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SO W A L 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. Hilary 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

ECTC

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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."

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"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.

MKAF

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Community

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performances, and provide tech support. If I like it, I'll book you 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 Stage-Crafters 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 sum-

mer 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



Bruce Collier and Teance Blackburn, Bakersfield Mist February, 2017

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 asked. "I just have a feeling; I'm not saying it's a word from God or anything, I just have this really strong feel-

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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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Events Around the Beach

Walton County Fair

Walton County Fair 2024 is taking place October 14 - 19 at the Fair Grounds in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. Lots of family fun for the week! Visit walton-countyfair.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 sing 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 prom-

ises 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 balmy southern evening. Tickets: 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.

Alys Beach Fall Festival Oct. 25

Join family and friends in the Alys Beach Amphitheatre on Friday, October 25th 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, view 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.

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

The Festival of the Arts, produced by Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), is a cel-

ebration 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

Continued on next page

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Community

Events Around the Beach (Continued)

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.

Baytowne Family Fun Festival Oct. 19

Join Baytowne for a FREE Family Fun Event 1-5 p.m. featuring the incredible Shaun the Magician as our star performer! Enjoy an afternoon of magic, games and entertainment that promises fun for all ages. Don't miss out on this magical experience and the chance to create lasting family memories!.

Baytowne Trick or Treat Street Oct. 31

Calling all ghouls, ghosts and goblins to the Village of Baytowne Wharf for a spooktacular extravaganza! This Halloween, trick or treat 6-8 p.m. through the Village streets and visit merchants for your favorite treat. Steve Hall will play frighteningly good tunes on the main stage. Enjoy crafts and balloon animals. Be sure to stop by Coconut Kidz to enter the costume contest and compete to win the grand prize! End the night with a spooky fireworks display at 8 p.m.



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.

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 communities. 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, October 31st 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. Get more details at www.witchesofsouthwalton.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.

Contractors Connect Networking Event Nov. 14

Contractors, subcontractors and other specialists in the building industry are invited to attend Contractors Connect, Thursday, Nov. 14, 5 to 7 p.m. at AJ's Grayton Beach. Presented by Builders FirstSource 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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30A Cats "Cat Daddies" Screening Event and Fundraiser Oct. 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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BeGenerous Inc. Hosts 7th Annual Fundraiser November 9

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 silent 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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October 30th

Community

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 to find out more.

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 expensive. 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 for more information.

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Community

Walton Area Chamber of Commerce's "The Next BIG Thing" Annual Conference on November 4-5

Tickets are now on sale for "The Next BIG Thing," Walton Area Chamber's two-day annual conference, presented by Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast and Eglin Federal Credit Union on November 4-5th at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa. Tickets are \$200 for Chamber members and \$250 for the public, with two-day passes also available for \$225 (member) and \$275 (public) available at <https://www.waltonareachamber.com/the-next-big-thing/>.



Attendees will choose from a diverse lineup of breakout sessions throughout the day in Leadership Development, Entrepreneurship and Women in Business.

The conference will commence with special experiences like complimentary headshots by Epic Photo Co., Mingle & Mimosas, and a coffee bar during check-in at 8 a.m., followed by a light breakfast and networking opportunities in the

Vendor Hall. The official kickoff will feature welcoming remarks from Walton Area Chamber of Commerce CEO, Megan Harrison. The first day will conclude with a cocktail reception offering light bites, cocktails, and exciting raffle prizes. The conference will continue on the second day with additional elevated breakout sessions, a workshop, a delicious brunch, and

more enriching activities. Keynote Speaker Juanita McDowell will present the topic Mastering Achievement in Business & Life and also lead a session on the timely topic of using AI in business. The United Way Emerald Coast will lead a panel on ways businesses can build their networks and Bobby Parker will host a session on Using Strategic Storytelling to Elevate

Your Organization.

Afternoon Keynote Speaker Dr. Rick Goodman will lead sessions on Living a Championship Life: A Game Plan for Success, and Transforming Challenges into Opportunities with his trademarked program The Adaptability Zone.

The Women in Business track will offer numerous timely and essential sessions like Speaker Aerial Payne's session on Using Canva Pro to Elevate Your Social Media and Brand. Payne will also host an elevated breakout session on Capturing & Scheduling Video Content. Jessica Leavins will tackle the hot topic of burnout in business and Tolliny Rankins will present 28 Ways to a Better You.

Opportunities for entrepreneurs also abound during this conference with speakers, panels and workshops on topics like networking, elevator pitches, personal entrepreneur stories of challenges, grit, and glory. Speaker Terry Maurer will

present a session on Harnessing the Power of Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition.

For a complete speaker schedule visit www.waltonareachamber.com and stay up to date with the latest information by following the Chamber's Facebook page. The Walton Area Chamber would like to thank Dixon Injury Law (BIG Stage Sponsor), Florida Power and Light (Recharge Station Sponsor), Dunlap & Shipman (Platinum Sponsor), 850 Magazine (Leadership Track Sponsor), the Blue Leopard Agency (Workshop Sponsor), the Florida Small Business Development Center, Emmanuel Sheppard & Condon, and All In Credit Union (Coffee Bar Sponsors), without whom The Next Big Thing would not be possible.

To get involved or inquire about sponsorship, please contact Gabrielle Hamilton at 850-892-3191 or Gabrielle@WaltonAreaChamber.com.



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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 cele-

brating 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 was 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 is 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!

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, an installation featuring 22 panels was unveiled 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.



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.

Eagle Springs Golf & Recreation
117 Country Club Lane, Defuniak Springs

www.eaglespringsgolf.com

 Community


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 do that by showing up to vote."

Lisa acknowledges that not everyone has the time to volunteer for their political affiliations 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.

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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.

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.

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



 Community

Trends & Treasures!



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their notes on monogrammed, fold-over note cards, while gentlemen prefer to write on flat notecards with their full name, top and center. Print styles include raised thermography, letterpress, or engraved. Start now! You’ll be able to think of a gift your recipient will adore, rather than out of desperation grabbing whatever’s available in December. Remember: personalized gifts, such as Frill Seekers popular custom monogrammed necklaces, bracelets and monogram earrings take time to design, create and make. Fine stationery, gift tags or notecards are exquisite gift ideas. Start shopping now. For gifts that need to be mailed, keep costs down and purchase a Frill Seekers gift card, so they can create a wish list and design their very own piece of personalized jewelry or a luxurious set of monogrammed stationery, that they’ll remember for years to come. Shop online now or visit the shop in City Market Bayside off Hwy. 98 in Destin. Phone orders welcome!

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It’s October which means Beyond Measure is gearing up for the holidays! Check out these new arrivals before they’re gone—a stunning 14KW 5.3ctw Oval and Round cut Diamond Bracelet and a 14kW 2ctw Oval and Round cut Diamond Ring—as well as a vast selection of unique, one-of-a-kind, exquisite jewelry! Wanting a new design custom-made just for you instead? Choose your Diamond and let Beyond Measure design your dream ring! You decide which shape suits you best—there’s an array of fall and traditional colors and styles. Whether you’re shopping for a special gift, a new, fall color or a one-of-

a-kind engagement ring for that “special” day, Beyond Measure is here for you. Owner Ashleigh Woolly offers looks and colors for any season—Destin style—as well as tons of gemstones in varying colors and shades. Specializing in diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry, the Beyond Measure Jewelers’ showroom sports an array of diamond and gemstone bracelets, special-occasion rings, necklaces and earrings. Ashleigh is passionate about exquisite and custom-designed jewelry. Trust your custom project to Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, where a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting!

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provide exponential healing. Renew your entire body at the cellular level, rejuvenating damaged cells from the inside out—healing both on the surface and at the cellular level—with Red Light Therapy. CRYO850’s Near Infrared Lighting boosts ATP (energy) and balances hormones. Take advantage of the Wellness Circuit – access to six therapies including: Infrared Sauna, Red Light Therapy, Whole Body Cryotherapy, Localized Spot Treatment CRYO, Vibration Plates and Compression Therapy.

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“We hired Brian to help us navigate 30A’s tough real estate market. He has serious negotiating skills and expertise. Because of his efforts and strategies that he details in his book, we quickly sold our Destin home and bought a 30A beach front home, below asking price,” said client, A. Albright.

Destin Life readers can get a FREE copy of the book, for a limited time, by emailing Brian@BeOnTheCoast.com or give him a call at (850) 739-3800.

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Football, Fun and Fall Flavor! Smallcakes Destin: A Cupcakery and Creamery

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October Medicare Opportunities

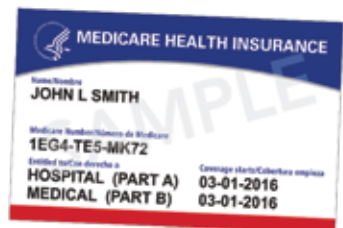


BY CHRISTIAN REGALADO

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 hap-



pening 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 certi-

fied with many different insurance carriers, and I am happy to answer your questions and assist any way I can.

Email me at christian@evergreenhealthins.com or call (850) 687-7606.

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Instead of Leaning Out, Lean In



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG, JOURNEY BRAVELY

Do you ever find yourself leaning out of something you fear? Maybe you fear conflict so you avoid a hard conversation. Or, maybe you fear rejection so you present a false version of

yourself to escape feeling judged by others. Or, maybe you fear abandonment so you close yourself off from others to avoid feeling unimportant. At the time, leaning out seems like a helpful strategy, because it alleviates the immediate discomfort of your fear. But, upon closer examination, what is the larger result of leaning out?

Not having hard conversations often results in lack of resolution, lack of understanding and long-term resentment. Instead of creating less conflict, avoidance creates larger future conflict. Running from fear of rejection by presenting an inauthentic self ultimately creates a situation where you don't know if people truly accept you for you. Instead of creating accep-



Eight Ways to Lean Into Fear to Get What You Really Want:

Notice what you fear and instinctively want to avoid. Notice fearful, repetitive thoughts. Notice people or situations you are avoiding. Notice signs of anxiety in your body. Name the fear and the avoidance. "I'm afraid I'll upset my partner if I'm honest and I'm avoiding having the conversation."

Identify what you really want. "What I really want is closeness and open connection with my partner."

Identify how to align your behavior with what you want. "If I want to be close, open and connected with my partner, I need to communicate honestly even if it scares me."

Notice unhealthy coping patterns of leaning out. Notice when you are avoiding. Notice when you are striving in unhealthy ways. Notice when you are engaged in self-protective defensiveness. Notice your personal brand of leaning out behavior around fear.

Lean into the thing you fear. Remind yourself you will survive the fear. Remember avoiding your fear will create more of what you fear. Do the uncomfortable thing. Remember anticipatory anxiety is usually worse than doing the thing you fear.

Sustain leaning in. Lean in long enough to get to the other side of your fear. Repeat leaning into your fear until your brain remembers it's a useful strategy.

Evaluate the results of leaning in. Leaning in won't always get your desired results, however, leaning out will always lead to more problems eventually. Notice how you feel about yourself when you lean into fear. Notice when leaning into fear produces helpful results.

Practice. Keep practicing until leaning into fear is a way of life. Celebrate and be proud of yourself as you are progressing.

Be brave and patient as you learn to lean into fear and walk in the confidence that follows. Connect with us along your journey at Journeybravely.com.



JOURNEY BRAVELY



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ance, a false version of self ends up creating more feelings of rejection. Closing yourself off from others to avoid abandonment actually creates more internal loneliness and abandonment. Ironically, leaning out of the thing you fear often creates more of the thing you fear.

So, if leaning out doesn't work, then what?

As it turns out, the way to get what you really want is to lean into your fear instead of leaning out. Have the difficult conversation and prove to yourself you can make it through conflict and survive, often with

a helpful outcome. Show up as an authentic version of yourself and learn that those who judge you aren't your people and those who want to be close to the real you truly appreciate you for you. Allow yourself to be close to others even when it feels like they might leave you as a pathway to vulnerable connection. Getting what you really want happens through the risk of leaning into your fear.

So, how are you supposed to lean into fear when the instinct to lean out is so strong?

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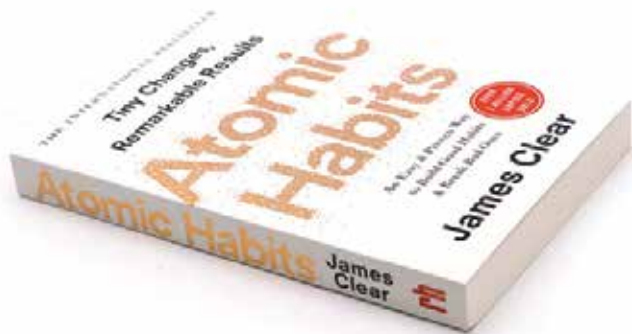
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Book Review of James Clear's "Atomic Habits"



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 and can be reached at (850) 837-0123 or Psychotherapy30A.com.



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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-rang-

ing 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 docu-

mentary 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.

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- Suggested questions to consider before selecting.
- 2024 & 2025 Medicare's Part A, B and D costs.
- Social Security and Medicare official websites links.

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 eradica-

tion by vaccinating children on a massive scale. As a core partner, Rotary focuses on advocacy, fundraising, 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.



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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).

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 top-

ics 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 or (303) 875-8117 for more information.

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.



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/_uhym-MV2IEo?si=wXjoojcJaAN-q42L-

To learn more about Path of Grace's recovery program, testimonies, projects and events, you can visit <https://www.pathofgrace.net>. Be on the lookout for more information on the Path of Grace Gala being held in December.



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Musing

Sean of the South



millions of emotions at once, and yet feel none of them.

I know this because that's how she described it.

"It's all gone. All of it."

This was followed by images on my screen that were apocalyptic. One of America's most historical storms. Hurricane Helene. Destruction from Florida to Virginia.

And here I am, sitting in my comfortable living room, watching the tube, thinking about how scary all this is.

These people's lives are ruined. These people have nothing left. These are Americans. These are my brothers and sisters.

Whole towns are gone. Highways have been upended. Floodwaters rage. Mudslides. Missing persons. Missing pets. People going hungry. People trapped. People injured.

All I can think about are the emails and texts going back and



BY SEAN DIETRICH

"It's all gone." That's what the lady on the news said.

She was an older woman, being interviewed by a reporter. Giant news camera shoved in her face.

The lady sounded like she was in a uniquely frantic state, poised somewhere between panic and absolute exhaustion. It is a frame of mind where you experience

forth between those who experienced the nightmare.

"We still haven't heard from my mom..."

"My son hasn't called yet..."

"It's been days and I don't know where my husband is..."

As I write this, the death toll tops 120. And I just read somewhere that 600 are still missing. And that's just the ones we know about.

And as I'm watching this unfold on the television, I'm about to cry. I'm about to give up, deep inside. For there is little hope left

in this world, I'm thinking.

But then I see something.

On the television, I see a kid picking up debris. He's slight and small, maybe 6 years old. Blond hair. And he's out there helping. Busting his tail.

I see food trucks galore, on their way to affected areas. Saint Pete. Western North Carolina. Waycross. One Salvation Army food truck, teeming with volunteers, is capable of cranking out 12,000 meals at a time.

Small churches with food lines. Churches with buildings

that don't even exist anymore are feeding the hungry. Feeding each other.

Members of the Cajun Navy, speeding toward flood zones in bass boats, with utility trailers full of supplies.

I see young guys with chainsaws, slicing through fallen oaks. I see men and women from other states, who took a field trip into hell, just to help. They have no relatives here. They just want to pitch in.

I see the Baton Rouge Fire Department flying to Charlotte, North Carolina, just to be airlifted into a rural area of the state.

Volunteer hikers, on their way to the Tennessee state line, a badly damaged area that hasn't been assisted yet.

There are mule packers, headquartered in the North Carolina hills. Men leading mule trains, trained to haul military ammunition, now delivering meals and water to neighbors stranded.

The stories are too many to count. As I write this, a new story of heroism is occurring every minute in this nation.

Lives are being saved. Heroes. Each one of them. They are carrying the wounded of our kinship toward safety, on their own backs.

And I am reminded of something I once heard one of my own heroes say about horrific events occurring in our world.

"Look for the helpers," he said. "You will always see people who are helping."

He's absolutely right. And in this case, they're called Americans.

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A Pastor's Ponderings: On Eagle's Wings



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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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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 be-

rating 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 uncom-



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fortable. She couldn't figure 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 dis-

cuss 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.



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.

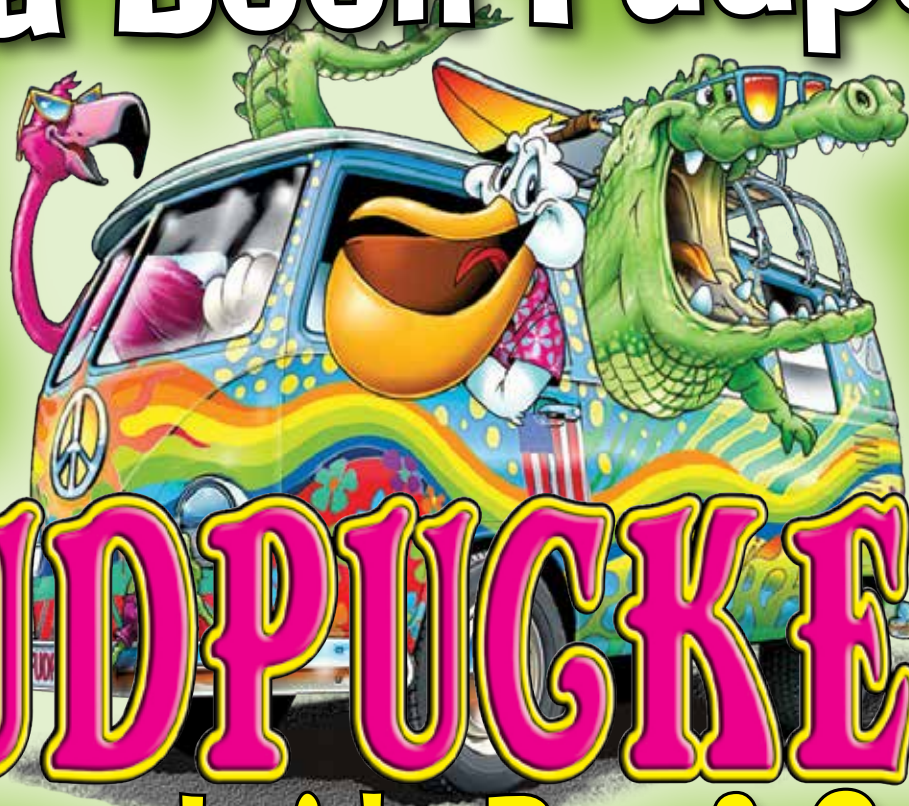
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MKAF

continued from page 1

To realize our vision to “enhance 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 benefits 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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mattie kelly
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25,000
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- ✓ Receive membership rates on select MKAF events.

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Arts & Music

Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County Installs 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 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-



MURAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPRING RUN MEDIA

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, Morn-

ing 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 Gray 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.

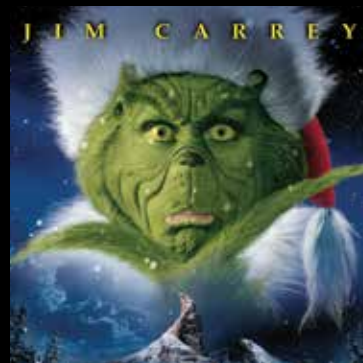
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Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.



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Henderson Beach Resort

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ECTC

continued from page 2

ing 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



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

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 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!?!?



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 Arts & Music

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

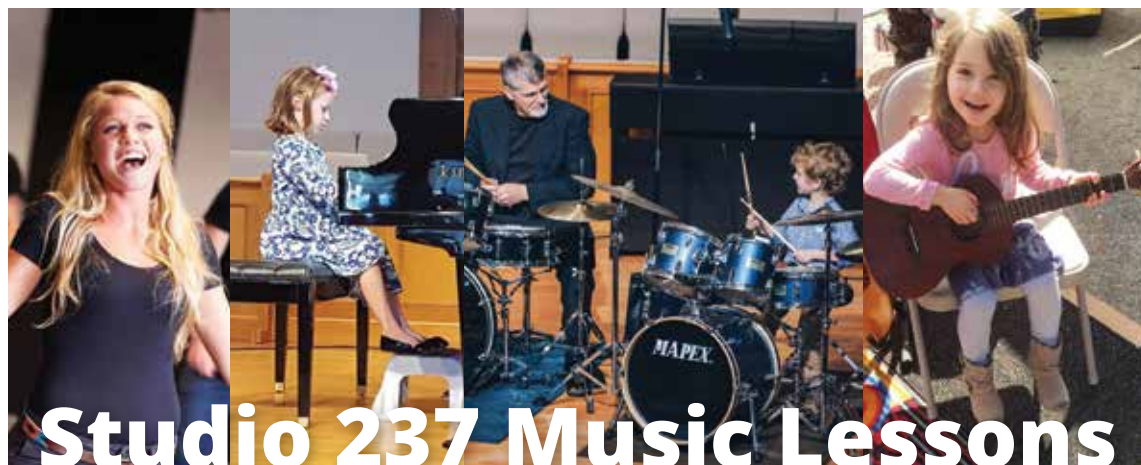
Choose a specific area in your home for practice. Keep your instrument, music stand, and other necessary materials readily accessible. Eliminate potential distractions by turning off electronic devices or finding a quiet space.

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,



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Lee Campbell

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 prac-

tice 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. Email us at studio237music@gmail.com.



Insights for Investors: Estate Planning – What are the Basics Everyone Should Know?



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

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 for us all is: Should everyone have an estate plan (and do estate planning)? To answer that question, we will review what are consider the essentials or the basics.

First is – having a will. A will is for your wishes. It points out your wishes as to whom your assets are to go to. 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 which 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 are with regard to your health (vs. your wealth). Those are 1) 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. 2) 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 have their heirs not have to go through the probate process and that their assets can pass 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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It's Not Easy Being Green

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



BY CHRIS BALZER

It's not easy being green once sung by 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; being 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 taking actions to reduce our carbon footprint. Taking simple steps, such as 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 70's we were alerted that our ozone layer has a hole in it and 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 now 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 CO2 emissions. Some ways we can be green is to buy local, using fewer resources to get the product or service to you. At ECES, we focus on homes which on average produce 7.5 tons of CO2 emissions. By taking actions to increase energy efficiency, you increase your comfort and re-

duce your CO2 footprint. Some actions are properly air sealing your home. These unintended gaps and cracks cause poor air quality and lose energy costing you money. Having the right insulation is important. If your home was built by 2004 or older, your attic's home may be under insulated. New construction code 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, you can reduce your attic's temperature by 30 to 40 degrees in the summer making your duct work and insulation more efficient saving you money and increasing 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, not affected by some, is a crawl space under a 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. It provides smiles to its customers after installing high energy efficient products, thereby increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save this fall and become energy efficient schedule an inspection. Call (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com and Beat the Heat!



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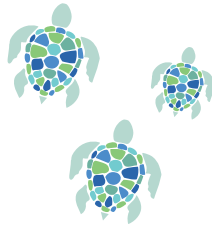
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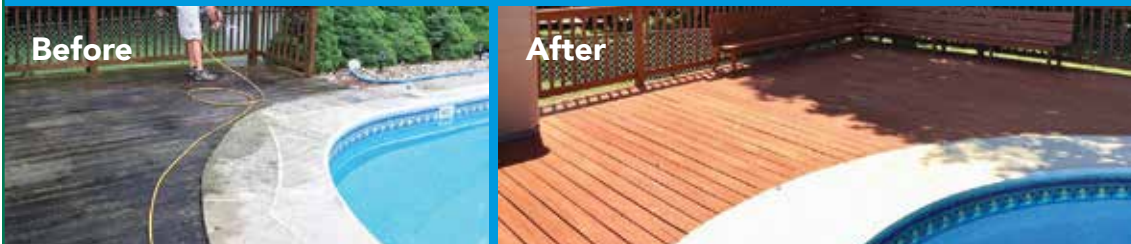
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What's On 30ATV?

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 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 adven-

tures 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, to see the channel, visit www.30A.TV

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