GREG D. CROSSLIN**  
3999 Commons Dr. West  
Suite D Destin, FL  
850 650-7378 destinlegal.com

### Auto Body

**JOE BUMPER**  
US Hwy. 98 E, Miramar Beach  
918-384-9166

### Bathroom Designs

**COASTAL CABINETS**  
12889 Emerald Coast Pkwy.  
Miramar Beach, FL 32550  
CoastalCabinetsandCounters.com  
850-424-3940

### Contractors

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### Granite & Tile

**SSGRANITE AND TILE**  
Santa Rosa Beach 850-267-0599

### Heating

**Aire Serve Heating & Air Conditioning**  
Santa Rosa Beach 850-378-3779

### Home Inspections

**HEY NEIGHBOR HOME INSPECTION SERVICES**  
(850) 687-3148  
info@heyneighborconnect.com  
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### DIRECTORY

continued on next page



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## 2nd Homeowner / VRBO Resource Directory / Business Directory

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Green Solutions to High Energy Bills, Santa Rosa Beach (850) 588-2870

[www.TRUSTeces.com](http://www.TRUSTeces.com)

### Insurance Services

#### FULLER INSURANCE

Hwy. 98 Santa Rosa Beach, FL Home, Auto & Life Fast, Friendly, Local! 850-622-5283 - Fuller.insure

#### INSURANCE ZONE

Home, Auto & Life 2166-B County Rd 30A, Santa Rosa Beach 850-424-6979 - ins-zone.co

#### TINA FADER, INSURANCE BROKER

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#### COASTAL CABINETS

12889 Emerald Coast Pkwy. Miramar Beach, FL 32550 CoastalCabinetsandCounters.com 850-424-3940

### Kennel

#### EMERALD COAST KENNEL, INC.

190 Shannon Lane Santa Rosa Beach, FL 850-267-1679 - eckennel.com

### Lawncare & Landscaping

#### BLUE GREEN LANDSCAPE

Plant Nursery Store and Landscaping Service. 6844 County Hwy. 30A, Santa Rosa Beach 850-660-1934

### Locksmiths

#### RESORTS LOCKSMITHS SERVICES

4942 US Hwy 98 W, Suite 16 Santa Rosa Beach 850-660-6901 [www.resortlocksmithservices.com](http://www.resortlocksmithservices.com)

### Lodging

#### 30A SUITES

6904 County Rd 30A Santa Rosa Beach 850-499-5058 - 30Asuites.com

### Massage Therapists

#### FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

2217 W County Hwy. 30A Blue Mountain Beach 850-267-0558 [shopforthehealthofit.com](http://shopforthehealthofit.com)

#### CARING TOUCH JANET HARDY, MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

2217 W County Hwy. 30A 140 Wild Blueberry Way, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 850-231-9131

[www.caringtouchtherapy.net](http://www.caringtouchtherapy.net)

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### Pressure Washing

#### POMPANO PRESSURE WASHING

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### Property Management

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### Real Estate

#### DESTIN PROPERTY EXPERT

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**MARBLE SLAB & COOKIE COMPANY**  
**\$2 OFF ANY 16-INCH COOKIE CAKE OR LARGER, OR 10% OFF PURCHASE**  
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