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ECP Announces Art Escape, A Cultural Initiative Featuring Regional Artists

Work from select Bay and Walton County artists to be showcased in the airport's concourse

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP), together with Life Media Pubannounces lications. a new cultural initiative, Art Escape, which showcases contemporary work by local artists in the airport's concourse. The inaugural exhibit "Where am I Going?" opens July 1, with a plan for rotating works to cycle through the space over the next five months. Comprised of artists from across the region, this project brings together dynamic regional voices with the intent of enhancing the

airport experience for those traveling to and from the Emerald Coast. Welcoming nearly 1.9 million passengers in 2024, ECP acts as a gateway to the cultural attractions of surrounding counties, which, beyond airport doors, include



Francisco Adaro, "60, Buenos Aires a 30A"

art galleries, world-class live music, documentary film festivals, stand-up comedy, and much more.

Where am I Going?" includes the work of artists Francisco Adaro, Christon Anderson, Mark Little,

Chandler Williams, Mandy Yourick, and Jamie Zimchek in mediums that range from painting to photography and installation.

"ECP is a gateway to both beautiful beaches and a region rich in culture. We're honored to enhance the passenger experience by sharing a little of that culture (with a touch of beach) at our facility," stated Parker McClellan, ECP Executive Director.

"We see this as a unique opportunity to bring the more contemporary work of local artists to an unconventional space," said Jamie Zimchek, who helped launch this endeavor. "Though visitors can get a glimpse of these working artists in galleries throughout the region, this show offers them the opportunity to present work that's a little more

experimental and boundary pushing while working around a theme that relates to ideas about personhood, place, and, of course, travel."

ART ESCAPE continued on page 21



Governor **DeSantis Signs New Law Restoring Public Beach Access in Panhandle**

By Douglas D. Stauffer

Governor Ron DeSantis signed landmark legislation in Walton County recently that restores public beach access and returns local authority to communities across Florida's Gulf Coast. The bill, Senate Bill 1622, repeals restrictive provisions from a 2018 law that had limited customary use access to dry sand areas of privately owned beaches, creating years

PUBLIC BEACH

continued on page 2





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PUBLIC BEACH

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of controversy and confusion, especially in Walton County.

Speaking before a crowd of lawmakers, local officials, and beachgoers at Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar in Santa Rosa Beach, DeSantis emphasized that the new law will "put the power back in the hands of local governments and their citizens."

"This bill is about restoring local control, cutting the legal red tape, and putting our residents first," DeSantis said. "The people of this area have fought long and hard to regain the access they've traditionally enjoyed. Today, we're making that a reality."

Reversing a Controversial Law

The legislation repeals part of the 2018 law that required local governments to get court approval before enforcing customary use, an unwritten public right to access dry sand areas of beaches that has been traditionally practiced in many parts of Florida. The 2018 change forced counties to initiate costly, parcelby-parcel legal battles, sparking widespread opposition in coastal communities.

State Senator Jay Trumbull, a sponsor of the bill, remembered how the 2018 legislation caught many residents off guard.

"Overnight, people who had walked the same stretch of beach for generations were being told that they were trespassing," Senator Trumbull said. "This law fixes that."

The new bill allows counties and municipalities to pass local customary use ordinances without first obtaining court judgments, reasserting the right of the public to access Florida's beaches for walking, fishing, swimming, and sunbathing.

Accelerating Beach Restoration

Beyond public access, SB 1622 also simplifies the process for beach renourishment projects in smaller Gulf Coast counties like Walton. Under the law, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) can now establish erosion control boundaries using the state's existing mean high-water line instead of conducting lengthy surveys or requiring separate approvals.

This change is expected to save time and money while enabling faster responses to severe beach erosion, a growing concern in the region. DEP Secretary Alexis Lambert noted nearly 19 of Walton County's 26 miles of coastline are critically eroded.

"Beach nourishment isn't just about tourism," said Representative Shane Abbott, who co-sponsored the bill. "It's about protecting our coastline, preserving property, and ensuring that locals and visitors alike can enjoy these beaches for years to come."

Local Impact and Funding

Florida has invested over \$550 million in beach restoration efforts since 2019, with an additional \$53 million allocated in this year's state budget. In Walton County, nearly \$60 million in state funds have been committed to local projects, and another \$60 million is expected in federal matching funds.

DEP Secretary Alex Lambert emphasized the significance of the new process: "This legislation simplifies how we set erosion control lines, allowing vital beach nourishment projects to move forward more efficiently."

A Victory for Coastal Communities

The signing of SB 1622 marks a significant victory for



coastal communities and public access advocates across the state. Local leaders praised the decision as a return to common sense and a reaffirmation of Florida's longstanding tradition of beach enjoyment for everyone.

"This is a great day for Wal-

ton County and the entire Panhandle," said Commissioner Danny Glidewell. "Our residents have been waiting for this for years, and I thank Governor DeSantis for listening and taking action." The bill takes effect immediately.

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Chasing Perfection: Inside the World of the Blue Angels

By WILL ESTELL

Soaring by on a high-speed pass, barely one hundred feet above the runway—at a speed I'm told at the time is in excess of 700 mph—I can literally smell the fuel and feel the jet wash, before I hear the powerful roar of the F/A -18 Super Hornet as it soars by then climbs steeply just ahead of us, disappearing into the clouds, before diving back down in a corkscrew then leveling out about a mile away. All of this happens in about 20 seconds before another pilot with cojones of steel, and the skills to match, flies by completely inverted, slightly further away, but still close enough to feel the change in the atmosphere from where I am standing on the tarmac.

What I am witnessing up close and personal today is the same magical breath of patriotism that fans see at airshows all over this great country each year. The only difference is, today I'm taking it all in from the Blue Angels communication cart, sur-

rounded by a small team of just eight of the Blues support staff, along with my wingman for the day, Blue Angels Public Affairs Officer, Lt. Ben Bushong.

Since being established in 1946, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels hold the unique distinction of being the most well-known aerobatic team in the entire world. While they regularly wow crowds with breathtaking performances right here in our own backyard, their mission extends far beyond dazzling crowds at airshows, as they aim to inspire future generations of patriotic Americans, by demonstrating the unmatched aptitude, attitude and professionalism of the men and women serving in the U.S. armed forces.

These aero superstars do so much more than simply entertain with a breathtaking aerial showcase. Their performances represent thousands of hours of precision flight, discipline, unshakable resolve and the unwavering spirit of naval aviation. For decades, they've



captivated millions with gravitydefying maneuvers, embodying the excellence and teamwork that define the U.S. Navy Blue Angels—or as we affectionally refer to them along our beautiful Northwest Florida coastal communities, The Blues. I had the opportunity to spend a day inside the world of The Blues, guided by LT. Bushong, and gained some firsthand insight into their headquarters at NAS Pensacola. Including observing a morning flight meeting, pre-flight preparations, and the behind-the-scenes maintenance and logistics performed by their

team of 158 active-duty Sailors and Marines, that keep this elite squadron at peak performance.

Here are some Q&As from my behind-the-scenes day with LT. Ben Bushong and the Blue Angels team, part of a multi-

Continued on next page





BLUE ANGELS

continued from page 1

publication media experience with The Blues:

What is the age range of the pilots and does age play a part in the selection process?

The age of our pilots usually range from early 30s to late 40s. Age isn't necessarily a factor when applying for the team. All pilots need to have a minimum number of flight hours and experience to be able to apply.

As popular as the Blue Angels are around the country, how do you and your team feel about the escalation of attention after last year's hit Amazon original, The Blue Angels?

The film definitely gives viewers an inside look into what it means to be a part of the U.S. Navy's flight demonstration squadron, and it does it for an entire show season, including the selection process and intense training that the pilots endure to get to where they are. As a team we're happy about the depiction and think the movie can only help bring our fans closer and hopefully create more interest in our mission.



Do the pilots still get any sense of nervousness when they fly or is it such a welloiled repetitive motion, due to all the practice and shows, that it becomes like driving your vehicle from home to work and back?

Everything we do is based on safety and having absolute complete trust in one another. We absolutely all have to count on that up there and on the ground. So, during winter training, we incorporate the crawl, walk, run mentality to continue to work towards the tight formations. As a team, we are always chasing perfection, 100% of the time.

What criteria would you say does play the largest part in the pilot and support team selection?

With all team members, trust and personality are two big factors when selecting new team members. If your current command is letting you apply for this team, then that means you have already checked all the boxes on paper for the prerequisites. But we are looking for people who would make great ambassadors for the Navy and Marine Corps, and someone that you would potentially spend 300 days on the road with in a given season. Our Maintainers and Crew Chiefs perform all the preflight inspections on every aircraft, so the pilots can strap in and go! It takes complete trust in a person, to be able to strap in and fly without performing your own preflight inspection of the aircraft. We are a successful team. because everybody has complete trust that the person next to you is doing their job effectively and efficiently.

With such vicious schedules between practices, social and event obligations, and traveling 300 days per year, how much sleep does the average pilot get?

Wait...we're supposed to be sleeping too? [laughs] Thursday morning we fly to our show site. The first flight at every city is our "circles" flight, where we fly over the airfield to find all the checkpoints for the show. Followed by a practice. Thursdays are typically the longest, because it's a three-flight day: Transit, Checkpoint Flight and Practice. Friday we perform community outreach, visiting local schools and hospitals, then perform a full practice. Saturday and Sunday are show days, then we transit back to Pensacola after the show. Monday our team gets our day off, then it's back to Tuesday and Wednesday practices here in Pensacola.

Actually, not getting enough sleep is never really too much of a factor. We always perform in the afternoons, so there's typically not many early mornings on the road.

Any other closing insight you and the team would like readers to know about the mission you all are fulfilling?

The Blue Angels are direct representatives of the 800,000 men and women serving in the Navy and Marine Corps. All of us are from the fleet and will return to the fleet after our time here. By design, our Navy and Marine Corps is expeditionary in nature, meaning all our operations are happening overseas and out of sight. The Blue Angels were designed to showcase the teamwork and professionalism of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to the American public, and like we always say, "We're glad to be here!"

Will Estell is a seasoned writer, editor, and media entrepreneur with over 700 published articles spanning regional and national publications. His work covers coastal tourism, real estate, dining, automotive reviews, and celebrity interviews, earning him a strong reputation in Northwest Florida media. Currently the Chief Creative Officer of Estell Hussey Media, LLC, Will has co-founded 12 magazine titles and served as editorin-chief for several others. Originally from Booneville, Miss., Will is a father of three and lives in Destin and Navarre with his wife, ABC 3 news anchor Laura Hussey-Estell.



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Coastal Seniors Update for July

Exercise Classes

Angela Gibson will lead classes every Tuesday and Thursday at 10:00 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: coastalseniorsof-southwalton@gmail.com

Art Classes

Watercolor Painting Class – Karen Peterson will teach classes on Fridays, July 11 and 25, and August 1 and 8, from 8:45 a.m. to noon. Classes are held at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$15 for CSSW members and \$30 for nonmembers. 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 will be on Wednesday, July 16,

6 to 8 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 you may bring your own. Play at Boys and Girls Club will resume after Labor Day 2025. Please join the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org.

Water Aerobics

Takes place at Watersound Fountains, 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. July classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays at 9 a.m. and 10:15 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-

COASTAL SENIORS

OF SOUTH WALTON

5342 or email: coastalseniorsof-southwalton@gmail.com

Monthly Meeting

Friday, July 18, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 70 Logan Lane, Grayton Beach. A light lunch will be served and the program will be a performance by Gary Hubbard, Magician. 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 coastalsenior-sofsouthwalton@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 coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail. com, or on the website at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org Also, follow us on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton. Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit



501© (3) organization for active adults and we are looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.



LadyWorld Festival Returns to Seascape Resort

LadyWorld, the immersive entertainment retreat by The LadyGang podcast, returns to Seascape Resort Sept. 26–28, 2025. This three-day event blends podcasting, music, and comedy with wellness activities, pop culture panels, and signature cocktails from

21Seeds Infused Tequila.
Newly announced headliners include comedian Hannah
Berner and the Girls Gotta Eat podcast duo, Ashley Hesseltine and Rayna Greenberg. Other performers include Kaitlyn Bristowe, Stassi Schroeder, Rachel Lindsay, and Justin

Sylvester.

Attendees can choose from several pass levels and accommodation options. VIP perks include reserved seating, exclusive merch, and access to a private planning group.

For tickets, visit www.lady-world.co.







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Ohana Day School Opens New Location at Grand Boulevard Town Center

The first day school opened at the 30Avenue location, which has proven great success in attendance and programming.

We are pleased to announce that Ohana Day School, a branch of the Ohana Institute educational system for children ages 3 to 5 years, has opened a second school conveniently located at Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach.

We are also excited to announce a special Lottery for new 2025–2026 school year applicants, in which we will choose one student to receive free tuition for one year. To enter, you must fill out the application at OhanaDaySchool.org and choose the Grand Boulevard Miramar Beach location. Other requirements are detailed on the website. A winner will be selected and notified at our Open House event on July 31, 2025.

The Mission of Ohana Day School is to respect the individual needs of all children, foster a caring and creative environment, and use innovative technology to deliver an experiential, student-centered blended education model. Ohana Day School believes that the paths of learning include social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development, which invites the passionate pursuits of each child's interests. Our teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging as they interact with the children. Each child is valued as an individual. Self-expression and interpersonal relationships are fostered in this nurturing atmosphere. Children learn to make choices, develop relationships, and benefit from all their daily experiences.

Our Vision is to ensure each child has successful experiences every day, give them a positive self-concept, and ensure a lifelong love of learning. Young children learn through play and direct involvement, and Ohana Day School is designed to meet each child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive needs.

We operate using the "SHELL Model," Ohana's



foundational pillars, which we developed here along Florida's Gulf Coast. The SHELL is the heart of Ohana operations and practices: Safety and Security. Holistic Education. Experiential. Loving Yourself. Loving Others.

We welcome you to learn

more by getting in touch, visiting the website, touring the school, and joining us for a special Open House and Grand Opening celebration on July 31 from 5-7 p.m.! We hope you will consider enrolling your child in Ohana's comprehensive day school program. Those who

enroll and meet the requirements will be entered into the lottery.

Please share this information with your friends and colleagues, as we are excited to meet our new class of students! www.ohana-dayschool.org

About Ohana Institute

Ohana is a 501c3, fully accredited, private school and recently became a part of the Kaplan Education Company. Ohana Institute's goal is to provide a creative environment

where learning happens organically. We believe that through individualized learning plans, students feel supported in all areas of their lives. Ohana Day School was created by the founders of Ohana Institute in South Walton, Florida. www.ohanainstitute.org





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Green Thumb Garden Club Awards \$7,000 in Scholarships to Outstanding Walton **Students and Organizations**

By KATHLEEN EDGE, Publicity & Website Chair

Green Walton County's Thumb Garden Club wrapped up their 2024/2025 year with a special program announcing this year's Mercer and other scholarship award winners. Green Thumb members learned about each student's achievements, current plans and future career goals as related to the mission of the garden club.

Addie Ingle from DeFuniak Springs will use her \$2,000 tuition award to complete her resource conservation studies in the Fall at Northwest Florida State University, Niceville and then transfer to University of Florida, West Florida Research Center, Milton Campus for the Winter semester. Hatcher Patrick from Santa Rosa Beach will use his \$2,000 tuition award to study forestry at the University of Montana, Missoula.

Three additional \$1,000 scholarships were also awarded at the Club's May meeting. Local youths participating in Walton County 4-H Camp Timpoochee's programs benefit from scholarship assistance funded by GTGC. E.O. Wilson Biophilia Naturalists Outdoors program will also receive an education scholarship to support Walton County students. Westonwood Ranch is a first-time scholarship recipient and will use their award to support their educational programs. GTGC

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has funded local scholarship programs for decades through the generous donations of its members and the community. We are proud to increase the amount of these awards every

year and during the 2024/2025 year have distributed \$13,000 in donations in Walton County.

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

The Green Thumb Garden Club, Inc., located in Walton County, Florida, is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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, loral design, gardening, horticulture, and nature studies and instill in our youth the love of gardening and respect for the envi-







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Birds on Our Beaches

By Helen Petre

Ever wonder which birds you are seeing on the beaches? Walton County has quite a few shorebirds. Read this article and you will be able to call them by their names, instead of saying "seagull" and "sandpiper."

Snowy plover (Charadrius nivosus)

Snowy plovers are small, native shorebirds with white bellies and black foreheads. They feed along the shoreline and make solitary, ground nests in our dunes from February to August. Females lay three eggs in the sand, and they are so well camouflaged that you may step on them without even seeing them.

Least terns (Sternula antillarum)

Those birds you call seagulls are probably least terns. They have yellow beaks, black heads and forked tails, and fly along the shore, diving for fish. Least terns nest in a group for protection. The male gives the female a fish, and the female allows the male to mate. The young hatch in June.

Snowy plovers and least terns are the reason you see signs and fences on the beach requesting that you stay off the dunes. Besides protecting the dune structure and vegetation, the breeding and survival of shorebirds depends on protection from predators.

Brown pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis)

Brown pelicans fly in a line along the surf looking for fish, and plunge dive into the waves to scoop them up. They live year-round here on the Gulf and eat four pounds of fish and shrimp per day. Brown pelicans make nests of sticks and regur-



JACK CHILES. HAGERMAN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SHERMAN, TEXAS. 2025 Snowy plover



FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE. 2025 Least terns mating.



Sanderlings

gitate food to feed their helpless young. They live for 20 years.



Ruddy turnstones are common on our beaches in spring and fall. Sometimes they stay all year, as first-year nonbreeding birds stay all summer. Their

name originates from their habit of turning over stones to look for tasty invertebrates



Brown Pelican

Ruddy turnstone

along the shore. Here in Florida, they turn over seaweed to find food. Ruddy turnstones live nine years. They nest in Alaska but return to the same beach every year. Since they have far to travel, they fly fast, around 40 mph, and travel about 600 miles a day.

Helen Petre is a retired USDA biologist and college biology professor. She spends her time volunteering, teaching, and writing science articles to share her interests with future generations.



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Business Profile: Spotlight on Phoenix Restoration

Travis Kring has come a long way on his inspiring 4-year journey marked by faith, dedication, and an unshakable commitment to serving God and others. Just one year ago, he was recruited from the real estate world and joined Phoenix Restoration and Catastrophe. In that short time, by the grace of God, Travis and his team, led by Bobby Cates, have generated \$1.2 million in revenue. But beyond the numbers, this season has been about

tation that speaks louder than words.

We truly believe that the Phoenix Restoration team is just scratching the surface of what's to come. The growth, the connections, and the opportunities to serve are only beginning. Our Kingdom-focused team at Phoenix is excited to continue impacting our community with care, skill, and faith at the center of it all. Whether you're in need of a free HVAC ductwork mold in-



building meaningful, spiritual, and professional relationships that continue to grow and bear fruit. Travis, Bobby, and the Phoenix team bring a passion for people and excellence into every home and project.

From his days on the court as a basketball player to his time coaching and mentoring players, Travis has always carried a strong sense of leadership and heart. That same spirit now fuels his work with Phoenix Restoration, where he's become known across the Florida Panhandle for reliability, integrity, and genuine care for the community. His journey has been nothing short of incredible, transforming lives through service, bringing comfort in crisis, and building a repu-

spection or help with restoration after a storm or fire, we are ready to show up and help, just like we would for our own family.

Everyone on our team lives here in the Santa Rosa Beach, Destin, and Freeport area. You'll see us around—at Destiny Worship Center, in Grand Fitness, or grabbing groceries at Publix. We're your neighbors, your friends, and your trusted professionals. Honest, caring, and Kingdom-driven, we're here to serve you with excellence. Thank you for letting us be a part of your community. We'd love the opportunity to earn your trust and do business with you.

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Palms Resort Brings Dinner, Drinks, Live Magic & Comedy to Destin!

An action-packed live show featuring World-Class Magic Comedy and Ventriloquism is now open with nightly shows at the newly renovated Palms Destin Resort Showroom.

Interactive magic takes place just inches away in an intimate showroom that offers excellent table seating. The performance features sophisticated magic & smart comedy targeting adults but is family-friendly and appropriate for all ages. The show is headlined by Bart Rockett who hosted his own nationally syndicated television show for three seasons, had a co-starring role on the former NBC Drama Parenthood and headlined his own 1.000-seat theater in the tourist mecca of Branson, Missouri for nine seasons. He has appeared in 85 countries around the globe and headlined for most every major cruise line.

Rockett, who started at the age of 10, trained under Jeff Dunham and is recognized for his excellent comedy ventriloquism which is featured in the show. After growing up in the South, Rockett moved to Hollywood, California where his management team is located. He produced his teens to the finals of NBC's America's Got



Talent and they have gone on to do major Hollywood projects over the years. Kadan, who starred in the movie Dark Skies with award winning actress Keri Russell and on CBS's rush hour combines forces with his Sister, Brooklyn to make guest appearances in Rockett's Destin show.

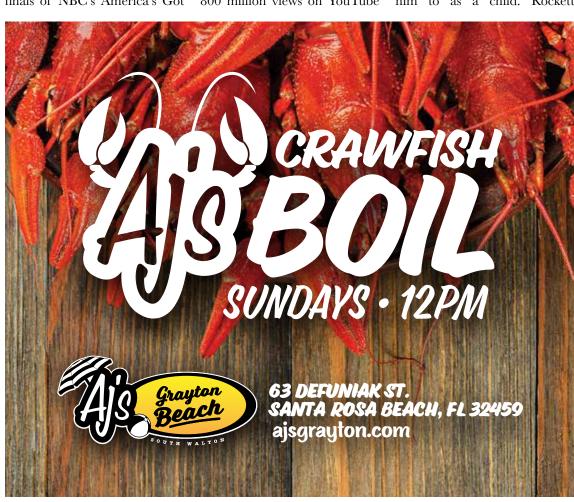
Brooklyn is well known for her viral Super Bowl commercial that currently has nearly 800 million views on YouTube and most recently played Hollywood superstar Bradley Cooper's daughter in a project with Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese.

This talented family has been vacationing in Destin for many years and now that Rockett's kids are almost grown, he is excited to be back for a long-term residency in the place his Grandparents first introduced him to as a child. Rockett

shared, "For me, coming back here feels like coming home. Some of my greatest childhood memories happened on these beaches and it's my desire to bring something unique to the area that is a fun experience for families to attend & make their own amazing memories."

Nightly shows happen at 7:30 p.m. with 5 p.m. early seatings offered on Sunday's and select dates. A variety of alcoholic & non-alcoholic beverages are available as well as a full menu of food and dessert offerings before or after the show. Parking is plentiful and free in The Palms Destin Resort multi-level parking garage, that is attached to the showroom.

Advance reservations are required and can be made at the official ticketing site: USATourTickets.LIVE.







The Walton Area Chamber of Commerce Launches Speaker Search for "The Next BIG Thing"

The 2025 Annual Conference is on October 6th at Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa

The Walton Area Chamber of Commerce opens speaker search today for "The Next BIG Thing" Annual Conference, presented by Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast and Eglin Federal Credit Union, set for October 6th at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa. This unique and exciting speaking engagement will offer an unparalleled opportunity for business executives and industry leaders alike to reach a captive audience. The deadline to submit applications is August 9th.

The Next Big Thing will inspire over 200 emerging and established professionals alike in attendance, with innovative opportunities for personal business growth during one high-energy day. Attendees will choose from a diverse lineup of TED Talk-style breakout sessions, seminars, and workshops. The experience includes a welcome reception with coffee, mimosas, and light breakfast, lunch, a closing cocktail hour, and exciting extras like complimentary headshots.

Specifically, the Chamber is now seeking leaders willing to share their expertise on topics



aligned with the conference's three distinctive growth tracks: Leadership Development, Entrepreneurship, and Women in Business. Selected speakers will have the unique opportunity to empower attendees both professionally and personally, nurture emerging and existing entrepreneurs, and inspire the next generation of leaders.

Prospective speakers are invited to submit their applications by Midnight on August 9th at https://business.waltonareachamber.com/form/view/35802.

To attend the conference, visit

https://www.waltonareachamber.com/the-next-big-thing/. Sponsorships for The Next BIG Thing are also still available: Local businesses and individuals interested in sponsorships should contact Gabrielle Hamilton at (850) 892-3191 or Gabrielle@WaltonAreaChamber.com.

The Walton Area Chamber would like to thank Ascension Sacred Heart (Presenting Sponsor), Eglin Federal Credit Union (Presenting Sponsor), The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa (Event Venue Spon-



sor), 30A Flexspace (Lunch Sponsor), Florida Power & Light (Recharge Station Sponsor), D.R. Horton (Coffee Sponsor) and All In Credit Union (Coffee Sponsor), without whom The Next Big Thing would not be possible.

About the Walton Area Chamber

The Walton Area Chamber of Commerce was established in 1925 and provides leadership for a healthy business community. As the area's leading voice of business, the more than 800-member organization represents the interests of business with government, promotes the local community and provides business education and networking opportunities toward building a strong Walton County economy. For more information, visit www.waltonareachamber.com or call 850-267-0683.







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 per-

Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of the "brotique" phenomenon is the personalized attention provided to customers.

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





place to buy clothes or grooming

"brotique" is more than just a products; it has become a destination for men seeking inspira-

tion, 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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CBA's "State of the Basin": **How Oyster Gardening Is Reviving Choctawhatchee Bay**

By Allison McDowell, CBA

Along the shores of Choctawhatchee Bay, a quiet but powerful movement is taking place – one oyster at a time. Families, retirees, and students are rolling up their sleeves to take part in a unique conservation effort led by the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA). Their mission? To rebuild the bay's critical oyster reefs through an innovative and community-driven initiative: the Oyster Gardening program.

Now entering its 2025 season, this hands-on program invites local volunteers to help restore the bay's ecosystem by growing young oysters at their homes or designated dock locations. It's a project where science meets stewardship, turning everyday citizens into environmental champions.



A Simple Solution with a Big Impact

Each oyster grown through the program can filter up to 50 gallons of water daily, making them natural purifiers for Choctawhatchee Bay. Beyond water quality, these tiny powerhouses also create habitat for fish and crabs and help stabilize shorelines.

The program has supported habitat restoration efforts at multiple sites around the bay, an impressive achievement that's benefiting marine life and bolstering the overall health of the ecosystem. It's a grassroots effort with ripple effects far beyond the shoreline.

Science Comes to Life

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Oyster Gardening

program is its educational value. Whether it's a retiree tracking oyster growth or a middle schooler observing changes in the water, participants are engaged in real-world marine science. The program transforms conservation into a fun, local, and impactful experience, nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards in the process.

Get Involved

With the 2025 season underway, CBA is calling on new volunteers to help make waves. No experience is needed, just a love for the water and a willingness to learn.

For more information or to get involved, visit www.basin-alliance.org or email reynol59@ nwfsc.edu.

Tips to Safely Co-Exist With Alligators

As the weather gets warmer across the state and alligator mating season approaches, Florida's state reptile, the American alligator, can become more active and visible.

The American alligator is a conservation success story in

Florida. Florida has a healthy and stable alligator population, which is estimated at 1.3 million alligators of every size. Alligators are found in all 67 counties, inhabiting all wetlands where there's adequate food and shelter

Serious injuries caused by alligators are rare in Florida. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) works to keep Floridians and visitors informed and recommends the following precautionary measures near alligators, in-





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cluding in or near the water, to reduce the chances of conflict:

Keep a safe distance if you see an alligator. If someone is concerned about an alligator, they should call FWC's toll-free Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286), and we will dispatch a contracted nuisance alligator trapper to resolve the situation.

Keep pets on a leash and away from the water's edge. Pets often resemble alligators' natural

Świm only in designated swimming areas during daylight hours and without your pet. Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn.

Never feed an alligator. It's illegal and dangerous. When fed, alligators can lose their natural wariness and instead learn to associate people with the availability of food. This can lead to an alligator becoming a nuisance and needing to be removed from the wild.

Access safety information resources in both English and Spanish by visiting MyFWC. com/Alligatorand clicking on "Living with Alligators."



Through My Clear Eyes

By A Window
I stand in silence, day by day,
a frame for all I see —
from blush of dawn to starstrewn night,
the world looks back at me.

I watch the sun climb from the gulf, its warmth against my face.

I cradle morning's gentle light and watch the world awaken, bright. When I am clean, oh what a

gift —

the world shines brighter than before.

Colors sharpen, sky expands, each view a living grace. I catch the waves of waving hands.

the press of small, wide eyes.
Their chalked rainbows,
smudged and sweet,
become my best disguise.
I watch the people passing by;
I hope they'll pause and look
inside —

to see the welcome waiting there, the space where smiles reside.

Through My Clear Eyes by A Window

I cradle morning's gentle light, and watch the world a gift.— the world shines brighter than before.

And then the clouds come gathering near,

the sky turns steel and gray.

The rain taps gently, cool and clear —

a storm is on its way.

The downpour fades; the light returns

and bathes all I embrace.
The world feels fresh, the air is clear.

the sun resumes its place.

So here I stand — both shield and frame — brighter, just as to share what's all around, grateful to help you see each day the Emerald Coast's great town.

When your clean, the world brighter, just as veal. Fish Wingarteful to help you see each of a clear view beauty, but for

When your windows are clean, the world truly does shine brighter, just as these verses reveal. Fish Window Cleaning understands the importance of a clear view — not just for beauty, but for connecting you to the vibrant life outside. Let's bring that brilliant clarity to

your home and business, so you, too, can fully embrace every moment, every view, every impression and every day on the Emerald Coast.

Fish Window Cleaning 850.842.2162 fishwindowcleaning.com/3249



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Focusing on Love: It's Dog Harmony's 10th Anniversary

10 Years of Unconditional Love: Building Bonds, Changing Lives

10 human years equals 70 dog years of making an impact!

Ready to see your incredible bond celebrated all year long? Dog-Harmony's 10th Anniversary 'Love in Focus' Photo Calendar Contest ends July 15!

Participants can win a spot in the exclusive calendar, and every entry helps fund its vital therapy dog and humane education programs. Dog-Harmony can't wait to see all of the heartwarming submissions!

As a supporting sponsor, you

can be a part of this feel-good journey and have potential customers, or returning fans, associate these warm and caring feelings with your company, too.

Dog-Harmony is offering three ways to support the fundraising goal of \$20,000 for critically needed funds: Platinum, Gold, and Pop-up Prize levels. All three of these levels get eyes on your business, because every visit to the Love in Focus calendar contest site shows your logo and the link to your company!



The Platinum and Gold levels will not only appear in marketing before, during, and after the contest but will also have coveted real estate in the printed Love in Focus calendar, with a targeted distribution to Dog-Harmony's loyal fans and business partners. This means your business ad is seen in a long-lasting format as these calendars are displayed in homes and businesses across our area.

What is that Pop-up Prize all about? This is an additional opportunity to associate your company with people's loving feelings for their pets and get participants excited about voting or entering the contest.

We hope you'll join Dog-Harmony and show your support by sponsoring the calendar contest, donating a giveaway item, or both, this year to help reach its fundraising goal. To enter the competition and vote, go to https://www.gogophotocontest.com/dog-harmony. To learn more about Dog-Harmony and sponsorship opportunities, visit dog-harmony.org or email Hello@dog-harmony.org.

Cook Team Registration Now Open for the 11th Annual "Eggs on the Beach"

Get fired up! Bay Breeze Patio, the official retailer of Big Green Egg and host of the beloved Eggs on the Beach Big Green Egg Festival, announces that cook team registration is now open for the 11th Annual "Eggs on the Beach" Cooking Competition, happening Saturday, November 1 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Seascape Resort in Miramar Beach, Florida.

Recognized three times as "Best Local Annual Event" by VIP Destin Magazine readers, Eggs on the Beach is back and better than ever-bringing together backyard grillers, pro

chefs, restaurants, and non-profit teams to compete for cash, trophies, a brand new Big Green Egg, and of course, the ultimate prize: bragging rights.

"We're fired up for year eleven," said Wayne Paul, co-owner of Bay Breeze Patio and founder of the event.

"It's a celebration of great food, community spirit, and incredible support from our sponsors and cook teams. We've got some exciting surprises in store for both teams and tasters this

Each registered team of up to six grillers will be provided with

a large or XL Big Green Egg to showcase their skills, serving up bite-sized creations for both the public and a panel of honorary judges. Teams compete for crowd and judges' votes in a high-heat showdown of flavor, creativity, and presentation. The grand prize is a large Big Green Egg for the most Taster votes. Cash prizes will be awarded to non-profit cook teams to support their cause, and trophies will be awarded by a team of honorary judges. Every team gets commemorative t- shirts and Wayne's Get Grillin' Rubs.

The delicious event raises

funds for Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Food For Thought, two local charities making a big difference in the community. Located on Eglin Air Force Base, the Fisher House provides a "home away from home" for military families to be together during treatment for serious illness or physical/occupational therapy. Based in Santa Rosa Beach, Food for Thought provides backpacks filled with healthy, easy-to-prepare foods for students who are dependent on free or reduced school meals.

For those who have considered owning a Big Green Egg,

Host a 30A Hat Bar party and make a one of a kind

hat to fit your dreams and your personality!

Demo Eggs, which will be used during the event, will be sold in advance with nest (metal stand) and plate setter for a discounted price. Both large and XLarge Eggs include a limited lifetime warranty, and can be picked up after the event.

Cook team registration is \$50 for a team of six and cook team fees are waived for non-profit cook teams, which are competing for a cash donation toward their cause. Taster tickets will be on-sale soon. To learn more or to register a cook team or become a sponsor, visit www.Eggsonthe-Beach.com or call 850-269-4666.

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Nominations for 2026 Perfect in Walton County Awards Open July 29

The nomination period for the 2026 Perfect in Walton County Awards will be open from July 29 to Aug. 15. During this time, anyone can nominate their favorite businesses, events and activities using the online form only available at perfectinwaltoncounty.com.

"The Perfect Awards are such a powerful way to showcase and promote the outstanding businesses that are the heart of our community," said Matt Algarin, Walton County tourism director. "When our residents and visitors vote for their local favorites, they're not just recognizing great service—they're helping these businesses thrive and telling the world what makes Walton County extraordinary."

Nominations can be submitted in as many or as few categories, but only one online form per email address will be accepted. Every nomination counts. Visitor-facing businesses are encouraged to ask their guests, customers, followers, friends and family to nominate them in any of the thirty categories. Social media graphics are available to use at https://platform.crowdriff.com/m/s-fN-_Z9OT-4F9-XAM.

To qualify, businesses and individuals must primarily be in and serve Walton County. Additionally, those providing beach services (such as photographers, yoga instructors, bonfire organizers, chair vendors, etc.) must hold a current vendor permit from the Walton County Code Compliance Department. Please review the contest rules at https://www.waltoncounty-fltourism.com/userfiles/2026_Perfect_Award_nomination_rules.pdf.

The top five businesses with the largest number of nominations in each category will advance to the final voting round, which will be held online at perfectinwaltoncounty.com from Sept. 2 to 19. The top three businesses with the highest number of votes in each category will be honored as Diamond, Platinum or Gold winners at the Perfect in Walton County Awards presentation in January 2025.

These winners will be promoted in print and online by Walton County Tourism throughout the year. To see a complete list of last year's winners, visit waltoncountyfltourism.com/2025-perfect-walton-county-awards/.

The 2026 categories include:

Activity/Shopping

- · Best Art Gallery/Studio
- · Best Event
- · Best Golf Course
- · Best Kids Attraction
- · Best Nature Locale
- · Best Retailer
- $\cdot \operatorname{Best\ Shopping\ Area}$
- · Best Tennis Facility

Accommodations

- · Best Boutique Vacation Rental Company (Less than 50 units)
- · Best Hotel/Resort
- · Best Rental Management Company (More than 50 units)

Food & Drinks

- · Best Breakfast
- · Best Casual Dining
- $\cdot \, Best \; Coffee \; House \\$
- · Best Craft Beer/Spirits Selection
- · Best Fine Dining
- Best Happy Hour
- · Best Lunch
- · Best Personal Chef/Catering Service
- · Best Sweet Treats
- · Best Wine Selection

Services

- · Best Beach/Event Services Provider
- · Best Fishing Charter
- Best Local Musician/Band
- · Best Outdoor Adventure Activity
- Activity
- · Best Photographer
- · Best Spa/Salon

Venues

- · Best Meeting/Conference Space
- · Best Live Music Venue
- · Best Wedding Venue

For more information about the Perfect in Walton County Awards program, please contact Industry Relations Specialist Lisa Foster at Lisa@WCFL-Tourism.com or (850) 333-2728.







Scenic Walton Presents Conceptual Design for Linear Park in West DeFuniak Springs

City Council Unanimously Approves Vision for New Green Space Connecting Key Community Assets

Scenic Walton is proud to announce the unanimous approval of a new conceptual design for a linear park in West DeFuniak Springs, presented by Executive Director Leigh Moore at

Springs City Council meeting.

Commissioned through Scenic Walton's Walton Safe and Beautiful program, the design envisions a multi-functional,

CHECK OUT OUR NEWLY RENOVATED LOCATION!

the February 10th DeFuniak aesthetically striking greenway running parallel to Highways 331 and 90—stretching from the future pedestrian bridge at Baldwin Avenue to the public Eagle Springs Recreation





Silver Sands Premium Outlets



Center and Golf Course. This transformational project will provide safe, scenic connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists while offering new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

The conceptual plan includes:

- A multi-use path from the planned Baldwin Avenue pedestrian bridge to the rear entrance of the golf course
- A connection to the bridge to promote walkability and accessibility
- Lush, sustainable landscaping throughout the corridor
- A new playground area to encourage outdoor play and family activity

"This project embodies Scenic Walton's mission to enhance beauty, connectivity, and quality of life across Walton County," said Moore. "We're grateful to the DeFuniak Springs City Council for their support and excited to move toward the next phase—securing funding for installation."

The City Council's unani-

mous vote to accept the design is a major step forward in Scenic Walton's ongoing efforts to promote smart, community-focused development. Once implemented, the linear park will serve as both a functional corridor and a visual asset to West DeFuniak Springs.

Scenic Walton would also like to extend special thanks to former City Councilman Anthony Vallee, whose advocacy and vision played a significant role in advancing this project during his time on the Council. His early support helped lay the foundation for the progress now being realized.

Scenic Walton looks forward to working with city leaders, community partners, and potential funders to bring this vision to life.









By CLINT GHARIB, AIF®, CFED®

2025 Q2 was nothing short of stellar for many areas of the stock markets both in the US and abroad. This year so far, the markets have really divided facts versus feelings in regard to investors. Sadly, though, there was no shortage of financial pundits and talking heads repeatedly in the media yelling 'run to the hills' or 'get out of stocks' or worse, fear fear-mongering that collapse was all but certain in Q1. You'd think after 35+ years managing money that I would no longer get ruffled by the crowd that repeatedly seems to overreact to headlines. As an advisor working in a fiduciary capacity, it really upsets me when I see emotions pandered to as clarity in the market. Too many investors were scared out of the markets because of emotions, either their own or those

Investing: Facts vs. Feelings

guiding them. I have long said that emotions are to investing like drinking is to driving: a TERRIBLE mix.

In my Market Update "Damn the Torpedoes" before the selloff in Q1, I said, "I see the current worry about President Trump's tariffs to the markets as the long-submerged torpedoes. The media has been filled with conjectures over when, what, where, why and how much they will be. Damn the tariffs, Earnings ahead... Thus, to me, US corporate earnings forecasts are the most important variable for navigating through the current 'minefield'." Once the sell-off took hold in March in my Market Update "Thanks for the Gumball," I said, "Currently I see the tail winds that have been driving stock gains in general remain: interest rates, earnings results & forecasts and cash flow. Do not think that means that I am just comfortable and fully invested. On the contrary, I am closely watching and assessing economic data amongst various reports and levels. So far, I can honestly say market action since November has not been outside what I was expecting. We have not seen anything yet beyond a normal profit taking correction."

Legendary investor Warren Buffett is quoted as saying, "You want to be greedy when others are fearful. You want to be fearful when others are greedy." This is easy to say and hard to execute in the midst of a market decline, but like the lyrics of one of my favorite songs "Fear is a Liar" by Zach Williams, "Fear, he is a liar, He will take your breath, Stop you in your steps, Fear, he is a liar, He will rob your rest, Steal your happiness, Cast your fear in the fire, 'Cause fear, he is a liar."

Fear works both ways. Now I see too many on the other side rushing to buy at peaks. If you missed out on the rally in Q2, I urge you not to rush all-in now. My experience has shown me it is folly to try to time the markets with all-in or all-out approach. Instead, I encourage investors to look even closer at the data, whether that be for a particular company, sector or market

(look both ways before crossing the street, so to speak). It seems likely to me that there could be another sell-off, especially profit taking, in the coming months, similar to what we saw this past March. Q3 is historically known for market turmoil.

While I think there could be a sell-off swift and temporary like March, I believe it will be to a much lesser extent, barring some major geo-political surprise. So it may be prudent to take some gains from the recent strong rally. This does not mean sell your winners blindly, rather like cutting off unfruitful branches on an apple tree and pruning those that are fruitful to make the whole (portfolio) more fruitful. I remain confident in my outlook due to the tailwinds for stocks still in place: interest rates bound in a tight range, many corporate earnings forecasts continue to be solid, and inflation has stays stable and cash flows remain generally ro-

In summary, use facts over feelings with your investing. The recent rally looks ripe for profit taking in Q3 so it may be prudent to 'scrape some cream off the top' and look to use short-term selloffs ahead of what I expect to be a positive winter for earnings.

Visit our site www.OxfordRA.com to learn more or contact us directly with questions or topics you'd like to hear about in the future.

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Heartache To Hope: Santa Rosa Beach Native Blossoms with Debut Children's Book Honoring Her Grandmother's Legacy

Nestled in the coastal charm of Florida's Emerald Coast, a beautiful story is blooming—one as radiant and inspiring as the young woman behind it. Isabella Violet Key, a 20-year-old model, cheerleading trainer, mental health advocate, and now debut author, has just released her first children's book, Free to Fly: Kathy Lou's Butterfly Wish—a poetic and powerful tribute to her late grandmother, Kathy Louise Litton.

"It's been two months without Free to Fly.

my sweet Nana—my best friend, my safest place, my biggest cheerleader, and such a huge part of my heart," Isabella shares. "I've been praying for God's guidance and strength, knowing how difficult it would be to grieve and accept this loss. In the heartache, God met me. He placed a powerful calling on my heart—to carry on her beautiful legacy and do something that would continue to shine her bright light."

That calling blossomed into Free to Fly.

Serving Destin to 30A

"I always thought I'd write a book someday—maybe 30 years from now—but God had other plans. What began as a way to process pain has become a story filled with hope, purpose, and beauty."

Kathy Lou, the inspiration behind the tale, was a gentle kind hearted woman with a beautiful soul, a woman of tremendous strength and big dreams.

"My nana was a provider - a safe haven," Isabella says. "Her arms were always open wide. Her stories lit up our imaginations, and her endless encouragement gave us a reason to dream big. Even while quietly battling her own storms, she poured love into everyone around her and made each person feel seen. Her story was never meant to stay silent—it was meant to bloom," Isabella reflects.

The idea for Free to Fly came full circle when Isabella was reading a handwritten letter from her Nana—one she had treasured since the funeral. In the note, Kathy Lou's letter symbolized the beauty of being free like a butterfly, letting go



of strongholds and encouraging others to find beauty even on dark days. The letter, hopeful and deeply personal, became the heartbeat of the book.

The letter was dated April 9, 1996—the same day Isabella, unknowingly, began writing her book this year.

"One Sunday morning, I curiously wondered if there was a date on the letter," Isabella recalls. "I looked—and it was the exact day I began writing her story. That moment was everything. God planted something beautiful that was conspiring for its ultimate purpose. I know she's been with me every step of the way.

Free to Fly tells the enchanting story of Kathy Louise, a gardener who nurtures more than just flowers—she sows seeds of hope, courage, and love in a sunlit valley where wildflowers bloom and dreams take root. As butterflies dance and songs of nature surround her, Kathy gently tends to her garden and the hearts around her. Yet, deep within her spirit, she dreams of flying—free like the butterflies she adores.

"This book is a small tribute to the immense impact she had on me. It is a reflection of the life she lived full of beauty and grace. "Isabella says

More than a book, Free to Fly is also the beginning of a heartfelt initiative: Kathy Lou's Comfort Kits.

"The first 100 books sold

will fund these kits," Isabella explains. "Each one is planted with love and purpose, offering hope, courage, and healing."

These baskets will be delivered to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, classrooms, and safe spaces—places where encouragement is needed most.

"Each kit carries more than just a book," Isabella says. "They hold affirmations, activities, and heartfelt reminders that every person is worthy, seen, and deeply loved."

It's a mission rooted in love—and it's already blooming in the hearts of the community.

You can purchase the book Free to Fly on Amazon by typing in the title. Isabella can also be found at local bookstores for signings this July, Sundog Books and the Hidden Lantern. She would love to sign your copy, get photos and enjoy inspiring crafts with you. To book a collaboration or event, reach out to her at isabellavioletkey@gmail. com. She will be sharing her story and leading mental health activities, crafts and bringing an inspiring word to all of our county libraries, at the Boys & Girls Club, Girls Inc., and NAMI Emerald Coast.

Isabella will be signing books at The Hidden Lantern in Rosemary Beach from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on July 19 and 20 and at Sundog Books in Seaside from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on July 26 and 27.

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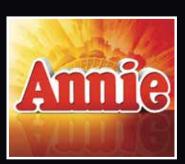


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Arts

ART ESCAPE

continued from page 1

About the Artists

Francisco Adaro, a Walton County-based artist originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, blends whimsical charm with refined technique. From a young age, he dreamed of a life in art, studying at La Salle and painting murals while selling sketches on the streets. A chance encounter with his now wife and Florida native Brooke, led him to 30A, where they opened Adaro Art Gallery. His vibrant oil paintings feature playful, stylized figures both human and animal—capturing moments of joy, curiosity, and tenderness. Inspired by his wife, children, and a lively menagerie of rescue animals, Adaro's work is a celebration of life's magic, infused with humor, warmth, and storytelling. His unique visual language invites viewers to see the world through a more joyful lens.

Christon Anderson is a selftaught Bay County artist out of Panama City. Anderson cultivates work that bridges the gap between poverty and privilege. Both bold and subtle mixed with abstraction and realism, Anderson's work acknowledges the duality in every singular subject.

Mark Little is a Walton County-based photographer whose work considers the connections that bring us together. Little's images bring into focus these connections, both with one another and the environments we inhabit; his photographs capture energy unfolding, offering a glimpse of the way it all intertwines. His work can be found in a variety of national spaces as well as 30A and greater Walton County.

Chandler Williams, a lo-



Chandler Williams,
"Rising From the Ashes"

cal photographer, was Walton County's artist of the year in 2021. His work has allowed him to experience life in many countries and interact with many amazing people along a multidecade journey. Williams is assisted by an experienced crew in tune with his working style and has a fine art photography gallery in Grayton Beach.

Mandy Yourick is an artist and educator whose work includes drawing, collage, and installation. Her work engages with broader themes of creative placemaking and ecology, often reflecting on how we inhabit public and private spaces. She studies structures and shelters, as well as individual and collective agency as they relate to environments and change. Mandy earned her MFA in Visual Arts from Vermont College of Fine Arts and has completed artist residencies in Gijipo, South Korea, Madison, Wisconsin, and Skopelos, Greece. Her sculpture, Hometown, is part of the collection at the Underwater Museum of Art in Grayton Beach.

Jamie Zimchek is a multidisciplinary artist with a background in painting and photog-



Jamie Zimchek, detail from "Connect the Dots"

raphy. Zimchek's work revolves around an exploration of popular narratives promulgated by power systems in private and public domains. She is particularly interested in the ways these systems use calculated storylines and absurd social constructs to shore up deeply entrenched self-interests. She has an MA in Mediterranean Studies from King's College London and an



Mandy Yourick, detail from "2025"



Christon Anderson, "Complementary Nuts"

MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Zimchek is co-founder of the I I I Artist Fund and an instructor in the art department at Gulf Coast State College.

About Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) is located less



Mark Little, "High Flying Birds"

than 30 minutes from Panama City Beach, Panama City and the beaches of South Walton. Today, with service from American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines, ECP provides daily flights to worldwide destinations, including daily and seasonal nonstop flights to Atlanta (ATL), Austin (AUS), Baltimore (BWI), Charlotte (CLT), Chicago (MDW/ORD), Dallas (DAL/ DFW), Denver (DEN), Houston (HOU/IAH), Indianapolis (IND), Kansas City (MCI), Nashville (BNA), New York City (LGA), Philadelphia (PHL), St. Louis (STL) and Washington DC (DCA). ECP provides Northwest Florida communities with first-class facilities and was strategically developed for major economic development opportunities. ECP is the gateway to visitors seeking Northwest Florida's famous beaches.







Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation's Second Wine Down Wednesday Raises \$4,681.92

Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation's second annual Wine Down Wednesday event, hosted on May 14 at Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood, raised \$4,681.92 for cardiovascular care at Sacred Heart Hospital of the Emerald Coast, advancing life-saving heart services.

Presented by Lynn McKenzie and Leonard Olson, guests enjoyed heavy hors d'oeuvres and a variety of fine wines while mingling with Ascension Sacred Heart's new CEO, Trey Abshier, and fellow cardiac doctors from the hospital. Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in a wine pull and enjoy live music, sponsored by Ali and Rob Weil.

All proceeds raised through ticket sales, donations, and the wine pull directly benefited cardiovascular care at Sacred Heart Hospital of the Emerald Coast.

"With heart disease affecting one in five adults, promoting heart health in our community is more vital than ever," said Janet Piepul, Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation major gifts and planned giving director. "We are thrilled to introduce our new cardiac physicians and physician assistants at our Wine Down Wednesday event that brought crucial awareness of the importance of heart health."

Ascension Medical Group Cardiology delivers specialty



heart options and surgical care close to home. Their cardiologists and interventional cardiologists manage and treat patients Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 7720 US 98, in Miramar Beach.

The second annual event raised 58% percent more than the first event held in September 2023. The Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation is al-

ready planning the next event, which will be held in August at Ambrosia.

The Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation would like to thank additional sponsors including Chris Sause of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices PenFed Realty, Emerald Coast Magazine, Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa, Kiara Watson Video, The Market Shops, VIP 30A Magazine, and VIP Destin Magazine for helping make this event possible. To learn more about the Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation, please visit https://www.givesacredheart.org.

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast is Expanding Its Award-Winning Maternity Care

Partnership with OB Hospitalist Group aims to improve the health of mothers and babies

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast is expanding its maternity services at The Family Birth Place through a partnership with OB Hospitalist Group, OBHG. As the only NICU close to home for families living in Walton and Okaloosa counties,

Sacred Heart Emerald Coast is renowned for its award-winning maternity care.

"As one of the fastest growing counties in the country, we have a high demand for OB-GYN services," said Trey Abshier, President of Sacred Heart Emerald Coast. "This partnership will help us to meet the growing needs of mothers and babies in our community while continuing to provide the high-quality care our patients and their families are accustomed to."

OB hospitalists care for preg-

nant women while they're in the hospital and their obstetrician isn't available. These specialized clinicians do not replace the care patients receive from their regular OB-GYN physician. Instead, they serve as an extension of the patient's regular doctor and the high-quality care that their doctor provides.

"No matter what time you or your unborn baby may need care, OBHG hospitalists add an extra layer of safety for emergency deliveries and complications before or after childbirth," said Dr. Deborah Edgeworth, medical director for OBHG at Sacred Heart Emerald Coast.

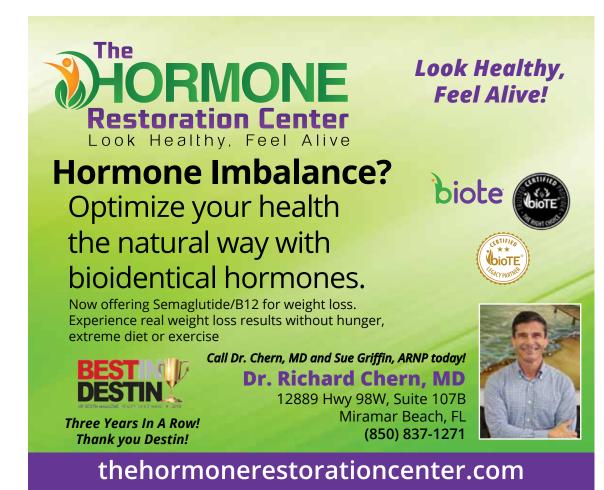
Sacred Heart Emerald Coast will also partner with OBHG to provide an OB ER, ensuring timely evaluation and intervention for emergencies like abdominal pain, bleeding, contractions and high blood pressure. The goals of the program include reducing ER wait times for expecting mothers, increasing patient safety and improving outcomes.

"Together we will continue our strong commitment to the health of mothers, babies and their families by partnering with OBHG on quality improvement projects inside and outside of the hospital," said Erica Bottom, director of Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Family Birth Place.

Sacred Heart Emerald Coast initiatives and recognitions for women's and children's health show our strong support for families in our community and include:

- Participation in the State's first postpartum wristband initiative that helps prioritize new mothers as patients and spotlight their medical history when they seek care through EMS, ERs or other medical sites.
- Earning a spot on Newsweek's list of America's Best Maternity Care Hospitals at the highest five ribbon level.
- The distinction of being a U.S. News & World Report 2025 High Performing hospital for Maternity Care and being recognized as a Maternity Care Access Hospital for our essential role in serving underserved communities at risk of becoming maternity care deserts.
- Being a Maternal Levels of Care verified hospital by The Joint Commission.
- Sacred Heart Emerald Coast's Baby-Friendly designation in recognition of our commitment to the highest level of breastfeeding support and education.

To learn more visit Sacred-HeartBaby.com.





Understanding Medicare Basics



By Christian Regalado

Will you be eligible for Medicare soon? If you've been anticipating your move to Medicare for the first time, making the transition can seem overwhelming. After all, there are a lot of moving parts and options to consider. But don't worry. With the right information and guidance, you'll be armed to make informed decisions best suited for your needs.

So, when do you start? While certain groups qualify for Medicare early due to misfortunes such as being on disability for over 24 months, an ALS diagnosis, or end-stage renal disease, most of us become eligible for Medicare the month we turn 65.

If you're already receiving Social Security benefits, you will automatically be enrolled in Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance), and your Medicare card will be mailed to you. If you're not yet collecting Social Security, you will need to apply, ideally three months prior to your birth month. You can postpone and stay on a credit-

able employer plan if you prefer. Otherwise, don't wait!

Medicare isn't just one thing; it's divided into different parts, each covering specific health-care services. Part A is hospital insurance. It also covers skilled nursing facilities and hospice care. For most people, Part A is paid for through work history payroll taxes.

Part B covers outpatient services such as doctor visits, lab tests, and X-rays. Unlike Part A, you will pay a monthly premium for Part B, which for most people is \$185 per month. in 2025. Higher-income individuals pay more due to the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). If this applies to you, consulting with a financial advisor or insurance broker can help identify strategies to mitigate these costs. Medicare A and B will cover about 80% of your medical expenses.

Next, you have two primary options to consider for more comprehensive coverage. The first is purchasing a Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plan. These plans help fill in the gaps left by Original Medicare, and they eliminate prior approval for most procedures. If you go this route, you'll also need to purchase a separate Part D prescription drug plan. Premiums for Part D plans can vary widely, depending on the coverage you select.

The second option is enrolling in a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C). These plans often have zero premiums and include additional benefits like dental, vision, and hearing coverage—services not included in Original Medicare. Medicare Advantage Plans are suitable for

those who are budget conscious and can tolerate some level of risk as these plans have varied cost structures and can have limited provider networks.

Deciding between these options can be complex, which is why consulting with a local and knowledgeable, certified Medicare broker really helps weed through options so you can select the coverage that best fits your lifestyle, needs, and budget. Remember, a broker's services are free to you, so please don't hesitate to reach out. I am a neighbor nearby that you can contact at any time. We can chat over the phone or meet in person. I'm happy to help! Email Christian@evergreenhealthins. com or call (850) 687-7606.





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A SUMMER OF FUN IN SOUTH WALTON

There's nothing like summer along the Emerald Coast. The heat of the salty day stretches into the buzz of the night, alive with music and fireworks. While we know you love the beautiful beaches, there are also a lot of exciting things to offer on land. Day or night, you'll never be bored, and there's something for the whole family to enjoy. Here are some upcoming events you won't want to miss.

Farmers Markets

Grand Blvd. Saturdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Grayton Locals Market Thursdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Hibiscus Guest House

Seaside Amphitheater Saturdays and Tuesdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Peddlers Pavilion Sundays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Rosemary Beach at North Barrett Square Sundays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Family Fun at The Village of Baytowne Wharf

Baytowne is for family fun



this summer! Events include Scallywag Sundays 7-9 p.m., Movie Mondays at 8 p.m., Boomin' Tuesdays with a DJ Dance Party followed by fireworks 7:15-9:15 p.m., Wednesday Night Concert Series 7-9 p.m., and a Thursdaze Lights Show 9 p.m.

Hemingway Day at The Pearl Hotel July 21

Enjoy global cuisine at Havana Beach Bar & Grill inspired

by the life and travels of Ernest Hemingway 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Each dish will be paired with its own wine or spirit. Reservations are recommended.

Nature & Outdoors

Tackle Boxes Not Xboxes: Kids Fishing Day at Boathouse Oyster Bar July 15 &

Kids can enjoy a day of fish-

ing aboard the American Spirit Party Boat. Includes event swag, lunch, water, and 6 hours of fishing starting at 8 a.m. Cost is \$60. Kids ages 6-10 on July 15 and Kids 11-14 on July 22.

Wild Sea Turtle Wednesdays

Join South Walton Turtle Watch on Wednesday mornings for Wild Sea Turtle Wednesday at The Big Chill 30A from 9-11 a.m. Learn about sea turtles and take the Jr. Ocean Ranger pledge to help keep our beaches clean, dark and flat for nesting sea turtles and baby hatchlings. Free and open to the public.

Coffee with a Ranger at Topsail Hill Preserve July 16

Enjoy coffee and a conversation with Park Rangers at the park clubhouse at 9 a.m. All ages welcome.

Guided Plant Walk at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park July 21

Join Master Gardner Bill Kuenstler for a guided stroll beginning at Tram stop #2 from 9-11 a.m.. Free with admission to the park.

A Tea for All Occasions at E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center July 26

Enjoy a unique rustic tea party with refreshing cocktails, a selection of teas, tea sandwiches, and desserts. \$70/\$65 for Women of Nature members at 11:30 a.m.

Vacation Bible School

Motion Summer Vibes at Destiny Worship Center July 16, 23 & 30

Every Wednesday through the end of July, celebrate summer with games, special events, and sermons geared towards youth in 6th-12th grade from 6:30-8 p.m.

Wonder Junction-Marvel at Jesus, Live for His Glory at Destiny Worship Center July 21-25

Enjoy a week of learning

Continued on next page















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about the wonders of Jesus. There'll be snacks, games, worship, Bible teaching, and fun from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Performing Arts

Kids Improv Bootcamp at The REP Theatre July 15, 17, 22, 24, 29 & 31

Kids ages 5-12 will have fun learning improv the basics of improv comedy and performance through challenges, teamwork exercises, and theatre games 2-3:30 p.m. Advanced registration is required. Cost is \$25 per session. Visit LoveTheRep.com.

Comedy on the Boulevard at Emerald Coast Theatre Company July 18

Hosted by Jason Hedden with headliner Clayburn Cox and feature act Emily Holden at 7 p.m. Tickets available at the theatre or visit www.emerald-coasttheatre.org.

The REP Rumpelstiltskin in Seaside Mondays

The Seaside REP Theatre

presents Rumpelstiltskin Mondays at 6 p.m. through Aug. 4 at the Seaside Amphitheater. This complimentary event will entertain the entire family. This captivating twist on a beloved classic is packed with adventure and humor. Visit LoveTheRep.com.

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 6:30 p.m. through August 6. This enchanting version of the classic Brothers Grimm fairytale features a heartwarming story, unforgettable characters, and many laughs, making it a delightful experience for the entire family! Visit LoveTheRep.com.

Huck & Lilly @ Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays

Huck & Lilly will perform live in the Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show. Free and open to all ages. Singer/songwriters Ken Johnson and Andi Zack-Johnson as Huck and Lilly specialize in music for kids AND the grown-ups who love them!

Camps

Forge Summer Camps at Forge Martial Arts SoWal July 14-18

Kids 5+ can enjoy Nerf wars, Legos, martial arts, sports, music, art, movies, and more from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Visit forgesowal.com.

E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center Wednesday Summer Day Camps

Designed for children aged 5-12, these camps focus on nature exploration, animal encounters and environmental education. Sessions are held on Wednesdays fthrough July 30 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$55 per camper. Register by calling (850) 835-1824.



Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park Sunset Camps

Sunset Camps for ages 6-14 include dolphin encounters, beach exploration and dinner. Select dates in June-August, 4-9 p.m., at \$89 for the first child, with discounts for additional siblings. Visit gulfarium.com.

Games

Grand Boulevard Lawn Games

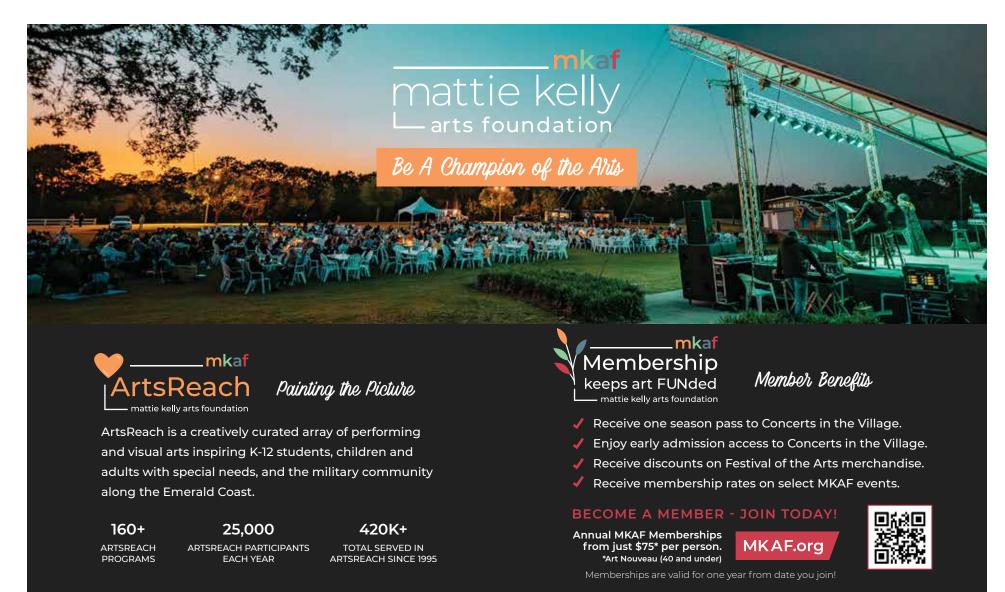
Bring the entire family out to Grand Boulevard to enjoy some fun! Summer Lawn Games will take over Grand Park from 5-8:30 p.m. nightly through August 9. Grab some food and drinks from one of the many restaurants in Grand Boulevard before you settle in to a fun round of corn hole, giant lawn chess, checkers and more.

Bingo at Stinky's Bait Shack Sundays

Enjoy 5 free rounds of bingo 4-6 p.m. on Sundays.

Trivia Night at The Courtyard at Pescado July 15, 29 and Aug. 12

Call ahead to pre-book your table. 6 p.m.





What Are Your Nails Telling You About Your Health?



By Bridget Sullivan, PA-C, COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND DERMATOLOGY

Some medical conditions might not appear to be obvious on the outside of the body, but did you know that some medical conditions can appear through changes in our nails? This article will provide you with examples of changes in fingernail shape, color, and texture, and possible medical conditions related to those changes.

Clubbed Nails - The fingernails may appear swollen and curved, resembling an upsidedown spoon or dome shape.











This can be a sign of a heart or lung condition.

Spoon Nails - The fingernails have a spoon-shaped appearance. This can be a sign of iron deficiency, anemia or thyroid disease.

Beau's Lines - The fingernails or toenails have horizontal

grooves or ridges that appear when nail growth is temporarily interrupted. This can be the cause of uncontrolled diabetes, severe illness or injury, infections, or nutritional deficiencies.

Nail Pitting - The fingernails or toenails have small depressions or dents in the nail. This can be a sign of eczema, psoriasis or alopecia areata.

Hutchinson's Sign - The fingernail or toenail may have a brown on black line underneath

the nail that extends to the cuticle or nailfold. This could be a sign of melanoma.

Pay attention to your nails. Changes in shape, color, texture, or any other abnormalities can be an indicator of the conditions noted, or other systemic illnesses and diseases. If you see any abnormalities in your nails, it is important to bring this to the attention of your medical provider for further evaluation.







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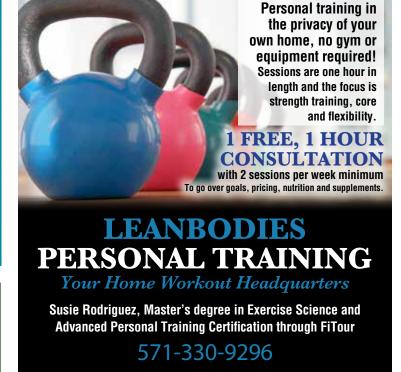
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Wellness

Forget the Sprint: Real Healing Happens in the Marathon!

At The Tortoise Clinic, personalized care and patience lead to powerful, lifelong wellness



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 part of getting older."

"I was given medication, but

no one asked about my diet or stress levels."

Integrative medicine fills those gaps.

We take time to listen. We look at patterns, history, and lifestyle. We ask about your 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

Continued on next page

WOMEN'S WELLNESS REIMAGINED

What if your story mattered as much as your labs?

What if "normal" isn't optimal for you?

What if your fatigue, bloating, or anxiety isn't just stress - but a sign your body needs support?



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Book Review: Maybe You Should Talk to Someone



REVIEWED BY MICHAEL MCMA-NUS, LCSW

"Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" by Lori Gottlieb is a compelling and insightful exploration of the human experience through the lens of therapy. Gottlieb, a psychotherapist, weaves together her own journey as a therapist and her experiences as a patient, creating a narrative that is both personal and universal.

The book introduces us to a variety of clients, each struggling with their own challenges—from the newly engaged to the terminally ill. Gottlieb's empathetic portrayal of her clients not only highlights their struggles but also underscores the shared nature of human emotion and the complexities of life. Her ability to blend humor with powerful and moving situations makes for an engaging read, allowing readers to reflect on their own lives while connecting with the stories presented.

What sets this book apart is Gottlieb's candidness about her own vulnerabilities. As she navigates her own therapy sessions, readers witness her growth and self-discovery, reminding us that even therapists are human and face their own battles. This dual perspective enriches the narrative, making it relatable and thought-provoking.

Gottlieb's writing style is engaging, filled with wisdom and insight. She skillfully distills complex psychological concepts into relatable anecdotes, making the book not only informative but also enjoyable. The themes of love, loss, and the search for meaning resonate deeply, inviting readers to reflect on their own relationships and life choices.

Overall, "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" is a beautifully written examination of the therapeutic process, the importance of connection, and the resilience of the human spirit. It's a must-read for anyone interested in psychology, self-improvement, or simply seeking a deeper understanding of the complexities of and relationships. Lori Gottlieb

has crafted a book that is both a mirror and a guide, encouraging us all to embrace our vulnerabilities and seek help when needed.

Michael McManus LCSW, is a psychotherapist in Santa Rosa Beach, FL, with his wife Angela, who is also

Lori Gottlieb MAYBE SHOULD SOMEONE A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed

a psychotherapist. They have lived and practiced in the area for almost four decades. They have four children and in their spare time enjoy hiking, reading, jogging, yoga and bike riding. Michael can be reached by phone or text at (850) 837-0123. Visit the website:Psychotherapy30A.com.



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continued from previous page

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.

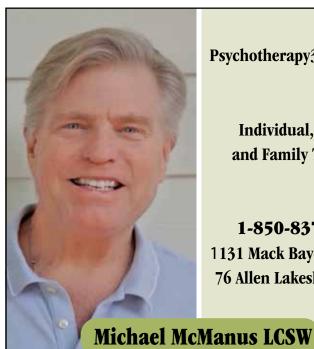
The Tortoise Mentality

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 your-

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 lifetime.



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Wellness

Unbreakable Bones



By Kay Leaman, HealthyDay HealthyLife

Life Osteoporosis happens when bones become weak and brittle. The most important thing to note that doctors don't tell you is that we cannot only prevent it, but it can be reversed. In some cases, it may be more difficult reversing it if the remodeling process isn't functioning.

Did you know that bones are living tissue (living, breathing, functioning cells) that remodel, rejuvenate and recycle continuously? We have the ability to keep them strong and healthy despite the aging process. With this in mind, let's dive in.

First, the statistics:

- 1 in 2 women after 50 will break a bone
- 1 in 5 men after 50 will break a bone
- 1 in 5 women can break a bone three or more times before being diagnosed
- Women reach peak bone mass between ages 20-35
- 10 million Americans have osteoporosis
- 44 million people have low bone density in over half of adults over 50 globally
- 25% of people with hip fractures end up in long term care. The loss of independence and mobility is often irreversible.
- Osteoporosis and it' effects are costlier than breast cancer, heart attacks and strokes.
- 39% of the population are deficient in calcium
- \bullet 95% of the population are deficient in vitamin D
- Women who strength train can increase spinal bone density by 13% in 6 months (Tufts University).

Bones are made up of osteocytes (bone cells), osteoblasts which build up and form new bone cells continuously, osteogenic cells are stem cells and os-



teoclasts which kind of reabsorb or break down the bone cells.

Muscles and bones work hand-in-hand. There needs to be a 'push and pull' on the bones to ensure the remodeling process actually takes place. Hence, resistance training can help your bones in the remodeling process. Six exercises that aid in strengthening bones are squats, walking, lunges, push-ups, jumping jacks and planks.

After menopause women experience increased bone loss primarily due to the decline in estrogen production. The decline in estrogen increases the risk of developing osteoporosis. As a side note, with men it's testosterone that declines, and for both men and women it's progesterone.

Risk factors we can control are sedentary lifestyles, poor calcium and vitamin D intake, smoking, alcohol, certain medications or medical conditions, hormonal imbalances and posture. Posture is critical. If you slouch when you sit or bend slightly when standing or walking, you limit the amount of oxygen coming in. Our bones need oxygen! Practice keeping your shoulder back and down. The ribcage needs to expand for quality oxygen to nourish our bones.

Risk factors we can't control are age, gender, family history, body frame size and ethnicity.

Calcium rich foods (Eat a variety of foods every week.):

- Vegetables: collards, broccoli, spinach, okra, kale, bok choy Beans: white, red, green, chickpeas, lentils
- Dairy: cheese, almond milk, yogurt, milkshakes, whole milk
- Nuts and Seeds: sunflower, sesame, chia, almonds, hazel,

walnuts Fruit: oranges, raisins, dried figs, currants, apricots, kiwi

• Other: eggs, tofu, seaweed, sardines, shrimp

Five Holistic Strategies:

- **Nutrition:** Cellular nutrients (antioxidants, core minerals) including calcium, vitamin D, magnesium and vitamin K are important for healthy bones.
- **Exercise:** Weight bearing, resistance, and impact
- Hormonal Balance: estrogen, testosterone, DHEA Supplement: We can't get what we need in food alone
- **Lifestyle:** Diet, sleep, activity
- Preventative Measures: Create meal plans incorporating many foods. Incorporate strength training 30 minutes three times per week. Maintain a consistent supplement routine. Get regular health assessments including a bone density test (DEXA).

Lastly, consider a collagen supplement, adequate protein intake (70 grams/day for women), natural hormone therapy, a weighted vest and utilize vibratory training (With whole-body vibration, you stand, sit or lie on a machine with a vibrating platform. As the machine vibrates, it transmits energy to your body, forcing your muscles to contract and relax dozens of times each second. The activity may cause you to feel as if you're exerting yourself.). You can also purchase a vibration plate that you stand

Making too many changes at once can be overwhelming. Start with one to three things and build up from there. Let's get stronger together.

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Emotional Triggers



By Stephenie Craig, Journey Bravely

Remember a time someone else's behavior really got under your skin. Maybe your partner's emotional reaction stirred you up. Perhaps your child's behavior or attitude upset you.

A friend may have responded to you in a way that felt unsupportive. A stranger may have been unkind for seemingly no reason. Think about how you felt in that moment and how you instinctually wanted to respond or did respond. Did you call them out for their behavior? Did you withdraw and become silent and emotionally disengaged? Did you have big emotions and freeze and try to pretend everything was okay without engaging in a conversation?

We all have emotional triggers that cause our nervous system to move into emergency mode. Our brain is prepared to engage in one of four behaviors to protect us when it determines we might be physically or emotionally unsafe including fight, flight, freeze or fawn. The fight instinct tells you to move toward danger and confront. The flight instinct tells you to physically flee the situation. The freeze instinct tells you doing and saying nothing will keep you safe. The fawn instinct tells you to move toward danger and appease or placate the threat to find safety. When you are in emergency mode, your rational thinking goes off line and becomes unavailable to you. Your brain's primary concern is survival and

When someone's behavior triggers an emergency response, you are likely to respond to the other person from a place of self-defensiveness, judgement, shame, blame, avoidance, fear or attack. These emergency driven responses lead to disconnection and eventual escalation in relationship problems. If you stay prolonged in emergency mode, you will begin to make up negative stories in your head about others that will make it difficult to repair and rebuild trust. The negative stories begin to feel true and you see yourself as a victim and others as villains. Your brain searches for negative examples to reinforce the nega-

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Marijuana Physician Consultation & tive story and begins filtering out the positive. And, before you know it, the relationship as a whole has become negative in your mind.

Both you and others will inevitably have big feelings and emotional triggers. Often, people are re-

sponding to one another's big feelings and triggers more than to the heart of the person.

When triggered, most people respond better to compassion and connection than they do to shame and judgement. So, if you don't want your relationships to feel negative and you want to respond to others on a compassionate, heart level, what can you do?

7 Ways to Navigate Your Emotional Triggers

- 1. Notice your brain moved into emergency mode. Notice body changes like tension, stomach and chest sensations, jaw grinding, heart rate increase. Notice changes in thoughts focused on fear, anger, self-defense, and blame. Notice thoughts related to gathering negative evidence.
- 2. Take steps to regulate your nervous system. Try taking

deep breaths, taking a restroom break, stepping outside for fresh air, take off your shoes and feel the floor/ground, eat sour candy or a strong mint, splash cold water on hands or face.

- 3. When calmer, check the negative story in your head. Remind yourself the other person is a whole person with strengths, weaknesses, and big feelings too.
- 4. Release judgement to embrace curiosity. Instead of, "You're being so rude and I didn't do anything to deserve it." try, "You seem overwhelmed. What's happening for you right now? How can I support you." Or try saying, "Are you okay?" "What do you need right now?
- 5. Move toward with compassion instead of withdrawing in punishment. Sit near quietly and take deep breaths. Ask the person if a hug would be helpful. Try validating their emotional experience instead of shaming it. "That does seem overwhelming. I can see why you're feeling emotional right now."
- 6. Let go of winning and pursue connection. "I'm here with you while you have big feelings. I want to be supportive. I'm also working hard to manage my feelings about your big feelings so I can be here for you."
- 7. When both parties are calm, try talking about the big feelings that happened and what you can each do to support one another when big feelings happen

These strategies are not meant for relationships with emotionally or physically abusive dynamics. In those cases, distance is more appropriate. Next time you are feeling triggered by someone's behavior or big feelings, try something new and notice how it shifts the interaction. Connect with us for counseling or coaching along your journey at Journeybravely. com.







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A Pastor's Ponderings: Timing



By Rev. Pete Hyde

Breathing heavily between sets in my weight routine, I stand at the second-story window of the gym looking out across the bay, stirred by a steady summer breeze on a hot, humid, normal summer day in Florida. My thoughts kind of wander from here to there as I try to catch my breath for a few minutes.

Movement in the sky catches my eye. A lone osprey with wings outstretched is circling in the updraft of the five-story hotel. Seemingly without moving a muscle and certainly without moving a feather, the graceful

bird heads out over the open water in its relentless hunt for tonight's dinner for the family that will likely include a couple of young chicks back at the nest. Its circle grows tighter as it almost hovers fifty or sixty feet above the surface of the brackish water. In an instant, wings are tucked back. Head is pointed to the water. With increasing speed, it heads toward the water like a dive bomber on its final run. Just before reaching the surface, wings are pulled back, legs and talons are extended to break the fall, and it soars back into the sky. Another one gets away. The majestic wings spread again as the routine starts over. What looks like lazy circles in the sky are an intense, unchanging work for survival for the osprey and its family.

In a moment, a second osprey appears and begins to circle in tandem with its mate just a few yards further out over the bay. Their soaring circles interlock as if they could hear heavenly music guiding the aerial ballet. If I were outside, I would be able to hear them calling to each oth-



er. But the dance is not for the enjoyment of the ospreys. It is vital work that dictates whether they and their young ones will eat tonight. In what seems like random dives, the two ospreys, who mate for life and return to the same nest each year to raise their young, dive toward the surface. Sometimes they pull out of the dive and other times they hit the surface of the water with a splash. Each time they come up empty-handed.

I found myself rooting for them. I forgot my weight routine and became oblivious to those around me. One more dive. Come on, you can do it. I was about to return to my world when one of the ospreys started another dive. It hit the shallow water at full speed, creating a splash and spray that any ten-yearold cannon baller would have been proud of. There was a moment when it seemed to rest on the top

of the water. Mighty wings stretched out and shook a little water off. Then, with mighty strokes, it struggled to lift off carrying a large fish. Its mate joined it as they headed across the bay with dinner in hand. I almost cheered out loud.

I reluctantly return to the weight machines, pushing against the stacks of metal weights. God had not only touched me with a graceful and beautiful snapshot of his wondrous creation, but he had also given me a lesson.

All our lives, we toil and work and many times struggle as we strive to survive this thing called life. We spend hours circling and searching – sometimes gracefully and sometimes not. We come up short and emptyhanded as we dive into life and all that it tempts us with. Over and over, we try. Some give up after a while. Others are persistent and persevere and give it one more try. While we try and try, others come alongside us to call out encouragement and to be with us in the struggle. In God's time, the reward will come. When everything fits into His plan and schedule the dive into life will be successful, and we will be able to carry that blessing to share with everyone. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...My chains are gone. I've been set free. My God my Savior has ransomed me."

I push a little harder on the weights. My muscles ache. My soul offers praise.

Push hard, my friends. God will bless your pushing. Dive fast, my friends. God will reward your diving.

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



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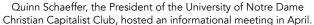




The Christian Capitalist College Clubs:

Helping Students Grow in Their Faith and in Business







Caroline Sanders, the President of the University of Alabama Christian Capitalist Club, hosted an informational meeting in April.



Drew Moss, the President of the Auburn University Christian Capitalist Club, hosted an informational meeting in April.

By Rich Sanders

Last April, my wife Rebekah and I had a terrific visit with two professors at the Mendoza College of Business at Notre Dame University while we were in South Bend to see our son, Will, pitch for the South Bend Cubs. We talked with Dr. James Otteson and Dr. John Sikorski about the Christian Capitalist movement and learned about their efforts to prepare students

to be better Christians in business. We were truly inspired by the stories they shared about the rapid growth of their academic programs. Within about thirty minutes of visiting with them and seeing the "Force for Good" banner outside the bookstore, it occurred to Rebekah and me that we should start Christian Capitalist clubs on college campuses around the nation!

These clubs serve as training

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grounds for the next generation of leaders who want to integrate their faith with their business efforts. Through guest speakers, community service projects, book discussions, and local outreach, students can explore how capitalism and Christianity thrive together when rooted in scriptural values. "The more we make, the more we give!"

Our daughter, Caroline, a junior majoring in public rela-

tions, has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and was quick to volunteer to start the first club at the University of Alabama. She proclaimed: "Having the Christian Capitalist Club on campus gives students the opportunity to prepare for the next step of entering the workforce with Christian values."

Students at Auburn, Ole Miss, South Carolina and Notre Dame have since volunteered to start clubs at their schools. Most of the presidents were able to gather in Atlanta last Thanksgiving for a retreat to prepare for the launch of the Clubs, and several of them held informational meetings at the end of the Spring semester.

The Christian Capitalist College Clubs support students in growing their careers in business, regardless of their majors or academic fields of study, and developing an ethic of hard work and generous giving to the poor and needy during their time on campus and beyond. The Clubs will work with churches, local non-profit organizations and businesses in their greater communities, giving students a chance to directly express their love of neighbor during their time in college. Students are also learning through the Clubs that they can use their faith in business after graduation, not hide from it!

Quinn Schaeffer, the President of the Christian Capitalist Club at Notre Dame and a double-major in accounting and finance at the Mendoza College of Business, summarizes the thoughts of many of her peers: "The Christian Capitalist Club



Rebekah and Rich Sanders outside the bookstore at Notre Dame with the banner that inspired the idea of the Christian Capitalist College

at Notre Dame is a combination of what every student in the Mendoza College of Business came to our Catholic school for: the interconnection of faith with commerce."

As the summer winds down, and college students head back to campus, if you or any students you know might be interested in joining or starting a Club at their schools, please pass along our website: christiancapitalist.life.

Rich Sanders is a pastor, small business owner, retired healthcare attorney and adjunct professor at Emory University, and former intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy, He and his wife, Rebekah, met at church in 1996, have been blessed with three children (James, William and Caroline) and live in Destin with their large golden retriever, Cowboy.



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Musing

Sean of the South: Get a Life



By Sean Dietrich

The electricity went out. I don't know why it happened. It wasn't storming. The weather was nice. All I know is I was watching TV when the lamps suddenly flickered and died.

And that was that.

The house fell silent. The refrigerator quit vibrating. The A/C compressor was no longer humming. My dog stared at the ceiling fan slowing down. The power must have affected cell towers, too. I had no phone ser-

For a few minutes I just sat in my living room, watching my dog dutifully perform an act of intimate hygiene.

Panic set in. What was I going to do? No electricity? No internet? No phone service? How would I contact a loved one in an emergency? How would I dial 911? How was I going to order cat food on Amazon?

I was becoming dangerously isolated from humanity, and fast. As an American, I am obligated by the Bill of Rights to keep current with essential news headlines at all times.

But without vital electronic devices, I had no idea what key events were happening in the global community. I was missing out.

What if something was hap-

pening in North Korea I needed to know about? How about Quebec? What if I missed vital updates on court hearings? Or the baby monkey kidnappings in Panama? Or the videoed rescue of the runaway zebra in Murfreesboro, Tennessee?

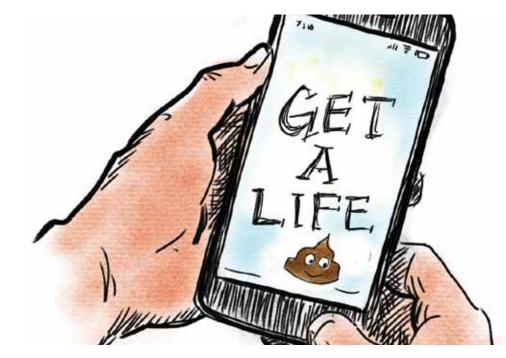
How was I supposed to live without constant headlines about various billionaires' sex scandals? What about my 24hour footage of violent demonstrations in Third World countries, massive explosions, terrorist bombs, bodies lying in streets, or "Live with Kelly and

No more TV means no more rich dudes in courtrooms talking about rappers' prostitution rings. No more news anchors gleefully saying the words "Harvey Weinstein." No more commercials urging me to purchase gold, Colonial Life insurance, or any other valuable service Joe Namath provides.

Also, no more fast food commercials advertising plasticized meat-like "products," injected with industrial-grade cholesterolized gelatine before being served upon "buns" that aren't actually-in the legal sensebread. This is usually followed by weight-loss commercial.

No more pharmaceutical ads about breakthrough drugs with vaguely Star-Trekky names that can (a) improve your life, and (b) kill you. No more lengthy drug company disclaimers which last about as long as law school:

("Zelabubracil may cause kidney failure, brain bleeding, rare forms of eyeball fungi, inability to form sentences without spontaneously soiling your underwear, depressive disorders, suicidal thoughts, sudden interest in C-Span...")



And what about my phone? No text conversations with family members that are purely based on sharing memes? No more spam marketers texting information about my auto warranty?

No more robo-calls from prerecorded machines offering me critical information about debt consolidation services, urgent health insurance opportunities, or scams about fundraisers for upcoming congressmen's balls. Everyone knows congressmen don't have those.

No. Without electricity there was nothingness.

I felt lost and disconnected. Where was I going to get my excitement? How was I going to adequately feel afraid? How in the WORLD was I going to

defend my principles on social media by engaging with people whom I've never met and subsequently calling them buttholes?

What in the world was I going to do with myself?

Wait. I know. Maybe it's time I lived my life.





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By Kirk McCarley

Not to be confused with armed conflict, W.A.R. is a term most inherent to the sport of baseball. Its initials stand for "wins above replacement."

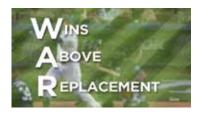
It is a rough gauge suggesting how many more wins were theoretically earned by a team having a certain player on a team vs. an "average," readW.A.R.

ily available replacement. It is calculated through incorporating such factors as offensive production, defensive performance, and league averages, weighing in the difficulty of their position, shortstop or pitcher, for example, as well.

The higher the WAR, the more valuable the player. For instance, a player with a WAR of 5.0 is considered to have added five more wins to their team compared to a replacement level player. In major league baseball, which demands a 162-game regular season, five wins can still be significant, separating not only playoff eligible teams from competitors, but also determining home field advantage when the post-season arrives.

As of June 22, New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge boasted a WAR of 5.6. The Yankees had 45 wins and led their division in the American League. WAR suggests that without Judge, the Yankees would have only 39 wins and would occupy third place in their division.

Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Dodgers, who has been a designated hitter and outfielder as well as a pitcher, had a WAR of 3.6. Like the Yankees, the Dodgers also led their division in the National League. Were the nearly four wins that Ohtani has provided the Dodgers to be scratched, they would



drop to second place in their division.

How might WAR apply to you and me?

Granted, few of us are professional athletes. In addition, our compensation pales compared to that of a major leaguer, where the average player salary this season slightly exceeds \$5 million. Yet we each have some standard of evaluation in what we do. What level of sales do we generate? How effectively do we respond to customers? Even in our personal lives, are we contributing a fair share to the success of our families?

I've introduced the concept of WAR to some of my coaching clients, not so much from the standpoint of cranking out the sophisticated statistical algorithms from the world of sports, but rather as more a statement of value. Allow me to explain.

A sales professional between jobs and seeking a new role lands a job interview. They are asked during the interview to elaborate on an achievement. A possible response might include that under their leadership, sales in their work unit achieved an all-time inflation adjusted high in the past year, increasing by 15% over the prior year. Dur-

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ing their five-year period before that, average year over year sales increased 9% annually, compared to a 5% average in the other work areas of that organization.

In other words, exemplary metrics.

Not all of us are in professions where worth is easily quantified. A customer relationship manager may be able to measure client satisfaction through surveys, though. "Mary and her team provided an experience far exceeding typical expectations." "John and his crew delivered service that was professional, prompt, and set new high standards. I will be recommending his company to my friends and colleagues."

Even more powerful are the tales that speak to character and heart. "As a claims adjuster, Sally went the extra mile when our home was destroyed by a weather event. She stayed with us throughout the ordeal, providing more than expected. What would we have done without her?"

The sales professional. Mary. John. Sally. Achieving. Going beyond. All providing exceptional value

Each of us is a product that offers value. We may not be flashy. We may not work in a capacity that lends itself to easily measurable key performance indicators. Maybe impeccable character and heart are our best assets. One thing is certain for any of us, though. There are one or more things that you offer that you do better than most for which you provide wins above replacement. What might that be? Who needs to know it?

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 is also 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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Chautauqua



By Rick Moore

While spending time with my son in Boulder, Colorado, I visited a state park at the foothills of the Flatiron Mountains. Near the park entrance was a sign with the words "Chautauqua Park." I had seen the word Chautauqua on signs in Defuniak Springs, which is just thirty minutes from my home.



I wasn't sure what the word meant or where the word came from. I asked someone in the Visitor Center of the Colorado Chautauqua if it was related to the Chautauqua in Florida. She gave me a brochure detailing the history of the Chautauqua Movement. This really sparked my curiosity, and I began researching.

Chautauqua is a county in the northwest corner of New York where, in 1874, a Methodist minister and a businessman joined forces to create a camp to educate Sunday school teachers in the areas of art, education, recreation and religion. Although it started in New York, a few years later it moved to Florida, and then sprouted up across much of the nation. The Chautauqua in Defuniak Springs was so popular that several Presidents of the United States came to speak at it. Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke twice at the summer gathering, said, "Chautauqua is the most American thing in America." Thousands attended, with many staying for weeks at a time.

Records reflect that in the early 1900s at a typical Chautauqua, campers learned Latin or French, listened to Beethoven or ragtime, and sampled lectures on literature, art, science and history. Americans who had never studied chemistry saw frozen CO2 and other wonders. Chautauqua also started America's first book club, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. This movement thrived on American curiosity. It became so popular that it spread west to Boulder, Colorado. Today, the Chautauqua in Florida and in New York seem only a token of their glory days. Though there are still annual festivals at locations across the nation, with the advent of radio and television, the Chautauqua Movement lost most of its influence. That is, except for the Boul-

der location. The Colorado Chautauqua continues to thrive. Visiting there brought me back to a time when learning was very different. This hands-on approach to education is the very opposite of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

AI is the number one news story of this year. I like Artificial Intelligence, but it should never replace non-Artificial Intelligence that is natural and organic. Think about the word artificial for a moment. Artificial sweeteners used to be advertised as superior to natural sweeteners. We now know that is not true. Even our animals can suffer from artificial synthetic ingredients and artificial additives in their food. My wife makes her own dog food because she has seen firsthand what artificial ingredients can do to our pets. When I see the word artificial, a red flag goes up. If feeding our bodies artificial ingredients is harmful, what does Artificial Intelligence do to our minds? What we feed our minds is no different conceptually from what we feed our bodies. Artificial Intelligence can be great, but it should not be a replacement for natural intelligence. Seeing an exotic flower grow on a mountainside is very different than seeing a picture of it on the

internet or even with the latest virtual goggles.

If you can't make a trip to the Colorado Chautauqua to enjoy the current offerings of activities, I have a suggestion: There is a local attraction that in many ways carries on the spirit of the Chautauqua. It is the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center located on Highway 20 East in Freeport. Be sure and check the days and times it is open to the public. Perhaps you can go visit a zoo or aquarium soon. The Artificial Intelligence you get from a VR Headset can never match the experience of be-

ing out in nature. The noise my sound machine makes at night is nice, but it will never replace the sound of the waves I hear while sitting on the beach. When you can, go natural.

Rick Moore is Communication Pastor at Destiny Worship Center.



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Road to Redemption: Eddie Mansfield, Managing Director at Path of Grace

By Victoria Ostrosky

God chooses to use some of the most broken people to accomplish His wonderful agenda of salvation. The Apostle Peter, for example, was tough, brash and confident. And because Jesus knew what Peter needed to learn, He allowed Satan to sift him as wheat. Not to demean him, but to show him that he was nothing without God. Peter would go on to be a charter member of the new ecclesia of God. God orchestrated Peter's first sermon on the Day of Pentecost to save 3000 souls. And the church was born. Peter, now laser-focused, was used mightily by God to bring the good news to, mainly, his Jewish brothers.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul the Pharisee, spent his every waking moment hunting down followers of The Way to put them in prison and have them executed. His zeal for the Law took him down the false path of works until Jesus knocked him off his donkey. He was given a heart of flesh for his heart of stone, then spent the rest of his life hunting for the lost, mainly Gentiles, delivering the good news of the Gospel, and writing most of the New Testament, with many of those letters written while in prison for preaching the Word.

Most of us either know someone personally or know of someone whom God broke completely so He could make them into a vessel fit for His use.

Eddie Mansfield was born and raised in Kentucky in a Christian household with a praying mom (we'll come back to that later). Eddie wasn't really into Christianity, and, as he says, "I veered away from anything that looked like Christianity." Eddie personified the typical teenage rebellious attitude, and, in his case, began drinking and smoking marijuana. "I had a progressing drug problem. I went to 7 rehabs and moved to different colleges wasting time and partying."

Drug use often accompanies arrests and jail time. Eddie's lifestyle played out the same. By the time he was 38 he "had a messed up life, in and out of trouble"

When Eddie was finally, completely broken, and ready

to listen to God's voice, he was once again in jail. A bunkmate, with whom he used to be friends in the drug world, suggested they do Bible studies while they served their time. They started in the Gospel of Mark. During Eddie's 7 months in jail, his praying mom began having a recurring dream about her son running a faith-based program for people in recovery. She believed God was doing something

would change him.

That was the end of 2006. In 2011, Eddie says," [I] realized my mom was right and started to see the vision she had. The Lord has given me the opportunity to help people like me."

in Eddie and had faith that God

Path of Grace, a faith-based transitional village in Freeport, opened in 2009. This place of healing specializes in helping women achieve lasting sobriety with, among other important things, therapy, both single and group, Bible studies and work

assignments. The highly structured program is for 16-24 months.

Eddie has something specific to say to the addict: "There's a better life – give God a chance to help you and change you. When you're high, you're in another world and don't realize until you're free for a bit that you're hurting. There's freedom on the other side. Get in a Christ-centered program."

Eddie is currently the Managing Director at Path of Grace, overseeing many women's lives being forever changed by Jesus. "God can take someone so messed up and turn it to good. I'm a firm believer that God has done all this. He's restored the years the locust has eaten."

You can listen to Eddie Mansfield'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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NEW **LIFE** CHURCH

New Life Church Launches Celebrate Recovery Program on August 8th:

A Safe Place for Healing and Hope

New Life Church is excited to announce the launch of Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain, addiction, or destructive habits of any kind. The program will officially begin on Friday, August 8 at 5:30 p.m. at New Life Church, located at 120 Kingdom Way in Santa Rosa Beach.

Celebrate Recovery offers a welcoming, confidential, and judgment-free environment where individuals can find healing and restoration through the power of Jesus Christ. Unlike traditional recovery groups, Celebrate Recovery addresses a wide range of life issues—from substance abuse and codependency to anxiety, depression, grief, and more.

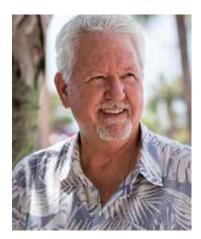
"We're thrilled to bring this transformative ministry to our community," said Pastor Shawn Baker, Lead Pastor of New Life Church. "Everyone is recovering from something, and Celebrate Recovery offers a path to healing that's rooted in grace, truth, and real-life change."

Celebrate Recovery was

Continued on next page



The Defining Forces of Freedom



By Pastor Dave Holland

We Americans cherish freedom. It's built into who we are. We celebrate the right to choose our path, speak our minds, and live without fear of oppression. But freedom isn't free. Behind every liberty we enjoy, there's a story of sacrifice.

Take Luke Air Force Base, just outside Phoenix. As the city expands around it, noise complaints have become more common. One local resident recently wrote a letter sarcastically asking, "Who do we thank for the air show?" after F-16s flew low over Arrowhead Mall. The writer assumed the jets were just showboating—maybe trying to impress someone grabbing coffee at Mervyn's.

But the truth behind that flyover was anything but trivial.

Lt. Col. Grant Rosensteel Jr. responded to the letter, explaining that the formation of jets on that June morning wasn't for fun—it was a tribute. At precisely 9:12 a.m., four F-16s from



the 63rd Fighter Squadron flew over the grave of Capt. Jeremy Fresques, an Air Force officer who had once served at Luke and was killed in Iraq on Memorial Day.

At 9 a.m., family and friends gathered at Sunland Memorial Park in Sun City to honor him. The jets flew overhead in what's called a four-ship flyby—a sacred tradition in military aviation that signifies a final farewell. The roar of the engines may have drowned out the 21-gun salute and taps for the crowd, but the flyover itself conveyed deep meaning and respect.

Lt. Col. Rosensteel closed his letter with a line that drove his point deep:

"Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you—Jesus Christ and the American soldier. One died for your soul, the other for your freedom."

It's easy to forget that the men and women who serve are more than uniforms. They're fathers and mothers, daughters and sons. They carry the weight of duty and often the burden of loss. Their sacrifices preserve the freedom we so easily take for granted.

But there's another kind of freedom we often overlook—the one that doesn't come from constitutions or courts.

Jesus Christ offers freedom that goes deeper than politics or war. He frees us from the grip of sin, from the things that enslave us on the inside: anger, greed, fear, guilt. His sacrifice wasn't for a nation—it was for humanity. He died to restore our souls.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time." Without the spiritual foundation of grace and truth, even a free society can drift into chaos.

This Fourth of July, remember those who have fought and died to protect our rights. But also pause to consider the One who offers the freedom of the heart—a freedom no army can secure and no enemy can take away.

"Truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... But if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." — John 8:34, 36

Let Christ's freedom reign in you. When it does, it becomes the foundation for the liberty that lasts.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. This devotional is from his book, "Extraordinary Jesus." You can get a copy of his books from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidvHolland54@ gmail.com.

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NEW LIFE CHURCH

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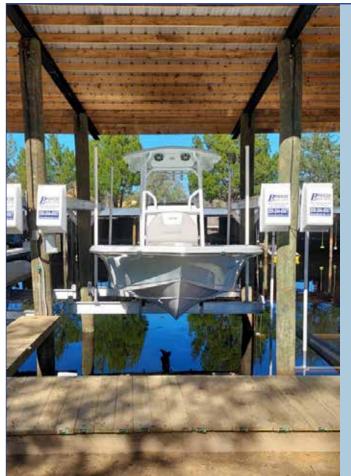
founded in 1991 at Saddleback Church in California and has since expanded to over 35,000 churches worldwide. The program is based on the actual words of Jesus rather than psychological theory, making it a unique and spiritually grounded approach to recovery.

Each Friday evening gathering will begin with large-group worship and teaching, followed by gender-specific small groups where participants can share their struggles and victories in a confidential setting. Childcare will be provided, but must be indicated when registering for the gathering by scanning the QR Code!

The program is open to everyone in the community—whether they attend New Life Church, another church, or no church at all. There is no cost to participate. Simply come as you are!

"This is a ministry where people can come and take off the mask," said Cherie Anderson, Celebrate Recovery Ministry Leader. "No one has to pretend. We walk together, trusting God to do the healing only He can do."

New Life Church invites anyone seeking hope, healing, and community to join the movement of recovery and renewal. Whether you're battling addiction, anger, fear, trauma, or any life challenge, Celebrate Recovery is here for you.



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South Walton Live Music Scene July 2025

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 Friday nights, as well as Saturdays and Sundays for Brunch featuring bottomless mimosas at FOOW - Fish Out of Water. The Gulf front restaurant invites you to delicious dining paired with live music. Visit foow30a.com.

Brunch live music schedule 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.:

July 12: Brett Stafford Smith





July 13: Jim Armstrong

July 19: Brett Stafford Smith

July 20: Matt Mccarthy

July 26: Zack Mannino

July 27: Ray Hitchell

Aug. 2: Brett Stafford Smith

Aug. 3: Aaron Watson

AJ's Grayton Brunch, Live Music & Crawfish Boil

AJ's is the place to be to celebrate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Come for brunch starting at 11 a.m., and stay for the music and dancing. Have 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. Enjoy live music with the Christon Birge Duo 12-4 p.m, the Pickled Pickers at 5 p.m., and the Corey Hall Duo at 8 p.m. Join in the fun on Karaoke Night starting at 8 p.m. every Thursday night (also Prime Rib Night). Check ajsgrayton.com for other live music throughout the week.

Brozinni Pizza Seagrove Beach Live Music

Join Brozinni's for great pizza, cold drinks, and live music, bringing talented musicians to Seagrove every Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, & Sunday from 6-9 p.m. Grab your friends, enjoy the tunes, and make it a night to remember!

July 13: Gilleran's Island Band

July 16: Cadillac Willy

July 18: Remedy

July 19: Soular Flair

July 20: Black Creek String

Band

July 23: Cadillac Willy

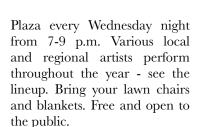
July 25: Alston Weeks

July 26: Coconut Radio July 27: Gillerans Island Band

July 30: Remedy

Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

Live music concerts take place in the Baytowne Events



July 16: Catalyst

July 23: Emily Bass Band

July 30: Cadillac Willy

Aug. 6: Boukou Groove

Aug. 13: 12Eleven

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.

Red Fish Taco

Live music is a central component of Red Fish Taco's festive atmosphere. Rock out to local and visiting musicians in their outdoor covered Garden Room. Catch Brett Stafford Smith every Monday in June and Casey Kearney every Tuesday. Check redfishtaco.com for other featured musicians every day of the week.

The Bay

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

Watersound Sounds Like Summer Series Thursdays

The Watersound community invites you to Sounds Like Summer, a series on Thursday nights through August 14, featuring live music, theater, outdoor movies and more under the shade of The Pavilion at Watersound Town Center. Featuring ample parking, a covered pavilion, and ceiling fans, all family-friendly events are free and open to the public.

2025 Sounds Like Summer Schedule

July 17th: 30A Songwriters Showcase – Gurufish July 24th: Kids Fair & Music July 31st: The REP Children's Play – Rumpelstiltskin

August 7th: 30A Songwriters Showcase – Livingston Taylor

August 14th: Neighborhood
Fun Run with Fleet Feet
Learn more: www.joe.com/
watersound-town-center.





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Gulf Coast Jam:

Twelve Years of Bringing Country to the Coast

By Paul Bonnette

For over twelve years, despite stormy weather conditions, pandemics, and hurricanes, Gulf Coast Jam has been bringing "Country to the Coast." This multi-day country music festival has seen its fair share of challenges, but has weathered them to become a staple event on the Emerald Coast. This year, thousands of fans from all 50 states packed into Frank Brown Park as headliners such as Sam Hunt. Blake Shelton, Tyler Childers and Lainey Wilson took to the stage for four nights of legendary country music. Whether it is shopping at the numerous vendors, enjoying food and fun or just coming to enjoy world-class country music, this event seems to offer something that brings out residents and visitors alike as tens of thousands of fans make this event a must-do.

However, it wasn't always the massive music festival it is now. Gulf Coast Jam began in 2013 as headliners such as Toby Keith, The Charlie Daniel's Band and Trace Adkins took to the stage and played to a crowd of 6,000. According to Executive Producer Rendy Lovelady, seeing the

growth of the festival to what it is now is something he holds close to his heart.

"We've walked this path and seen it grow from the first year with 6,000 people being in October...the talent has grown, the crowd capacity has grown, the pull of the festival is in all fifty states now, just the overall texture of the festival has grown," says Lovelady.

According to Lovelady, they are always looking at new ways to grow and provide extra experiences. As part of the ten-year anniversary, Gulf Coast Jam added a fourth night to the already stacked festival as well as unique experiences, including the now popular Ferris Wheel ride.

Gulf Coast Jam continues to grow and expand, and next year looks to be the biggest event in its history. For the first time in the event's history, Lovelady took to the stage on the first night to announce the full lineup for Gulf Jam 2026, which features legendary performers such as Chris Stapleton, Riley Green, Keith Urban and Post Malone. In addition to the headliners, Gulf Coast Jam 2026 will also feature performances by Koe



Wetzel, Muscadine Bloodline, Marcus King, Treaty Oak Revival and many others.

Tickets have already been selling out for many of the tiers as fans eagerly await next year's festival.

For Rendy Lovelady, despite the challenges, Gulf Coast Jam is an event that he hopes and plans will be around for a long time to come.

"I think Gulf Coast Jam is always going to be a staple for Panama City Beach. We have a long-term agreement with the city and it's in the top ten country events in the country. It draws from all fifty states, CMT covers it, so it has national television on it. It has become a real staple and I see it being very much a part of the future and hopefully it never goes away. I believe that Gulf Coast Jam is going to be here forever."

2026 Gulf Coast Jam Lineup Revealed

Post Malone, Chris Stapleton, Keith Urban and Riley Green to Headline May 28–31, 2026 in PCB

Organizers of the 13th Annual Gulf Coast Jam Presented by Jim Beam surprised fans by unveiling the full 2026 artist lineup on opening night of this year's festival in Panama City Beach—a first in the event's history.

Headliners Post Malone, Chris Stapleton, Keith Urban and Riley Green will be joined by more than 20 acts over four days at Frank Brown Park, May 28–31, 2026.

"Our four headliners are some of the most high-profile, in-demand artists we've ever had in our lineup," said Executive Producer Rendy Lovelady. "I mean, Keith Urban was presented the Triple Crown Award, Chris Stapleton won Male Artist of the Year, Riley Green won Single of the Year, and Post Malone is one of the biggest artists in music, period. We're beyond excited about 2026!"

The festival has drawn more than 30,000 attendees annually in recent years and continues to earn national recognition. Bill-board called it one of "The 10 Best Country Music Festivals," and Music Festival Wizard named it the #1 Festival in the World (2024, Voter's Choice) and a top pick among Best Beach Music Festivals (2025).

COO Mark Sheldon added,

"To have our full lineup in place and announced this early is testament to our Jammers giving us amazing feedback and to the incredible work our team puts in year after year to make this one of the top festivals in the country at one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. We love showing off our home, Panama City Beach!"

Tickets for 2026 are on sale now at www.GulfCoastJam. com, including General Admission, Military, College and First Responder passes, VIP options, hotel packages and payment plans. But they're going fast get yours before they sell out!





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Dining & Entertainment

Dolly Parton Welcomes Guests to Pirates Voyage Grand Opening

By Paul Bonnette

It was with heavy anticipation that guests waited for the doors to finally open for Pirates Voyage Dinner and Show on Panama City Beach. For months, construction crews worked diligently building the 60,000 square foot theater from the ground up. It was worth the wait as Dolly Parton walked out on stage arm in arm with Crimson Captain Red Scarlett and Sapphire Captain Doubloon to welcome everyone to the grand opening of Pirates Voyage.

But let's go back to the beginning. On a chilly morning in February of last year, the first shovels of dirt broke ground in Pier Park on the brand-new 1,000-seat entertainment venue. From that point on, it was almost impossible not to steal a peek at the progress of the building as many drove by the area. Locals and visitors were not the only ones who were excited to start building. Dolly Parton was quoted as saying, "How exciting that we're breaking ground for my Pirates Voyage Dinner & Show in Panama City Beach. When we open this spring, there will be pirates, mermaids, exciting acrobatics, pyrotechnics, and even a few songs that I wrote – it's a show everyone in the family is going to love. Everyone knows I dream big, so we are definitely going 'overboard' with the details as we get started!"



The excitement continued on in the summer with a "topping out ceremony" as construction crews placed the final steel beam atop the building, an age-old construction tradition that signifies the finishing of the last major aspect of the building's exterior profile. As summer came to a close, construction began on the interior of "Buccaneer Bay," excavating approximately 5,500 tons of sand and soil to create a 15-foot, 600,000-gallon lagoon pool complete with two pirate ships.

As construction continued

this year, excitement continued to build as locals and visitors alike eagerly anticipated the grand opening, until at last the day had arrived. Having witnessed the building of this 60 million dollar investment from the ground breaking to the topping out ceremony, it exceeded all expectations. From the moment you enter, it's impossible not to become instantly immersed in the world of scallywags with a pre-show area with live entertainment, piratethemed drinks and snacks, and a gift shop—or join the crew with

pirate and mermaid makeovers. All this, before it's even time to enter Buccaneer Bay.

The main show dazzles and shines with acrobats, mermaids, sea lions, sword fighting, and even a spooky visit from the ghost of Davy Jones. The show is only rivaled by the food, which has proven to be just as big of a hit with their four-course feast including Half O' Roasted Chicken, Me Hearties Pulled Pork, Cob O' Buttery Corn, Matey's Mashed Potatoes and of course the famous Buccaneer Biscuit and Voyager Creamy

Vegetable Soup. Exceptional food, exciting action, and mesmerizing mermaids, what more could you want, except perhaps a visit from a very special guest?

As we took our seats, overwhelmed by Buccaneer Bay, a very familiar voice sang out, welcoming us to the show. "I bet you've never seen a pirate like me, right?" As Dolly walked out on stage at Buccaneer Bay, she went on to welcome everyone to the opening of the show.

"We want to invite all of you to Panama City Beach and to the brand new Pirates Voyage Dinner Show and it's going to be opening up for all the great folks that live around here and for all the great folks that come here on vacation....It's the perfect place to bring my next pirate crew and everybody here on Panama City Beach has been amazing."

Dolly closed out by thanking everyone and of course, adding a nod to one of her famous songs.

"You have fun, just know I love you, I will always love you, and thank you so much."

Whether you come for the exciting adventure with swash-buckling pirates and mermaids or perhaps the famous cuisine that Dolly Parton's show are known for, one thing is certain. This is sure to be an Arrrr'esome time for the entire family.







The "Star-Spangled Banner":

A Symbol of Resilience and Freedom

One of my piano students requested to learn "The Star-Spangled Banner," written by Francis Scott Key in 1814. As we learned the melody, we began to dive deeper into the meaning of the words and found that it is a powerful symbol of the American spirit, resilience, and the country's enduring commitment to freedom. Set against the backdrop of the War of 1812, the song's lyrics capture a pivotal moment in American history when the nation stood strong in the face of adversity. It's not only a celebration of victory but also a strong reminder of the sacrifices made to secure our country's independence and sovereignty.

The song's lyrics are derived from a poem titled "Defence of Fort M'Henry," written by Key after witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore in September 1814. Key's words convey his emotions and thoughts as he watched the fort endure relentless attacks, only to see the American flag still flying at dawn.

Here are the lyrics to the first verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner":

"O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright



stars through the perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;

O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave"

The Meaning Behind the Anthem

The first line begins with the iconic question: "O say can you see, by the dawn's early light?" which calls attention to the significance of the morning after a long and difficult night of fighting. The "dawn's early light" symbolizes hope, the light that shines after darkness, and a moment of clarity following struggle

The mention of the "twi-

light's last gleaming" contrasts the fading light of day with the unknowns of the night ahead, setting the stage for the challenges that lay before the American forces. The "broad stripes and bright stars" of the American flag are symbols of strength and endurance, standing resilient in the face of the battle. This imagery reinforces the idea that the flag, like the nation itself, is steadfast, even amid chaos and uncertainty.

The line "through the perilous fight" highlights the danger and hardship faced by the soldiers defending Fort McHenry. Yet, despite the bombardment, the flag still flies, symbolizing perseverance and defiance. The phrase "rocket's red glare" and "bombs bursting in air" bring to life the chaos of the war, capturing the tension and fear that surrounded those moments. But

despite these fierce assaults, the flag remains as a testament to the strength of the American resolve.

The final lines, "O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave / O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?" are reflective and questioning. They ask whether the American ideals of freedom and bravery will persist, urging the listener to consider the true meaning of our nation's independence.

The lyrics have come to represent the broader resilience of the American people and their unwavering commitment to the values of freedom and liberty. The anthem's inclusion at major events (sports games, political rallies, and national holidays) reminds citizens of the nation's history and the sacrifices made by countless individuals to ensure the freedoms we enjoy today.

Additionally, the anthem

speaks to the many experiences of the United States, symbolizing the military's bravery, and the aspirations and struggles of everyday citizens who continue to build a more perfect union.

In conclusion, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is more than just a song sung at public events. Its lyrics carry a rich meaning that reflects the historical and enduring strength of the United States. Through the symbolic imagery of the flag surviving the battle, the anthem is a reminder of the courage, sacrifice, and resilience that has defined Americans for over two centuries.

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Embracing the Shade:

Why Awnings are Essential for Florida Living



By Chris Balzer

Florida, the Sunshine State, is renowned for its abundant warmth and vibrant outdoor lifestyle. However, the very sunshine that draws so many can also be relentless, bringing intense heat and harmful UV rays. This is where awnings step in, transforming exposed patios, decks, and windows into comfortable, shaded havens. Far more than just aesthetic additions, awnings are a practical and increasingly essential investment for any Florida homeowner or business, offering a multitude of benefits that enhance comfort, protect property, and even reduce energy costs.

One of the primary advantages of awnings in Florida is their ability to provide crucial sun protection. The state's strong UV radiation can quickly make outdoor spaces unbearable, limiting their use during peak daylight hours. Awnings offer a protective shield, allowing residents to enjoy their lanais, outdoor kitchens, or pool decks without fear of sunburn or excessive heat. This protection extends beyond people; valuable patio furniture, outdoor rugs, and even interior furnishings visible through windows are safeguarded from fading, cracking, and deterioration caused by prolonged sun exposure.

Beyond personal comfort and property preservation, awnings play a significant role in energy efficiency. By shading windows and glass doors, especially those facing east or west, awnings can dramatically reduce the amount of solar heat gain entering a home. This lessens the burden on air conditioning systems, leading to noticeable reductions in energy consumption and,

consequently, lower utility bills – a welcome relief in Florida's sweltering summers. Studies show that awnings can reduce indoor temperatures by several degrees, making a tangible difference in a home's cooling load.

The versatility of awnings available today means there's a solution for every need and aesthetic. Retractable awnings are a popular choice for their flexibility. These can be extended to provide shade when the sun is high and retracted to allow full sunlight on cooler days or during storms. Many come with motorized options, allowing for effortless operation with a remote control or even smart home integration, some even featuring wind sensors that automatically retract the awning in strong gusts. This adaptability is particularly valuable in Florida's unpredictable weather, offering the ability to quickly adjust to changing conditions.

Material choices also cater to various preferences and requirements. Fabric awnings, often made from solution-dyed acrylics like Sunbrella, are highly popular due to their vibrant color options, resistance to fading, and ability to withstand mildew and moisture – crucial in Florida's humid climate. These fabrics are also flame-resistant, adhering to safety standards. Metal awnings, typically aluminum, offer a more contem-

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



porary look and exceptional durability, often chosen for commercial applications or for their low maintenance.

When considering awnings in Florida, it's essential to be aware of local building codes and regulations. These codes often dictate specifics regarding height clearance (especially over public property), projection limits, and material fire ratings. It's always advisable to consult with a reputable awning professional who is knowledgeable about local requirements and can assist with any necessary permitting.

Installation is another critical factor. Given Florida's climate, awnings must be securely installed to withstand strong winds and heavy rains. Hiring experienced professionals ensures proper mounting, structural integrity, and adherence to manufacturer guidelines, maximizing the awning's lifespan and per-

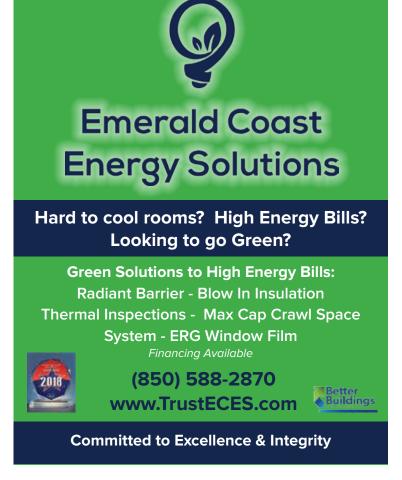
formance. Many local awning companies offer comprehensive services, from custom design and fabrication to professional installation and ongoing support.

The cost of awnings in Florida can vary widely depending on the type, size, material, and complexity of the installation. While a range from several hundred to a few thousand dollars per unit is common, the longterm benefits – including energy savings, extended outdoor living space, and enhanced property value – often make them a worthwhile investment.

In conclusion, awnings are more than just an accessory in Florida; they are a strategic enhancement that significantly improves the quality of life. By offering superior sun protection, contributing to energy efficiency, and expanding usable outdoor living areas, awnings allow residents and businesses alike to fully embrace the vibrant, outdoor-centric lifestyle that defines the Sunshine State, all while staying cool, comfortable, and protected.

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







Michael Whalen Named Resort Operations Director at Seascape Resorts, Inc.

Michael has served as Director of Sales & Events and will continue to lead that division. In this newly expanded leadership role, he will now oversee all aspects of resort operations, including rental management, maintenance, housekeeping, group sales, events, business development, and owner relations. Additionally, Michael will play a

key role in the continued growth of The Grove and other upcoming residential and commercial developments at Seascape Golf, Beach & Tennis Resort. He will also maintain his position as a Class B Director on the Seascape Master Homeowners Association Board.

Michael brings over 40 years of hospitality experience, including a combined 12 years at Seascape. He originally joined us in 2008 as Rental Manager, was promoted to Director of Group Sales & Events in 2010, and held that role until 2014. After relocating to California for family reasons, he continued his career in leadership roles with Marriott and IHG-branded hotels before returning to Seascape in 2020.

Since his return, Michael has made a lasting impact, most notably by spearheading our partnership with Topeka, which introduced music vacation experiences to Seascape. These events have quickly become a signature part of our resort, with over 15 successful music vacations held to date—and 6 more already planned for 2025. This year alone, we anticipate welcoming over 45,000 attendees through these events.

In addition to his professional achievements, Michael actively contributes to the local community. He serves on the Visit Walton Marketing and Communications Committee and is a dedicated advocate for both Seascape and the greater Miramar Beach area.

With Michael's leadership,



Seascape Resorts, Inc. is excited to further enhance the guest and owner experience while continuing to build on the resort's proud legacy.

"I'm honored to step into the role of Resort Operations Director. Hospitality has been my life's work for over 40 years, spanning operations, sales, and events across hotels, meeting planning, and vacation rental resorts," says Whalen. "I'm deeply committed to Seascape and the people who make it special. I've experienced both challenges and milestones here—weathering the 2008 housing crash, the 2010 BP oil spill, and returning

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through it all, our team has shown remarkable resilience. On a personal note, I've been married to my wife, Evelyn, for 32 years. We have two grown sons and one grandson, and we love to travel. So far, we've explored 35 states and 28 countries—and we're not done yet.

There's a bright future ahead for Seascape, and I look forward to leading us through the next chapter. Thank you to everyone who has supported me along the way. I'm proud to be part of this incredible team and commu-



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