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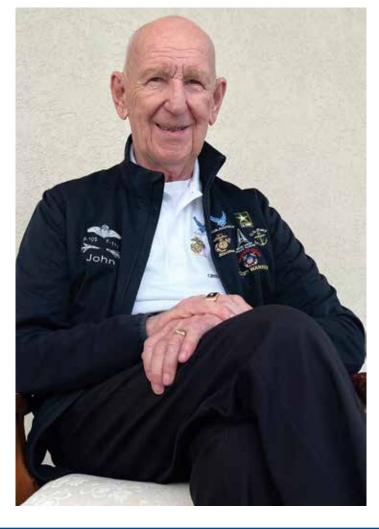
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# **Remembering Vietnam:** Hometown Hero John Wambough Flew Against the Odds

By Kelly-Murphy Redd

John Wambough says courage and love of country was the glue and inspiration that kept the F-105 fighter jet pilots climbing high in the sky at record speeds over North Vietnam. Retired Colonel John H. Wambough remembers the heroic past of his pilot friends who daily went into battle facing being shot down, perhaps rescued, killed or falling into the hands of the North Vietnamese. John says he never thought of himself as a hero, though his F-105 took on enemy fire. He says, "The real heroes were those who fought bravely and didn't make it back safely. Many were unmercifully tortured for years in the infamous 'Hanoi Hilton' and many never returned."

Born in 1939, John grew up in Glen Cove, Long Island, N.Y. He attended New York University (NYU) and joined the Cadet Corps, became Captain of the Pershing



Rifle Trick Drill Team, and Cadet Corps Commander his senior year. After graduating from NYU in 1962, he attended Flight School at Vance Air Force Base during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He flew the B52G Bomber against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. He volunteered to fly F-105 Fighters in 1967.

During the Vietnam War, John volunteered to fly the F-105 Thunderchief (THUD) and trained at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nevada.

1967 was the peak year for pilot losses. F-105 pilots averaged getting shot down every 33 missions. The rescue rate was 50%. 180 F-105 pilots were killed in action during the Vietnam War. 107 pilots became prisoners of war (POWs). 145 F-105 pilots were shot down and rescued. Of the pilots who became POWs, most were tortured during captivity via beatings, stress positions and prolonged

HERO

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# Easter Reflections

By Guery Clendening

It is spring! The flowers are blooming and Azalias have been beautiful this year. I love this season. To me, spring speaks of new beginnings. When I lived in Illinois, the winters could be harsh at times. I remember one winter looking out my office window at a very large tree. With snow and ice covering its branches, you would have thought the frozen limbs were dead. But when spring came, an amazing thing happened; what seemed to be dead came alive! The branches budded and before long, the tree was filled with green leaves. It is fitting that Easter is celebrated in the spring.

**EASTER** continued on page 3



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### **HERO**

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isolation to extract information and propaganda confessions. At least 7 F-105 pilots died in captivity. The extreme loss rate of F-105 pilots was due to highly sophisticated air defenses in North Vietnam, second to only Moscow, to include 10,000 antiaircraft artillery guns (AAA), Soviet supplied surface to air missiles (SAMs) and MIG fighters. F-105 missions were so dangerous that by the late 1960s, the odds of an F-105 pilot completing a 100-mission tour were less than 50%.

Micromanagement of the Vietnam War by the sitting President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson and Secre-

tary of Defense Robert McNamara also contributed to high loss rates. President Johnson bragged, "They (pilots) cannot hit an outhouse without my approval." Predictable routes of attack and hideous Rules of Engagement prevented hitting targets necessary to win the War. The first year and a half into the War, 97% of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's recommended targets in North Vietnam were off limits to air strikes. The North Vietnamese were able to build up defenses to attack American aircraft when they were finally permitted to attack targets previously off-limits.

Pilots noticed the uncanny ability of the North Vietnamese to move AAA and SAMs into position before they could hit assigned targets in North Vietnam. The reason was revealed many years after the war during a TV interview with President Johnson's Secretary of State Dean Rusk. He admitted the following: "We didn't want to harm the North Vietnamese people, so we passed the targets to the Swiss Embassy in Washington with instructions to pass them to the North Vietnamese government."

John flew missions as a part of Operation Rolling Thunder. The F-105 accounted for approximately 75% of the sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam during Rolling Thunder. Targets included heavily defended rail lines, bridges, supply depots and missile sites to stop the move-

ment of war materials going to South Vietnam to be used against American and South Vietnamese troops. Civilian populations were not targeted. John's combat tour included strikes into North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, with only a single mission into South Vietnam in support of American troops in contact with enemy forces (Viet Cong).

John loved flying the F-105. He describes it as "fantastic." The F-105 was the biggest and fastest fighter-bomber ever produced. It could go up to 1,000 mph off the deck. MIGs (fighter aircraft supplied by Russia to the North Vietnamese) couldn't match its speed.

In September of 1968, John began a tour of duty in the 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) at KORAT, Thailand, expecting to fly 100 combat missions in six months. However, due to the high losses of F-105 aircraft during the Vietnam War, the F-105s were withdrawn from combat in the 34th TFS in 1969 and replaced with F-4 fighter aircraft. John went on to an assignment as an Air Operations Officer at 7th Air Force, Saigon, followed by an assignment to the 12th

TFS at Kadena AB, Okinawa. He retired in 1990 at Hurlburt Field after over 27 years in the Air Force.

# Celebration to Honor Vietnam Veterans

John is looking forward to the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber's Honoring Our Heroes celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

The tribute to honor our Vietnam veterans begins April 28–29 with free events at the Air Force Armament Museum in Fort Walton Beach, 5-8 p.m.

The Heroes' Tribute Banquet follows on April 30, 5-9 p.m., at the Destin/Fort Walton Beach Fairgrounds & Event Center.

The keynote speaker is Rocky Bleier, four-time Super Bowl champion and Vietnam veteran. Other featured speakers include decorated Marine and Warriors, Inc. founder Dale Dye, and Col. Ed Hubbard, a former POW who spent over six years in captivity in North Vietnam.

Register for the banquet at: https://www.fwbchamber. org/events/details/heroes-tribute-banquet-honoring-our-vietnam-veterans-20292

### Publisher's Note -

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. In recognition of this milestone, we are honored to share stories that pay tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of those who served. We thank our Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and invite our readers to join us in remembering their legacy.

~ Lori





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#### **EASTER**

continued from page 1

Years ago, I was on a plane traveling to Israel. The person sitting next to me was a man from Israel who knew the historical record concerning Christ. As we discussed the story, he made a statement that got my attention. He said, "You know, they never did find the body of Christ." I breathed a silent prayer and said to him, "The reason they never found the body is because He rose from the grave. That is the foundation of the Christian faith."

There is a passage of scripture in the New Testament, that is

found in First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 12-15, and verse 20, that says, "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? ...for if there is no resurrection from the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; then our preaching is useless, and your faith is also useless....But now, (as things really are) Christ in fact has been raised from the dead....

So, what people were celebrating on Easter was not only the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also the hope they have in Christ that they too will rise from the grave to live forever with him! Jesus said this: "Because I live you will live also..."John 14:19. That's why Easter is so special for so many. Not only do they celebrate Christ's resurrection and His promise of Resurrection for them, but they also celebrate because through Christ's death, sins are forgiven and new life is theirs through faith in Christ! Yes, miracles do happen. Just like the tree that blossomed in the spring, those who put their faith in Christ will experience a new life of peace and freedom from the past. As we enjoy spring, may we celebrate and experience the power of Christ to make all things new.

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







# **UWF Students Investigate Fort Kirkland to Preserve** a Vital Part of Northwest Florida History

Florida Archaeology Institute is leading the search for Fort Kirkland in Okaloosa County, Florida, thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the Department of State.

The University of West UWF students, faculty, archaeologists, local families and veterans with Task Force Dagger Special Operations Foundation are working together to study and memorialize the fort.

Following Florida's transition to an American territory in 1821, families from neighboring southern states such as Alabama and Georgia began relocating to the region to establish new

homes. At the time, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole communities still inhabited much of the area. As American settlers moved in, tensions escalated and ultimately led to violent conflict. These events culminated in what became known as the Second Semi-

nole War (1835-1842). Historical evidence suggests that the site of Fort Kirkland was likely destroyed during this conflict. Many descendants of those involved — both settlers and Indigenous communities still live in Northwest Florida today. The

study will detail the historical background of the fort, survey the land where the Fort Kirkland site is potentially located, and create a historical landmark to honor this history.

Jennifer Melcher's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in Anthropology class spent several weeks of the class fitting historic maps to the modern landscape and digitizing roads and settlements to guide potential fieldwork locations. Students from the Anthropology program spent the latter part of their spring break immersed in the experiential learning opportunity, which involved conducting fieldwork and searching for the fort.

"This project allows students in my class to work with project data in real time," Melcher, a faculty research associate with the UWF Archaeology Institute, said. "Normally, the class works with created practice scenarios; in this case, their work is



creating important data for the search for Fort Kirkland."

Students will spend the rest of the semester reviewing their findings and figuring out if more fieldwork is needed. Nick Linzy, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology, participated in both the training and fieldwork last week.

"Documenting our search for Fort Kirkland is important to me because archaeology is more than just the artifacts we find; it's the set of tools and methods we use to find these historic sites and our interpretation of what we find," Linzy said. "With such

### **FORT KIRKLAND**

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# **Coastal Seniors Update for April**

Chair Yoga Classes — Tuesdays, April 1, 15 and May 6, 20 at 9:45 a.m. at the Blake, 90 Ponce De Leon St. in Miramar Beach. RSVP by calling (850)-650-5000.

Exercise Classes – Angela Gibson will lead classes every Tuesday and Thursday at 10 a.m. at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$5 per session for CSSW members and \$10 for non-members. Registration required as space is limited. To be added to the email sign up list, call (850) 280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Art Classes –Watercolor Painting Class. Karen Peterson will teach classes on Fridays, April 4, 11, 25 and May 2, 9, 23, 30, from 8:45 a.m. – Noon. Classes held at 70 Logan Lane

in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$15 for CSSW members and \$30 for non-members. Registration required as space is limited. To be added to the email sign up list, call 850-280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com All supplies are included.

Pickleball - Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex courts April 9 and 23 at 6 p.m. This beginner class is open to Walton County residents only. (18+) Registration required. Register at www.waltonrec. com. Email Sandy Gulak at sowalpickleball@gmail.com for more info and with questions. Class is free and equipment is provided or use your own. Also join us at the Boys and Girls Club on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. through

# **COASTAL SENIORS**

OF SOUTH WALTON

April 30. Cost is \$5 per day and an initial \$35 waiver fee. Please join the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.

Water Aerobics - at Watersound Fountains, 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. Starting in April, classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Cost is \$5 for CSSW members and \$10 for non-members. A pool noodle and water dumbbells are used for class. Please bring a towel, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Registration is required as space is limited. To

be added to the email sign up list, call (850) 280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@ gmail.com

Monthly Meeting - Friday, April 18 from 11 a.m - 1 p.m. at 70 Logan Lane, Grayton Beach. Joy Hankins-Beene, Watercress Senior Living will sponsor lunch. Lunch is Potluck so bring your favorite side or dessert. Guest speaker, Bill Kuenstler, Master Gardener, will discuss and demonstrate proper pruning techniques. There will also be a Plant Swap so bring a plant to participate in the swap. R.S.V.P. by replying to the Sign Up email. To be added to the email sign up list, call (850) 280-5342 or email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@

gmail.com.

Seniors 50 years of age and up residing in or visiting Walton County are invited to join CSSW. Membership is \$30 for individuals, \$40 for family, and \$100 for businesses (your business will be listed on our home webpage and our Facebook page). You can become a member via email at coastalseniorsofsouth walton@gmail.com, or on the website at www.coastalseniors of southwalton.org. Also, follow us on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton. Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit 501© (3) organization for active adults and we are looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.

Media Contact: Melinda Finney, Director, Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. T: 615-477-3417 Email: mkfinney24@gmail.com

### **FORT KIRKLAND**

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limited historical documentation, archaeology is our best hope for reconnecting with this lost part of Florida's history."

Nicole Grinnan, assistant

director of the Archaeology Institute, coordinated the training and fieldwork exercise. She invited the veterans' group to be a part of it. She has worked with them since 2018 during underwater archaeological projects for the Defense POW/ MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

"Training veterans to help archaeologists and students conduct a metal detector survey to look for this historical site brings together a number of important audiences around the subjects of public archaeology, education and service," said Dr. Ramie Gougeon, director of the Archaeology Institute, chair of the Department of Archaeology and professor.

Gougeon said they hope to be in a position to present text

and a proposed location for a historical marker to Rep. Patt Maney in Fall 2025.

For more information about the Archaeology Institute, visit uwf.edu/archaeology.







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# The Watersound Club® Team Announces the Opening of Its Newest Course, The Third, Designed by Golf Legend Davis Love III

Masterfully sculpted by Love Golf Design, the new course blends the Club's renowned amenities with an exhilarating new playing experience

The Watersound Club® team proudly announces the official opening of The Third, a premier 18-hole championship course designed by golf legend Davis Love III and his team at Love Golf Design for the prestigious Watersound Club private membership club. Spanning acres of green in Panama City Beach, FL, The Third enhances the exclusive club's world-class offerings, bringing its total to 54 holes of championship-level golf. Named in homage to its designer and as a nod to its place as the club's third course, it delivers a dynamic new playing experience to the region.

Starting March 20, The Third will be available for play, not only to members, but also to guests of Camp Creek® Inn. The luxuri-

ous 30A hotel boasts a Member for a Stay program, which treats guests to Northwest Florida's most sought-after, otherwise private, amenities and championshipcaliber courses during their stay. The Third is the latest of several recent demand driven expansion projects, including Watersound Camp Creek® amenities, featuring a state-of-the-art wellness center, tennis and pickleball courts, a sprawling pool complex and three dining venues, as well as Watersound Club Sporting Preserve, a 15-station sporting clays course.

"The opening of The Third represents a monumental milestone in the ongoing Watersound Club evolution and an intentional response to growing demand for more golf options," said Patrick Murphy, Senior Vice President of Hospitality with St. Joe. "We're thrilled to elevate the experience on the green for our members, while also offering an exclusive opportunity for Camp Creek Inn



guests to enjoy premier golf."

Just north of Shark's Tooth Golf Course, the newly designed grounds boast a meticulously crafted layout that caters to golfers of all skill levels. Expansive greens with subtle undulations, strategically positioned bunkers, and six tee options create a course that is both inviting and rewarding—delivering a challenge even for the

most seasoned players.

Describing the course, Founder and President of Love Golf Design, Mark Love, noted, "Players should be able to find a set of tees that matches their game. The greens are large and have a good deal of movement in them. We can set the course up to challenge highly skilled players in a major event, but on a daily basis, we can

provide a nice mix of easy, medium and difficult pins to keep things interesting, but not too difficult for the average golfer."

Alongside the existing Watersound Club golf offerings—Shark's Tooth and Camp Creek courses—The Third continues to establish Northwest Florida as a premier destination for golf enthusiasts. Golfers looking to treat themself to an unforgettable golf retreat should explore one of Camp Creek Inn's exclusive Golf Pack-

ages, which are perfectly tailored to offer avid golfers exceptional accommodations, tournamentcaliber golf, and luxurious amenities.

For more information on The Third and accommodations at Camp Creek Inn, visit camp-creekinn.com/golf/the-third-golf-course



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# Dog-Harmony Presents 10th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza at Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

A Canine-Only Egg Hunt and Social on April 18

Puppy parents, get ready for a tail-wagging good time! Dog-Harmony proudly presents the 10th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza, a canineonly Easter egg hunt and social event on Friday, April 18, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. leashed canine companions will receive a souvenir bag to sniff out 1,000 colorful eggs filled

For a \$20 donation in advance (or \$25 on the day of the event), humans and their

leashed canine companions will receive a souvenir bag to sniff out 1,000 colorful eggs filled with delicious dog treats. With two designated hunting areas for dogs over and under 35 pounds, every furry friend has a chance to join in on the fun.

Attendees will also enjoy an evening of music curated by DJ Diamond Dan, indulge in delicious appetizers from JC's Gourmet while sipping on beer and wine, pose for pet photos courtesy of Rescue Animal Photography, participate in family-friend games to win fun prizes, and shop human treats at the silent auction.

Proceeds from Doggie EGGstravaganza support Dog-Harmony, a 501(c)3, and its mission of keeping dogs out of shelters through humane education for children and

families and programs that enrich the human and animal bond.

Doggie EGGstravaganza is presented as part of the Coastal Culture Series, made possible by the Grand Boulevard Arts & Entertainment Program. Dog-Harmony requests that no prong, shock, or choke collars be used on canine family members at the event.

To purchase tickets for the canine-only egg hunt in advance or learn more information about event sponsorship opportunities, visit https://events.humanitix.com/doggie-eggstravaganza-2025



# Floral Designing Educational Event Presented

By Green Thumb Garden Club

By Kathleen Edge, Publicity & Website Chair

Reservations are still available for Green Thumb Garden Club's

upcoming "From the French Coast to the Emerald Coast" floral designing event.

Renowned author and floral designer Laura Dowling will demonstrate the art of creating stunning floral arrangements for attendees.

As the White House chief floral designer from late 2009 through

February 2015, Dowling managed flowers and décor for both public and private spaces as well as all official events and the famous Christmas decorations. She studied French floral art in Paris and extended her floristry training in Germany. Laura is the author of five books, most recently Designing Christmas: Practical

Tips for Festive Décor.

Using the theme "Gifts from the Garden", she recently transformed nine rooms at the



Cheekwood Estates & Gardens in Nashville into a holiday wonderland.

The GTGC event is on May 15 at Westwinds Conference Center at Sandestin, 4700 Westwinds Drive, Miramar Beach, FL, 32550. Registration is required and attendance is limited. Lunch and afternoon refreshments are included in the reservation.

Tablescapes created by talented GTGC members will be on display and there will be a book signing opportunity with Laura Dowling.

All details, including the agenda and registration form, can be found at www. greenthumbgardenclubinc. org, or email greenthumb gardenclubinc@gmail.com or call (209) 605-4146.

The Green Thumb Garden Club, Inc., located in Walton County, Florida, is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to stimulate interest in the beautification

of Walton County, furthering the education of its members and the public in botany, community beautification, conservation of natural resources, environmental awareness, floral design, gardening, horticulture, and nature studies and instill in our youth the love of gardening and respect for the environment.







# Walton County Tourism Wins Multiple **HSMAI** Adrian and ADDY Awards

been recognized for excellence in marketing and communications with multiple awards at the 2024 Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International Adrian Awards and the New Orleans Chapter of the American Advertising Awards. These accolades highlight the organization's commitment to innovative storytelling and strategic marketing in pro-

Walton County Tourism has moting South Walton as a premier destination.

"I'm incredibly proud to see our team honored for their hard work in promoting Walton County as a world-class destination," said Matt Algarin, Walton County tourism director. "To know that our work stands tall against international competition speaks volumes to the time and effort that goes into telling the



Walton County Tourism Director Matt Algarin and Director of **Marketing Kelli Carter** 

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stories that inspire travel and allows our visitors to create lifelong memories, all while supporting our community through direct spending and job creation."

The American Advertising **Awards**, also known as the Addy Awards, is the largest and most prestigious advertising competition, drawing over 25,000 entries annually to celebrate creative excellence in marketing and design. Walton County Tourism was recognized at the New Orleans Chapter of the ADDY Awards,

earning one Gold and one Silver award:

Gold ADDY - Sales & Marketing | Collateral Material | Publication Design | Book Design: South Walton Cookbook

(Gold winners advance to the district competition.)

Silver ADDY - Out-of-Home & Ambient Media | Events | Multiple Events: South Walton Unpacked

The American Advertising Federation conducts the three-tier competition annually, beginning at the local level and culminating in the national stage.

The **HSMAI** Awards, held recently in New York City, celebrate outstanding achievements in hospitality advertising, digital marketing, and public relations. This year, Walton County Tourism was honored with one Silver and five Bronze awards across various categories:

Silver Award - Public Relations/Communications (Feature Placement Online or Print): Florida's South Walton; Where to Eat, Play, Stay & More – Read the feature

Bronze Award - Advertising, Brand Campaign: Authentic Walton Branding – View the case

**Bronze Award** – Advertising, Print Collateral: South Walton Cookbook - Explore the cook-

**Bronze Award** – Advertising, Group Sales/Travel Trade: Meetings Interactive Brochure

Bronze Award - Digital, Social Media/Social Networking: 16 Beach Neighborhood Locator

Bronze Award - Integrated Campaign, Business to Consumer: Your Getaway. Your Homecoming. Your South Walton.









Heirloom Donuts is Finally Open! Stop by Tuesday - Saturday from 7 a.m to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. to see what the fuss is all about. Find them at 38 Thompson Rd. in Santa Rosa Beach.

# South Walton Fire District and SEASIDE® Partner to Provide Professional Lifeguard Services

The South Walton Fire District (SWFD) and SEA-SIDE® are proud to announce their partnership to provide professional beach lifeguard services for SEA-SIDE® homeowners and vacation guests beginning March 11, 2025.

ment for services was finalized following discussions between the two entities about the critical need for enhancing beach safety within SEA-SIDE® after the closure of the Van Ness Butler Regional Beach Access in 2024.

The contractual agree-

"The closure unfortunately created a three-mile gap between our lifeguard towers in Seagrove Beach and Grayton Beach," said SWFD Fire Chief Ryan Crawford. "SEASIDE® has stepped up to provide its residents and visitors with lifeguard protection, which allows us to more effectively pre-



vent and respond to emergencies in an area with a historically high call volume."

The beach will be staffed daily, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., during the 2025 Beach Safety Season, which includes extended hours during peak times.

"Our goal is to provide peace of mind for everyone who enjoys our beaches, knowing that professional lifeguards are on duty to keep them safe," said Kevin Boyle, Seaside Community Development Corp. General Manager. "I have the utmost respect for Beach Safety Director David Vaughan, Fire Chief Ryan Crawford, and Fire Marshal Sammy Sanchez for their unwavering dedication to protecting our community. Their leadership has been instrumental in making this agreement possible, and we are grateful for their partnership. We also applaud Alys

Beach, Rosemary Beach, Sandestin, and others for paving the way with similar agreements, setting a strong precedent for proactive beach safety measures across our region."

SWFD and SEASIDE® encourage those visiting the beach to swim near a lifeguard and follow the beach flag warning system. For more beach safety information, follow SWFD on social media or visit www.swfd.org.

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### Spotlight On

ACHIEVING YOUR VISION, TOGETHER - NATIONWIDE & LOCAL

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



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



### More Than Just Interiors / The EED Process

Our Ensured Ease Design (EED) process is built around you – offering flexibility and customization at every turn. With flat-fee design packages, you can tailor your experience to perfectly match your needs, whether you're embarking on new construction or a complete redesign.

From the first consultation to the final accent, we're with you every step of the way. Our team of designers brings both nation-wide expertise and local knowledge to every project, ensuring that the design process is as seamless as it is inspiring. We take immense pride in creating spaces that not only function seamlessly but reflect your personal style and fulfill your vision.

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





## Ready to Start Your Design Journey?

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### **Redfish Returns**

Did you know Historic Downtown Panama City is home to one of only two documentary film festivals in the Southeast U.S.?

Redfish Film Fest - in its second year - is on track to become the premier event of its kind in this area. Last year was a smash, and festival organizers say they have more films and immersive live events planned for this year.

"We were awed how people embraced Redfish in its first year," said Kevin Elliott, Director of Redfish. Elliot moved to Panama City in 1988, at the age of 13, and was smitten. A life-long arts kid, he has always wanted to help build arts and culture in Panama City like he sees in the big cities he visits with his film company, Wewa Films.

"Our town and people helped us make this what it was. We are thrilled and honored to do it again."

This year's fest happens April 24-27 in Historic Downtown Panama City. The fest will be screening at five venues this year — Panama City Center for the Arts, Downtown Boxing Club, Mosey's, Gallery of Art and Bay County Historical Museum — with more than 60 documentaries and immersive arts events happening each night.

Redfish is not a typical film festival. Its signature evening arts events are not usually seen at film festivals.

"Last year we had a 3D projection art block party, a blues jam, a Redfish comedy show, and bourbon tastings," Elliott said. "Our arts community gathered round us and helped make Redfish so much better. It's happening again this year."









In addition to documentaries, Redfish will have an opening night party on April 24 called From Bayou to Beyond that celebrates Panama City's past, present, and future. Friday, April 25 includes an "urban fantasy street party" called Storyteller's Row that will feature musicians, light projections, and a nighttime art market from local group Trash Market, all in downtown's Gateway and McKenzie Parks.

That same night, local haunt Mosey's will host a concert by Matt Siegel Music called Music in the Movies, then Panama City Comedy will host its Redfish Comedy Showcase.

Saturday night, April 26 will see Masque of the Red Death, a "dark masquerade party" based on the short story by Edgar Allen Poe.

The Redfish team have a brunch planned for Sunday, April 27 that includes a boat journey across St. Andrews Bay to Papa Joe's Bayside, where guests will be entertained with a true crime adventure.

But why documentaries only? Redfish co-founder and head programmer, Lex Benedict, said it comes down to real stories about real people. Benedict is a producer, editor, and VFX artist who has been working professionally in L.A. for over two decades. She has spearheaded the post-production and delivery process of over twenty featurelength films, several docu-series, music videos, shorts and branded content distributed on platforms such as Array for Netflix, HBO/ MAX, HULU, Buzzfeed, Billboard, FOX, COMPLEX and Amazon.

"In the end, Redfish is about people and their stories," Benedict said. "Personal stories are our most treasured possessions as humans. We want Redfish to be a place where people can share their stories, celebrate them, and create some new chapters with us."

For more information on Redfish Film Fest or to buy tickets, visit www.redfishfilmfest. com. Volunteers interested in assisting with set-up April 19-27 can email Lex Benedict at lex@ redfishfilmfest.com for more information.



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# Rejuvenate and Refresh:

# The Ultimate Spa Experience at Henderson Spa

Nestled within the tranquil embrace of Henderson Beach Resort, the Henderson Spa is an oasis of relaxation and rejuvenation along Florida's Emerald Coast. From signature facials and massages to luxurious body treatments and beauty enhancements, every detail is designed to provide a world-class wellness experience. This spring, guests and locals alike are invited to discover the spa's newest offerings at the much-anticipated Spring Open House—an exclusive event celebrating self-care, beauty, and holistic well-being.

# Indulge in Signature Treatments

Henderson Spa's menu of services is carefully curated to address relaxation, renewal, and revitalization. The spa's massage therapies range from deep tissue and hot stone to aromatherapy-infused sessions that melt away stress and tension. For those seeking a radiant complexion, the spa's skincare

treatments feature the renowned Babor line, a European luxury skincare brand known for its advanced, science-driven formulas. Additionally, the spa proudly offers Dr. Schrammek's Green Peel, a world-renowned herbal facial treatment designed to deeply rejuvenate and renew the skin. Whether indulging in the Ultimate Glow Facial or the Detoxifying Oxygen Facial, guests will experience transformative results tailored to their skin's needs.

Body treatments elevate the wellness journey further with options like the Sugar Glow Body Scrub and the Marine Algae Detox Wrap, which deeply nourish and purify the skin. The spa also offers exclusive couples' experiences, where partners can unwind together in a serene, intimate setting. Every service is enhanced by the spa's signature rituals, ensuring that each guest leaves feeling fully refreshed and renewed.

# Spring Open House: A Celebration of Wellness

As the season of renewal unfolds, Henderson Spa invites guests to its annual Spring Open House on April 10 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., a premier event showcasing the latest in beauty, skincare, and holistic wellness. This special gathering will feature live demonstrations of new treatments, complimentary miniservices, and exclusive discounts on spa packages and retail products. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the spa's luxurious offerings, meet expert therapists, and sample premium products from top-tier beauty

Guests will enjoy special mini facials from Dr. Schrammek, chair massages, HydraFacial hand treatments, complimentary polish change (no gel polish, please), Prickly Pear Bellinis and skincare consultations. Salty Sparrow will host a pop-up jewelry display while Prime IV will offer custom drips and injec-



tions. Sip, socialize, and indulge in a serene escape designed just for you. We encourage you to call the spa to pre-book your mini facials before they all fill up: (850) 424-4482.

## An Escape Like No Other

Beyond its extensive service offerings, Henderson Spa provides an unparalleled setting for relaxation. With its soothing coastal-inspired design, plush treatment rooms, and tranquil relaxation lounges, the spa is a sanctuary that instantly transports guests away from the bustle of daily life. Whether visiting

for a single treatment or indulging in a full day of pampering, every moment spent here is a step toward deeper relaxation and renewal.

This spring, there's no better time to prioritize self-care and experience the best of what Henderson Spa has to offer. Locals enjoy 10% off spa services daily with a 20% savings between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (discounts cannot be combined). Reserve your spot today and embrace the art of relaxation in paradise. To schedule an appointment, call (850) 424-4482 or online at henderson-beachresort.com/spa.





# Capital City Bank Celebrates New Office Opening In Panama City Beach

On Tuesday, March 11, Capital City Bank hosted a ribbon cutting to commemorate the opening of its new banking office located at 8403 West Bay Parkway at the entrance of the Latitude Margaritaville Watersound community. Attendees included leadership from Capital City Bank and The St. Joe Company, as well as several members of the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Bay County Chamber of Commerce.

"With the opening of our new office in Panama City Beach, we are strengthening our commitment to Bay County," said Stephen Stabler, Capital City Bank regional executive for the Emerald Coast of Florida. "The addition of our West Bay Office compliments our existing locations in the area, enhancing access to comprehensive banking services and ensuring we are well positioned to support clients across the region."

"We are very pleased to welcome a financial institution to Watersound West Bay Center," said William Brock, Vice President of Commercial Real Estate for The St. Joe Company. "We have had the opportunity to work with



Capital City Bank on other offices near our residential communities. This new location gives them an additional opportunity to serve customers as development continues along Highway 79."

With the addition of West Bay, Capital City Bank now operates five service locations across Bay and Walton counties, providing a full range of consumer and business banking, lending, trust and wealth management solutions to the local community. The Bank's expansion in the region began with the opening of its first loan production office in Panama City Beach in March 2018. Since then, Capital City has steadily grown its presence. In 2020, the Company added a loan production office in Santa Rosa Beach and constructed its first full-service banking office at Panama City Beach's Breakfast Point community to replace the original Panama City Beach loan production office. In 2023, the Bank continued its expansion with a second new-construction full-service banking office at the Watersound Town Center in Inlet Beach and a loan production office in Lynn Haven. With the addition of the West Bay Office, Capital City Bank remains committed to serving the financial needs of Bay and Walton counties with convenient locations and comprehensive financial solutions.

The West Bay Office is equipped with virtual teller technology, which enables live assistance from a banker via video chat with or without a debit card from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Saturday. The machine has a Smart ATM op-

tion for self-service banking with a debit card 24 hours a day. The Smart ATM has all the standard features of a traditional ATM but includes several key enhancements that make it easier, faster and more convenient than ever before. It accepts cash and check deposits of up to 30 items in a single transaction, and checks post the same day when deposited by 8 p.m. on business days.

Founded in 1895 and headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida, Capital City Bank provides a full range of consumer, wealth management, business and commercial banking services. The Bank has repeatedly been selected as the best bank or financial institution in multiple communities across its footprint, including Tallahassee, Crawfordville, the Emerald Coast and Palatka, Florida, and Cairo, Georgia. Additionally, the Company has been chosen for Florida Trend magazine's "Best Companies to Work For in Florida" thirteen years in a row and the American Banker magazine's "Best Banks to Work For" every year since the list's inception in

### Local Resident To Compete For Miss Florida Usa 2025

Jenna Landmon, 21, of Santa Rosa Beach, will compete for the title of MISS FLORIDA USA 2025 on May 23-25 at the Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center in Orlando, FL. "I am so excited to represent and serve the area as Miss Emerald Coast USA," said Jenna. "I look forward to competing with smart, talented women from across Florida and encouraging and inspiring children to make a difference in their communities."

Jenna is a summa cum laude graduate from Boston College. She is the two-time published author of Little Paisley Makes a Big Difference and Little Paisley Goes to Africa. Both books tell the heartwarming story of a young girl who sets out to impact her community, both locally and abroad. Jenna's mission is to inspire each child to use their voice to create positive change, which is why she formed the



nonprofit Paisley's Difference (www.paisleysdifference.org). Through speaking engagements at schools and churches both across Florida and the nation, Jenna loves to inspire children to become world changers!

The Miss Florida Teen USA® and Miss Florida USA® pageants are the Official Preliminaries to the MISS TEEN USA®, MISS USA®, and MISS UNIVERSE® pageants.

The young woman chosen as Miss Florida USA 2025 will go on to represent the state of Florida in the 2025 MISS USA® pageant, one of the most anticipated events of the year.





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# Fish Window Cleaning:

# A Great Catch for Santa Rosa Beach and Beyond

By Christopher Manson

We believe in: Fairness, Kindness and Respect Choosing a Positive Attitude Doing the Right Thing Creating Wow Moments Because culture eats strategy for breakfast.

Our mission is to provide year-round growth-focused employment while keeping Northwest Florida beautiful, delivering excellent service, and being positive community stewards.

— Fish Window Cleaning of Northwest Florida Mission and Values

What's my line
I'm happy cleaning windows...
— Van Morrison, "Cleaning Windows"

Statement

Fish Window Cleaning of Northwest Florida started serving Destin, Seaside, Rosemary Beach, Inlet Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Pensacola, Gulf Breeze, Navarre, Mary Esther, Milton, Miramar Beach and 30A in August 2021. It is part of a franchise that boasts nearly 300 locations nationwide.

Local Danica LaFaire worked

in marketing for a Missouri-based broadband company that was about to be bought out. "I knew I needed to prepare for an exit," she says. Danica and husband Josh began to look into franchising while she was teaching classes on entrepreneurship. "My husband was about to make a big career change, too." When the LaFaires landed on the Emerald Coast, Danica remained in the broadband industry for another year and also became a franchise consultant.

She kept her eyes open for franchise opportunities here. "I learned about Fish Window Cleaning in February of 2021, and it just clicked. No nights, weekends or holidays, nobody calling at two in the morning." Her marketing skills came in handy as well—not just sales and marketing, but the vital areas of safety, training and customer service.

Fish Window Cleaning's team includes skilled window cleaning technicians, estimate writers, an





troubleshooting.

"We train in a lot of aspects that help employees continue with their growth as team members and work their way into leadership positions, whether they stay with us or not," says LaFaire. "We have several leadership positions we plan to fill from within. We let our people know what we're working toward so we're on the same page and that they know how they can contribute."

"Our first two years of focus have been on having a culture where our team members want to get out of bed and come to work," says LaFaire. "You get what you put in, and we will continue to focus on our team members so they can set and achieve their goals."

While some companies offer numerous additional services, LaFaire believes in focusing on windows—

cleaning, identifying problems, and maintaining integrity. She notes that "stacking services" can cause a window cleaning operation to lose its focus, adding that Fish Window Cleaning has partnerships in other service industries such as pressure washing and housecleaning.

The current list of satisfied clients is made up of structures, homes and buildings four stories and under. "We are focused on making our business clients shine," she says.

"If you had asked me five years ago, I would have looked at you like... It's just that I'm not a very strong physical, getout-and-do-it person. I was the worst cleaner we had! I couldn't

have imagined the team we have today," she says. "I'm so blessed that I get to see the best folks on a daily basis. I have an amazing team I can count on, and they bring it every single day."

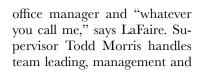
LaFaire often drives around town with her nephews, pointing out all the places Fish Window Cleaning services. "By the end, they're like, Aunt Danica, please be quiet!"

The LaFaires have made a commitment to local involvement, as noted in the mission statement above. Fish Window Cleaning donates a portion of its topline revenue to Semper Fi & America's Fund (thefund.org), a nonprofit that serves needy military, veterans and their families. "We clean 'in kind' for the United Way of the Emerald Coast, the Children in Crisis Neighborhood buildings and Path of Grace in Miramar Beach," adds LaFaire. Fish Window Cleaning is very active in the local Chambers of Commerce.

"This is home, and there's no chance of me leaving this area. If I get stuck on a bridge, I can look left or right and stop and pause to be grateful every single minute. My community here is so strong. I have more friendships and positive relationships here than I've ever had in my life."

Beginning next month, La-Faire will contribute a series of articles dealing with everything from window cleaning and maintenance to marketing ideas.

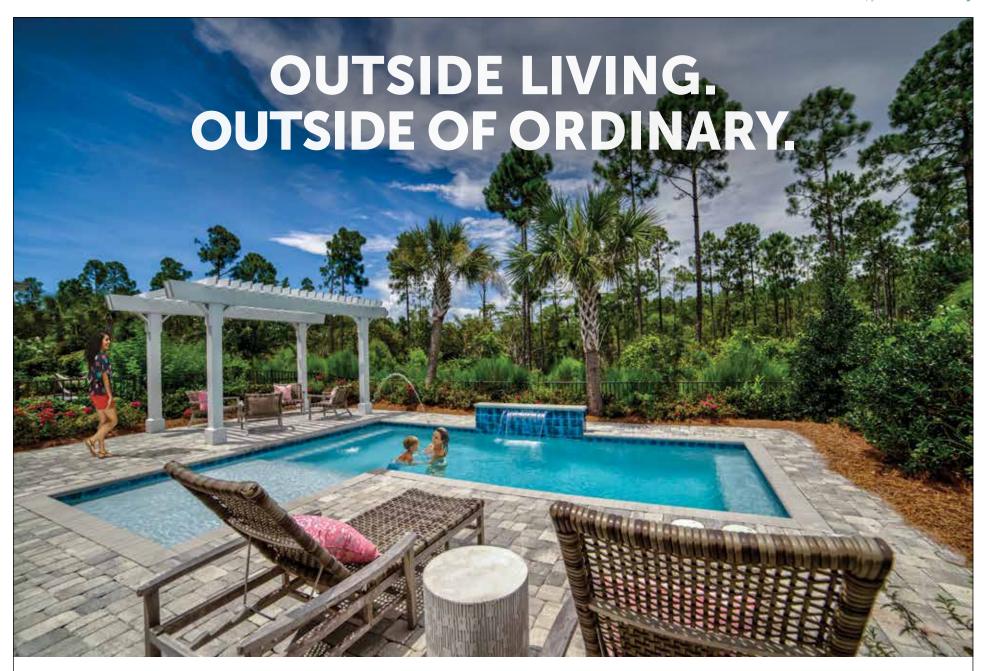
Fish Window Cleaning of Northwest Florida, located at 623 Harbor Boulevard, Unit 7, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 850.842.2162 for a free estimate, and visit www.fishwindowcleaning.com/Destin-FL-3249/ for additional information.







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

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

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

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

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

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





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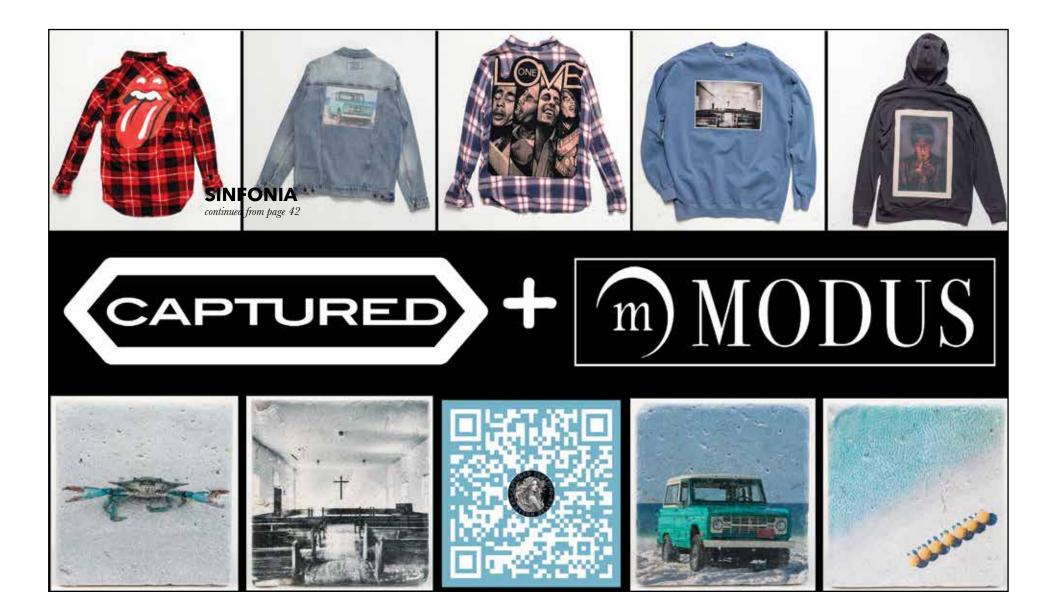
counterparts, these stores prioritize individualized service, with knowledgeable staff members who are passionate about being able to help customers. The "brotique" is more than just a place to buy clothes or grooming products; it has become a destination for men seeking inspiration, community, and a sense of belonging. Many of these stores host events, workshops, and collaborations, creating a platform for men to connect, network, and share their experiences and interests. As the popularity of the "brotique" continues to rise, it has become a game-changer in the retail industry. Its success can be attributed to its ability to adapt to the changing demands and expectations of the modern man. individualized service, and a vibrant community atmosphere.

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

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

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

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# Find Your Perfect Pre-Wedding Escape on 30A

Looking for the ultimate bachelorette getaway? 30A's mix of sun, sand, and celebration makes it an ideal destination for every kind of pre-wedding escape. St. Joe Hospitality's boutique properties provide a home base tailored to different bachelorette styles, ensuring an unforgettable pre-wedding escape.

Whether the bride envisions a weekend of pure indulgence, wellness-focused relaxation, or outdoor adventure, St. Joe's boutique properties offer the perfect setting. Here's a guide to the best stays for every bridal party style:

# The Glamorous Bride – The Pearl Hotel

For the bride who loves luxury, The Pearl Hotel is the ultimate chic retreat. Spa days at The Pearl Spa, sunset champagne toasts at Havana Beach Rooftop, and poolside lounging in private cabanas set the tone for a stylish and sophisticated getaway.

## The Suite Escape – Watersound Inn

For the bride who wants a refined yet relaxed getaway, Watersound Inn offers an effortlessly chic setting for a memorable pre-wedding retreat, with spacious, coastal-inspired suites with fully equipped kitchens and private balconies overlooking the stunning Emerald Coast. Wake up to the sound of rolling waves, enjoy exclusive access to the Watersound Beach Club, and explore 30A with complimentary bike rentals.

## The Beach Bum – WaterColor Inn

For the bride whose ideal trip includes sitting poolside with a good book, beachfront lounging at the private WaterColor Beach Club, and vibrant group dinners – WaterColor Inn delivers. Enjoy fresh coastal dining at Fish Out of Water, sunset bonfires on the beach, and stand-up paddleboarding adventures in the Gulf.

# The Adventurous Bride – Camp Creek Inn

For the outdoorsy crew,

Camp Creek Inn is the perfect launchpad for adventure. With exclusive access to world-class golf at Camp Creek, Shark's Tooth and The Third golf courses, sixteen tennis and pickleball courts, and a fully equipped country-club style pool area, it's ideal for a group that wants to stay on the move.

# The Laid-Back Crew – The Lodge 30A

For an easygoing bachelorette getaway that won't break the budget, The Lodge 30A offers a stylish yet affordable home base. With easy access to Seagrove Beach, nearby dining, and plenty of outdoor adventures, it's perfect for a fun, no-fuss trip with a relaxed vibe.

From indulgent spa days to high-energy adventures, every bride can find her dream bachelorette along 30A.



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# 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



# Mountain High Outfitters is Here to Stay

After opening in 2022 in The Market Shops at Sandestin and then moving temporarily to Silver Sands Premium Outlets, Mountain High Outfitters has locked into a brand new permanent location where they celebrated their opening on April 4.

"We are beyond excited to

finally be locked into the Emerald Coast, where people come from all over to enjoy the spectacular beaches and atmosphere. Allowing Mountain High Outfitters to spread our passion and the fun curated assortment of brands is truly a blessing. We can't wait to have you visit and experience the MHO movement," says Chris Groom, Owner

Mountain High Outfitters (MHO) is more than a traditional outdoor retailer. Upon entering any store, you will notice a vast array of products and brands that create a compelling story for any patron. They pride themselves

on guest engagement, making it a comfortable place to prepare for a first adventure, expedition, or lifestyle experience. Building a community and giving back to the community is at the forefront of MHO's movement. Mountain High Outfitters currently has 25 locations throughout Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida and Utah, as well as a website, www. mountainhighoutfitters.com. Come experience MHO and be a part of the movement. Get Out, Get Active, Be Inspired and Live Your Passion.

Find Mountain High Outfitters at their newly renovated location in Silver Sands Premium Outlets.





# Open Door Food Pantry in Need of Heavy Equipment

Open Door Food Pantry, staffed by volunteers and their CEO, Bill "Boss" Howell, handles about 22,000 lbs of donated food every week. This amazing service is open to all that ask for food and other help. Currently, the Open Door Food Pantry is in need of equipment, such as a

forklift. If you have equipment to donate or are interested in volunteering, please contact Bill Howell at (850) 217-6991.

The Open Door Food Pantry is located at 24388 HWY 331 S. For more information, visit www. thechurchatthebayandopendoorf oodpantry.com.

# Defuniak Springs Holds Fifth Annual Sprint Triathlon

The Fifth Annual Sprint Triathlon will be held in Historic DeFuniak Springs on May 3, 2025. Racers will swim about 600 meters in Lake DeFuniak, bike 8 miles into Eucheanna Valley and return, then run a 5 K through the historic district. If you are interested in participating, please register at runsignup.com. Discounts are available at local hotels and campgrounds. The fun begins at 7 a.m., and all should be done by 11 a.m. Forward DeFuniak, Inc. hosts the event which has a reputation of being well organized and safe. The town comes out in support of the racers and makes so much noise that anyone would move a little faster! If you have been several times or if this is your first time we hope to see you there! Call (850) 830-7663 for more information.



# Watersound Fountains Provides a Welcome Space for Coastal Seniors The senior living community offers space to Coastal Seniors of South Walton to hold fitness classes, events

Watersound Fountains, an independent living community in Inlet Beach, has become a welcome space for local seniors - and not just the ones who live there. Over the last year, the community has partnered with Coastal Seniors of South Walton (CSSW) to provide space for the group's regular fitness classes and special events.

On March 17, the group launched its popular water aerobics class at the Watersound Fountains pool. During the winter months, they also hosted line dancing classes at the community, which wrapped up on March 12. For years, the Coastal Seniors have petitioned to have a senior center built in South Walton to house its regular classes and events. Until that happens, Watersound Fountains is happy to provide a space for all seniors in South Walton to meet.

"We've built a strong partnership with the Coastal Seniors since opening our doors last year," said Melissa Adams, Executive Director of Watersound Fountains. "We believe strongly that regular socialization and physical activity are important to maintaining an active lifestyle for local seniors. We're happy to provide CSSW a space to host those events until they have a space of their own."

In addition to providing a space for CSSW's regular fitness classes, the senior living community has provided food for its events - like the Bicentennial event in Santa Rosa Beach last June. They also served as the venue for CSSW's member appreciation event last fall.

Earlier this year, CSSW started a petition on Change.org to raise awareness of the need for a senior center in Walton County. In it, they note that seniors are often impacted by isolation as they age, which can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline,



and more. Currently, seniors age 50 and above make up 42 percent of the population of Walton County, yet there is not an adequate facility where programs for active seniors can be provided.

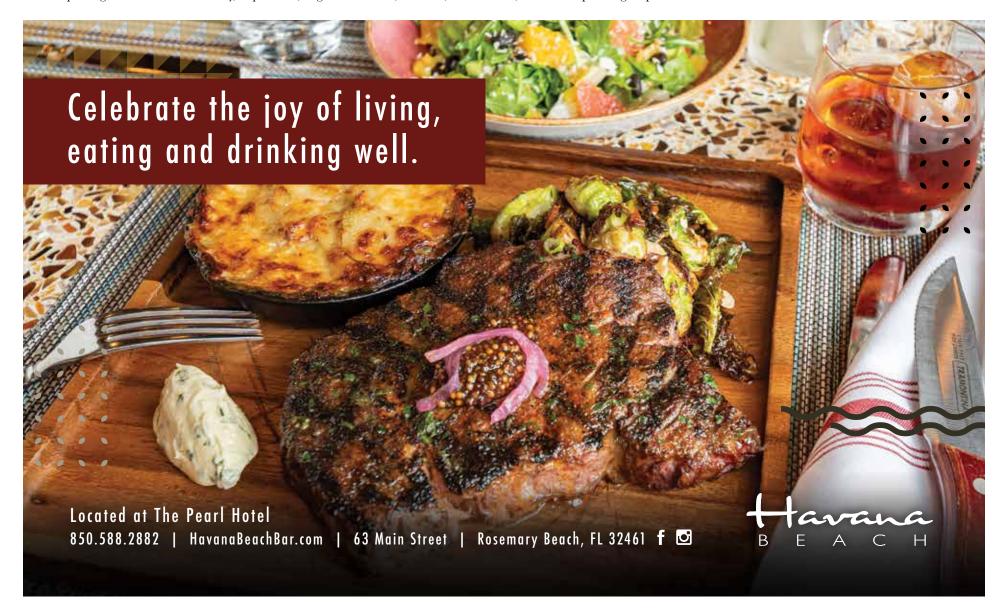
When they are not holding class at Watersound Fountains. CSSW meets at the Walton County Commissioners Office in Santa Rosa Beach and hosts events throughout the community. The organization provides a community for active seniors and focuses on personal health, social, recreational, volunteer opportunities, and life-long learning. Classes include exercise, chair yoga, Tai Chi, watercolor painting classes, and pickleball sessions. The organization also regularly hosts guest speakers.

Adams said that CSSW members are always welcome at Watersound Fountains events, and the invitation goes both ways. The senior living community has purchased CSSW memberships for residents so they can attend events with the Coastal Seniors outside of the community. Creating a space where all seniors are welcome is a common thread the two organizations share.

The two organizations are in the early phases of discussing a possible CSSW art class in Watersound Fountains' Create Art Studio.

"There have been discussions about a watercolors class with a local senior who is a member of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County," said Adams. "We have a beautiful art studio in our community and we'd love to see more people enjoy it. This seems like a win for everyone involved and the next phase of the beautiful partnership we've created with CSSW."

Coastal Seniors will hold its weekly water aerobics class at Watersound Fountains from March until October. The class is held four times a week - on Mondays and Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. Members can register for the classes on the CSSW website.





# Surfside Music Theatre Announces Mean Girls JR.

# Limited Seating for This Ferociously Funny Show, Tickets on Sale Now!

thrilled to announce that tickets are now on sale for the highly anticipated production of Mean Girls JR., a smart, hilarious, and "totally fetch" musical based on the hit movie written by Tina

Surfside Music Theatre is Fey. Performances will take place from April 23–26, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the Surfside Music Theatre's Blackbox Theatre located in Grayton Beach. Tickets are \$16.50 and can be purchased at www.surfsidemusictheatre.com.

Mean Girls JR. follows the hilarious journey of Cady Heron, a student who must learn to navigate the treacherous social hierarchy of high school after moving to suburban Illinois from Kenya. With the "Plastics," a group of popular but ruthless girls led by Regina George, Cady's mission to climb the social ladder quickly takes unexpected and humorous

Mean Girls JR. is presented through a special arrangement with, and all authorized materials supplied by, Music Theatre International (MTI). Featuring a book by Tina Fey, lyrics by Nell Benjamin, and music by Jeff Richmond, Mean Girls JR. is based on the 2004 film, which was adapted from the book Queen Bees and Wannabes by Rosalind Wiseman. The production is under the direction of Michelle Kerrigan, with Assistant Director Addison Hightower and house management by Michele Perkins.

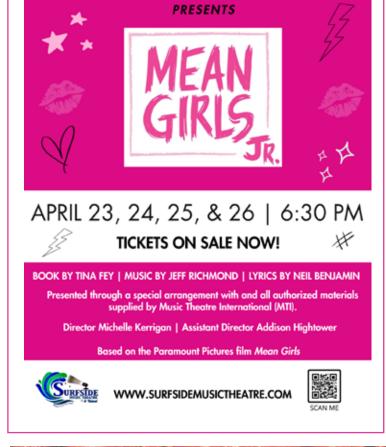
With limited seating in the intimate Blackbox Theatre, tickets will sell out fast. Don't be the last to find out what all the buzz is about—reserve your spot beMEAN GIRLS.

fore it's totally too late! Get your tickets now at www.surfsidemusictheatre.com.

Cast: Cady Heron - Avery Horn, Janis Sarkisian – Addison Hightower AD, Damian - Colin Grantham, Regina George - Lucy Leming, Gretchen Wieners – Ava Watt, Aaron Samuels - Cayden Perkins, Taylor, Mrs. Heron, French Teacher, Kevin G. - Ama Pinto, Rachel, Marymount 3 - Ivy Castle, Caitlin, Caroline Kraft - Penelope Lvnn.

About Surfside Music Theatre: Founded by Michelle Kerrigan, Surfside Music Theatre encompasses two vibrant production companies: the professional Surfside Music Theatre (SMT), founded in 2006, and the youth-focused B.E.T.A. (Broadening

Education Through Arts), established in 1986. Our mission is to produce high-quality theatrical and family-friendly live stage shows that enrich the cultural landscape of the beautiful 30A community, serving both residents and visitors alike. In August 2015, Kerrigan relocated B.E.T.A. from Destin to the artistic haven of Grayton Beach, where the quaint Black Box Surfside Music Theatre now flourishes. Surfside offers private masterclass opportunities for professionals and youth in performance voice, acting for stage and screen, and dance for the musical theatre performer. You can find more information www.surfsidemusictheatre. com



SURFSIDE MUSIC THEATRE







### Gerard Frank is 2025 ArtsQuest Featured Artist

The Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) of Walton County will feature Gerard Frank for the 37th Annual ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival. Frank's custom artwork—One Man Show—will be showcased on all ArtsQuest marketing materials. The festival will take place May 3-4, 2025, at Grand Boulevard Town Center's North Park.

Frank, a professional artist for 26 years, holds the distinction of being the first living artist included in the permanent collection of the Anna Lamar Switzer Center for the Visual Arts. His work is also featured in The Lofts Gallery in Pensacola and a prestigious Central Park West lobby in New York City. His collectors span the U.S., from Miami to NYC's SoHo district to Long Beach, CA, and internationally in Germany. In addition to his fine art career, Frank has dedicated more than two decades to tattoo artistry, owning and operating his own shop while exhibiting in multiple galleries across the country.

A self-taught painter with a background in commercial screen printing, Frank has worked with clients such as Hewlett-Packard, Boeing and Lucent Technologies. His expertise in printing on diverse materials—including plastics, metals, wood and glass—helped shape his abstract style. Encouraged by his wife, Teri, he continues to explore creative boundaries, blending fine art and tattoo artistry.

"As humans we have a desire to belong to something. As artists, we exist in a paradox—trusting our process even when it separates us from the group," says Frank. "When people con-

nect with your work as deeply as you connect with creating it, you've achieved a fundamental human desire: belonging. Being named the Featured Artist for ArtsQuest 2025 is an incredible honor, reinforcing my passion and obligation to keep creating."

"Gerard Frank's work embodies the bold creativity and dedication to craft that ArtsQuest celebrates," said Melissa Wheeler, Vice-President Marketing & Strategy of the Cultural Arts Alliance. "His unique artistic journey and powerful storytelling through visual art make him an inspiring choice as our Featured

Artist for 2025. We are thrilled to showcase his incredible talent and share his work with our community and visitors."

ArtsQuest will feature over



125 artists from across the U.S., exhibiting in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, sculpture, glass, oils, acrylics, mixed media, photography, metal and

wood, jewelry, and works on paper. Artists will compete for awards and cash prizes totaling \$10,000, judged by a panel of distinguished experts.

Beyond the art, attendees can enjoy live demonstrations, a CAA member exhibit featuring artists from The Foster Gallery, a Walton student County exhibit, a special showcase from the CAA's Prison Art program, an interactive public art installation, a silent auction, continuous live entertainment, and "ImagiNation: Where Kids Rule." A full cash bar will

be available throughout the weekend in Grand Park.

ArtsQuest is part of Art Month Walton County, a collaboration of visual, performing and literary arts events presented in diverse formats and venues throughout Walton County in May. Art Month Walton also includes Dine + Dive - a fundraiser for the Underwater Museum of Art, Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, the Longleaf Writers Conference, an Open Mic Night with Emerald Coast Storytellers, Sinfonia Goes Pop at Alys Beach, Legally Blonde - a production from Emerald Coast Theatre Company, Gallery events, concerts and more.

Volunteers are needed throughout ArtsQuest weekend to work on all aspects of the festival. Sign up at CulturalArtsAlliance.com/volunteer. Sponsorships are still available, and interested businesses can contact Gabby@culturalartsalliance.com.

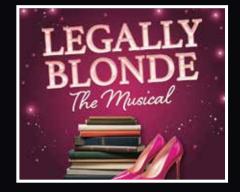
A rain or shine event, the festival is open to the public and a \$5 admission donation is requested. Visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.







The Tortoise and The Hare: Fast Friends, Slow Foes MARCH 27 - 30



Legally Blonde The Musical MAY 2 - 18





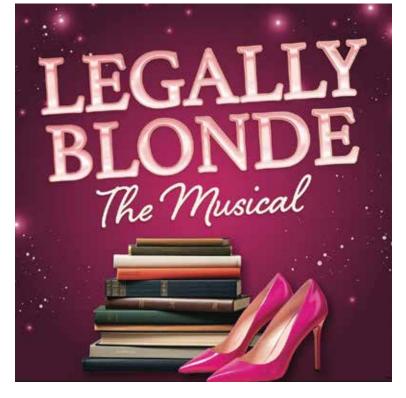
# Spring is Blonde this Year!

By Anna Fisher, Associate Artistic Director, Emerald Coast Theatre Company

Spring is always my favorite time of year. I love it for all the usual reasons—cool breezes, beautiful flowers, and Easter celebrations with family. I also love it because we have our K-12 student performances in April when we get to watch our ECTC kids shine on stage- most recently in "The Wizard of Oz." Last but not least, we end our season in the spring with a show-stopping musical, which is

love it because we have our none other than Legally Blonde K-12 student performances in this May!

One of the things I absolutely love about this show is the humor that is woven through every part of the show. The song lyrics, the writing, and the scenes always bring a laugh or





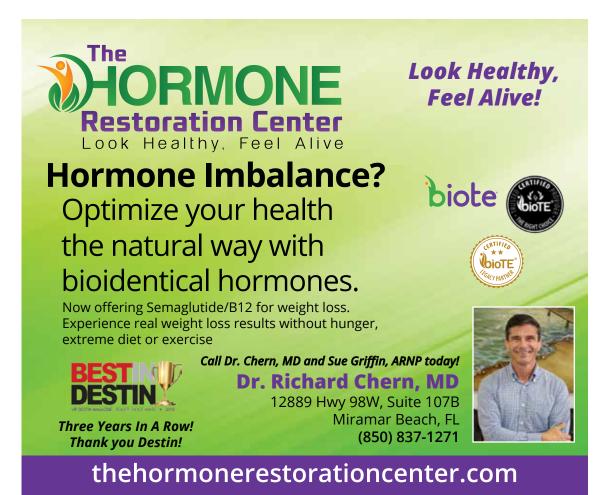


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a smile and yet manage to show depth and character development at the same time. Elle Woods, the lead character, is a great example of this balance of humor and depth.

Everyone around Elle- including the audience- expects her to be a shallow sorority girl who only cares about getting her MRS. degree. This might be true in the beginning, but one of the joys of the show is watching her grow and overcome every obstacle thrown in her path. She proves us wrong time and time again and defies all odds by being kind, persistent, and not quite as "blonde" as we think she is. If you're somehow not familiar with the story, I won't

spoil it for you, but I will say it's gonna surprise you how much you end up rooting for this pink loving blonde.

We always deliberate at length about what shows to put in our season at Emerald Coast Theatre Company, and we always look for stories with heart. This show is no exception. I think you'll find that like a cool refreshing breeze, Elle is the hero we all need this spring. Don't miss the laughs and the joy! Come join us May 2nd-18th in real time for a live show experience that will never happen the same way twice. That's why the heart of ECTC is you!



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# Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Calls For Artists For The 30th Annual Festival Of The Arts

Artist Applications Now Open for the 30th Annual Festival of the Arts Awarding More Than \$12,000 in Cash Prizes

The Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) is now accepting artist applications for the 30th Annual Festival of the Arts, one of the most anticipated art festivals in the Southeast. This juried fine arts show will take place October 25-26, 2025, on the Dugas Pavilion green in Destin, Florida.

Celebrating three decades of artistic excellence, the Festival of the Arts features more than 100 premier artists from across the country, offering attendees an immersive experience of fine art, live music, and interactive activities for all ages. The event includes a beer and wine garden, a live entertainment lineup, "street" performers, and engaging art activities for children—all narrated by a professional emcee.

Artists are invited to apply for this juried show, which awards more than \$12,000 in cash prizes, including Best in Show, People's Choice, Awards of Excellence, Awards of Merit, and Judge's Recognition Awards. A variety of mediums will be showcased, including painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, digital art, sculpture,

mkat mattie kelly Larts foundation



ceramics, fiber, glass, wood, jewelry, mixed media, and more.

The Festival of the Arts provides a prime opportunity for artists to showcase and sell their work to an audience of more than 6,000 art enthusiasts and collectors. Participants benefit

from inclusion in the official festival guide, both in print and digital formats, with artist contact details featured in the Artist Preview. MKAF offers exceptional artist hospitality, including free admission to the kickoff party Friday (optional), compli-

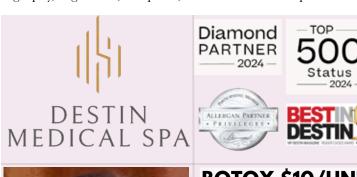


mentary breakfast each morning and a special artist award dinner on Saturday evening. Artists also enjoy easy, drive-up access for booth setup and teardown, free on-site parking, booth sitters, and overnight security.

Artists must submit four highresolution images, including three of their work and one of their booth setup, for jury consideration. The application fee is \$30 per category. Booth fees are \$350 for a single space, \$400 for a corner space (limited availability), and \$700 for a double space (limited availability). The deadline to apply is June 30, 2025, with jury results announced in mid-July.

Proceeds fund the MKAF's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, individuals with special needs, and active-duty military and veterans in our community.

For full details on artist participation, rules, and applications, visit www.MKAF.org or contact (850) 650-2226 or info@mkaf.org.





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## **SOUTH WALTON EVENTS**

# The REP Rumpelstiltskin in Seaside Mondays

The Seaside REP Theatre presents Rumpelstiltskin Mondays at 6 p.m. through April 21 at the Seaside Amphitheater. Step into the magical storybook world of Rumpelstiltskin where young Biddy, a humble peasant girl, must spin straw into gold. There is only one problem. Biddy has no magical powers! Presented by the Seaside Merchants, this complimentary event will entertain the entire family.

# The REP Snow White in Rosemary Beach Wednesdays

The Seaside REP Theatre presents Snow White kids' theatre every Wednesday at St. Augustine Green in Rosemary Beach at 6 p.m. March 12 - April 16. Presented by The Merchants of Rosemary Beach, this complimentary event will entertain the entire family. Join Snow White on her thrilling adventure through the enchanted forest as she escapes the clutches of the Evil Queen. Along the way, she

befriends seven lovable dwarfs and discovers the true meaning of friendship and kindness.

### Grand Boulevard Lawn Games Fridays & Saturdays

Bring the entire family out to Grand Boulevard to enjoy some fun! Spring Lawn Games will take over Grand Park from 5-8:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday through April 25. Grab some food and drinks from one of the many restaurants in Grand Boulevard before you settle in to a fun round of corn hole, giant lawn chess, checkers and more.

### Sandestin Wine Festival April 10-13

The 38th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival at the Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort will take place April 10-13. Topping area polls as a must-experience event, this beloved festival offers four full days of unique events, including wine dinners with celebrity chefs, yoga, live music, interactive experiences, culinary tents, and

of course wine tastings. Tickets, schedule and lodging info: www. sandestinwinefestival.com.

Wine novices are able to learn more about wines and sample from a comprehensive selection in all varieties, styles, and price ranges. Wine aficionados enjoy meeting winemakers, asking detailed questions, and acquiring hard to get selections. Everyone gets to enjoy the live music, interactive experiences at the Culinary tents, and shops and dining of the Village of Baytowne Wharf.

### Doggie EGGstravaganza Returns April 18 to Grand Boulevard

Calling all dog lovers! Dog-Harmony's 10th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza hops into Grand Boulevard at Sandestin on Friday, April 18, 2025, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. This canine-only Easter egg hunt features 800 treat-filled eggs, live music, pet photos, games, prizes, and delicious bites from JC's Gourmet, plus beer and wine for the humans.

Two egg hunt zones—divided by dog size—ensure every pup has a chance to play. A \$20 donation in advance (\$25 at the event) includes a souvenir treat bag and helps support Dog-Harmony's mission of reducing shelter populations through education, training, and outreach.

Part of the Coastal Culture Series by Grand Boulevard Arts & Entertainment, tickets are available at events.humanitix.com/doggieeggstravaganza-2025. For sponsorships, email hello@dogharmony.org.

### Rosemary Beach Easter Celebration & Egg Hunt April 20

The Easter Celebration & Annual Egg Hunt takes place on Sunday, April 20, in Rosemary Beach. The annual egg hunt kicks off at 9:45 a.m. Enjoy a complimentary mimosa from Summer Kitchen Café and get your photos taken with the Easter Bunny at Gigi's immediately following the egg hunt. Remember to BYOB... Bring Your Own Basket!

## Seaside Easter Celebration April 20

Bring the whole family for a day filled with complimentary photos with the Easter Bunny, live music, face painting, and exciting activities for kids starting at 11 a.m. The Easter Egg Hunt has over 25,000 eggs and kicks off at 1 p.m., promising an egg-citing adventure for children of all ages. Don't miss out on the festive atmosphere and cherished memories waiting to be made at our Easter eggstravaganza in Seaside.

### Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt at Sandestin April 20

Celebrate Easter Sunday at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort Linkside Conference Center

with a delightful brunch and festive egg hunts on the beautiful Grand Lawn. Brunch Seatings: 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Egg Hunts: 12:30 p.m.: Ages 4 and under | 1 p.m.: Ages 5 and up. Join for a memorable day filled with family fun, delicious dining, and excit-





# **SOUTH WALTON EVENTS**

ing activities. Enjoy a carefully crafted buffet featuring savory entrées, fresh salads, tempting sides, and a delightful assortment of desserts. Adults can enhance their experience with our bottomless mimosa option.

### **Earth Day Bay Cleanup** at Sandestin Baytowne **Marina April 22**

Celebrate Earth Day with Sandestin on Tuesday, April 22 at Baytowne Marina. Beginning at 7:30 a.m., help clean the shoreline by removing plastics and other debris harmful to local wildlife, bay water and natural resources along the Sandestin boundary of Choctawatchee Bay. Refreshments will be provided.

7:30 - Gather, mingle, meet and greet with morning refreshments 7:45 - Welcome and appreciation 7:50 - Start Pickup

9:30 - Raffle Costa Sunglasses and Prize

10:00 - Gather collections and take a picture!

### **Celebrate Earth Day at** the E.O. Wilson Biophilia **Center April 26**

Mark your calendars for an exciting Earth Day Expo on Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, 4956 State Hwy. 20 East in Freeport.

This community-centered event, sponsored by CHELCO Operation Round Up, is a celebration of nature, sustainability and environmental education. Expo Vendors present include:

- Native Plant Nurseries
- Community Food Forest
- Master Gardeners & Garden Clubs
- Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance
- Camp Rudder's Army Rangers Reptiles
- Vale of Paradise Mushrooms
- NoWal Farm

In addition to vendor exhibits, attendees can enjoy theater presentations featuring experts from Vale of Paradise Mushrooms, the Community Food Forest, and Sandhill Native Nursery, who will share insights into sustainable practices and local ecosystems.

Admission: \$10 for ages 13 and up; \$7 for ages 4-12

Local food vendors, including The Bentea Stop and The Rican Vegan, will offer delicious refreshments. Join us in celebrating our planet, connecting with the community and learning how we can all contribute to a healthier, more sustainable environment. For more information, visit www. eowilsoncenter.org.

### **Destin Charity Wine Auc**tion April 25-26

The Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) marks 20 years of fundraising with the 2025 Destin Charity Wine Auction, presented by the Jumonville Family, on April 25-26. Proceeds benefit 17 children's charities in Northwest Florida.

Patron packages are on sale now at dcwaf.org/tickets. Sponsorships available—contact info@dcwaf.org.

#### **Event Highlights:**

**April 25** – Patron Dinners: Exclusive vintner and chef pairings at private homes, supporting DCWAF charities.

April 26 - Charity Wine Auction: A Reserve Tasting & Live Auction at Grand Boulevard Sandestin Town Center featuring world-class wines, gourmet cuisine, and high-energy bidding on rare wines, trips, and more.

The auction coincides with the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival, offering hundreds of premium wines and culinary delights. Auction attendees receive access to the festival's Grand Tasting on April 27 at 1 p.m. Learn more at dcwaf.org/ auction.

### **South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival** April 24-27, 2025

A dazzling roster of celebrity winemakers, mixologists, and chefs will converge April 24 27, 2025, for a world-class wine and food experience—the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival in Grand Boulevard Town Center—to wine, dine, educate and entertain guests as part of the four-day celebration of wine, spirits, food, music, sunshine, fun and goodwill.

South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival features a stunning showcase of some of the best in the world—the perfect blend of 600+ world-class wines, industry experts, culinary icons, Nashville singer/songwriters, educational seminars and a sprinkle of fun and funky activations.

Celebrity wine producers and chefs present fine wine and food pairings from the world's most famous appellations. The Culinary Village offers a sumptuous array of foods to taste and wines to pair, as well as wine and food tasting seminars.

### **Event Highlights:** Botanicals, Bitters & Brews April 25 | 5:30-8 p.m.

- Enjoy a cocktail competition, craft beer, lite bites and live music in a stunning garden-inspired setting under the stars. Sample specialty cocktails and vote for your favorite, sip local craft brews, and nosh on delectable cuisine while you dance the night away to The

### **SOUTH WALTON EVENTS**

continued on page 44



















#### THURSDAY NIGHT CONCERTS **APRIL 10 - JUNE 12**

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

April 10 | The Fabulous Thunderbirds

April 17 | Journeyman: An Eric Clapton Tribute

April 24 | Yacht Rock Revue

May 1 | Black Jacket Symphony: Journey's Escape

May 8 | Dear Amy: Amy Winehouse Tribute

May 15 | Kickstand Jenny

May 22 | Molly Ringwalds

May 29 | Petty Hearts

June 5 | A1A: Jimmy Buffet Tribute

June 12 | Adrenalize: Music of Def Leppard



### Purchase Tickets at MKAF.org/Events

PRESENTING SEASON SPONSOR





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



# Emerald Coast Theatre Company Raises \$54,193 at Inaugural Signature Event, "La Vie En Rouge"

Emerald Coast Theatre Company's (ECTC) signature event, "La Vie En Rouge," held on Friday, March 7 raised \$54,193 for the local organization.

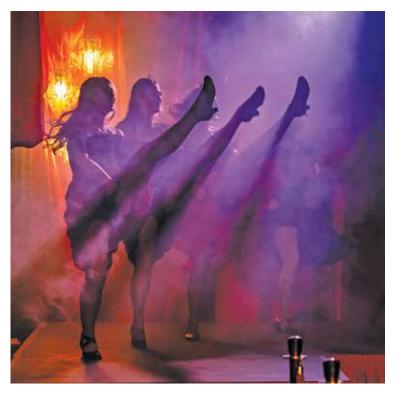
Embodied after the hit musical, Moulin Rouge!, the event brought the glitz and glamour of a 19th-century Parisian cabaret to the Emerald Coast. From entry to exit, guests were delighted with spotlight performances sponsored by Presenting Sponsor Blue Water Oral Surgery Center, Grand Boulevard, and Ocean Reef Vacation Rentals and Real Estate. Throughout the evening guests were surprised by pop-up performances and atmosphere entertainment from ECTC's talented performers. There was also an extensive silent auction and a special finale dessert presented by Cafe Thirty-A and baked with ECTC was transformed into a 19thcentury Parisian cabaret with decor sponsored by Hilton Sandestin. Guests were greeted upon arrival by our strolling

Champagne Dress Lady sponsored by Own at the Beach Team Keller Williams, with champagne courtesy of Vin'tij Food and Wine. Guests enjoyed the Moulin Rouge-themed cocktail hour and an opening performance by presenting sponsors Blue Water Oral Surgery Center. Commemorative keepsake wine glasses were provided by Grand Boulevard. The Cabaret Lounge hosted additional craft cocktails made with Distillery 98 Vodka, each poured into a commemorative keepsake rocks glass, courtesy of Ocean Reef Vacation Rentals and Real Estate. Patrons indulged in gourmet bites prepared by local chefs from Bijoux, Swiftly Catered, Fish On, Cantina Laredo, Tommy Bahama, Flemings, P.F. Chang's, Grimaldi's, and Beignets and Brew.

"Another amazing soiree - thanks to YOU" said Anna Fisher, co-founder of ECTC. "The music, the costumes, the food, the performances - we can't wait to do it again year



after year! Thank you to each person who supported this event, from the restaurants serving food and local businesses who donated auction items, to the ticket holders and sponsors





– you all helped make this event so special."

Through ticket sales, donations, and silent auction purchases, ECTC was able to raise \$54,193. This money will go directly to the organization's continued mission to enrich and entertain the Emerald Coast community through professional and educational theatre.

Emerald Coast Theatre Company would like to thank these additional local businesses and individuals for sponsoring the event- Basmati's and Poate/ Bonjean Financial Group of Wells Fargo. A special thanks to The Gathering for their sponsorship of this event in honor of Shirley Simpson. Media sponsors include: Emerald Coast Magazine, Tallahassee Magazine, Life Media, Scarlett Magazine, SoWal.com, and Destin the Beautiful.

La Vie En Rouge only happens once a year! Join us next spring on March 6, 2026, for this annual epic night of food, fun, and jaw-dropping performances!



# Wellness Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint:

# Why Integrative Care Matters



By Dr. Karen DeVore

If you know the story of the tortoise and the hare, you already understand one of the most important lessons we can apply to health: slow and steady wins the race.

In a world where we're constantly bombarded with quick-fix solutions—miracle diets, instant detoxes, and one-pill answers—it's easy to lose sight of the long game. But with integrative healthcare practitioners, that's exactly what we focus on: your long-term, sustainable

wellness. Not the shortcut, not the sprint—but the journey that leads to resilience, balance, and vitality for years to come.

### What Is Integrative Health?

Integrative health is an approach to care that puts you, the whole person, at the center. It draws from both conventional Western medicine and evidence-based Eastern traditions to treat not just symptoms, but root causes.

This model acknowledges the value of modern diagnostic tools, lab testing, and pharmacology, while also embracing the centuries-old wisdom of acupuncture, herbal medicine, nutrition, and lifestyle medicine. At its core, integrative health is collaborative, personalized, and preventative.

Instead of asking, "What drug treats this disease?" we ask, "Why is this symptom happening—and what's the best way to restore balance?" That might include medication, but it



may also include herbs, dietary changes, movement, sleep support, or acupuncture. The goal is not to replace one system with another, but to combine the best of both to offer more comprehensive, compassionate care.

### How The Tortoise Clinic Blends East and West

At the Tortoise Clinic, we live and breathe this philosophy.

We've served the communities of North Florida for over 30 years, building a practice that reflects the needs of our patients and the realities of modern life.

A typical visit here might include lab testing to evaluate hormones, inflammation, or nutrient deficiencies, followed by acupuncture to support nervous system regulation and pain relief. A patient might receive

customized herbal formulations from our Chinese herb dispensary - the largest in Northwest Florida, paired with guidance on nutrition and daily habits to support their health goals.

Because we're not bound by one medical model, we have more flexibility—and more tools—to help you feel your best.

### How Is This Different From Traditional Medicine?

Traditional, Western medicine has done incredible things. It excels in acute care, emergency response, and surgical interventions. But when it comes to chronic illness, long-term prevention, and quality of life, many patients are left wanting more.

I hear it often:

"My labs are normal, but I still don't feel well."

"My doctor told me it's just

Continued on next page



# WELLNESS IS A MARATHON, no a sprin

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# Struggling with Sleep? Hormone Therapy Can Help You Rest and Restore Your Health



By Dr. RICHARD CHERN

**WELLNESS** 

continued from previous page

part of getting older."

no one asked about my diet or

If you're tossing and turning at night, waking up drenched in sweat, or simply unable to sleep through the night, you're not alone. Poor sleep is one of the most common complaints among women approaching menopause

or who are postmenopausal. And the most common cause of this frustrating issue is estrogen defi-

As estrogen levels decline, the body experiences disruptions in temperature regulation, melatonin production and serotonin levels-all critical factors for a deep, restful restorative sleep. This leads to insomnia, frequent waking, night sweats and poor sleep quality, leaving you feeling drained, irritable and unable to function at your best.

#### **Poor Sleep Affects Every Part of Your Life**

Many women don't realize rested. Lack of sleep can have serious effects on physical and mental health. Without proper rest, emotions become harder to regulate, leading to increased irritability, anxiety and even depression. The immune system weakens, making you more susceptible to illness and slowing down your body's ability to heal.

Poor sleep also interferes with metabolism and weight management. When you're not sleeping well, your body produces more cortisol, the stress hormone that encourages fat storage, particularly in the midsection. Over time, sleep deprivation can also increase the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and even dementia. In fact, research indicates that consistently poor sleep can reduce life expectancy due to its widespread impact on overall

If you feel like you're aging overnight, struggling with low energy or battling daily exhaustion, it's time to address the root cause. Hormone therapy can

#### **The Hormone Restoration Center Can Give You Back Your Sleep!**

At the Hormone Restoration Center, we specialize in helping both women and men achieve hormonal balance, restoring energy, vitality and overall wellbeing. For women struggling with sleep due to declining estrogen,

hormone therapy can be a lifechanging solution.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) is a safe and effective treatment that replenishes the hormones your body is missing. By restoring optimal estrogen levels, you can experience deep, uninterrupted sleep, relief from night sweats and hot flashes, improved mood and reduced anxiety. Energy levels will increase throughout the day, mental clarity will sharpen and your metabolism will function more efficiently, making weight management easier.

Imagine waking up refreshed,

THERAPY continued on page 29

stress levels."

those gaps.

that sleep isn't just about feeling

We take time to listen. We "I was given medication, but look at patterns, history, and lifestyle. We ask about your

Integrative medicine fills

sleep, digestion, energy, and emotional well-being-not because it's "extra," but because it all matters. Our goal isn't just to mask symptoms, but to understand the story behind them and to create a care plan that's tailored to your unique biology, goals, and life circumstances.

#### The Power of Personalized Wellness

No two bodies are the same. You are not your neighbor, your parent, or your coworker. What works for one person may not work for another—and that's why personalized care matters.

When you work with an integrative provider, you're not handed a one-size-fits-all solution. You're invited into a partnership, where we co-create a wellness plan that evolves with you. Whether you're working on hormone balance, fertility, digestion, chronic stress, weight loss, or simply optimizing your energy, our role is to guide and support your process with the right blend of tools.

Sometimes, that's acupuncture. Sometimes, it's a dietary shift, a carefully selected supplement, or lab-guided medical intervention. Often, it's all of the above.

#### **The Tortoise Mentality**

Health is not a destination. It's not a number on a scale or a perfect lab result. It's a relationship with your body, and like any relationship, it requires time, trust, and patience.

True wellness isn't about "fixing" what's wrong—it's about learning what your body

needs to thrive and honoring that through intentional, steady steps. That's what we mean when we say, "Wellness is a marathon, not a sprint."

As an integrative team, we walk beside you for the long haul—not racing to the finish, but pacing with purpose. With every visit, every conversation, and every personalized plan, we aim to help you move closer to the healthiest version of yourself.

So, whether you're just starting your health journey or looking for a deeper, more connected approach to care, I invite you to embrace the pace of the tortoise-and discover the kind of health that lasts a



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Wellness

# **Book Review:** Maybe You Should Talk to Someone by Lori Gottlieb



Reviewed By MICHAEL MCMANUS, LCSW

"Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" by Lori Gottlieb is an insightful and engaging exploration of the human experience through the lens of therapy. Gottlieb, a therapist herself, weaves her personal journey into the stories of her patients, creating a rich tapestry of vulnerability, humor, and profound insight. I love this book

and find it to be one of the better books describing the therapy experience.

The book stands out for its candid approach to mental health, breaking down the stigma surrounding therapy. Gottlieb's writing is both relatable and deeply moving, as she shares her own struggles and the lessons learned from her clients. Each character is well-crafted, bringing unique challenges and perspectives that resonate with readers, allowing them to reflect on their own lives.

What makes this book particularly compelling is its balance of humor and seriousness. Gottlieb's witty observations and self-deprecating anecdotes provide levity to the heavier themes of loss, love, and personal growth. The narrative flows seamlessly, making it a page-turner that invites readers to

ponder their own emotional landscapes.

Overall, "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" is not just a book about therapy; it's a book about life itself. It encourages readers to embrace their vulnerabilities and seek connection, reminding us that we are all in this together. This heartfelt and thought-provoking read is a must for anyone looking to understand themselves better or simply seeking a compassionate reminder of the beauty and complexity of the human condition.

Michael McManus LCSW has been a psychotherapist for 38 years and is in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. To set an appointment call or text (850)837-0123 or visit Psychotherapy30A.com.

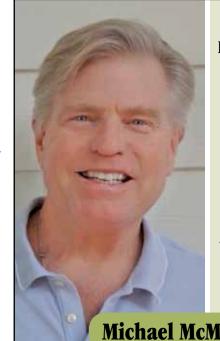
### **THERAPY**

continued from page 28

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**Michael McManus LCSW** 

# Board Certified Dermatologists Are The Experts In Medical and Aesthetic Dermatology

By Jessica Clark, MD FAAD

I have been surprised lately that patients do not realize that dermatologists not only "do botox and filler", but we are also the experts. Board certified dermatologists are considered experts in skin conditions and aesthetic skin treatments because of their extensive training and expertise in cutaneous anatomy and physiology.

Medical Training: Dermatologists complete four years of medical school after a bachelor's degree, followed by a dermatology residency program that typically lasts three years. The basis of dermatology is internal medicine and dermatologists are often the first to diagnose internal disease as well as cutaneous conditions. During this time, they receive in-depth training in the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of skin conditions, including complex diseases, infections, and cancers. This broad knowledge allows them to effectively manage all aspects of skin health.

Specialized Expertise: Dermatologists specialize in the skin, hair, nails, and mucous membranes after learning general medicine. This makes them uniquely qualified to understand the complexities of skin anatomy, function, and aging, all of which are essential when performing cosmetic procedures like neuromodulators, dermal fillers, and lasers.

Board Certification: Becoming board-certified involves passing rigorous exams and continuous education. Board-certified dermatologists must stay up to date with the latest advancements and research in medical, surgical, and cosmetic dermatology. This ensures they provide safe and effective treatments.

Cosmetic Treatments Expertise: Dermatologists receive additional training in cosmetic procedures, including neuromodulators like Botox, dermal fillers, and lasers. Their knowledge of skin anatomy and how different treatments interact with the skin allows them to achieve optimal, natural-looking results while minimizing risks and complications.

Patient Safety: Dermatologists have a deep understanding of potential risks, side effects, and complications related to aesthetic treatments. They can manage and mitigate these risks by tailoring treatments to individual patients, considering their skin type, health history, and desired outcomes.

The injection of filler can be dangerous in a non-qualified injector causing skin necrosis or even blindness. Your face is not a place to look for bargains or specials.

Holistic Skin Care: Board certified dermatologists consider both the cosmetic and medical aspects of skin health. They can provide personalized, comprehensive care, addressing both aesthetic concerns and underlying skin issues, such as acne, rashes, chronic skin conditions, and

This combination of extensive medical training, specialized expertise, and commitment to patient safety makes dermatologists the top choice for skin conditions and cosmetic treatments. Physicians swear by the Hippocratic oath that first says "Do no harm." Providers who do not get a degree in medicine do not take this oath. Also, unfortunately, in 2025 it is possible to get a PhD online and then call yourself a doctor. I wish patients did not have to be savvy and ask about credentials but in today's world, there are many people who present themselves to be experts who have very little training and may not even know basic

I tell my patients to inform their friends and family to check the credentials of anyone treating them medically and verify there is board certification in the specialty being practiced. I would advise everyone to ask who the supervising physician on staff is before allowing anyone to perform procedures on your face and make sure they are actually in the office in case a complication does happen. In the state of Florida, it is not required for the physician to be on-site and I do not think the public is very aware of that.



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### **Wellness**



By Christian Regalado

This year has been more confusing than most. Medicare has always been complex, with a variety of options and terminology that most people just don't understand. That is why the services of an independent broker are helpful, especially when they are at no cost to the client. Having a professional you can rely on to

## **Medicare Stories for 2025**

help navigate these complexities is similar to having an accountant for help filing taxes or a lawyer to help draw a will. The only difference is that your independent broker won't send you a bill for their services. We are commission-based and work with multiple carriers in the area. I focus on contracting with established companies that have the most competitive products. The carrier that best fits a client's needs is dependent upon personal situations. My job is to navigate the sea of options based on individual needs and preferences.

This year is unusual in a few respects. The good news was that themaximum out-of-pocket cost for prescription drugs dropped from \$8000 to \$2000 per year. For those on expensive drugs, this was terrific. The downside was that the insurance companies made up for this loss in revenue in several ways. The obvious was an increase in premiums on most prescription drug plans. For those on Medicare Advantage plans, certain benefits were either reduced or eliminated with increased copays. There were also changes in the insurance carrier's formularies which is the list of drugs that are covered.

These are some of the stories that I heard from clients: An expensive drug that was covered in 2024 was no longer covered by that carrier

in 2025. I had to find an insurance company whose drug formulary did cover that drug. If they had stayed on their old plan, the drug would not be covered, and it wouldn't count towards the \$2000 out of pocket maximum. That could have been a very expensive mistake.

I also had a client with a similar situation that had an expensive drug that was no longer covered and we could not find any other plan that covered the drug. Luckily, we were able to request a formulary exception and the company honored it. However, starting next year, they may have to consult with their doctor to find a similar drug that we can find in a PDP plan that will cover the drug.

Another client had a generous dental benefit on their Advantage plan that was reduced in 2025. Again, I had to search for a new carrier with a plan that offered better dental benefits. Other clients that had their dental benefit reduced opted to choose a different PPO plan that had a great network and a generous part B give-back benefit to make up for the difference in their dental coverage reduction.

One big reason for changes in 2025 was that a major carrier had a change of network. Doctors in their plan for 2024 could no longer be covered in 2025. Some folks kept their plan and changed doctors while others changed Advantage plans so that they could keep their current doctors. This has been a big issue that I was able to help multiple clients resolve just in time before the Open

Enrollment Period ended on March 31. There were also changes in dental networks and dentists that took a particular plan in 2024 and are no longer accepting it in 2025.

This year also presented a stark contrast of Advantage plans vs Supplement plans. Recent press articles on Advantage plans have been mostly negative. However, nationally, more folks are enrolling in Advantage plans primarily due to no or low premiums and the extra benefits such as dental, vision and hearing. Locally, I see more people enrolling in Supplement plans but most still enroll in an Advantage plan.

If you are looking at enrolling in a Supplement plan, know why it may make more sense for you. One person wanted to enroll with the same carrier she had in her group plan. She thought that this would help to make sure her doctors were in network. Supplement plans don't have networks. They are accepted by any doctor or hospital that accepts original Medicare. That is one of the positive reasons to enroll in a Supplement plan. She may have enrolled in a plan with a higher premium for the wrong reason.

Everyone's story is different. Let us hear your story and help you select the right plan for you. Should you have any questions or need help, please contact me. My services are no cost to you and I am always happy to help a neighbor. Reach out anytime! Email Christian@evergreenhealthins.com or call (850) 687 7606.

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# Choosing Healthy vs. Toxic Relationships



By Stephenie Craig

Have you ever found yourself in a relationship that is feeling unhealthy? Do you notice a pattern of unhealthy relationships in your life over time and wonder why you keep attracting people who don't treat you well? Maybe a relationship seems great at first. The other person seems fun, friendly, and interested in a relationship with you. You share significant information about yourself pretty quickly and develop a connection. Then, perhaps, you start to notice your new friend ignores you when you say no, or is only interested in talking about themself, or punishes you emotionally when you don't give them what they want, or yells and calls you names when they are frustrated. Maybe they express jealousy when you spend time with another friend, belittle your values, or refuse to take responsibility for their behavior and blame you when they behave badly. And, when these things occur, perhaps you make excuses for them telling yourself they are just upset and won't do it again or focus on the good moments while ignoring the disrespectful ways they are treating you.

Over time, when you stay in unhealthy relationships, your

brain becomes trained to believe this is how you deserve to be treated. As you tolerate being treated poorly, you are unintentionally setting yourself up to choose other unhealthy relationships in the future. It's also possible you grew up in an unhealthy environment that set a pattern of being treated poorly by parent figures. This scenario also creates patterns and beliefs that how you were treated as a child is what you deserve in your adult relationships. Repetitive unhealthy relationships

can leave you wondering what is wrong with you and why you can't seem to find healthy people in your life. No one wants to be surrounded by toxic relationships, but, how are you supposed to stop the cycle? How do you start choosing healthy relationships and distance from toxic relationships?

- 7 Ways to Choose Healthy Relationships and Distance from Toxic Relationships
- **Define and notice deal breakers.** Try making a list of qualities/behaviors that are relationship enders for you. Examples include: abuse of any kind (verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, financial), name calling, cursing at you, demeaning/belittling, disrespecting your consent, drug/alcohol abuse, infidelity, pushing, hitting, etc.
- **Define and notice red flags.** Try making a list of qualities/behaviors that signal unhealthy patterns. Examples include: offloading anger on you, blaming you for their behavior,



shaming, jealous/controlling patterns, isolating you from other relationships, passive aggressive punishment of you instead of direct, respectful conversations, hateful words, talking behind your back, insecurity, holding you responsible for their mood/mental health, refusal to have conversations about your experience in the relationship, disrespect of your values.

- Define and notice green flags. Try making a list of qualities/behaviors you believe are important to have in a healthy relationship. Examples include: honesty, loyalty, respect, kindness, directness, caring, reciprocity, respect for your boundaries, calm conversations, taking responsibility, willing to apologize, listens, manages anger in healthy ways, communicates needs.
  - Approach re-lationships

slowly and intentionally. Sharing too much too fast and getting close without having time to observe long-term behavioral patterns can result in missing red flags.

• Clarify your values. When you know what is most important to you in life and relationship, it will be easier for you to notice if someone is a healthy fit for your values. Values fit does not require the other person to agree with you about everything.

Values fit requires that your most important values are not in conflict with the character and lifestyle of the other person.

• Be the friend you want to have. If you want a new friend to be kind, compassionate, and

respectful of your boundaries. Engage in personal growth and become kind, compassionate and respectfu of boundaries. You are more likely to pursue and attract health when you are healthy.

• Be honest and let go. Be honest with yourself when someone is treating you poorly. Remember that while it is hard and sometimes complicated, you have the choice and power to step away from or end a relationship when needed. Grieving the end of a relationship is hard, however, staying in toxic relationships leads to more future toxic relationships.

Choosing more healthy relationships produces a life of positive community and support. Be patient with yourself as you navigate learning new relationship skills. Connect with us for counseling and coaching along your journey at Journeybravely.com.







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# Meet Our Local Wellness Pro - Dr. Steven Clark: A Trusted Name in Wellness & Transformation

For more than 25 years, Dr. Steven Clark has been more than just a board certified plastic surgeon—he's been a guide, a confidant and a trusted expert for those seeking renewal, confi-

physically and emotionally-here on our own Emerald Coast. His work isn't just about aesthetics; he's dedicated to helping people feel their best-inside and

dence and transformation-both out. "I always strive to achieve safe results that enhance each person's natural beauty while preserving individuality and uniqueness. I want my patients to still look like themselves-

only better," he says.

This philosophy has resonated deeply with the countless men and women who have walked through his doors, searching not just for cosmetic changes, but for a renewed sense of self, represented by 300, 5-star Google reviews.

### A Legacy of **Excellence & Dedication**

A proud U.S. Air Force veteran, Dr. Clark was once stationed at Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field, where he quickly gained recognition as one of the top plastic surgeons on the Gulf Coast. In 1999, he launched Bluewater Plastic Surgery in Niceville, later expanding to Santa Rosa Beach, and most recently Watersound, to welcome patients from throughout the country.

His expertise is unparalleled, with more than two decades of membership in the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) and the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS—which selects board certified plastic surgeons who have demonstrated advanced experience in cosmetic surgery)—ensuring he stays at the forefront of an ever-evolving field with sterling credentials. Most recently Dr. Clark was honored to be made a board member and serve the Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons

From facelifts and breast augmentations to liposuction and tummy tucks, along with their newest solution—UltraClear, a laser facial rejuvenation treatment that targets multiple skin layers to reduce the signs of aging—Dr. Clark's approach blends technical precision with a deep understanding of his patients' goals, addressing a full range of aesthetic needs. "There is no substitute for excellent surgical training and experience," says Dr. Clark, "but having a warm, supportive staff is equally important. We want our patients to feel comfortable, confident and informed at every



### Compassion **Meets Expertise**

At Bluewater Plastic Surgery, that supportive environment starts with his dedicated team, including Board-Certified Nurse Practitioner Michelle Sasala (ARNP-BC). With 20 vears of healthcare expertise, Michelle's passion for helping patients feel their absolute best shines through in every consultation.

Dr. Clark also holds a deep respect for those who serve, offering military discounts for cosmetic procedures to current and former U.S. Armed Forces members. "It's important to me that we give back," he says, reflecting on his time in uniform and his admiration for military families.

#### **Making Transformation At**tainable

Understanding that cost can be a hurdle, Bluewater Plastic Surgery partners with CareCredit to offer flexible financing, making procedures more accessible than ever.

One patient's heartfelt words sum up Dr. Clark's impact: "He is a master of his craft. His staff is wonderful and kind, and I have nothing but good things to say about the overall experience. I couldn't be happier!"

#### **Confidence Begins Here**

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# The Road to Redemption: Sheila Guagliardo

By Victoria Ostrosky

When David was in hiding from King Saul, who was hunting him down, he became depressed and cried out to God for help. When he sinned against God with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed, he confessed his sin and begged for forgiveness and restoration. God speaks of David as a "man after God's own heart," and it was proven in his daily life as he lived his life knowing God was there. The Book of Psalms is an eternal testament to David's relationship with the God he knew, depended upon, and

In the scriptures, they say that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was fully God, but also fully man and dealing with everyday life and people's needs was draining. He was, at times, disappointed, angry, sad, compassionate and full of grace and love. Jesus's time in prayer and His absolute submission to the Father's will was the key to His peace and joy. We will experience the same as we follow in His footsteps.

Sheila Guagliardo was raised in a single-parent home. Her dad was a severe alcoholic and died at just 39 years of age. At that time, her mom wasn't a Christian but worked hard and did her best to provide for her four children. When Sheila was young, she was sexually abused by a family member and, with the help of a friend, was able to get out of the situation, but she was left with internal scars from the trauma.

At the age of 16, she was in a horrible car accident, sustaining serious injuries, especially to her face. She endured eight surgeries. At the time, she didn't know the Lord. At least, not yet. But she found out later that He knew her quite well.

After Sheila was married, her mom became a Christian and sent her a Bible. Sheila wasn't interested at the time in Christianity, but she noticed her mom's depression had lifted and the profound change in her caused Sheila to begin looking into who God was.

While she and her husband were staying at a hotel in New Mexico, the Lord began opening her heart to the Gospel when she found a Gideon Bible in the nightstand. She

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ended up giving her heart to Jesus.

As she began to grow in her faith, she had questions on why God allowed her abuse and accident to happen. "It was hard to understand why God allows things to happen. God was there no matter how dark things were. I don't need to understand the why. His presence brought peace and healing."

Over the years, she learned about what she refers to as 'shelving trauma'. What exactly are we to do with the bad things that have happened to us? "He uses His Spirit to reveal things. Don't run away from it but find a trusted person." Sheila knows the importance of having someone you can trust and confide in. "The Lord brings the painful things up and will bring healing."

She remembers when she and her husband were stationed in Okinawa, she was quite selfconscious about the scars on her face. Through a series of events, she ended up on a stage and was blown away by how the Lord ended up using that to speak to her. The words from the song Something Beautiful penetrated her soul and God used the lyrics to reveal to her just how beautiful He was making her. "I'm just so thankful to be saved. Sometimes, we want to fight when He's trying to help us. We have to trust Him."

Sheila's advice to others struggling is this – stay in the Word. "The Lord wants you to be whole. He wants to bring you up from the darkness so He can turn it to joy."

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



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# 37:51 and 2,715



By Kirk McCarley

Billy Donovan has enjoyed a remarkable record of success as

a basketball coach. As the head coach at the University of Florida for 19 years he led the Gators to consecutive NCAA championships in 2006 and 2007. Donovan left Gainesville at the end of the 2015 season to coach in the NBA, first with the Oklahoma City Thunder and now with the Chicago Bulls.

His career should be considered nothing less than exemplary.

Donovan shares a story about success and failure that provides

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wisdom for each of us.

One of his best players suffered what some would consider an "off night." He shot just two of 11 from the field one evening, certainly not a high conversion rate in a sport where typically a 40% mark is required for acceptability. Following his performance, the player scapegoated himself for the team's loss.

Coach Donovan consoled his athlete after glancing at the statistics from the game. He noted

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the player had logged 38 minutes of playing time. Facing him, the coach asked him about the nine missed shots. "How long does it usually require to attempt a shot?" he asked. After a moment of consideration, the player answered, "I suppose about a second." Donovan, calculating quickly, responded, "So you're letting a total of nine disappointing seconds offset and delegitimize the other 37 minutes and 51 seconds where your play may well have been outstanding and a contributing factor in allowing us to compete?"

Are we not sometimes like the player? Focusing on the 4/10ths of one percent of our personal and professional lives when the other 99.6% has been at least acceptable, if not often stellar? How we beat ourselves up, allowing for grief and inconsolable wailing in many instances when there's already been a forgiveness.

Admittedly, I still can ruminate over things I did or didn't do years ago. An inconsiderate comment. A poor decision. A missed opportunity. An embarrassing gaffe.

Bill Buckner was an outstanding professional baseball player. During a more than 20-year career, mostly with the Dodgers, Cubs, and Red Sox, he compiled a .289 lifetime batting average with 2,715 hits, seven seasons batting more than .300, and three seasons of 100 RBIs. He was the National League batting champion in 1980.

Yet, it was one play during the 1986 World Series between the Red Sox and the Mets that defined his career. Boston, leading

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the heavily favored New Yorkers three games to two, was in an extra inning tussle in Game 6. The Mets rallied in the bottom of the 10th with three straight singles with two outs. Up comes Mookie Wilson. The speedy Wilson fouled off several pitches before hitting a slow roller to Buckner at first base. Buckner, aware of Wilson's swiftness, rushed the ball. In haste, the ball rolled through his legs and into shallow right field, allowing the runner on third base to score and the Mets to win. Had the ball been fielded cleanly, there would have been another inning. The Red Sox went on to lose game 7

who to that point had not celebrated a World Championship for 68 years, were incensed. The following season, Buckner was heckled and booed by the frustrated fan base. There were even death threats. Despite acceptable stats in 1987, the Red Sox released him in the middle of that season. He went on to play a few more years with several teams, including the Red Sox again, before retiring in

Buckner forgave himself by coming to terms with his infamy and making fun of himself. He also accepted the forgiveness of the Boston fans and the media. He befriended Mookie Wilson. He signed autographs with him. He returned to Fenway Park in Boston in 2008 to throw out the first pitch for the home opener. He received a two-minute ovation from the crowd.

It's far past time to dwell on the nine seconds or the costly error. Give yourself an ovation for the other 37:51 and your entire story.

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



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the next night and thus the Series. Long-suffering Red Sox fans,





## Sean of the South: What is Easter?



By Sean Dietrich

"What is Easter?" the boy asked his grandfather.

The old man and boy sat on the front porch. That's where people used to sit in the olden days. They used to build porches on the fronts of houses so you could wave at your neighbors. Now they build "decks" on the back so you can wave at your above-ground pool.

"Easter is a day of rebirth," said Granddaddy.

The two cohorts were still wearing their Sunday best. The boy: His necktie and khakis. The grandfather: His button down, crisply pressed, with only a few tobacco-spit stains on the collar.

"What's rebirth?" the boy said.

"Well, you remember when you was born, don't you?"

"No."

"Well, trust me you were born, or else you wouldn't be here." Granddaddy took a sip of his Doctor Pepper. "And today it all happens again."

"What happens again?"

"You get born."

"I get born twice?" the boy said.

He nodded. "Look at the trees and the flowers, see how they're all blooming? You see those azaleas across the street."

"Which ones are the azaleas?"

"The pink ones that Mrs. Wannamaker will slit your throat you if you touch."

"I see them."

"And the trees, look at them. They're turning green. The birds are singing. That's what resurrection means."

"It means birds?"

"No. Resurrection means, when something comes back to life. And it's a miracle, every time something gets reborn. Because a new beginning is a miracle."

"Is that why we look for eggs on Easter?"

"No. Hell. I don't know why

we look for eggs."

He took another sip. "Look," he went on, "you know all those crosses people wear around their necks?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think

we're wearing the wrong thing around our necks. We shouldn't be wearing the cross. The cross is death. It's a tool of execution. It's like wearing an electric chair around your neck. Or a hangman's noose."

"Granny wears a cross around her neck."

"Your Granny was raised Pentecostal."

"What's that mean?"

"It means don't go to her church if you're afraid of reptiles."

He unbuttoned his top button. "The point is," he went on, "maybe we should be wearing the empty tomb around our necks. Because that's where it all starts."

"Where what starts?"

"That's where your life begins. You will come to a point in your life when you have nothing. You will reach a moment in your life when everything falls apart. You will find yourself in a tomb, of sorts. You will be as good as dead."

"Just like Jesus?"

"Just like Him. And I wish I could save you from that fate, but I can't. Because on that day, there will be nothing left for you, boy. Your life will be a wreck. You will be at your bitter end.

"And in that moment, you will have only two choices: You can either lie down and die, or you can look up.

"What happens if I look up?"
"Rebirth."

"Have you ever been reborn?"

"Many times."

"How did it happen?"

"It first happened to me when I was in Italy, fighting. And there were men with guns all around us. And my young soldiers were all going to die."

"And what'd you do?"

"We all looked up, and we asked God to help us. My men started praying. Out loud. We started talking to God. And that's all it takes. You just have to talk.

"Ain't no magic words, no se-



cret handshake, no special membership rules. Don't ever let anyone tell you it's more complicated than that. You just talk to God. And He'll hear you. And He heard us that day in Italy."

"And what happened next?"

"I'm sitting right here drinking a Doctor Pepper, ain't I?"

Granddaddy always had a way of explaining things so I could understand them.



# Oll Florila Toul in the Heart of 30a









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Musing

# A Pastor's Ponderings: The Journey



By Rev. Pete Hyde

It had been almost three years since the small band of followers had aligned themselves with this wandering teacher and healer. Many of them left their

livelihoods and families to follow him. There was something different about him, almost strange. They saw so much in these three short years. They were his closest friends and followers and yet they still did not completely understand who he was or who he claimed to be. Yes, they had their moments of deep belief. But they also had their times of serious doubting. They witnessed the healings, heard him preach and teach, witnessed the debates with the authorities, saw him walk on the water and marveled when he fed more than five thousand with a

few loaves and fishes.

He told them more than once it was time for him to complete his mission and he would have to go away. They just did not understand. Now his face and mind were set on Jerusalem. There seemed to be something drawing him there other than the celebration of the Passover Feast. There was something in his eyes that told them this trip to Jerusalem was more important than the others. As they approached the city, he became more intense, more focused on his mission.

The news spread to Jerusalem that the one of whom the prophets spoke was coming into the city to free them from Roman occupation and to become their long-awaited king. They lined the street as

the small band entered the city. They had done this many times before as others who claimed to be the anointed one came into the city. The crowds had been disappointed many times before, but maybe, just maybe, this would be "the one." Maybe, just maybe - they could only hope and pray. They waved their palm branches in a patriotic display that would rival any 4th of July celebration. They laid their cloaks in front of him to pay homage to the coming king. They shouted "Hosanna" to express their longing to be freed from the Roman occupation of their country. The band of followers became more and more confused about what they had gotten themselves into.

They retreated from the city that evening. He stood on the

mount and wept for Jerusalem and what would have to happen there for him to complete his mission. They would reenter the city in the morning for the beginning of the end - at least here on earth. His heart was heavy. He would "be led like a lamb to the slaughter" without resistance. He would plead with his Father to take the cup of death from Him, but he would follow his Father's will, even to death upon the cross.

The journey of Holy Week begins. It is a journey to the cross and an ultimate journey to resurrection and new life. Wherever you are and whatever you are doing, take time each day to contemplate the journey of Holy Week. It is outlined in the Gospel of Luke, chapters 19 through 23. Take time each day this week to read what happened during the week that changed the world. Attend services this week that will help you fully experience the events of Holy Week. What happened there happened for you.

Rev. Pete Hyde serves as chaplain with the South Walton Fire District











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# Gators + Food + Booze = Fun at Fudpucker's GatorFest 2025

#### **GatorFest 2025**

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill is set to host GatorFest 2025, a spectacular event promising an exhilarating blend of entertainment, education, and gastronomic delights. Scheduled for May 3th, 2025, this four-hour extravaganza at Destin's most family-friendly venue aims to bring together individuals of all ages for an unforgettable experience dedicated to one of nature's most awe-inspiring creatures — the alligator. Festivities go from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

#### **GatorFest Activities**

GatorFest 2025 is more than just an event; it's a journey into the heart of Florida's beloved wildlife culture, set against the backdrop of Fudpucker's renowned hospitality. From thrilling Gator Shows that offer an up-close look at these magnificent reptiles to a Gator Tail Cook Off Competition that showcases culinary creativity, the festival is a testament to the diverse attractions that make it a must-visit destination.

A standout feature of the festival is its dedicated Kid's Zone, a paradise for young adventurers. Here, children can engage in a variety of activities, from face painting to Gatorthemed games, fostering an environment of joy and creativity. Meanwhile, adults can savor Cocktail Tastings, indulge in Hot Sauce Tasting, and enjoy music, ensuring there's something for everyone.

### **GatorFest Charity Partnership**

But GatorFest is not just about fun and games. It stands as a beacon of community involvement and environmental conservation.

Partnering with Alaqua Animal Refuge, the festival channels its energy and passion into raising awareness and funds for the refuge's mission to rescue and care for animals in need. This collaboration highlights the event's commitment to making a positive impact, offering attendees a chance to contribute to a noble cause while enjoying the festivities.



### Fudpucker's Beachside Bar

Fudpucker's itself is a destination that embodies the spirit of family-friendly fun, with its title of "Best Family-Friendly Restaurant" earned through a commitment to providing memorable dining experiences. Gator Beach, dubbed The World's Greatest Alligator Park, allows visitors to interact with these fascinating creatures, offering an educational experience that leaves lasting memories.

The anticipation for GatorFest 2025 reflects a broader community excitement, drawing visitors from across the United States.

Known for hosting vibrant events like Teen Night, Kid's Day, the Noon Year's Eve Balloon Drop, Kick-Off Parties for EC Volleyball and Jeepalooza, and Jazz Dinner Shows, Fudpucker's continues to be a beacon for family entertainment, making it the perfect venue for GatorFest.

#### Food, Fun & Gators

GatorFest 2025 promises a day of exhilarating entertainment, delicious food, and a shared commitment to wildlife conservation. By integrating fun with educational and charitable endeavors, the festival not only offers a unique experience but also reinforces the importance of community and environmental stewardship.

Mark your calendars and join the celebration at Fudpucker's, where the wild is welcomed, and memories are made.

So, stop by and have some fun at Fud's Gatorfest. See you later, alligator!

#### Visit Us in Destin at

20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy. www.FudsGatorFest.com www.Fudpucker.com





# Lady Ray's Expands to Walton County Through New Bakery Partnership

Lady Ray's, a renowned name in custom cakes and confections in Destin, is bringing its signature creations to Walton County through an exciting new partnership with The Little Bluebird Bakery. The collaboration marks a significant step in Lady Ray's expansion, allowing local customers to enjoy their handcrafted cakes in a fresh, new way.

The Little Bluebird Bakery, a beloved mobile bakery based in Defuniak Springs, has been serving the community since 2020 with its made-from-scratch treats. Known for its creativity and dedication to quality, the bakery has built a strong local following. Now, through this partnership, customers in







Walton County will have easier access to Lady Ray's custom cake designs and specialty desserts.

"We are extremely excited about this partnership, as we've been looking to expand our product offerings to Walton County over the last couple of years," says Lady Ray's owner, Tim Vondell.

"Working with The Little Bluebird Bakery is the perfect opportunity to bring our custom cakes to a wider audience while collaborating with a fantastic local business that shares our passion for quality and creativity."

This partnership will allow both businesses to enhance their offerings, giving customers more options for weddings, birthdays, and special events. Orders for Lady Ray's custom cakes will now be available for delivery through The Little Bluebird Bakery, providing a conve-



nient and local way for Walton County residents to enjoy their stunning and delicious cakes.

With this expansion, Lady Ray's continues to grow its presence in the Florida Panhandle, staying true to its commitment to delivering exceptional baked goods and unforgettable cake designs.

For details on custom orders and availability, customers can follow Lady Ray's on social media or visit the website at ladyrays.com. In Destin, 833 Harbor Blvd. Unit 19, near Target.





# Egg-citing Easter Events You Won't Want to Miss

Easter along the Emerald Coast as a local or a visitor, you'll find a variety of dining options and family-friendly events to enjoy. From sunrise services and elegant brunches to fun-filled Easter egg hunts, there's something for everyone, and 30A offers countless ways to make the holiday special. Explore our list of the best Easter brunch and dinner spots, and festive events happening along the coast!

#### Breakfast, Brunch and Dinner

(Call ahead to check if reservations are required.)

#### Sunday, April 20

Cuvee 30A - Chef Tim Creehan will be serving signature dishes and special chef features such as Eggs Benedict and Easter Rack of Lamb from 11 a.m. to

Roux 30A - Enjoy an Easter Brunch with a curated threecourse brunch beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Havana Beach Bar & Grill at The Pearl in Rosemary Beach - Experience an Easter buffet featuring brunch specialties, a prime rib carving station, chilled seafood bar, kids' options and desserts from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Beach Club at WaterSound - A full brunch buffet with a chef-attended omelet station will be offered from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Vue on 30A - Located in Dune Allen Beach, an Easter Brunch buffet which will feature a raw bar with oysters, shrimp, mini lobster tails, house-cured salmon, shrimp etouffee over rice, roasted prime rib, custom omelets, grits and mashed potato bar, desserts and more will be available 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Fish Out of Water You're invited to enjoy an Easter Breakfast Buffet with a Mimosa Bar and a Dessert Bar from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Live Jazz by Jim Armstrong starts at 11 a.m.

Stinky's Bait Shack -Easter Brunch & Dinner will be available 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

North Beach Social Celebrate Easter on the bay with food and fun. They'll be serving up an Easter Sunday Feast with Honey Ham, Potato Salad, Green Beans and Cornbread starting at 11 a.m.

Sandestin Golf & Beach **Resort** – A variety of Easter brunch favorites will be available at Burnt Pine Golf Club from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WaterColor Lakehouse -Easter Brunch will be available by reservation only. Time slots are 10 – 11:15 a.m., 11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. or 3:15-4:30 p.m.

#### **Services & Holiday Events**

#### Saturday, April 19

Baytowne Wharf will host an Easter Explosion, a day of face painting, arts, crafts, and an opportunity to get your picture taken with the Easter Bunny. The begins at 9:45 a.m. festivities run from 12 - 3 p.m.

Camp WaterColor is offering a Community Easter Egg Hunt. There will be multiple hunts throughout the day, face painting, and an appearance from the Easter Bunny. Snacks and mimosas will be available for purchase. The event will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

#### Sunday, April 20

Rosemary Beach Eastern Green will hold a nondenominational church service. A low-rise chair is recommended. Service begins at 8:30 a.m.

Rosemary Beach Western Green is holding an Easter Egg Hunt. Receive a free mimosa from Summer Kitchen Café and have your photo taken with the Easter Bunny at Gigi's following the hunt. The event

WaterColor Beach will host an Easter Sunrise Service with Gary Wingo and Fellowship 30A. Coffee will be provided on the Beach Club Deck prior to service. Please bring your own chairs and blankets. Service begins at 6 a.m.

The WaterColor Inn Pool offers a day of family fun with kid's craft stations from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and an Easter Egg Hunt beginning at 3 p.m.

Seaside will hold its annual Easter Celebration at the Amphitheater. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt with 15,000 eggs. They will be holding the First Annual Duck Olympics, where 5,000 rubber ducks will race their way down a lazy river. Prizes will be awarded to winning ducks. It is a free event. There

will also be music, food and other activities for children. This event is held from 12 - 3 p.m.

The Big Chill will host photos with the Easter Bunny from 1-3 p.m. and an Easter Egg Hunt from 2 - 2:30 p.m.

Camp Creek Inn at WaterSound is offering an Easter Sunrise Service from 6 -7 a.m. at the Beach Club, and an Easter Egg Hunt at Central Park at 3 p.m.

North Beach Social will host Easter Egg Hunts for multiple age groups beginning at

Burnt Pine Golf Club at Sandestin will host an Easter Egg Hunt, complete with prizes for kids of all ages, beginning at











# The Benefits of Music Students Performing in Recital

Recitals are an important confidence. part of any music student's education. These performances offer significant opportunities for growth and development. For students, the chance to perform in front of an audience can be both exhilarating and challenging. Yet, the benefits extend beyond stepping on stage. From technical skills to fostering emotional resilience, recitals provide valuable experiences that shape a music student's journey.

#### 1. Building Confidence and Overcoming Stage Fright

One of the benefits of performing in a recital is the opportunity to build self-The idea of confidence. playing in front of others can be daunting. However, with practice and repeated exposure, the fear of performing gradually diminishes. Over time, students become more comfortable with public performance, gaining selfassurance to play before others. It is an excellent way to conquer stage fright and gain personal

#### 2. Refining Technical **Skills**

performance Α recital offers students a chance to put their technical skills to the test. Rehearsing for a recital encourages musicians to finetune their playing, ensuring they achieve the highest level of precision in their technique. In preparing for recitals, students focus on details and often improve their overall musicianship as they perfect their instrument handling, rhythm, and phrasing.

#### 3. Developing **Discipline and Time** Management

Preparing for a recital requires a level of discipline and time management that is crucial to a student's musical development. Students must organize their schedules to allow ample time for rehearsals, adjustments, and refinement of their songs. This process teaches valuable lessons in discipline as they balance their musical goals with other academic



personal commitments. The experience of preparing for a recital, then, is not only about musical growth but also about developing the habits of consistency and perseverance that will serve them in all areas of life.

#### 4. Enhancing **Emotional Ex** pression

One of the most rewarding aspects of performing in a recital is the ability to communicate emotion through music. Music is a powerful tool for expression, and recitals provide opportunity to convey emotions to an audience. Whether playing a piece filled with joy, sorrow, or contemplation, students learn to use their instruments to evoke a particular mood or atmosphere. This emotional connection with the music develops one's appreciation for their craft while honing their ability to connect with listeners on a deeper level.

#### 5. Receiving Constructive Feedback

Performing in front of an audience, including instructors and peers, provides students with the opportunity to receive constructive feedback. Teachers and fellow musicians might offer suggestions to help refine the performance. This feedback, while sometimes challenging, is crucial for a student's growth. By learning how to welcome and implement constructive critique, students develop a sense of humility and strength to continue learning and improving.

#### 6. Cultivating a Sense of Community

Finally, recitals foster a sense

of community among music students. These performances create a shared experience between the performer and the  $audience. \, The \, support \, from \, peers, \,$ family, and friends who attend the recital creates an encouraging atmosphere that nurtures the student's growth. Also, they often provide students with the opportunity to connect with other musicians, exchange experiences, and learn from one another. The skills and experiences gained will influence their musical journey for years to come.

Studio 237 Music Lessons' student recital is scheduled for May 10, Saturday, at Seagrove Baptist Church, 4915 E County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL. The community Is invited to attend. Performance groups will begin at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Students of all ages and levels will be playing on piano, voice, guitar, drums, and ukulele. To find out more about Studio 237 visit our website at www.Studio237Music. com, and/or call (850) 231-3199.





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#### Record Store Day at Central Square Records

Central Square Records will be celebrating Record Store Day Saturday, April 12! Doors open at 8 a.m. with this year's exclusive 'RSD Drops' releases along with Jittery Joe's coffee. Central Square will have exclusive vinyl releases, unique to this day, from a vast array of artists, from the likes of Charli xcx, David Bowie, the Cure, Fleetwood Mac, Laufey, the Grateful Dead, and many more!

You can expect a boatload of exclusive items, rare and limited pressed vinyl, along with great freebies as we celebrate everything vinyl. Come celebrate the independent record store with the coolest one on the Gulf Coast! Visit www.recordstoreday.com.

#### Old Florida Fish House Weekdays

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

## FOOW Live Music Fridays and Sunday Brunch

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

# South Walton Live Music Scene AJ's Gravton Brunch, Live April 9th: Midnight Blue - The encouraged to bring a blanket

**Music & Sunday Funday** 

AJ's is the place to be to celebrate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Come for brunch, stay for the music and dancing. Every Sunday from 11 a.m. til 3 p.m., AJ's brunch is not to be missed. Complete your meal with a mimosa or go all in with their famous Build Your Own Bloody Mary bar. Sunday afternoon essentials include crawfish and cold beers -- starting at noon. Indulge in fresh, flavorful crawfish served with traditional sides of corn, new potatoes & mushrooms. Enjoy live music 12-4 p.m. with the Christon Birge Duo and again at 5 p.m. with the Pickled Pickers. Check ajsgrayton.com for other live music throughout the week.

#### Karaoke Night @ AJ's Grayton Beach Thursdays

Join in the fun on Karaoke Night starting at 8 p.m. every Thursday night at AJ's Grayton Beach. Thursday night is also Prime Rib Night at AJ's. Enjoy a 10oz cut of Prime Rib with au jus & horseradish cream sauce. Served with side salad and baked potato for \$22.95.

#### Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

Live music concerts take place in the Baytowne Events Plaza every Wednesday night from 7-9 p.m. Various local and regional artists perform throughout the year. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Free and open to the public. April 9th: Midnight Blue - The Foreigner Tribute April 16th: TBA

April 16th: TBA April 23rd: TBA April 30th: Freebird

#### **Shunk Gulley**

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

#### The Bay

Come out to The Bay with family and friends every Wednesday night starting at 5 p.m. for dinner, cold drinks and a bonfire with various musicians on the beach of the Choctawhatchee Bay. It's a mid-week tradition in South Walton. Sunday Pickin' @ The Bay features The Sand Ole' Opry with Mike Whitty & Friends on stage from 4-8 p.m. Mike brings in new musicians to play every week.

Wednesday nights: April 9: Sugarcane Jane

April 16: StormFolk

April 23: Sand Ole Opry w Mike Whitty and Jared Herzog

April 30: Martin Lane

### 30Avenue Concert Series March 13-April 19

Come out to 30Avenue for the Spring Break Concert Series from 6-9 p.m. on the green, March 13 through April 19. Gather your people for dinner, sips, shopping and LIVE MUSIC under the stars in Inlet Beach, Florida. Guests are

encouraged to bring a blanket or low-back lawn chairs. Visit www. thirtyavenue.com/calendar for the lineup.

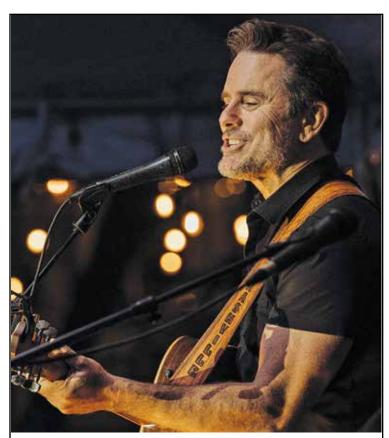
#### Seabreeze Jazz Festival April 23-27

Smooth jazz, white sands, and fun set for April 23-27 at Aaron Bessant Park in Pier Park - The Ultimate Weekend of Smooth Jazz. Named a "Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA" by JazzIZ Magazine and nominated as "Best Jazz Festival" at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival in Panama City Beach combines the top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches, and

good times - all on the west end of Panama City Beach. The event now attracts over 20,000 fans from the USA, Canada, and Europe for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz. Tickets and lineup for the 26th Seabreeze Jazz Festival: seabreeze jazzfestival.com.

### The Forrest Williams Band April 20-26

Catch the smooth tunes of the Forrest Williams Band at the Red Bar April 20 from 1-3 p.m., Local Catch April 22 from 6-9 p.m., the South Walton Food & Wine Festival April 25 at Grand Blvd. from 5:30-8 p.m., and Hibiscus Backyard of Love April 26 from 7-9 p.m.



The Old Florida Fish House is excited to welcome back Charles Esten on April 26 at 7 p.m. for a special up close and personal performance. VIP meet and greet tickets are available at oldfloridafishhouse.com.



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## **Covering Your Assets**



By Julie A. Martin

Insurance is everywhere, and there are so many different kinds, it gets confusing. What kind of coverage are you supposed to have to cover your homes, cars, boats and other fun things that you and your family

use? Is it Property Insurance or Casualty Insurance?

The answer is both. **Property Insurance** covers your homes, your condos, your furniture, electronics and all the things you use in your home that is not permanently attached to your home. **Casualty Insurance** usually refers to the items that move, such as your cars, motorcycles, boats and jet skis.

Both Property insurance and Casualty insurance include coverage for your covered items as well as liability. The liability coverage levels may go as high as 500K on a single policy. When you feel it isn't enough to protect you and your family, there is the Umbrella policy.

**Umbrella policies** include coverage for liability losses over and above what your primary

underlying policies would pay. For instance, if you are playing golf and you accidentally hit someone in the head with a golf ball, that person can sue you if they are hurt, even if you yelled "Fore." The incident would need to be sudden and accidental in nature, as no intentional acts are covered.

The umbrella policy covers in levels from \$1M to 5M, with requirements to maintain a minimum level of liability on the underlying policies for auto, boat, etc. of 250/500 Bodily Injury Liability and 100K Property Damage Liabil-



ity. The minimum underlying liability requirement for home insurance or any property policies the umbrella covers would be 300K.

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It is a common misconception that if someone has an umbrella policy, that its primary function is to pay out what is demanded. That is not how this works. The umbrella policy acts to defend its policyholder and attempt to keep the client from financial ruin. Many standard carriers offer umbrella coverage, and it is even possible to bundle your auto insurance with your umbrella in many cases for an extra multi-

If you have more than one home, two cars and even one toy, whether it's a motorcycle, boat or wave runner, it would be a good idea for you to have an umbrella to cover excess liability over all of your assets. Speaking with an independent agent to find out what kind of coverage is right for you will give you the peace of mind in knowing that there are no coverage gaps. And you can live your life not worrying about your insurance!

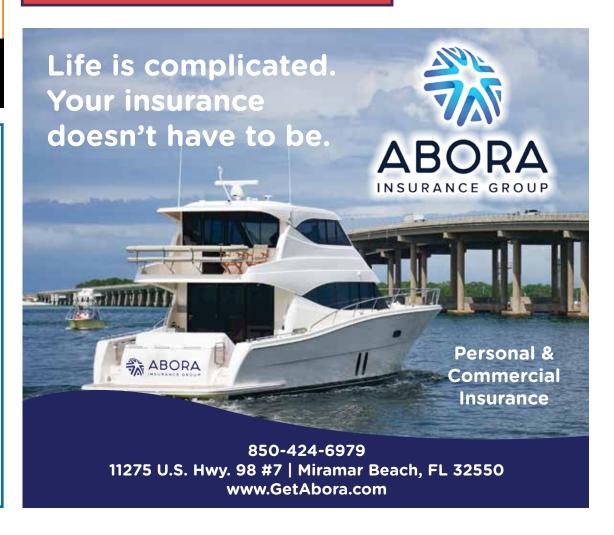
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### Winner... Winner?



By Chris Balzer

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 2024 won the warmest year prize since they started recording in 1880, surpassing 2023's wide lead over other recent years. The past ten years, 2015-2024, are the world's ten warmest years on record. If you do a search for "things we insulate," you will see the majority of sites and images are of attics, walls and windows. We insulate much more than our homes. We are constantly looking for that right beach cooler or cup to keep our drinks and snacks cold and cool. YETI has become very popular and on the scene of just about every beach, boat or fishing outing. Just look around. If you don't own a YETI, your neighbor most likely does. One

video on YouTube about what's inside a YETI cup has more than 8.5 million views. That's more views than the entire population of Tennessee and that's just one video.

It's no secret that we care about insulating things and pay a little more for quality and efficiency. So, why when it comes to our biggest investment, our homes, do we fall short of upgrading our home's efficiency and insulation? A Former US President once said during a press conference on renewable energy that insulation is sexy stuff and if you haven't upgraded your home, it's not just heat or cool air escaping, it's also energy and money wasted. Based on a study conducted by NAIMA (North American Insulation Manufacturers Association), the majority of US homes are underinsulated, wasting energy and money and decreasing comfort for the homeowners. Unless your home was specifically built for energy efficiency, you can benefit from energy upgrades like fiberglass insulation, radiant barriers, and attic air sealing, to name a few. Dr. Levy, Professor of Environmental Health at Boston University, stated that if all US homes were fitted with insulation based on the 2012 IECC (International Energy Conserva-

# **ENERGY TIPS**

### by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

tion Code), residential electricity use nationwide would drop by 5% and natural gas use by more than 10%. That's an impressive number and a positive impact on our environment.

Let's talk about cost. I know that getting an energy upgrade for your home costs more than a cooler or a cup. So, let's look at this slightly differently. On average, an energy upgrade today costs around what a good living room couch costs. The difference is that the couch will start to lose its value the moment it is delivered. Home energy upgrades immediately start to save you money and increase your comfort. Plus, energy upgrades will see a full return of your investment in few short years based on energy savings. The couch, after several years can become worn and sometimes uncomfortable due to the settling of the batting or filling. Your energy upgrade continues to add value to your home and increased comfort. Getting a proper energy upgrade can also help with reducing dust

and decreasing humidity in your

your biggest investment, your home, and remember our most sustainable energy source is not solar, hydro or geothermal; it's YOU

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

home. I don't know if I would call adding insulation sexy, but I do know that adding insulation saves you money, increases your comfort and has a positive impact on the environment. So the next time you are putting ice in your cooler, sipping something refreshing from your cup or sitting on your couch, think about getting an energy upgrade for



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### SOUTH WALTON EVENTS

 $continued \ from \ page \ 25$ 

Forrest Williams Band!

**Saturday Grand Tasting April 26 | 3-6 p.m.** – At SoWalWine, it's all about the quality, diversity, scope and relevance of wines being offered and the people bringing them to the table. There are over 600 high-quality, diverse selections!

**Sunday Grand Tasting April 27 | 1 - 4 p.m.** – Welcome back to day two of the Grand Tastings, where you can taste wines from around the

world and buzz-worthy, award-winning craft spirits, then stroll on over to sample delicious foods while listening to live music. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.SoWalWine.com.

#### Swing into Action May 3 FORE the Love of Animals

Get ready to hit the greens for a great cause May 3 at the Links Golf Club at Sandestion! Registration is now open for the FORE! the Love of Animals Golf Tournament, presented by Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort and benefiting Alaqua Animal Refuge. This premier event combines friendly competition, camaraderie and a shared commitment to helping animals in need.

Secure Your Spot Today! Foursomes are \$850 and individuals are \$250 with proceeds directly supporting Alaqua's mission of providing shelter, safety, and second chances to animals in need.

REGISTER NOW at https://app.eventcaddy.com/events/fore-the-love-of-animals-2025.

Want to make an even bigger impact? Sponsorship opportunities offer premium visibility, brand exposure, and the chance to be a leader in supporting animal welfare. Sponsor a Hole for Just \$100! Spots fill up fast, so don't wait! Join us on the course and help change lives — one swing at a time.







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# Contractors Connect Invites Building Industry to May Networking Event

Contractors, subcontractors, and building industry specialists are invited to Contractors Connect, a premier networking event happening on Thursday, May 1, from 5 to to 7 p.m. at AJ's in Grayton Beach. The event offers professionals in the construction and trades industries a valuable opportunity to build relationships, exchange business insights, and connect with potential partners—all in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

Attendees will enjoy one free draft beer or house wine, light appetizers, multiple door prizes, and exclusive networking opportunities with local industry leaders.

"Networking is crucial in the construction industry, and Contractors Connect is designed to bring professionals together to strengthen the local building community," said Erin Bakker, event organizer for Contractors Connect. "We encourage all industry professionals—whether you're a contractor, subcontractor, supplier, or specialist—to come out and expand your net-

work "

The event is presented by Builders FirstSource along with Industry Partners, Savi Flooring & Tile, Precision Stoneworks and Ply Gem – highlighting the commitment of industry leaders to fostering connections among construction professionals in the region.

"Contractors Connect is a fantastic event, and we're proud to be the presenting sponsor for the May meetup in Walton County," John Pugh, Builders FirstSource area sales manager, said. "It's a great opportunity to connect with others in the construction industry, build relationships, and support the local building community. We truly appreciate being part of such a valuable networking experience."

Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased in advance at www.contractors-connect.com, or at the door. For more information or sponsorship opportunities, please contact info@beespokeconsulting.com.



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

#### **Accountants**

#### LYNCHPIN TAX SERVICES

Rosemary Beach 850-210-9738 Lynchpintax.com

#### **Air Conditioning**

### AIRE SERVE HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Santa Rosa Beach 850-378-3779

#### BEACHSIDE A/C

Replacements and Repairs 850-267-0000 www.beachsideac.com

#### **Assisted Care**

#### PANHANDLE ASSISTANT CARE

In-home personalized, private care. Serving the Destin-30A community. 24/7 Telephone 850-517-5745 panhandleassistantcare.com

#### **Attorneys**

#### **GREG D. CROSSLIN**

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

#### **Auto Body**

#### **JOE BUMPER**

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

#### **Bathroom Designs**

#### **COASTAL CABINETS**

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

#### **Contractors**

### EMERALD COAST IMPROVEMENTS

Heating and Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Contractors, Property Management, Painting, Cleaning Miramar Beach, (757) 672-3322

#### FARROW CONTRACTING, INC.

Residential, Commercial, and Hospitality, New Construction & Remodels, Destin, FL farrowinc.com; (850) 585-2783

#### **Computer Sales & Service**

#### MINH'S COMPUTER

Full service computer sales & service. 850-376-3412

#### **SEO IS LOCAL**

Affordable Internet Marketing Services 850-684-2029

#### **Dentists**

#### **SMILEOLOGY**

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## Center for Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

4635 Gulfstarr Dr., Destin 850-654-8665

#### **Disaster Specialists**

#### **APEX DISASTER SPECIALISTS**

Water, Mold, Fire, Remodel SantaRosa Beach, Destin 877-307-3088

#### **Flooring**

#### **BEACH HOUSE TILE & DESIGN**

Gulf Place, 118 Spires Lane Santa Rosa Beach 850-622-1986

#### **SAVI FLOORING**

Commercial & Residential, Guaranteed Quality! 850-622-3022

#### **Flooring Contractors**

### ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS & RESOURCES

Your Flooring & Renovation Specialists 181 Lynn Dr. Suite A Santa Rosa Beach 850-622-0246 - www.aersrb.com

#### **Glass**

#### **SEAGROVE GLASS**

Seagrove Beach 850-231-5450

#### **Granite & Tile**

#### SSGRANITE AND TILE

Santa Rosa Beach 850-267-0599

#### Heating

### Aire Serve Heating & Air Conditioning

Santa Rosa Beach 850-378-3779

#### **Home Inspections**

### HEY NEIGHBOR HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

(850) 687-3148 info@heyneighborconnect.com www.heyneighborconnect.com

#### **Home Watch**

#### SOWAL SERVICES

South Walton's premier Home Watch and 2nd Home Concierge 850-565-9038 SoWalServices.com

#### **Insulation Contractors**

### EMERALD COAST ENERGY SOLUTIONS, LLC

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

#### **Insurance Services**

AFFORDABLE HOME

#### **INSURANCE**

(850) 654-1567 • ahifl.com

#### **FULLER INSURANCE**

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

#### **INSURANCE ZONE**

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

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#### Kennel

#### EMERAL COAST KENNEL, INC.

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

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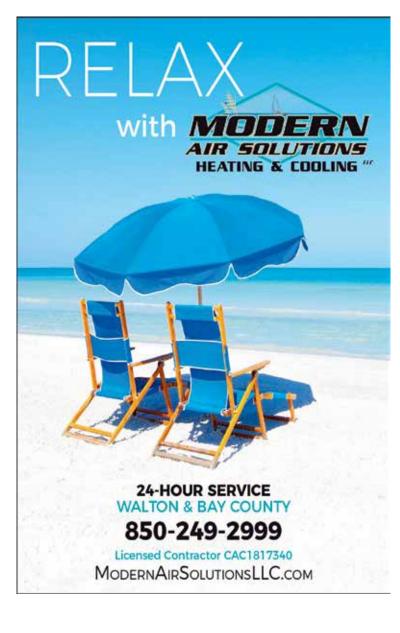
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### 2nd Homeowner / VRBO Resource Directory / Business Directory

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#### **Locksmiths**

#### **RESORTS LOCKSMITHS SERVICES**

4942 US Hwy 98 W, Suite 16 Santa Rosa Beach 850-660-6901 www.resortlocksmithservices.com

#### Lodging

#### **30A SUITES**

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

#### **Massage Therapists**

#### FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

2217 W County Hwy. 30A Blue Mountain Beach 850-267-0558 shopforthehealthofit.com

#### CARING TOUCH JANET HARDY, MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

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

#### **Music Instruction**

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#### **Painting Contractors**

#### GY PAINTING & RENOVATION

Painting, Home Renovations, Custom Interior Shutters 850-714-7502 gypaintingandreno.com

### **PAINTERS BY THE SEA** 636-236-5839

**Pet Supplies** 

#### WHAT'S UP DOG

Pet supplies, Dog Care & Training. 9970 US-98, Miramar Beach - (850) 420-2894

#### **Plumbing**

#### BEACH TO BAYOU PLUMBING

www.beachtobayouplumbing.com

#### **Pools & Spas**

#### **TAMTECH POOLS & SPA**

185 N Holiday Rd Miramar Beach - 850-650-3747 www.tamtechpools.net

#### **Pressure Washing**

#### POMPANO PRESSURE WASHING

Miramar Beach 850-849-4499

#### **Property Management**

#### TROPICAL SANDS REALTY

US Military Member Owned 3754 West County Hwy. 30A Santa Rosa Beach 850-278-6994 www.tropicalsandsrealty.com

#### **Real Estate**

#### **DESTIN PROPERTY EXPERT**

Danny Magagliano Grayton Beach 850-830-4747 DestinPropertExpert.com

#### **ENGEL VOLKERS**

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Offer expires 4/30/25 3754 W County Hwy 30A Unit #1

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### **VKI JAPANESE STEAKHOUSE** 10% OFF W/ANY PURCHASE OVER \$55

Offer expires 4/30/25 4552 US Hwy. 98W, Santa Rosa Beach 850-267-2555

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> > Offer expires 4/30/25 850-269-3246 destinoverheaddoor.com

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> Offer expires 4/30/25 21 Shannon Lane, Santa Rosa Beach 850-267-0599

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> Offer expires 4/30/25 117 Country Club Lane, Defuniak Springs www.eaglespringsgolf.com | 850-892-3812

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