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# Answering the Call with Emerald Coast United

By Heather Bennett Eye

The past year for Justine and Joey Sauvageau has been one of both heartache and reward. They started their nonprofit, Emerald Coast United, last year to assist with search and rescue, and disaster relief efforts along the Panhandle and in nearby states. While they've been a blessing to many, the organization was created out of personal loss.

Their close friend and diver, Jeremy Carmical, went missing September 22, 2024, while spearfishing in Destin. With Hurricane Helene closing in on the Gulf, and Destin still in the range of impact zones, every minute in the search counted. Once Justine and Joey found out Jeremy was missing, they were able to assist in organizing search and rescue efforts. A collective group rallied approximately 45 boats together over the span of the two-day search and they became points of contact for the United Cajun Navy.



Volunteers were able to recover Jeremy two days later, just before Hurricane Helene made landfall in the Big Bend area, east of Destin. Although it wasn't the outcome they hoped for, Justine and Joey felt peace knowing they could help bring closure to Jeremy's family. "The community supported us in ways I never thought possible," said Justine. "I'm extremely thankful."

After assisting in the rescue efforts for Jeremy, and working closely with Justine and Joey, the United Cajun Navy urged them to start their own nonprofit to assist in future efforts along the panhandle. Jeremy's mother, Michelle Carmical, also encouraged them to follow their calling to help others.

#### ANSWERING THE CALL

continued on page 6



# The REP Theatre Announces Final Curtain Call After 25 Years of Creating Memories

With many fond memories and much sadness, The REP Theatre announced that it will be ceasing operations following the completion of its final summer performances in mid-August, concluding a remarkable 25-year run as a cornerstone of the 30A arts community.

Founded a quarter-century ago, The REP has been dedicated to its mission of creating lasting memories for the local families and countless

#### **REP THEATRE**

ontinued on page 2



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#### **REP THEATRE**

continued from page 1

visitors who have graced its audiences. The Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to close the theatre after facing a convergence of significant challenges.

"This decision follows a period of strategic assessment prompted by the upcoming departure of our key artistic leadership and the challenge of navigating increasingly high operating expenses. The situation was further complicated by the non-renewal of the lease for our theatrical home of 25 years due to planned renovations by Seaside, prompting the unexpected challenge of securing a new, affordable venue while simultaneously recruiting new leadership. Facing this convergence of challenges, we have made the heartbreaking choice to close the theatre. We are immensely proud, however, that the spirit

of The REP's work will likely live on."

For 25 years, The REP has been more than just a stage; it has been a home for artists, a source of joy for audiences, and a vibrant part of the community's cultural fabric. This would not have been possible without the unwavering support of so many.

We extend our deepest gratitude to every audience member who shared a laugh or a tear, every volunteer who gave their time, and every artist who poured their heart out on our stage. We are profoundly

> thankful to the generous donors, sponsors, and foundations who invested in our mission, and to the dedicated Board of Directors, past and present, who volunteered their time and wisdom to guide this organization. A special thank you goes to our founders, Craige Hoover and Jennifer Steele, whose vision sparked this 25-year journey. To every community member who believed in the power of theatre: you were the lifeblood of this organization.

> We invite the entire community to join us for our final summer performances to celebrate the stories we've told and





the memories we've created together. Let's make this final run a testament to the spirit and artistry that has defined The REP for 25 wonderful years.

For information on the final performance schedule, please visit LoveTheREP.com.



# Family Chiropractic Center announces the retirement of Brian Soroka, D.

43 years as a chiropractor and serving Santa Rosa Beach for the last 18 years of his career. Patients' records will remain in the care of

As of August 1, 2025. This is following Jackie in the office located at 24700 US Hwy 331S, Suite 101. You may call (850) 231-2011 for more information.

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# **PWMC Announces Harvest Moon Fundraiser Weekend:**

# Two-Day Celebration Supporting Healthcare Access for All

Point Washington Medical Clinic (PWMC) is proud to announce its annual Harvest Moon Fundraiser Weekend, taking place September 26-27, 2025. This beloved three-day community event combines wellness, exceptional dining, entertainment, and philanthropy to support PWMC's mission of providing high-quality primary healthcare regardless of patients' means or access to insurance. All events sell out annually, so early registration is recommended.

#### Friday Morning: Yoga in the Park

The weekend begins on Friday, September 26, 2025, at 9



a.m. with a peaceful yoga session in Ruskin Place in Seaside, FL. Participants are invited to bring their own mats and join the community for stretching, breathing, and grounding under the beautiful trees of Ruski. This wellness-focused start to the weekend embodies PWMC's commitment to health and community well-being.

# Friday Evening Dinner Celebration

The weekend kicks off on Friday, September 26, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. with an elegant dinner celebration at Bud & Alley's Restaurant in Seaside (located

at 2236 East County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL), one of the coast's most cherished dining destinations. Set against the Gulf's pristine waters, guests will enjoy a multi-course dinner, beverages, and special evening activities.

Tickets are \$275 per person, with table and event sponsorships still available. The evening features both silent and live auctions, with silent auction items including fine art, jewelry, local dining experiences, and unique excursions. The live auction will showcase several luxury trips and premium experiences.

"Your ticket purchase is more

than just a meal—it's an opportunity to connect with likeminded community members who share your commitment to giving back," said Executive Director Hillary Glenn. "As twilight falls over the water, guests will experience world-class hospitality while directly supporting our vital healthcare mission."

#### Saturday Evening: Open House and Harvest Moon Social Club

The celebration continues on Saturday, September 27, with an Open House at the clinic (located at 1321 North County Hwy 395, Santa Rosa Beach, FL) from 6 - 7 p.m., where guests can tour the facility and learn more about PWMC's services. Following the tour, attendees will follow lanterns to the Harvest Moon Social Club, a hidden Carnival in Point Washington for an evening of drinks, grazing, and dancing under the moonlight. Saturday tickets are \$85 per person.

# About Point Washington Medical Clinic

PWMC is a donation-based, volunteer-driven medical clinic dedicated to providing high-

#### **HARVEST MOON**

Continued on next pag 7





# Scenic Walton Looks Ahead While Celebrating Past Award-Winning Designs

As Scenic Walton continues its mission to promote thoughtful, beautiful, and sustainable

development throughout Walton County, the organization is shining a spotlight on one of last year's Design Excellence Award recipients: Dune Lakes Elementary School, designed by the Walton County School District.

The award, presented in April 2024, recognized a public project that exemplifies Scenic Walton's design ideals—architecture and landscaping that reflect community character while preserving and

enhancing the natural beauty of the area.

"Dune Lakes Elementary set the tone for what's possible when design is intentional and aligned with our environment," said Leigh Moore, Executive Director of Scenic Walton. "We're using past recipients like this one



to inspire future nominations as we continue recognizing design excellence in both the public and private sectors."

The Design Excellence Award, launched in 2017 and revitalized in 2024 following a pandemic-related pause, honors businesses, developers, and

public institutions that create projects with exceptional design, scenic value, and environmental sensitivity. Scenic Walton's board is currently reviewing upcoming award cycles and encourages the community to get involved by nominating projects that reflect these values.

As part of its commitment to education and community engagement, Scenic Walton has launched

a new YouTube channel, where viewers can watch exclusive interviews with award recipients.

#### **SCENIC WALTON**

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# Nominations for Perfect in Walton County Awards Now Open

Write-in nominations for your favorite businesses for the 2026 Perfect in Walton County Awards will only be accepted online at perfectinwaltoncounty. com through Friday, Aug. 15. Please read the contest rules for details.

We want to kindly remind everyone that there are no marketing firms or services that can legitimately secure nominations or guarantee a win in the Perfect in Walton County awards. The contest is governed by strict official rules that prohibit any form of manipulation or outside influence. Attempting to work around these rules not only undermines the integrity of the contest but could also lead to disqualification. We strongly encourage all participants to engage in the process authentically and avoid any involvement in practices that will ultimately not benefit you or your business.

To be qualified for nominations, candidates must primarily serve or have a visitor-facing business in Walton County. Businesses may

be nominated in multiple categories, although eligibility may be determined by the Tourism Department staff. Businesses are encouraged to utilize social media to ask their followers, guests and the general public to nominate them using the graphics available on our website. Remember: every nomination counts!

One online nomination form is allowed per email address during both the nomination and final voting rounds. The top five eligible businesses in each category will move on to the final voting round September 2-19. After the voting round, the top three businesses in each category will be recognized as Diamond, Platinum or Gold winners at the Perfect in Walton County Awards presentation in January 2026

To view a complete list of last year's winners, check out the 2025 Perfect Awards page. The current Perfect guide can be found on our website. For more information about the Perfect Awards program, please contact Lisa Foster at Lisa@WCFLTourism.com or (850) 333-2728.

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# **Coastal Seniors Update for August**

#### **Exercise Classes**

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

#### **Art Classes**

Watercolor Painting Class – Karen Peterson will teach classes on Fridays, August 1, 8, 22, and September 5 and 26, from 8:45 a.m. to noon. Classes held at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach. Cost is \$15 for CSSW members and \$30 for non-members. Registration required as space is limited. To be added to the email sign-up list, call 850-280-5342 or email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@

# **COASTAL SENIORS**

#### OF SOUTH WALTON

gmail.com. All supplies are included.

#### **Pickleball**

ginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex Courts at 6 p.m. on August 13 and 27. This beginner class is open to Walton County residents only. (Ages 18 and up) Registration is required. Register through Parks and Rec website at secure.recl.com. Email Sandy Gulak at sowalpickleball@gmail.com for more information. Class is FREE and equipment is provided or use your own. Play at Boys and Girls Club will resume after Labor Day 2025. Please join the SolWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates

and check the CSSW calendar at www.coastalseniorsofsouth-walton.org.

#### **Water Aerobics**

Takes place at Watersound Fountains, 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. August and September classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. There will be no class on Labor Day Monday September 1. Cost is \$5 for CSSW members and \$10 for non-members. A pool noodle and water dumbbells are used for class. Please bring a towel, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Registration is required as space is limited. To be added to the email sign-up list, call (850) 280-5342 or email: coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

#### **Monthly Meeting**

Friday, August 15, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 70 Logan Lane, Grayton Beach. Guest speakers are Tina Henson of the Alzheimer's Association and Karen Englert from Centerwell. Karen Englert will provide lunch and dessert from 98 BBQ Restaurant. R.S.V.P. by replying to the Sign Up email. To be added to the email sign-up list, call (850) 280-5342 or email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Senior Citizens Day - August 21 - We will celebrate our special day with an Ice Cream Social to be held at 70 Logan Lane, Grayton Beach, at 11

a.m. Come socialize and enjoy delicious ice cream. R.S.V.P. by replying to the Sign Up email. To be added to the email signup list (if you are not already on our email list), call 850-280-5342 or email coastalseniorsof-southwalton@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 coastal seniors of southwalton @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. Media Contact: Melinda Finney, Director, Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. T: 615-477-3417 Email mkfinney24@gmail.

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# ANSWERING THE CALL

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Along with Justine and Joey, Emerald Coast United is led by Shelby Harkins, John Brown, Cara Teeter and Jana Ramsey. They bridge a gap between law enforcement and volunteers and are an asset to the United Cajun Navy and other out-oftown volunteers, helping them navigate the area. They have a strong working relationship with the United Cajun Navy, who assists them in searches when they need more resources. "It's nice that it's not up to one organization. It nice to have the collaboration and access to resources as needed," stated Justine.

Emerald Coast United has assisted with several search and rescue efforts in the area. Bret Valona, a U.S. Marine veteran, went missing in the Blue Mountain Beach/Point Washington State Forest area after being dropped off at the Eastern Lake Trailhead, where he planned to spend several weeks in the forest. Although extensive canvassing of the area was carried out, his location remains unknown. Early March is when his phone was last known to be in service. He was

last seen wearing a plaid shirt, cargo pants, a yellow raincoat, brown hiker boots, and carrying two backpacks. If you have any information, please contact the Walton County Sheriff's Office at (850) 892-8111.

Their most recent search and rescue effort was for Trinity Eslinger, a search that greatly affected the entire Florida Panhandle and surrounding areas. The United Cajun Navy assisted in the search effort, bringing in resources such as search and recovery K9s, helicopters, boats, search spotter aircraft that fly above the spotter choppers, and drones that fly lower, scanning the water, looking under docks. Their resources provided multilayered details to the search area.

Emerald Coast United and the United Cajun Navy continued to search for Trinity after the Okaloosa Sheriff's office and Coast Guard made the decision to scale back their resources. As long as Mother Nature is cooperative and they have resources, Emerald Coast United will continue search efforts when local officials need to pull back. "It took a village to help look for Trinity. Unfortunately, we came up empty-handed, but it wasn't for lack of effort," said Justine. "I



wish we were able to provide that closure for the family."

Accidents happen to even the most prepared and knowledge-able people on the water, as Jeremy's friends and family know too well, but continuing to educate and remind people could make a big difference. Justine suggests that locals and tourists alike pay attention to the water conditions and educate themselves on water safety. "People don't realize how dangerous the water is," stated Justine.

One suggestion is that more information be available for those coming in from out of town. "The biggest thing we need to do as a community is we need to teach people what a rip tide looks like and what to do during a rip tide," said Justine. "If every property management com-

pany around here could have a laminated flyer in their houses, it would be beneficial for our area to get them in the hands of all these wonderful people visiting."

Other safety resources include looking at surf conditions on local beach cams, or texting one of the beach alert system numbers (Panama City Beach -Text "PCBFLAGS" to 888777, Destin/Fort Walton Beach/Okaloosa Island - Text "BEACH" to 44144, Walton County - Text "SAFETY" to 31279). In response to recent water emergencies, Bailey Brooks started the new nonprofit, Safe on the Emerald Coast. On their Facebook page, you can find water safety tips and other relatable content.

In addition to search and rescue on the water, Emerald Coast United and the United Cajun

Navy also helped with posthurricane disaster relief. Immediately after Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton, they began organizing donation stations with fire departments and volunteers across the panhandle and were able to fill 10 semis full of essential items to send to storm victims throughout the affected areas. The United Cajun Navy was able to assist in rescue operations in the affected areas and help with the distribution of donations and essential supplies.

Emerald Coast United is gearing up for hurricane season again, preparing to be ready to assist with post-storm recovery and assistance as needed. Getting essential items to storm victims is a vital part of recovery efforts.

They hope to continue gaining volunteers and expanding beyond the region to help as many people in need as they can. "I hope to continue to grow and get more volunteers willing to work with us," said Justine. "We only want to grow and get bigger."

If you are interested in volunteering or donating to Emerald Coast United, you can reach them at (850) 312-3303 or ECUnited850@gmail.com. You can follow them on Facebook for more up-to-date information.





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# Fore Her Tees Up Registration and Calls for Sponsors in Support of their 13th Annual Golf Outing

Friday, September 26th at the Links Golf Club in Sandestin

Fore Her invites seasoned golfers and novices alike to dust off their clubs and swing for a cause at their annual Golf Outing, now in its 13th year, set for Friday, September 26, 2025, at the Links Golf Club in Sandestin, presented by Emerald Coast Hospice Care.

Golfers will hit the links at 8 a.m. for check-in, announcements at 8:45 a.m. and tee off at 9 a.m. for a very "pink" cause, supporting local women and men along the Emerald Coast who are battling breast cancer. Fore Her contributes all funds raised from the Golf Outing to offset living expenses, utilities and transportation costs for breast cancer patients while they are in the battle of their lives, ultimately lessening their financial and emotional burden.

This year, Fore Her's signature event will bring together the community for a festive golf-filled day, complete with a four-person scramble tournament, on-course food and drink, a catered lunch by Evie Mae's BBQ, the fan favorite "Dress Like a Lady" hole, and an after-party with prizes, a raffle, and giveaways.

Registration is now available for Early BIRDIE pricing where participants may sign up at \$175 per golfer or \$700 for a team of four. Fees increase on September 1 to \$200 per golfer and \$800 for a team of four. To register, visit https://www.foreher.org/golfouting.

#### **HARVEST MOON**

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quality primary healthcare to uninsured and underinsured community members. The clinic serves as a vital healthcare safety net, ensuring that financial barriers never prevent access to essential medical care.

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, or more information about PWMC's services, visit thepwmc.org or contact Jackie Ward, PWMC Community Engagement Director via email at jackie@thepwmc.org or via telephone at (850) 527-1205.

"The community's contributions through this event gives these families a great deal of relief when they need it most," says Amy Walsh, Founder of Fore Her. Last year Fore Her raised \$30,000 at our Golf Outing, and as a result we were able to help offset these women's living expenses while continuing to provide educational resources through our support groups. None of this would be possible without the generous and passionate support of individuals and businesses along the Emerald Coast."

"Emerald Coast Hospice Care is passionate about supporting Fore Her in their significant strides to support local women with breast cancer while they undergo treatment," says Melody Joy, Hospice and Palliative Care Consultant with Emerald Coast Hospice Care. "It is an honor to be associated with such a noble charitable cause and we are grateful for the essential support Fore Her provides to these women while lessening their load." "After being diagnosed with breast cancer just before my 40th birthday, I became very sick while trying to work, take care of myself and my children, and go to appointments...It became a lot," says a recent Fore Her recipient. "The savings started to dwindle and without Fore Her,



I don't know where I would be right now."

A heartfelt thank you to Fore Her Golf Outing 2025 Sponsors (to date): Emerald Coast Hospice Care (Presenting), Renasant Bank, The Links Golf Course, Bob Carver, The Agency, Cynthia Kennedy, Eglin FCU, Winsupply FWB, Evie Mae's BBQ, Byron Pelt Insurance, Own at the Beach, Centennial Bank, The Gulf Club, Allervie, David Scott, Lee Buick (Hole in One Sponsor), and Sweet Henrietta's.

Sponsorship opportunities are now available: Whether sponsoring, playing a round, or donating a raffle item, any



amount helps Fore Her continue to provide critical financial assistance to breast cancer patients throughout the Emerald Coast. Volunteer opportunities are also available. Contact Amy Walsh at amy@foreher.org for more information on how to get involved.









# GRUNT is a Local Delivery App Built by One of Us, for All of Us

'If you live or own a business along the Florida Panhandle, you've probably made more than a few last-minute runs to the store for supplies just to keep the job moving. Whether you're a supplier trying to get products to a customer fast, a contractor short on time, a business juggling customer needs, or a homeowner finishing a weekend project — those extra trips eat up your time in a big way.

That's exactly the problem GRUNT is here to solve.

# GRUNT is a solution to a bigger problem

GRUNT is a local delivery app that connects people who need materials, tools, or supplies with nearby drivers — folks with cars or pickup trucks —who can pick up what you need and deliver it within a few

hours. No national chains. No mark ups, No hidden fees. Just local people helping local people, every day.

Meet Martin Horak, the founder of GRUNT, who has spent the past 30 years living and working in the Panhandle in property management, construction, and development. Martin saw first-hand how often suppliers and small businesses struggled to deliver on-demand, and how tradesmen, business owners, and property managers wasted hours waiting on parts or making supply runs.

"I built GRUNT for people who value their time or juggling tasks with no time to spare," says Horak. "For the mom running a local business who can't leave to pick up paint. For the retired neighbor with a truck who wants to earn extra money on their own schedule."

# **GRUNT** is community focused

GRUNT works because it's rooted in real local needs. Contractors use it to keep crews on-site. Local Business and Suppliers use it to offer fast, flexible delivery without straining staff. Homeowners use it to finish projects faster. And drivers — everyday local heroes — use it to earn extra income during the day, without late nights or backseat drama, while helping their neighbors.

"Also, through Grunt, we're creating new ways for locals to earn more money due to new job losses created every day by AI and increased automation," explains Horak.

"From an idea on a napkin to launching our prototype in 2024, it took countless late nights, frustration, and every bit of three years to get us where we are today. Building something from nothing is costly — extremely difficult, if not impossible, but we did it. And now it's time to put it to work," adds Horak.

# GRUNT isn't just about convenience... it's about community

"Natural disasters strike without warning, and when they do, neighbors need neighbors. That's why we're building a volunteer database of locals willing to step up when others need help; whether it's delivering supplies, helping with cleanup, or just lending a hand. At Grunt, we want to be able to quickly mobilize support when disaster hits," says Horak.

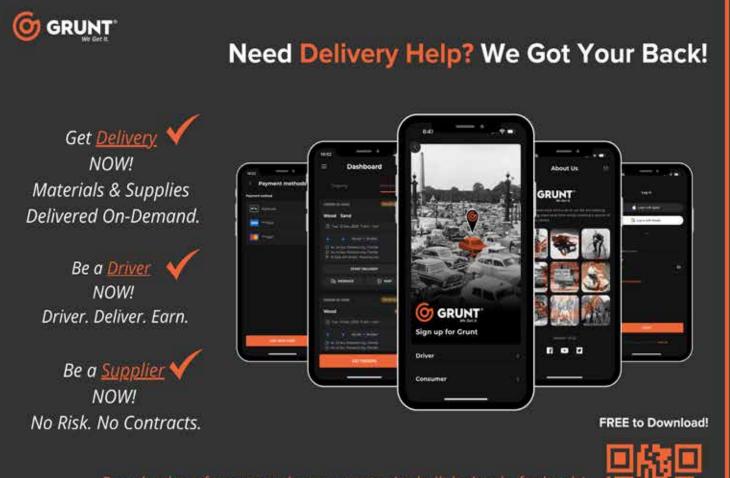
"When Hurricane Michael hit, everyone was stretched thin," he says. "My friends and I were running supplies to Bunker Cove, Mexico Beach, Cottondale, and other places. That's when it clicked: I thought: 'Why isn't there a better way?"

GRUNT is that better way. It's local. It's fast. And it's personal. Every order placed helps someone in your own community—not a tech company in another state, or country.

And while automation dominates the headlines, GRUNT keeps things human. "When you call us, you'll talk to a real person," Horak says. "We're not here to replace jobs, we're here to create them."

Visit GRUNT, the new and innovative app, today and sign up: www.trygrunt.com

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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,

ers, 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 it all. Whether you're in need of a free HVAC ductwork mold inspection 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.

FAITH - FAMILY - FIT-NESS - PHOENIX. Call Travis today (615) 477-9277.



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 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 playof incredible, transforming lives through service, bringing comfort in crisis, and building a reputation 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

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# The Trilith Foundation's Flourishing Summit

By Christy Milliken, Seaside Institute, Executive Director

In today's rapidly changing world, the pursuit of human flourishing has become more than a philosophical ideal—it is a practical necessity for resilient communities and sustainable leadership. Recognizing this, a remarkable gathering was orchestrated to bring together visionaries from a tapestry of disciplines and experiences, all united by a common ambition: to cultivate environments where individuals and collectives not only succeed but truly thrive.

I had the privilege of being among a curated group of leaders this Summer for a Flourishing Summit at Trilith Studios in the Town at Trilith presented by the Trilith Foundation. The weekend was carefully curated for leaders and creatives with diverse backgrounds for two days of connectivity, inspiration, and wellness. These are core values we cultivate at the Seaside Institute as we inspire communities where people do not just live but thrive. We all strive as leaders to pour into our family, job, mission, and community, etc., and often forget to fill our own cup in the process. The two-day event brought together like-minded individuals to reflect on global





flourishing and discuss ways to share this message locally.

Elizabeth Dixon, Executive Director of the Trilith Foundation envisioned the program to inspire and restore those who attended while making new connections in a relationshipbuilding environment that will hopefully foster collaboration.

The Flourishing Summit was a unique gathering of thought leaders, designed to catalyze the impact of human flourishing across multiple dimensions of culture.

The Summit was an honest and authentic space that introduced the concept of human flourishing, allowing people to engage with it. Leveraging global research, which originated in partnership with the Global Flourishing Study team at Harvard and Baylor, and immersive experiences, the team at Trilith provided an intentional environment for influential storytellers, academics, and culture-makers to explore how integrating flourishing concepts could enhance and multiply the impact of our work forward.

As the sun cast its golden glow over the creative heart of Trilith, participants immersed themselves in an atmosphere both invigorating and restorative. Workshops and roundtable dialogues encouraged attendees to peel back the layers of conventional leadership, delving into the intersection of

# SEASIDE Institute

#### Inspiring livable communities

well-being, creativity, and social responsibility. The summit followed a relaxed pace, allowing time for listening, laughter, and reflection, emphasizing holistic well-being.

Whether sharing insights over artisan coffee or engaging in reflective exercises amid the cinematic soundstages, every interaction seemed charged with possibility. Thought leaders, community builders, and innovators shared transformative stories, illuminating how the principles of human flourishing could be translated into tangible actions that ripple from the individual to the collective. The spirit of the gathering was not one of competition, but of co-creation—a space where vulnerability and vision could meet, forging new alliances and sparking new ideas to elevate the quality of life for all.

With a shared sense of purpose, the Trilith team set out to foster collaboration, inspire growth, catalyze cultural impact, and offer a counter-cultural movement towards health.

We began the weekend with tours of Trilith Studios, formerly Pinewood Studios. The multiple production studios are state-of-the-art facilities where filmmaking and motion pictures thrive. The latest box office hit filmed on site was Superman. Our summit also took place in one of the production studios for a more immersive experience.

Dan Cathy, Founder of Chick-Fil-A and Rob Parker, President and CEO of Trilith Development, led a tour of the mixed-use new urbanism neighborhood of Trilith and showed why many flock here to live, work, and play.

During the summit, we heard from an eclectic group of leaders at Harvard University, Baylor University, Physicians, Chick Fil-A- Founders and leaders, Grammy Winning Musicians, Pro Sports Professionals, and leaders that presented the Global Flourishing Study by Gallup

The Gallup Global Flourishing Study explores six domains valued across countries and cultures. The Secure Flourishing Index (SFI) measures these through targeted survey items, with five domains pursued for their own sake and financial stability providing the foundation. When financial stability is omitted, the measure becomes the Flourishing Index (FI), while contextual factors help understand environments where flourishing thrives in categories such as Happiness and Life Satisfaction, Mental and Physical Health, Meaning and Purpose, Character and Value, Close Social Relationships, Financial and Material Stability, and Religion and Spirituality. When cultivating a community, these factors are important to human flourishing. While we design physical environments, we also need to study the community's quality of life.

The Summit encouraged leaders to not only connect, but to rest and reflect. We had Yogo as an option in the morning each day, massage available, and a fantastic engaging meal that provoked meaningful conversations from prompt cards placed on our table.

A new sense of purpose and renewal left with each leader, so we could continue to inspire vision forward and the motto of the Trilith Foundation which is "Be Well, Do Good - Together".

"A good shepherd smells like his sheep/flock".

~Dan Cathy, Vision Officer/ Founder of the Town at Trilith, Trilith Studios, Trilith Foundation, Trilith Institute, Trilith Live, and Chick-Fil-A.

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# 2nd Annual Golf4TheCure - Gulf Coast Tournament

Tees Off This September at Raven Golf Club

The 2nd Annual Golf4The-Cure – Gulf Coast Tournament is returning to Sandestin this year at the prestigious Raven Golf Club, on Friday, September 12, 2025, for an unforgettable day of golf, giving, and goodwill — all FORE a great cause!

Following the remarkable success of last year's inaugural event, this year's tournament promises to be even bigger and better. Players, sponsors, and volunteers from across the Panhandle and beyond are invited to participate in a meaningful day of sport and community, with proceeds supporting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (awareness, research, prevention and treatment of childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases).

Event Highlights Include:

18 holes at the award-winning Raven Golf Club

Lunch, Player Gifts, Raffle Prizes, Hole Contests & More!

Post-Tournament Celebration (Dinner, Live Music & Kid's Zone)

Lighting of the Lanterns is back!

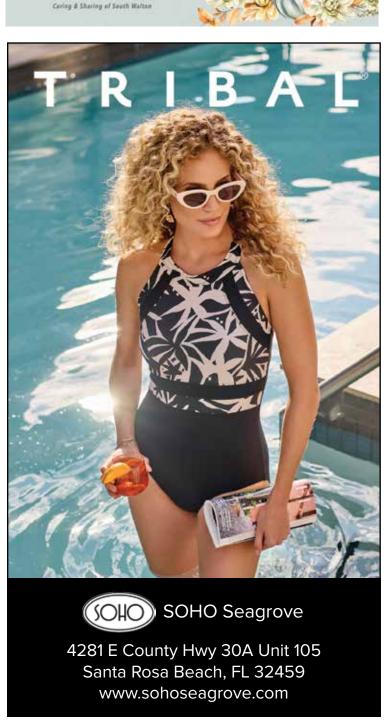
"We are thrilled to bring this event back for another incredible year!" said Scott Erby, Founder of the tournament. "This Sep-



tember, we proudly stand with St. Jude to fight childhood cancer because hope, love and healing should never be out of reach." Join the fun, whether you're a golfer, a business interested in sponsoring a powerful cause, or someone who just wants to volunteer, there's a way for everyone to get involved. To learn more, visit: https://golf4thecure-gulf-coast.perfectgolfevent.com/.









# 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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# ODUS



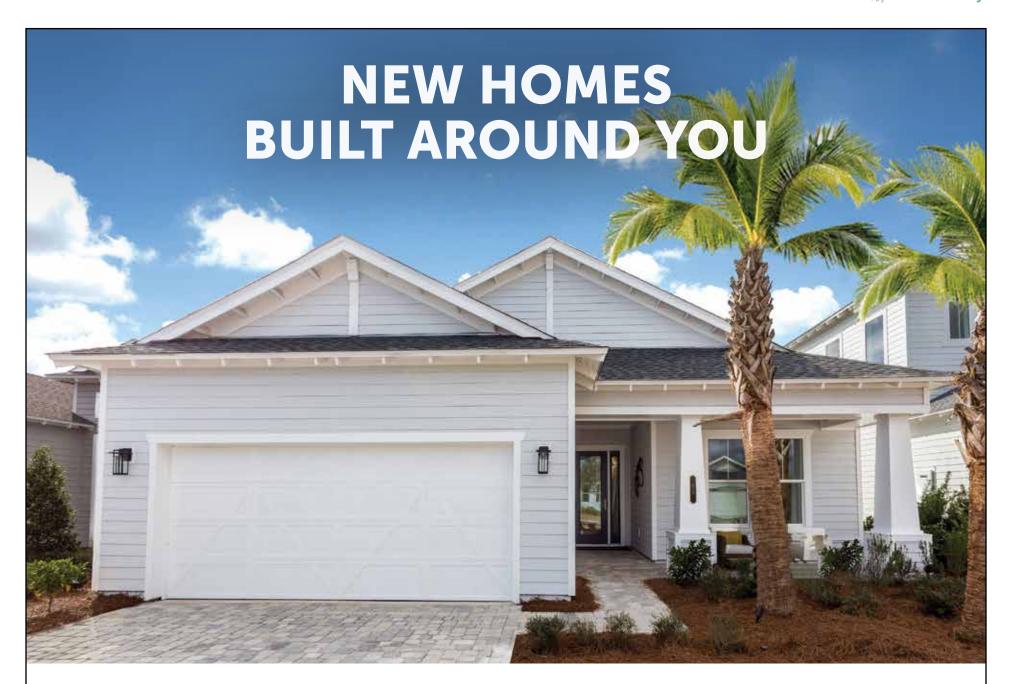












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#### Community



BY CLINT GHARIB, AIF®, CFED®

The passing of the "One Big, Beautiful Bill (OBBB) by the US Government on July 4th this year has a myriad of changes that can seriously impact investors. As an investment manager, I'm looking at this through the lens of what it means to the stock markets. The biggest change from this was restoring and locking in prior tax cuts into permanency.

During the first term of President Trump, a big factor that fueled economic activity and stock markets was the 100% immediate expensing through 'Bonus Depreciation' put in place in late 2017. This was set to phase out 20% annually to 0% by 2027, until the recent passing, which restores it back

# Investing: One Big Beautiful Stimulus

only can this be a big stimulant to economic activity, but it can also be utilized as a tax mitigation weapon. For some, it may be the biggest one. I'm not a tax mitigation expert, so I turned to someone who is. Jeff Mowrer is the President/Founder of Tax-PlanningTeam.com who comes alongside clients and their tax team or CPA. I've known him for many years and have seen him show clients and their CPA's pathways to reduce and in many cases, eliminate seemingly huge tax burdens over the years. So once the OBBB was approved, I called Jeff to get his take on it. He told me, "With this passing, anyone who pays a big tax bill chooses to." There are many items in the OBBB that deserve discussion. Today, let's look at a piece that I think can benefit nearly everyone due to its potential impact on tax mitigation, business activity, and thus the stock markets, which is my area.

Let's look at a case he put together for a client couple in Alabama, who had a combined income of \$1.2m and the hus-

to 100%, permanently. Not only can this be a big stimulant to economic activity, but it can also be utilized as a tax mitigation weapon. For some, it may be the biggest one. I'm not a tax mitigation expert, so I turned to someone who is. Jeff Mowrer is

"I showed them how using bonus depreciation, when it was 100% level before, they could purchase two car washes for \$10 million but only put down \$2mm (20% of the purchase). Due to bonus depreciation they were able to deduct \$10 million right away which covered all the profits from the business sale and even the \$1.2 million they earned - so they paid zero taxes for that year, used the car washes' cash flow to pay the loans and costs, plus still had almost a \$1m in their pocket since they only put down \$2mm to buy them." Yeah, my eyes popped out when I first learned this, too. Jeff sai,d "It's like scoring a giant 'Get Out of Taxes Free' card — just for buying the right kind of asset."

There are many details to consider when it comes to taxes and mitigation, and not every type of equipment or purchase works the same. Bonus depreciation may not be for you, but think of all the people and businesses it could benefit, and what that means for possibly increasing economic activity and thus investment potential. I can't guarantee that folks will make purchases to the same extent they did following 2017 for those few years, but as an advisor to many business owners, I've been hearing more conversations about expansion and acquisitions than I can recall in several years.

As trusted advisors to clients across the country, we don't simply manage investment portfolios but work for clients like a head coach of their team, assembling strategies, and bringing together specialists, like Jeff Mowrer, to help clients try to save more of what they earn and try to earn more on what they save. The next two updates I plan to go into additional parts of the OBBB that may benefit you.

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## **Built to Grow:**

# Why Investing in People Makes a Stronger Community



By Danica LaFaire, Owner – Fish Window Cleaning, Destin

The sun reflecting off a perfectly clean window here in Destin is a beautiful sight. But, what truly shines at Fish Window Cleaning isn't just the glass – it's the people behind it.

If you've ever walked into a business and just felt the energy — that sense of pride, kindness and ownership — then you already understand the kind of workplace I'm trying to build.

At Fish Window Cleaning here in Destin, we clean glass, yes. But that's just the tool. What we're really doing is building people up, creating jobs with purpose, and helping Northwest Florida shine — inside and out.

I've been asked before, "Why put so much energy into culture?"

My answer is simple, "because how a business treats its people affects everything. It affects the service customers receive. It affects the mood employees carry home. And it absolutely shapes the strength and resilience of our local community."

# That's why our mission is clear:

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

And that mission starts with our team.

## Culture Is the Foundation

We believe in:

- Fairness, Kindness, and Respect
- Choosing a Positive Attitude
- Doing the Right Thing
- Creating Wow Moments

These aren't just things we say — they're how we operate. Every Monday, our team comes together to check in on goals, share wins (like glowing Google reviews), and train around safety and service. And yes — safety always comes first.

New team members are given a copy of The Five Dysfunctions



of a Team, along with a note from me. That book helps us anchor our culture in trust, healthy conflict, shared accountability, and the drive to win as a group.

We've also built tools — like our team app — that make it easier to stay connected, solve problems, and celebrate progress, whether someone's in the field or heading to their next job.

#### Growth That Goes Beyond the Job

We pay commission on every job. Bonuses are real. Sales opportunities are available. That means our team members control their earning potential — and we

teach them how to grow it.

But more than that, we teach goal-setting, personal budgeting, and long-term thinking. Because I don't want anyone just clocking in and out here. I want them leaving this business better than they came in — as leaders, as providers, and as people.

We're not here to create jobs that plateau. We're here to create careers that launch.

That's why every leadership opportunity we build — as we grow toward future satellite offices — we plan to

fill from within.

# Why This Matters to the Community

When you invest in your people, they show up with energy, integrity, and purpose. That shows up in how they treat your customers, how they show up in their own homes, and how they engage with the community around them.

And when a business models

this kind of leadership, it raises the bar for everyone.

We're also proud to give back directly — not for attention, but because it's part of who we are. We provide in-kind cleanings, monetary support or volunteer time for:

- Children in Crisis
- Path of Grace Thrift & Boutique
- Semper Fi & America's Fund
- The Fort Walton Chamber of Commerce
- United Way Emerald Coast

We want to be the kind of company that doesn't just succeed — but contributes.

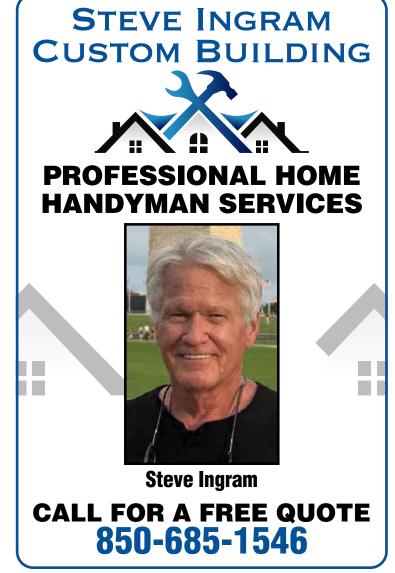
#### The Bigger Picture

I know we're just one small business. But I've seen firsthand what happens when you create space for people to grow: they rise to meet you.

Imagine the impact if more local businesses — big or small — created environments that nurtured their team's potential,

Continued on next page







## Seashells on Our Beaches

By Helen Petre

Most of us go to the beach and see shells, but we rarely know their names. These amazing creatures live in the harsh salt beach conditions and can build their own homes out of stuff they find there, which is mostly calcium carbonate. Here are some of the common shells on Our area beaches and a few cool things about them.

#### **Mollusks**

Most of the shells on our beaches are mollusks, with calcium carbonate shells. Before they end up on the beach, the animal inside usually dies, and

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then a storm, or tides, bring the hard, empty shell to the beach. In Florida, if there is no animal inside the shell, you can take them home.

#### **Coquina (Donax variabilis)**

Coquina are the most obvious and numerous shell on the beach, under your feet at the swash line. Although they are easy to collect, if the two halves are attached the animal is probably alive.

#### **Cockles (Family Cardiidae)**

The most common mollusk shell on our beaches, after live coquina, is the cockle shell. Cockles live close to the low tide

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Donax variables. Florida Fish and Wildlife, 2025.

line, so when they die it is a short trip to the beach. These twoinch, heart shaped shells can be white, red, brown, or yellow and have ridges. Cockles, like most shells you find on the beach, are bivalves, which means the two halves fit together with a hinge.

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Usually, that hinge breaks on its way to shore, so you find half the shell on the beach.

#### **Bay Scallops** (Argopecten, irradians)

Bay scallops are fan-shaped mollusks with ridges and scalloped edges. They are about three inches across when fully grown and have tiny blue eyes lining the shell when alive. They live in shallow coastal waters, and especially sea grass meadows, which provide shelter and food. They are often buried in the sand and live for about a year. The upper shell is usually dark and mottled, and the bottom shell is white. Scallops spawn in the fall when the water temperature changes. They produce millions of eggs and sperm, but only one fertilized egg in about 12 million reaches adulthood. Scallops are sensitive to environmental changes such as sea grass losses. Once common on our beaches, they now occur in only isolated populations.

#### **Marine Gastropods**

Marine gastropods are sea snails. They have only one shell, which is twisted, and interestingly, unless a hermit crab that has taken over the shell (which is a crustacean and not a gastropod), the animal inside is twisted as well.

#### **Crown Conch (Melongena** corona)

Crown conches grow to five inches long, and have red, brown, purple, or yellow horizontal stripes. The long, narrow points at the end of the shell look like a crown, providing the com-



Olive shell. Wikipedia. 2025.



Half a cockle shell.

mon name. Crown conches are carnivores, and they eat small bivalves, like coquina and scallops. They live in sea grass beds. Females are larger than males, produce about 500 eggs, and attach them to sea grass blades. Hermit crabs really like to live in crown conch shells.

#### Olive Shells (Oliva sayana)

Olive shells are smooth, shiny, two-inch-long shells, often greenish, light tan, or brown. The animals are carnivorous and feed on bivalves, invertebrates, or sometimes carrion. They are super-fast sand burrowers.

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 genera-

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Lee Campbell

#### **BUILT TO GROW**

continued from previous page

rewarded effort, and built real trust. We'd see stronger families, more resilient storefronts, and a tighter, more vibrant community.

That's the kind of momentum we're proud to help lead.

For us, it's never just been about windows.

It's always been about people. And if we can keep growing a team that reflects that — while making our coast just a little brighter every day — then I believe we're doing something that matters.

#### Ready to Join Our Team?

We're always looking for individuals who share our values and want to grow with us. If you're a positive, driven person looking for a career with purpose, we encourage you to explore what we have to offer.

Visit FishWindowCleaning. com/3249 to learn more about current opportunities.

Or if you're looking for a reliable, community-minded partner for your home or business, we'd love to serve 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 Coo-



per'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 longterm 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: USATour-Tickets.LIVE.







# Heroes in the Backyard

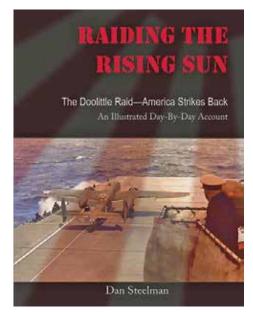
# A Review of Raiding the Rising Sun: The Doolittle Raid-America Strikes Back

By Dan Steelman REVIEWED BY DAVE HOLLAND

Few moments in American military history match the daring and determination of the Doolittle Raid. In his newly released book, Raiding the Rising Sun: The Doolittle Raid—America Strikes Back, aviation historian Dan Steelman revisits this bold World War II operation in a format that's as informative as it is visually rich.

This isn't your typical war history. Steelman walks readers through the mission in a dayby-day format, beginning on December 7, 1941—the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor—and continuing through April 18, 2022, marking the 80th anniversary of the raid. Told in the present tense, the story unfolds with immediacy, allowing readers to experience the tension, bravery, and resolve of the men involved as though it were happening now.

Led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, the April 1942 raid targeted Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and other Japanese cities. It was America's first counterstrike following the attack on Pearl Harbor and served as a powerful symbol of national resolve. Though the physical



damage inflicted was limited, the psychological impact was profound—boosting American morale and shaking Japanese confidence.

What makes this story especially meaningful for readers along the Gulf Coast is its deep local connection. The crews that would take part in the raid trained at Eglin Field in Northwest Florida. They practiced low-altitude bombing runs, night flying, and learned how to take off from a short runway-all in preparation for launching B-25 bombers from the deck of the



Hornet. Naval flight instructor Lt. Henry L. Miller from NAS Pen-

sacola played a pivotal role, teaching the crews how to simulate takeoffs on a carrier deck using makeshift runways on base.

Their mission had no return plan. The crews

knew they'd be flying into hostile territory with no landing strip waiting on the other side. Most would have to bail out or crashland in occupied China, risking capture or worse. Yet they went anyway.

Steelman's account is notable for its attention to detail and historical accuracy. Drawing from



both American and Japanese sources, it offers a balanced perspective, supported by more than 200 high-quality photographs—

many rarely seen. The images, in

both color and black and white,

are integrated throughout the

book to help bring the mission

The author's background

adds credibility. Steelman is a seasoned museum professional and lifelong aviation enthusiast. His love of history began in his youth and led to a career preserving artifacts that ranged from dinosaur bones to Apollo-era spacecraft. His admiration for the men who carried out the Doolittle Raid is evident on every page.

For readers who remember a time when patriotism wasn't just a word but a way of life, Raiding the Rising Sun is both a history lesson and a tribute. It reminds us of a time when America responded to tragedy with unity, grit, and courageand of the young men who trained right here in our own backyard before taking off into

The USAF Armament Museum will be hosting Author Dan Steelman for an author signing event on August 16 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Museum is located at 100 Museum Drive, Eglin AFB, Fort Walton Beach. The museum has a B-25 on display in the colors of Jimmy Doolittle. Admission to the museum is free.





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#### Arts

#### **SCENIC WALTON**

continued from page 4

The first episode features Walton County Schools Superintendent Russell Hughes, Facilities Director Jill Smith, and Scenic Walton Executive Director Leigh Moore, interviewed by Melissa Ward, President of the Emerald Coast Section of the American Planning Association Florida. The conversation offers insights into the design process behind Dune Lakes Elementary and the significance of the award to both the school district and the broader community.

Notably, the school district is not required to follow the Land Development Code when constructing schools—but chose to do so anyway, setting a precedent for excellence and community consideration.

Watch the full interview and subscribe at YouTube.com/@ ScenicWalton for future episodes featuring stories of design, community impact, and scenic preservation across Walton County.

"This award isn't just about aesthetics," added Moore. "It's about quality of life, sustainability, and how thoughtful development improves our communities for generations to come."

#### **Call for Nominations:** Help Us Recognize **Excellence in Design**

Do you know a building or development in Walton County that truly stands out—one that respects the environment, enhances scenic beauty, and reflects the character of our community?

Scenic Walton is now accepting nominations for upcoming Design Excellence Award cycles, recognizing outstanding architectural and landscape design throughout Walton County.

#### **Recent Award Recipients:**

- Dune Lakes Elementary School Thoughtful, communityminded design
- Eglin Federal Credit Union (Freeport Branch) – A modern aesthetic rooted in local charm
- CCB Bank Restoration

(DeFuniak Springs) – Historic preservation that revitalizes downtown

· Sunbright Inn (DeFuniak Springs) - A graceful blend of historic preservation and modern comfort

#### What We Look For:

- Architecture that fits the landscape and surrounding community
- · Landscaping that enhances natural beauty

- Signage, lighting, and aesthetics that contribute to scenic character
- Environmentally sensitive design
- Projects that improve quality of life for residents and visitors

#### **How to Nominate:**

Email your nomination to: Leigh Moore at leigh@ scenicwalton.org.

# Cultural Arts Alliance Awards More Than \$30,000 in Art For All Grants to Support Walton County Arts Education

Walton County (CAA) is proud to announce that over \$30,000 in Art For All grant funding has been awarded to support arts education and creative projects benefiting more than 900 K-12 students across Walton County. In its ongoing mission to foster creativity, the CAA has granted more than \$885,000 to teachers, students, artists and arts organizations over the years.

This round of funding includes 16 teacher mini grants awarded to educators representing 11 area schools including: Bay School VPK, Butler Elementary School, Freeport Elementary School, Freeport Learning Center, Freeport Middle School, Maude Saunders Elementary School, Seacoast Collegiate High School, Seaside Neighborhood School, South Walton High School, Walton Middle School, and The WISE Magnet School were awarded. These grants are designed to enhance visual, literary, and performing arts experiences for K-12 students in public, private (501c3), and homeschool environments. Funding supports materials, guest artists, field trips, and other artsfocused enrichment opportunities initiated by educators.

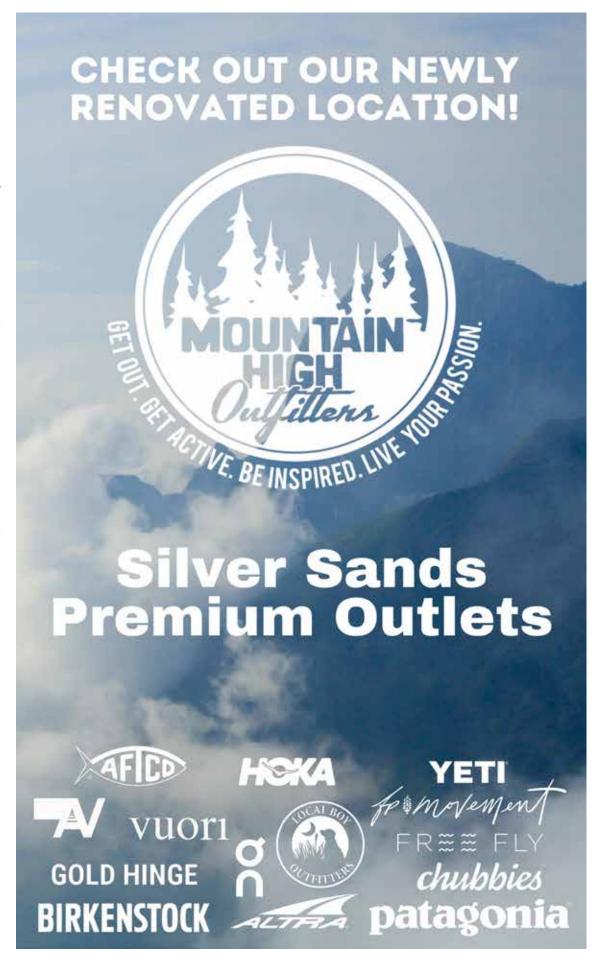
In addition to the teacher grants, a college scholarship was awarded to Avery Joyner of

The Cultural Arts Alliance of DeFuniak Springs who is pursuing a degree in the Arts. Local artist Lexi Holt received an artist grant for professional development for continuing education to advance her work, and two non-profit organizations, Emerald Coast Theatre Company and the Longleaf Writers Conference, were awarded grants to support youth arts programming and outreach.

> "These grants reflect the heart of our mission: supporting the creative development of our community," said CAA President & CEO Jennifer Steele. "When we invest in arts education, we invest in a future that values imagination, empathy, and innovation. We're proud to help empower educators, students, and local creatives to shape a vibrant, art-rich Walton County."

> The next application deadline for Art for All grants is November 15, 2025. Eligible applicants include teachers, students, individual artists, and arts organizations. Applications and guidelines can be found at CulturalArtsAlliance.com/artistresources.

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





# **Something from Nothing**

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

One big regret I have, which dates back to 2016, is my lack of historical documentation. I think back to the day that Stacey Brady, ECTC board member and advocate, brought Nathanael and I to the empty, echoey 17,000 sq. ft. space that now houses Emerald Coast Theatre Company and asked "Do you think this will work?" We laughed, and then we cried, overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the gift that we were being given from Grand Boulevard. I never dreamed of how full it would become. Full of people, full of things, full of life. I should have created a time lapse video of the curtain track being hung in the rafters and how our theatre friends and colleagues showed up to do math and hang curtains in all the right places. The space slowly began to take shape and form—a curtained off black box area with room for 100 seats, a shop area, a small corral of desks, and a spot in the corner for the bins of costumes and props we had accumulated and stored in my Father's shed when it outgrew our garage. We finally had our own space! We could build a set and install it without loading it into our car for transport. Costume and props creation could now happen at a table in our new theatre instead of my kitchen table at home. We could strike the set and not have to load it up for two or three trips back to our garage. It was practically a life of leisure to have an actual location!

Even after the curtains were hung, the space felt massive. I was given a bright blue scooter that Christmas and I used it to get from the back where our "offices" are to the front lobby area. There came a point when I had to abandon my mode of transportation, because the growing number of cords, curtains and people had multiplied so much that there were just no more pathways for scootering. We recently



extended the green room to hold 15 people and two racks of costumes—and if everyone turns sideways and sucks in, they can maneuver around fairly well

This past season we moved our curtains again to maximize our mainstage seating to 260 seats. We've also challenged Beca, our Resident Designer, and Carl, our Master Carpenter, to work in less and less shop space as they simultaneously build bigger and more elaborate sets for the larger shows we are producing. The resourcefulness of our production team always inspires me, because they always

figure out a way to make the magic happen.

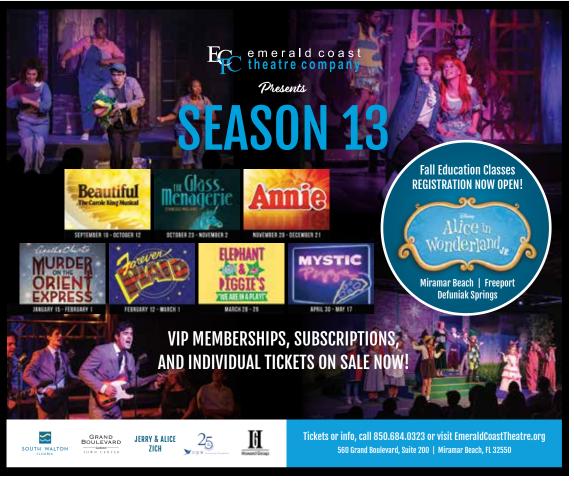
If I were to give you a tour today, you would see every inch of this incredible space in use. During the summers, we have some weeks where we simultaneously run four camps totaling almost 100 students. It is a cacophony of joy and energy and so much life happening in real time. There are the little ones in our small dance studio, the big kids dancing their hearts out in the larger rehearsal room, the serious teens working on their murder mystery in the second stage area of the lobby, and our audition-only

group singing at full volume on the main stage theatre. You would see Taylor, our Costume Designer, up on the 12 foot high rolling step ladder to pull costumes that have been hung from the ceiling while Ora, our Props Master, forges a path between the shelves of prop bins and set furniture to find that one perfect centerpiece for the show. This year we were so grateful when friends and supporters Brooks and Cari-Beth McDonald gifted the administration team a separate office space to work in for the summer. We affectionately named it "the quiet place."

Just like this once empty and echoey space, theatre is about creating something from nothing. The playwright creates that first spark and ignites a firestorm of imagery, music, lyrics and emotion. We then get to build those flat words into three dimensional miracles that exist for a moment in time. Ephemeral little worlds filled with texture and life and color and structure and wood and velvet and people moving and breathing in a way that never happens the same way twice. I hope you'll join us in real time for Season 13, and see all the worlds that ECTC has made into something from nothing.







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# From Player to Powerhouse: How One Woman Helped Save and Grow Pickleball in the Panhandle

When Jill Vavala picked up a paddle for the first time in the fall of 2022, she had no idea just how quickly Pickleball would become a defining part of her life—or that two years later, she'd be leading the charge to save and expand one of the region's fastest-growing leagues.

"I started playing Pickleball and was instantly hooked," she recalls. By the fall of 2024, she was competing in the Florida Team Pickleball League as part of a women's 3.0 team. "The league introduced me to so many amazing women and provided such fun, competitive play—I was all in."

But just as her Pickleball journey was gaining momentum, the league's future in the Panhandle was thrown into question. An unexpected email notified players that the Region Manager had abruptly resigned, and without someone to step up, the league couldn't continue.

That's when a group of concerned players—including Vavala—decided to take action. They reached out to the League President, offering to volunteer and help keep things going. Before she knew it, Vavala was named the new Region Manager. "Next thing I knew, I was the Region

Manager... with no idea what I had volunteered for." She laughs

With the support of a passionate team, Vavala helped steer the league through a successful season. Since the State Championship, she and her league coordinators and volunteers have dedicated countless hours to recruiting new players and expanding the league's offerings—all while focusing on fun, competition and affordability.

"My experience playing in the Florida Pickleball League has been more than just a sport—it's a community," said Ray Ross, captain of a men's 4.0 team out of Margaritaville. "The camaraderie, the friendly rivalries, and the energy on the courts keep me coming back week after week."

# A League Built for Players

Established in the winter of 2024, the Florida Team Pickle-ball League has brought the joy of team-based Pickleball to communities across the Panhandle. Unlike traditional tournaments that often come with steep entry fees and time commitments, this nonprofit, volunteer-run league emphasizes maximized playtime, community-building, and cost-effective competition.



"We introduced a transformative team concept that enhances the Pickleball experience," she explains. "It increases court time, involves more players, and keeps things affordable—while still delivering the excitement and spirit of competition."

That formula is clearly working. What started with 172 players across 17 teams and 4 divisions has grown to over 500 players, 45+ teams, and 13 divisions—and interest continues to surge.

However, with growth comes challenges. One of the most pressing issues is access to courts, particularly in Walton County, where available court space hasn't kept pace with the rapid rise in interest and participation. A significant

hurdle has been the limited access to taxpayer-funded public courts, such as those at Dune Lakes Elementary, which have imposed restrictions on league use. Despite being funded by the community, these courts remain largely unavailable for organized play, creating frustration among players eager to participate and grow the

Still, community support is strong. The league thanks its host sites including Camp Creek, SanDestin, Margaritaville, Hidden Dunes, Papa Joe's, and its newest partner, Bayside Pickleball, for helping meet the demand.

#### More Than a Game: League Play Builds Lasting Friendships and Community

Beyond the matches and medals, players across the Florida Team Pickleball League say the most valuable thing they've gained isn't a trophy—it's connection

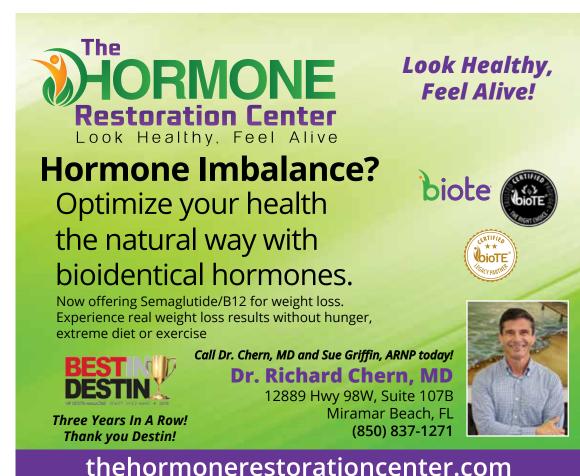
"As a player in the Florida Team Pickleball League, I've seen firsthand the impact it's had on our community," says Tracy Figueredo, captain of a women's 3.0 team. "From beginners to seasoned players, our league welcomes everyone and creates a supportive environment where people can grow and improve. After our team's appearance at the State Championship, I'm more excited than ever to spread the word—come play pickleball with us!"

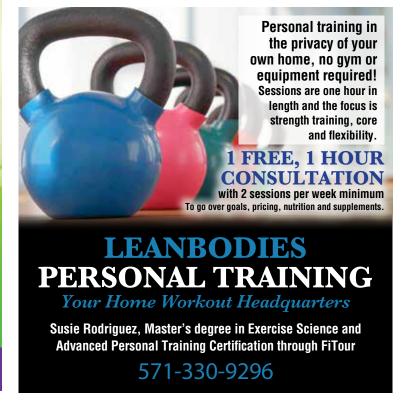
That sense of camaraderie is echoed across the Panhandle.

"The league has allowed our team to grow incredibly close," says Dee Blair, captain of a wom-

#### **PICKLEBALL**

continued on page 28







# **Healthcare Disruption In 2026**



By Christian Regalado

your seatbelts! Fasten Significant changes are on the horizon for individuals enrolled in Medicare and/or Medicaid, and for those who purchase individual coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) beginning in 2026. Changes are largely influenced by the recent passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill" and finalized rules through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Let's break down some of the changes we know about so far:

First, for Medicare enrollees, changes are anticipated for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, Part D prescription drug plans (PDP), and Medicare Supplement plans.

The Centers for Medicare

& Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized a 5.06% increase in payments to Medicare Advantage plans for 2026. Increased funding is aimed at ensuring seniors may continue receiving quality medical care without excessive financial strain. Nevertheless, in the Panhandle market, extra benefits commonly found in MA plans, such as dental, were already reduced in 2025, and additional cuts to dental, vision, and over-the-counter benefits are anticipated in 2026. We may also

see the number of available zeropremium MA plans reduced next year.

For seniors enrolled in Part D, the annual out-of-pocket max for prescription drugs will increase modestly from \$2000 to \$2100 in 2026. The monthly cap for insulin costs of \$35 or less will now apply annually, beginning in 2026, and deductibles won't apply to insulin. PDP plans will continue to cover recommended vaccines by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) with no cost sharing; however, future recommendations authorized by the Secretary of Health and Human Services may change.

For those enrolled in Traditional Medicare with a Supplement Plan, anticipate potentially impactful premium increases in 2026, though we don't yet know what that will look like.

Medicaid will see the biggest disruptions, with changes phasing in over the coming few years. Many will lose coverage, and there will be more hoops to jump through for most who are able to remain enrolled starting in late 2026. By late 2028, many enrollees will also see new cost-sharing requirements.

At the time of this writing, we're still learning how the individual ACA market will be impacted. We know the enhanced individual tax credits extended through the Inflation Reduction Act will expire at the end of 2025. The loss of these credits will leave many people unable to afford health insurance. Hopefully this will soon be addressed, but there is no sign that Congress intends to do so this year.

The healthcare landscape

Every day is a good day

for indoor pickleball!

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Lessons • Drills • Open Play Junior Program Special Events in the U.S. is only getting more complicated. People will benefit from local experts' help more than ever. Brokers won't see 2026 plans until September, and we can't discuss them until October 1. October and November will be busy with the Annual Election Period (AEP) starting October

15 and Florida ACA health insurance plans Open Enrollment starts November 1. If you don't already have a broker, it's never too late to find one!

How can you prepare for the coming disruptions in 2026? We'll know more in the next few months. What's most important

is to understand your options so that you can make the best decision for you and your family. If I can help, please reach out! 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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# **UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTH WALTON**



#### **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.

#### Coffee with a Ranger at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park Aug. 20

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park invites you to join them for Coffee with a Ranger in the park clubhouse on the third Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m. Enjoy a lively conversation with Park Rangers or an outside organization about wildlife, nature, conservation and all things Topsail. This program is ideal for the whole family to enjoy!

## Built to Lead: Women in Construction Summit Aug. 21

Join ContractHER Connect at the Emerald Grande for a dynamic day of leadership, networking, and industry insight tailored for women in construction, design, and development. Featuring keynote speaker Sarah Stein (Sarah Stein Homes), expert panels, lunch, and a networking mixer at AJ's. Tickets \$150. Info: contractors-connect.com/contracther-connect or email info@beespokeconsulting.com.

## Comedy on the Boulevard Returns Aug. 22

Emerald Coast Theatre Company and Panama City Comedy team up for another laugh-outloud night with Comedy on the Boulevard presented by Blue Water Oral Surgery Center. The

show features three acclaimed comedians bringing clean, family-friendly humor. The event takes place at ECTC's Main Stage at Grand Boulevard at 7 p.m. Get more information and purchase tickets at emeraldcoast-theatre.org/special-events.

#### International Dog Day at Sandestin Baytowne Marina Aug. 23

Celebrate International Dog Day with us at the beach at Baytowne Marina from 6:30-8:30 p.m.! Enjoy this FREE event with a live DJ, doggy kissing booth, special dog menu at Marina Bar and Grill, photo booth, and more. Humans will receive a free beer with a donation to Alaqua Animal Refuge and every furry friend gets a tennis ball and treats!

## Perfect Hues: Baytowne Wharf Art Fest Aug. 29-31

Join Baytowne Wharf this Labor Day weekend for Perfect Hues: Baytowne Wharf Art Fest. Each evening from 5-9 p.m., stroll The Village streets as you browse a variety of artwork from



local and regional artists. Enjoy live music throughout the festival and a spectacular fireworks show over the lagoon on Sunday at 9 p.m. Kick off the fall season with a unique, moonlit weekend!

#### Solaris Dinner Cruise for Taylor Haugen Foundation Sept. 10

Set sail for an unforgettable evening supporting the Taylor Haugen Foundation and its mission to protect student athletes from abdominal injuries. Enjoy fine yacht cuisine with chefselected desserts, a wine pull, and silent and live auctions—all while hearing inspiring stories

from founders Brian and Kathy Haugen.

Boarding is at 5:30 p.m. at the Baytowne Marina to sail 6-8 p.m. Proceeds provide education and advanced protective gear for secondary youth athletes. Tickets & sponsorships: TaylorHaugen.org.

## Golf4TheCure – Gulf Coast Tournament Sept. 12

Swing into action for a great cause at the 2nd Annual Golf4TheCure – Gulf Coast Tournament, benefiting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Enjoy 18 holes at the stunning

Continued on next page











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# UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTH WALTON

Raven Golf Club, plus player gifts, raffle prizes, hole contests, and a post-play celebration complete with dinner, live music, a Kid's Zone, and the magical Lighting of the Lanterns tribute. Register or sponsor at Golf4The-Cure-Gulf-Coast.perfectgolfevent.com.

#### LadyWorld Festival – Pop Culture, Podcasts & Power Vibes Sept. 26-28

The LadyGang is back with LadyWorld 2025 at Seascape Resort, an immersive weekend escape packed with pop culture, comedy, music, and inspiration. This 3-day retreat features powerhouse headliners like Hannah Berner and the Girls Gotta Eat podcast duo, plus Kaitlyn Bristowe, Rachel Lindsay, Stassi Schroeder, and more. Dive into glam workshops, wellness events, live podcasts, signature cocktails, photo ops, and plenty of Instagrammable moments! Multiple ticket tiers and accommodation options available. VIPs get exclusive merch, private planning access and more. Grab your girlfriends and get your passes at Ladyworld.co.

## 10th Annual Bloody Mary Festival Oct. 11



Get ready to Eat, Drink, and B MARY! Celebrate 10 years of bold flavors and brunch vibes at the 10th Annual Bloody Mary Festival at The Market Shops, powered by Step One Automotive Group. Sample unlimited creative bloody marys from the area's best restaurants and bars—loaded with over-the-top garnishes from grilled cheese to sushi. Also enjoy craft brews, bubbly, food vendors, live music, a cigar bar, and SEC football on

the big screen. 21+ only. Proceeds benefit Habitat for Humanity – Walton County. Info and tickets: TheMarketShops. com/Bloody-Mary-Festival.

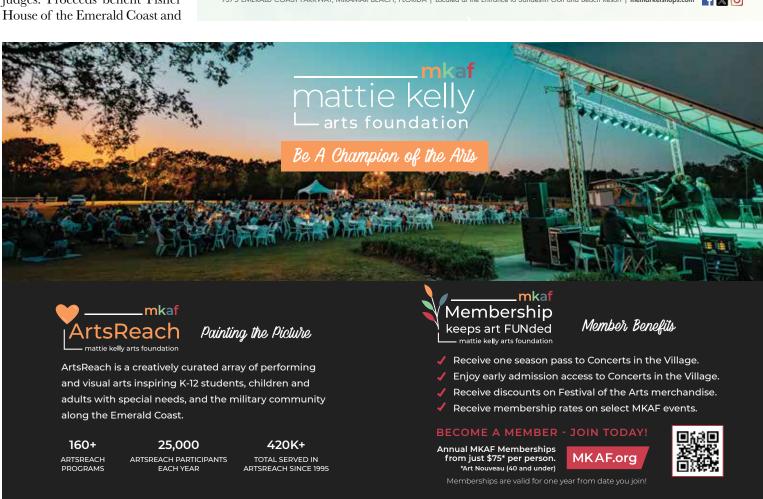
#### Eggs on the Beach Nov. 1



Cook team registration now open! Get fired up for the 11th Annual Eggs on the Beach, the beloved Big Green Egg cooking competition hosted by Bay Breeze Patio at Seascape Resort! This family-friendly foodie fest brings together backyard grillers, chefs, and nonprofit teams to serve up creative, bite-sized samples hot off the Egg to a hungry crowd and a panel of honorary judges. Proceeds benefit Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and

Food For Thought, two impactful local charities serving military families and food-insecure children. Whether you're grilling or grazing, you won't want to miss this smokin' hot event. Sign up or sponsor at EggsOnTheBeach. com or call (850) 269-4666.





#### Wellness



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

#### **Fungal and Yeast Infections**

Fungal and yeast infections

**Common Fungal and Yeast Infections** Seen in the Summertime:

### What to Know and How to Treat Them

become more common in the summertime due to heat, humidity, and increased sweating. Warm, moist environments allow fungi and yeast to grow quickly on the skin, leading to a variety of infections that often cause irritation, discoloration, and itching. These infections can be uncomfortable, contagious, and affect

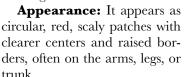
how your skin looks, so it is important to treat them early.

#### **Examples of these infections:**

\*Tinea Corporis, also known as ringworm, is caused by dermatophyte fungi. Tinea corporis is contagious and can spread through skin-to-skin contact or shared items like towels and



clothing.



- \* Athlete's Foot (Tinea Pedis)
- \* Jock Itch (Tinea Cruris)
- \* Yeast infections caused by Candida species.

**Appearance:** The above three conditions often occur in skin folds or damp areas of the body and appear as red, itchy, and sometimes cracked skin.

\*Tinea Versicolor, caused by the yeast Malassezia, typically affects the chest, back, and shoulders. This condition is not contagious but can occur, especially in hot, humid climates.

**Appearance:** It appears as small, discolored patches, either lighter or darker than the surrounding skin that may be dry or slightly scaly.

#### **Treatment**

Treatment for fungal and yeast infections typically involves topical prescription strength antifungal creams. In more wide-





spread or stubborn cases, oral antifungal medications may be prescribed.

#### **Tips for Prevention**

- \* Keep the skin dry and clean \* Stay cool; avoid getting over-
- \* Wear shoes in public places;
- shoes/flipflops at the pool, sauna, spa and gym
- \* Wear breathable fabrics; avoid tight clothing

Early recognition and proper treatment help reduce discomfort, can clear up the infection, and prevent the infection from spreading or recurring. If you notice a rash that does not go away or keeps coming back, talk to your healthcare provider. During these long hot days of summer, don't let the heat and skin rashes get you down!

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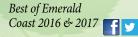


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# Menopause Doesn't Have to Be Miserable

By Dr. Karen DeVore

Let's start with something every woman deserves to hear: Menopause is

not the end of your vitality.

It's a transition—a powerful, sometimes challenging, often misunderstood chapter in your life. And at the Tortoise Clinic, we believe it can also be one of your most empowered.

#### A New Conversation Around Women's Health

Too many women come to me saying the same things:

"My doctor told me everything's normal, but I still feel off."

"I was offered antidepressants but never asked about my hormones."

"I'm gaining weight, can't sleep, and I don't feel like myself anymore." Sound familiar?

Menopause and the years leading up to it (peri-menopause) can cause a wide range of symptoms—hot flashes, mood swings, insomnia, brain fog, low libido, fatigue, and weight changes. But instead of support, many women are dismissed or handed a pill without a deeper conversation.

That's where integrative care changes the game.

## What Is Integrative Menopause Care?

Integrative medicine blends the best of both Eastern and Western healing traditions. It means we don't just look at your labs—we look at your life. We consider your diet, stress levels, sleep, relationships, work, and everything else that impacts your well-being.

At the Tortoise Clinic, menopause care is never one-size-fits-all. It's personal, proactive, and designed around you.

# Your Hormones Aren't the Whole Story–But They Matter

As your estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone shift, it can affect nearly every system in your body—from mood to metabolism to memory. We use advanced hormone testing (including DUTCH and blood panels) to uncover where imbalances are hiding.

But we also look beyond hor-

mones.

- Is stress overloading your adrenals?
- Is poor sleep undermining your immune system?
- Is your gut health affecting your mood or inflammation?

All of these matter. And all of these can be addressed—often without relying solely on medication.

## Our Holistic, Patient-Centered Approach

Every woman's body is different. That's why we offer personalized wellness plans that meet you where you are. Here's what menopause support can look like at the Tortoise Clinic:

Functional Lab Testing: We go beyond standard bloodwork to assess hormone patterns (including DUTCH testing), thyroid function, nutrient status, and inflammatory markers. "Normal" isn't always optimal—we help you find what's right for you.

Herbal Medicine & Supplements: We craft custom herbal formulas and use medical-grade supplements to support sleep, reduce hot flashes, regulate cycles, and improve energy and focus.

Acupuncture & Neuro-Acupuncture: These therapies help calm the nervous system, improve circulation, balance hormones, and reduce the intensity of menopausal symptoms naturally.

Nutrition & Lifestyle Coaching: We guide you in making smart, sustainable changes that support hormone health, blood sugar stability, and overall vitality. No fads. No deprivation.

**Real Conversations:** We take the time to listen to your story, your goals, and your challenges. You won't be rushed or brushed off. You'll be heard.

#### **Why This Matters**

Menopause doesn't mean you have to slow down, suffer through, or give up on feeling great. It's a biological transformation, and it deserves thoughtful care. When supported correctly, women often feel more grounded, intuitive, and powerful than ever.

And the results speak for themselves: Women at the Tortoise Clinic tell us they're sleeping better, thinking clearer, reconnecting with their energy—and feeling more like themselves again.

## Your Next Step Toward Vibrant Health

If you're in perimenopause, menopause, or even postmenopausal and struggling with energy, mood, sleep, or weight—don't wait for it to get worse. Let's

get to the root of it, together.

We're proud to be voted Best in Destin for Women's Wellness—and we'd be honored to support you on your wellness journey. Give us a call at 850.267.5611 or visit Tortoise-Clinic.com to schedule your consultation and mention this article to receive \$30 off your first ser-

vice as a new patient.

Menopause isn't the end of anything. It's the beginning of living in deeper alignment with your body—strong, aware, and empowered. Let's walk that path—slow and steady—together.

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# Book Review: Letters to a Young Therapist

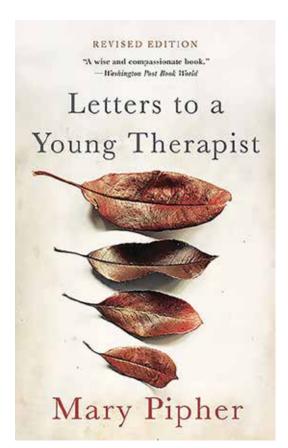


Reviewed By Michael McManus, LCSW

"Letters to a Young Therapist" by Mary Pipher is an insightful exploration of the complexities of the therapeutic profession. Although this book was published years ago, it still has a wonderful message. In this collection of letters, Pipher, a seasoned psychologist, shares her wisdom and experiences with a younger colleague, offering guidance that transcends the clinical aspects of therapy.

The book is structured as a series of heartfelt letters, each addressing different challenges and realities faced by therapists. Pipher's writing is both compassionate and candid, making it accessible to both seasoned professionals and those new to the field. She delves into topics such as the importance of self-care, the emotional toll of the profession, and the profound impact of the therapistclient relationship.

One of the standout features of Pipher's writing is her ability to weave personal anecdotes in with professional insights.



She reflects on her own journey, revealing vulnerabilities that resonate with anyone navigating the intricacies of human emotions. This personal touch not only humanizes the profession but also serves as a reminder that therapists are, first and foremost, individuals grappling with their own lives.

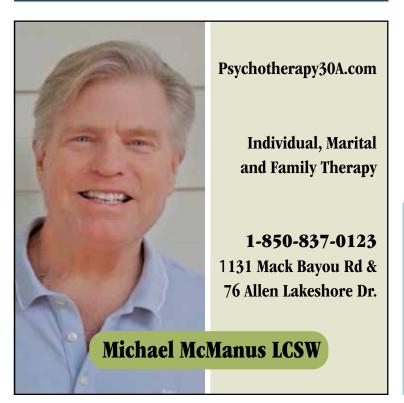
Pipher's style is engaging, and her use of language is both poetic and clear, making complex ideas easy to digest. The book is filled with practical advice, encouraging therapists to embrace their authenticity and remain attuned to their own emotional landscapes while helping others.

Overall, "Letters to a

Young Therapist" is more than just a guide for aspiring therapists; it is a meditation on the art of empathy, the necessity of connection, and the transformative power of understanding. Pipher's reflections serve as a beacon for anyone committed to the healing arts, reminding us that the path of a therapist is as much about personal growth as it is about aiding others. This book is a mustread for anyone in the field of mental health, as well as those interested in the profound dynamics of human relationships.

Michael McManus LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. He and his wife, Angela raised four children and enjoy hiking, reading, yoga, biking and cooking. Michael can be reached by text or phone at (850) 837-0123 or at psychotherapy30A.com.





#### **PICKLEBALL**

continued from page 22

en's 3.0 team from Sandestin. "We've built friendships while fine-tuning our game and raising our level of play. My team thrives in the safe, supportive, and competitive environment." Dee's husband Rocke, captain of 3 men's teams, adds, "The league has been an important part of Pickleball's growth in the Panhandle. With each season, we've seen more teams form and the level of competition steadily increase. What's been especially rewarding is the opportunity to build relationships with players across the region—people we wouldn't normally meet or compete against on a regular basis. Overall, our players are developing their skills, improving their ratings, and growing with each season. It's exciting to see that progress, both for individual players and for the sport as a whole."

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Mary Beth, the Women's League Coordinator, agrees wholeheartedly. "I've thoroughly enjoyed being part of this league as both a player and a coordinator. I've met amazing women who I now call friends," she shares. "It's motivated me to take lessons and improve my game. In a nutshell, I've become obsessed with pickleball! We're lucky to have this league in the Panhandle."

With multiple matches each season and the chance to qualify for the State Championship each April, the league offers meaningful, goal-driven play for athletes at every level. Dynamic ratings and structured divisions ensure fair and exciting matchups—and players say the rewards go far beyond competition.

"Playing in the league has been so rewarding," says Colleen, owner of Fit Pickleball. "I love showing up each week with my

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team—we've become such great friends and had an absolute blast! It even reignited my competitive spark. As a coach, I always encourage my students to join. It's a fun, supportive way to build skill, confidence, and community."

#### How to Get Involved

If you're ready to experience the joy, energy, and connection of team-based Pickleball, now is the time to get involved

Team registration for the Fall/ Winter Season opens in early August, with practice play kicking off September 7 and official season matches beginning the week of September 28.

To join, email Jill at jill. ftpli@gmail.com or download the Team Reach app and use code PHnew2025. Whether you have a full team or are a solo player looking to join one, the league will help get you on the court.

For more information, updates and upcoming events, follow Panhandle Pickleball League on Facebook and Instagram!







# Mind Reading: A Relationship Myth



By Stephenie Craig, Journey Bravely

When did you last want something in a relationship and instead of speaking up, you hoped the other person would read your mind? Maybe you wanted someone to plan a birthday surprise or you wanted a quiet dinner. Maybe you wanted someone to know how to show up for you in a time of loss or to know how you like to be cheered up when you're feeling low. You knew what you wanted but it felt hard to ask.

While a small group of people can be skilled at predicting what others need some of the time, most people do not possess this skill set. Largely, people learn what you need when you tell them directly. It is an unhelpful myth that mind reading is a green relationship flag or getting your needs met by asking is somehow less valuable or less connecting. In fact, waiting for someone to read your mind usually ends up producing frustration and connection disruption on both sides of a relationship. And, when you ask for what you need and the other person makes an intentional effort to meet your needs over time, they are communicating high value of you and the relationship.

You increase your chance of getting your needs met successfully in a relationship when you take time to understand your needs and tell the other person kindly and directly what works for you and what doesn't. You increase your chances of successfully meeting the other person's needs in a relationship when they communicate directly with you and you receive that communication with an open, curious attitude. Healthy, connected relationships are based on kind, direct communication about needs and desires,

not on any person's ability to predict the needs of the other.

So, if mind reading isn't going to be helpful, how are you supposed to talk about your relationship needs and preferences?

## 6 Ways to Practice Asking for What You Need Directly

1. Explore Your Needs. Notice what makes you feel safe, seen, valued, connected. Notice what feels hurtful or disconnecting to you. Notice your strengths and weaknesses and try approaching relationships with an awareness that everyone brings both good and hard parts of themselves. Learning how to identify what you need might be a more involved process and might be best supported with therapy if you have trouble knowing what you need.

- 2. Introduce conversation about needs. Try saying, "I would like for both of us to understand how we can each meet one another's needs in our relationship. Are you open to talking about that?"
- 3. Communicate needs as you go by giving helpful feedback. "I feel really appreciated and cared for when you initiate plans and follow



through." "I feel disconnected and hurt when you say you're going to do something and then don't follow through."

- 4. Communicate clearly and vulnerably rather than passively or aggressively. Avoid statements like, "You never" or, "You don't care how I feel." Instead try describing the situation and how you experienced it. "When I initiate a conversation with you and you continue looking at your phone and don't respond to me, I feel lonely and like what I'm trying to share is not important to you."
- 5. Once you have communicated a need, follow up about how it's going.

"I really appreciate the efforts you're making to prioritize quality time together in our relationship." "I communicated before that a need I have in our relationship is more quality time together. Since then, it feels to me like there isn't much change in this area. This feels important to me and I'd like to understand what is getting in the way of that happening."

6. Ask the other person in the relationship how they are feeling about their needs in the relationship. "How can I show up for you in

"How can I show up for you in this relationship in ways that feel good and supportive to you?"

Direct communication applies to various types of relationships and sets up more success and connection on both sides. Be kind to yourself and others in the learning process. Relationship communication can feel complex and being more direct takes practice. If you feel internal resistance to being kind and direct, try being curious about your fears and hesitations and seek support for healing that might be needed. Connect with us for coaching and counseling along your journey at Journeybravely.com.





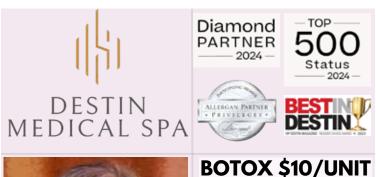


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By Jamie C. Williamson, PhD

Happy couples know a love hack that you can learn: They notice each other's good intentions and give credit where credit is due.

This simple love hack increases happiness and produces higher levels of relationship wellbeing.

Interestingly, the impact of your partner's good deeds depends largely on why you think they tried to do something good for you. We call this an "attribution" of cause.

And, what you see as the cause of their kindness depends mostly on what you look for.

The good news is that you can train yourself to pause, look for the good in your partner, and appreciate their contribution to your relationship wellbeing.

#### **How Giving Due Credit Works**

Let's say your partner made the bed while you were in the shower. There are four basic casual attributions you could make for this small

# **Look for Good Intentions:**

# A Simple Love Hack Promotes Happiness and Relationship Wellbeing

kindness, and they result from Internal vs External causes and from Stable versus Temporary causes.

My Partner made the bed for me because:

- 1. ...he is kind and routinely finds ways to make my life easier (Internal, Stable attribution)
- 2. ...he is feeling guilty about coming home late last night (Internal, Temporary attribution)
- 3....his sister always tells him he should help more with housework (External, Stable attribution)
- 4. ...his first appointment was a Zoom from home, so he just had extra time. (External, Temporary attribution)

People in healthy, satisfying relationships routinely make Internal, Stable attributions (#1 – an admirable character trait) for their partner's positive acts. These attributions increase happiness about the behavior and promote the relationship's well-being over time.

People in distressed relationships often make External, Temporary attributions (#4 – a self-serving opportunity) for their partner's kindness. These attributions diminish happiness about the behavior and erode relationship satisfaction over time

Pause, Think, and Stay Happy

Let's consider a grand gesture: Peter got a work promotion to a larger, new sales territory. He planned a meet-and-greet trip to Orlando during his first week in the new job, which happened to include his wife Lauren's July birthday. With his boss's permission, he invited Lauren to join him for his stay in Orlando at a luxury hotel, as a surprise birthday gift. He told Lauren that, although he would be working several hours each day, they could sleep late, have every evening meal together, and Lauren could enjoy well-deserved R&R as a special birthday treat. He knew that Lauren, a middle school teacher, had the summer off.

Fortunately, Lauren, who looks forward to celebrating her birthday with family and friends every year, paused to consider alternative reasons why Peter combined a work trip with her birthday celebration.

- 1. ...he is a hard-working man who is motivated to make her happy (an Internal, Stable Attribution)
- 2. ...he planned the trip before he realized it interfered with her birthday, so he just did the best he could to make up for it. (an Inter-

nal, Temporary Attribution)

3. ...his clever assistant suggested it was the way to keep both his boss and his wife happy. (an External, Stable Attribution)4.

...his boss gave permission, so he could pay for her birthday trip with his expense money. (an External, Temporary Attribution)

If Lauren believes that Peter combined his work trip with her birthday gift to save money and reacts through that lens, she will be unhappy with his effort, and they will experience relationship distress. Lauren won't hear Peter's alternative explanations because, in her view, the gift is a convenience to him, not a gift to her at all.

If Lauren believes that Peter combined his work trip with her birthday gift with good intentions, inspired by his work ethic and his dedication to her, she will be happy with his effort to please her, and their relationship will be enhanced. Lauren won't see an alternative explanation because she only sees a good deed and gives Peter credit for it.

#### **The Love Hack Learned**

Notice when your partner does something good for you and remember that what you see depends on what you look for.

If you look for Internal, Stable causes for your partner's good deeds, then you will easily see your partner's admirable character and positive intentions. This will enhance your positive regard for your partner and improve your relationship quality over time.

If you look for External, Temporary causes for your partner's good deeds, you will see self-serving motives and make critical interpretations. This will have a negative impact on your happiness and degrade your relationship over time.

I recommend you pause and try this simple, positive Love Hack instead.

Let me know if I can help.

Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and Member of the Gottman Referral Network, with a Certificate in the Science of Wellbeing and Happiness from the Harvard School of Medicine. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in "friendly divorce" mediation and psycho-educational couples counseling. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics and authors the blog "Work it Out". You can find her online at amitymediationworkshop.com.







There are more than 300 types of honey, each with its own unique flavor, color and nutritional properties. Be sure to look for raw and unfiltered honey. Other honeys are usually pasteurized (exposed to high heat) destroying the yeast that is naturally present as well as destroying most of the honey's nutritional properties.

Visiting as many as 50,000 flowers every day to collect nectar and pollen and then delivering it to the hive where the worker bees turn it into honey, are a honey bee's job. The flowers they thrive on determines the color, tastes, benefits and uses. Honey has been found in ancient tombs and it was still edible. It has no expiration date unless it is introduced to water.

The varying glucose and fructose levels found in honey is what causes it to crystallize at different rates. This does not affect the honey. It can be softened by placing a bowl with the honey in warm water. To help prevent honey from crystallizing store in a room temperature area and out of direct sunlight in glass

jars rather than plastic containers. It is also recommended to use wood vs. metal for extracting honey from the jar. Consistent exposure can affect the enzymes in the honey, and since honey its acidic, it can cause corrosion of the metal over long exposure.

Honey can also contain antioxidant and antibacterial or expectorant properties, probiotics, anti-inflammatory agents or be rich in iron. There are other properties as well, and each honey has its own medicinal applications. Here are some great ones to place in your arsenal.

**Tupelo Honey** - Found in Florida and the remote swamps of Georgia. Buttery and sweet making it good for BBQ sauces and as a drizzle over desserts or ice cream. Benefits include antioxidant and antibacterial properties.

**Alfalfa Honey** - Also known as Lucerne honey is good for baking or as a sweetener for lemonade, teas, etc. Consume regularly to treat diabetes, anemia and fever. It's rich in probiotics.

**Eucalyptus Honey** - Australia and California. Use for mild coughs and colds. Acts as a potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant agent to boost the immune system

**Buckwheat Honey** - Darkest and strongest among popular types of honey in the world. High in antioxidants and rich in iron. Great for treating anemia, sore throats, coughs and boosts lower cholesterol levels. Also good for wound cleaning and skin care.

# Hey, Honey

**Sage Honey** - California. Incredible for fighting diabetes and helps indigestion. It has antioxidants, antibacterial and expectorant properties.

Orange Blossom Honey -Spain and Mexico and common in Texas, southern California and Florida. Boasts high natural anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that support the immune system.

**Wildflower Honey -** Widely used to fight allergies, especially when consumed as a natural sweetener in smoothies and teas

**Dandelion Honey** - Australia. Excellent for boosting immune system and superb for gastrointestinal tract and bowel health

**Fireweed Honey** - This honey is created by the plant that sprouts and grows after a forest fire. Great for baking, gourmet cooking, glazes, marinades and grilled food. Has antibacterial and antioxidant properties boosts immune system

**Sourwood Honey** - Appalachian Mountains. Superior antibacterial and antioxidant properties.



**Linden Honey** - Most part of Europe. Used in desserts, tasty cheese and tea sweeteners. Helps alleviate insomnia (before-bed herbal tea) and anxiety as it acts as a sedative. Ideal for treating coughs and colds and detoxifying the body

**Avocado Honey** - Mexico and California. Rich in minerals, antioxidants, and vitamins. Boosts immune system, aids in preventing anemia and hastening wound healing.

**Acacia Honey** - North America and parts of Europe. Great for treating diabetes, cleansing the liver and regulating the intestines.

Manuka Honey - New Zealand Has incomparable medicinal benefits and is a top pick in the pharmaceutical industry. Has many medicinal applications from wound healing to several internal benefits.

**Clover Honey** - New Zealand and Canada. Excellent in salad dressings, sauces and cooking recipes. High amounts of phenolic acids improves heart and lung function and boosts the nervous system.

Blueberry Honey - Michigan and New England. Excellent spread on toast and biscuits and sweetener for granola or drizzles on fruits and yogurt. Boost immune system and fighting colds. Exceptional antioxidant and antibacterial powers.

I have a few on my list to try. Using it in recipes in place of sugar as well a teaspoon for a special evening treat sounds like to good place to start.

Here's to health! HealthyDay HealthyLife, succeed.hdhl@gmail.com







## Sean of the South: The Whale



By Sean Dietrich

Seldovia, Alaska, sits somewhere near the top of the world. It's a nanoscopic village on the North Pacific. Population 225. Tons of fishing boats. A lot of cold, icy, Kachemak Bay water.

A few days ago, a local spotted something huge stranded on the beach. It was a minke whale. About the same length as a midsize Toyota.

The whale was struggling. Thrashing around and panting. The whale was fighting to breathe.

The passerby ran for help.

When a live whale finds itself stuck on a beach, you don't have a lot of time. Maybe 20 minutes, tops.

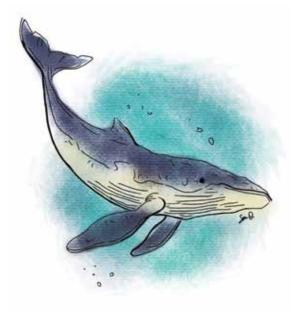
Dehydration is often what kills the whale. Or the whale might drown because its airway faces the tide. Often, it's suffocation that kills a stranded whale. Remember when

Remember when you were a kid, and you swam in the pool all day? Remember how when you got out of the pool, your whole body felt heavy? That's because for hours water supported your body weight while all your friends played Marco Polo, thereby trauma-

tizing some unfortunate child so that this child would be receiving therapy for the next, say, 30 or 40 years of his or her respective adulthood. Not that I would know anything about this.

So anyway, after being buoyant all day, your little-kid muscles weren't used to supporting your weight. Once you got out of the pool, your body felt heavy.

Likewise, whales spend a life-



time in the water. Their bodies are not built to handle their own weight. When a whale lies on the beach, gravity crushes its huge frame, making it almost impossible to breathe.

The whale in Seldovia was gasping, with roughly three tons sitting on its lungs. It was dehydrating in the sun. It wouldn't be long before the whale would just give up and die.

Each year, about 2,000 whales strand themselves on beaches and die. That number is rising. Nobody really knows why. Even fewer seem to care.

Someone in the village contacted Stephen Payton, the environmental coordinator. In his 10-year career, he had never encountered a live beached whale. He wasn't sure what to expect when a neighbor offered him a ride on a four-wheeler.

"It was really scratched up," Payton

said. "You could tell it had probably been rolling around on the rocks."

When he got to the beach, he had likely expected to find a dead whale. What he found, however, was not a deceased cetaceous creature.

When Payton arrived at the shore, there was a crowd of locals who had formed a bucket brigade. They were hauling

seawater from the Pacific, using five-gallon buckets, dousing the whale.

The villagers had wrapped the whale in wet towels to protect it from sun exposure. They did not leave the whale's side. Twenty minutes turned into an hour. One hour turned into six.

After a full day of caring for the animal, the tide arrived. The whale reoriented itself and swam into the water and the crowd cheered.

But the whale did not swim off into the deep. The whale stayed in local waters for days, surfacing frequently, and spouting at local villagers. Like it was saying thank you.

Now think of all the times you honestly believed you weren't going to make it. Try to remember the individuals who appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, who stood beside you during hard times, even when odds were not in your favor. Remember those people?

Good.

Now go be that person for someone else today.



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# **Critical Conversations**



By Kirk McCarley

Earl Weaver was highly successful for many years as manager of the Baltimore

Orioles. During a 17-year career as skipper for the O's, Weaver's teams won more than 58% of their games, appearing in four World Series and winning one. His squads were both talented and fundamentally sound, relying on solid defense and timely hitting.

Weaver was also notorious for his highenergy responses to umpiring calls with

which he disagreed, engaging in a variety of profane and somewhat "creative" outbursts and tantrums. His theatrics resulted in his discharge from 96 games, still third all-time among big league managers. In fact, he averaged being tossed at a pace of about one out of every 26 games during his tenure, essentially once a month during a season.

His demeanor with officiating crews was typically far from warm and tender.

We've all likely instigated as well as been the recipient of a crucial conversation. These discussions are often defined as those where the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions can be strong.

Recently, I had the distinction of doing some leadership training for a team of executives. One of the components of that training related to these very same critical conversations.

Crucial communications occur in a wide array of environments. In the business world, it may relate to a dialogue between a supervisor and a team member. In sports, it can be a player and a coach. In the classroom, there are teach-

ers, students, and sometimes parents involved. For those of us responsible for initiating the conversation, it can be one of the more unsettling experiences we encounter, regardless of our role. It is also often quite necessary. Avoidance seldom brings about a resolution to the matter at hand, although there can be benefits to "letting the jets cool" for a while before engaging.

So, where to start?

First, identify the issue. Are there problems with work performance, and what are they? How is it impacting not only



overall productivity, but also the output of others on the team? What does the problem seem to be? Is it related to production, or is it attitudinal and potentially toxic? Prepare for how to approach the situation, what you want to say, when, and the potential reactions you might expect.

Begin the engagement with a question to let the person know that feedback is coming. In other words, "Do you have an idea as to why we're meeting?" Sometimes the response is volunteered knowingly, other times it may be a mystery. Describe observations. "I've noticed your level of engagement has diminished. Do you also see and acknowledge that?" Or a coach might offer to an interior offensive lineman after a game that "you missed four blocking assignments in our last game. Before that, you had been averaging just one. What else may be on your mind?"

Include positive observations as to what is being done well. "You have consistently been a great student." "You have established a high standard in customer service."

Next, describe why what has

occurred is a concern. Demonstrate curiosity. A supervisor might ask again, "Is there something else going on that I should know about?" A teacher may want to know if a student is seeing and hearing all right. Perhaps there are some visual or audial challenges that have recently manifested and can be corrected.

Finally, invite input. The objective is not to determine "who" is right or wrong, but

rather "what" is right.

One of the worst things we can do to anyone is leave them guessing. The cold shoulder and inaction fail to bring about better results. Neither is the "inyour-face" exchange common between coaches and officials. Entertaining though it may be, it occurs in a different world from which most of us exist. There are ways that are right and better in which to have the critical conversation. Establish yourself

as someone fair-minded, under control, and professional.

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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By Rick Moore

It is hard to get the images of the children from Camp Mystic out of my mind. Well over a hundred lives were lost in the floods in Kerr County, Texas. We pray for the community. Our church sent money to support the efforts. I try to tell members of the Coast Guard thank you for their service. Yet, it isn't enough.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Scott Ruskan was recognized for saving over 160 people, many of them children, during the devastating Texas floods in July 2025. He said, "The mission's not over

## It's Not Over

yet. It's not over for us." Those words rang out to me. For many of us who have lived through hurricanes, we know that long after the national media has moved on to the next big story, some are just beginning the healing process. It's not over.

Award-winning author and USCG Captain Martha La-Guardia Kotite shared these thoughts on the Texas Floods: "My heart grieves for all those families impacted by this tragedy. I am grateful for the courage and determination our first responders have given to help save lives, especially those in the USCG." One of the several books Martha has written is titled "So Others May Live." She shares several stories about the many heroes who head toward danger when others are fleeing. My favorite story is "Hurricane Baby."

The Hubbard family was in the Atlantic Ocean, hundreds of miles from the coast of North Carolina. This family of four was in grave danger, trapped in the clutches of the extreme winds and huge waves of Hurricane Gordon. One of the chil-



dren was an infant who was only four months old. Their boat was being tossed around by twenty-five foot seas and gale force winds. Rescue swimmer Mario Vittone, pilot David Gunderson, copilot Daniel Molthen, and mechanic Bobby Blackwell boarded a Jayhawk helicopter after receiving a Mayday call from the family.

After flying hundreds of miles through the storm, they refueled by landing on the USS America, which was about halfway to the rescue scene. That gave them just enough fuel to fly the rest of the way to the family, spend no more than twenty minutes at the scene for the rescue, and then return to the USS America for more fuel before heading home. The swimmers had never trained for saving an infant in these conditions. Just the spray from the helicopter blades is more than some adults can handle during a rescue operation.

By the time they arrived at the Hubbard's boat, the seas had risen to thirty feet. The back of

the boat was cluttered with an assortment of gear, making delivery of the rescue basket impossible. Mario would have to swim to the stern of the boat, inflate the oneman raft, put the baby in it, and hoist it to the helicopter. While Mario was still swimming toward the boat, the mother carried the infant to the sailboat's swim platform. Then one of the breakers swept her and the baby into the sea. Mario dove to the rescue, saving mother and infant. After getting them safely into the helicopter, he went back to rescue the teenage daughter and the father. Mario received many awards for his historic rescue. The hero's response to such accolades is simple but profound. "We do this job because every once in a while someone is out there without hope, desperately praying for their life, and we get to be the answer."

This is just one of the many rescue stories Martha LaGuardia Kotite has to share. After having served in the Coast Guard for three decades, Martha is now an author and keynote speaker. Her work is far from over. If you would like to read more about great maritime rescues, visit marthakotite.com/books.



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# A Pastor's Ponderings: **Together**



By Rev. Pete Hyde

It was a perfect "chamber of commerce day." The temperature was near seventy, not a cloud in the sky, and a gentle breeze. A small group of ladies from the church and I had traveled to a large arts and crafts festival. As soon as we parked and a time was set for departure, they scattered like a group of excited children headed to recess. I turned around, and they were gone. I had no shopping list or agenda other than getting bratwurst for lunch. I slowly strolled the streets lined on both sides and down the middle with white popup canopies, trying my best to stay out of the way of serious shoppers.

The local high school booster club was selling brats with homemade sauerkraut, peppers and all the trimmings. I gathered up my lunch, found an old stump on the edge of the sidewalk in the sun, settled down and checked off the only thing on my to-do list for the day. The music of the local high school jazz band filtered down the street from the stage a half a block away. The smell of burgers and brats grilling mixed with the smell of kettle corn from the booth next door brought a carnival feel to lunchtime. It was time to do a little people watching.

People moved up and down the aisles created by the crafter's tents in an orderly fashion. As always, there were a few who were bucking the flow of traffic. There was an older couple making their way down the street. She was darting from booth to booth while he made steady progress in a straight line, cane in hand. Then came the young family pushing a stroller. Dad had one child in his arms dripping a Popsicle down his back. The child in the stroller had managed to get cotton candy on every square inch of himself or herself and the entire inside of the stroller. Mom was texting and not really paying attention, therefore everyone had to dodge them as they weaved through the crowd, never stopping to look at the arts and crafts. Groups of teenagers in various forms of attire made their way through the crowds with their heads down and eyes focused on their cell phones. They all giggled when one of them turned to the other and said, "Did you get the text I just sent you?" A couple who looked like they were in their seventies walked slowly, holding hands from booth to booth. One of the teenagers said, "Isn't that sweet, they're holding hands."

I moved from my stump to a vacant bench with a cup of mocha almond fudge ice cream in my hand. It wasn't on my list, but I need to indulge a little. Again, I gazed across the crowd. Thousands of people, each with their own agendas for the day, each with their own set of issues and problems, joys and concerns, sorrows and happiness, tears and laughter, enjoying a day in the same place but yet still alone, looking for little diversion or escape from the rigors of life.

Is this a picture of the church today - individual people coming together in a group, yet still alone, looking for an escape or diversion from the rigors of life? If it is, then the church has failed. We are called, as Christians, to come together as individuals with all the baggage we carry and form a body, the Body of Christ. If the church

is nothing more than a group of individuals, each on their own individual journeys, who just happen to gather together once in a while, then we will make no more impact on our community and world than the crowds attending an arts and crafts festival. The song says: "I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together." Let's

consider who we are as the church and, more importantly, who we are as individual members of the body and our part in forming the Body of Christ, called to impact our communities and the world in His name.

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



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# THEO BEACH TOWELS NOW ON SALE!



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



# A Cookie Creator and a Christian Capitalist: Michele Pavlich



By RICH SANDERS

Who would've thought that a simple cookie could become an instrument for delivering the Good News? Michele Pavlich did! As the founder of Covenant Cookie Creations, LLC, Michele was called by God to start a company based on two simple concepts: 1) making the best cookie she could; and 2) saying a prayer over each cookie to ask God to bring the Good News to whoever received it!

She didn't start off with a bakery, however. She and her husband met in high school and have now been married 40 years. After he retired from the





Air Force, they took the leap of faith to move to the Emerald Coast from Alaska. God soon called her to start the cookie business.

In describing her business card for Covenant Cookie Creations, Michele points out that: "Just by saying the name, the seed is planted and what that seed is—it's God's mustard seed. Our logo has the mustard seed on it. You'll also notice it's triple C. If people know us as "Triple C", I love it. But when I hear it, I hear Christ, Cross and Church. Wow!"

One of the core tenets of the Christian Capitalist is that we glorify God through our work, and Michele does that every single time she bakes a cookie. "So I pray over every cookie: not a prayer for me... it's a prayer that the Lord's seed is planted in the individual that partakes in this cookie, that a seed is planted. It's all up to His glory that I give him- isn't

that something?"

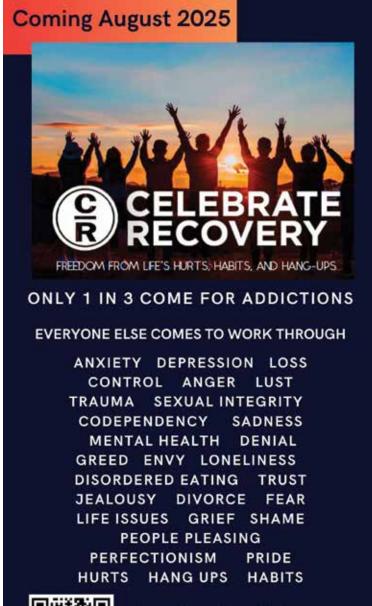
It is something indeed. Covenant has grown steadily in its first year and just got a major boost from some of the biggest celebrities on the Emerald Coast- the Blue Angels! Working with the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, Michele had the opportunity in July to make cookies for the Pensacola Beach airshow to serve families and friends of the Blue Angel pilots, as well as hosting a tent and sell her cookies to hundreds of thousands of people!

When asked what it means to be a Christian Capitalist, Michele wrote a poetic response: "Each day offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between the image we see [in the mirror] and the image God created us to be."

Michele recently appeared on the Christian Capitalist podcast Episode #30. This is significant for her because it had been 30 years since she participated in a small group at church, and she had a chance to read and review The Christian Capitalist this Spring in her small group at church!

Starting this month, SOWAL Life will provide a link to episodes of the Christian Capitalist podcast on its website. We are excited about this opportunity to continue to provide inspirational stories of hard work and generous giving to the poor and needy in the name of Jesus Christ, starting with Michele Pavlich and Covenant Cookie Creations!

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.



Scan the code to find out more and register for the next meeting!

Fridays 5:30 120 Kingdom Way, SRB









By Pastor Dave Holland

"Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'... But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things." — Luke 23:46, 49

Luke's Gospel repeatedly highlights the faithfulness of women. More than any other gospel writer, Luke shows how women were consistently devoted to Jesus—from Galilee to Golgotha. I relate deeply to this. I came to Christ in a church founded by a woman—Aimee Semple McPherson. Though she passed before I was born, her legacy raised up many men and women in ministry, including me.

Early on, I learned Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile... neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Women have always had a powerful place in God's story—and especially in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Women didn't just cheer from the sidelines. They followed, served, gave and endured. They traveled with Jesus, supported His ministry financially, and even cared for His physical needs. And when the road got hardest—when the crowds disappeared and the cross loomed—they stayed.

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month for the
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## A Pastor's Ponderings: Women and Jesus

Mary, the mother of Jesus, not only birthed the Son of God, but gave us the "Magnificat," a prophetic song that still echoes today. Mary Magdalene is mentioned in the Gospels more than most of the apostles. Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, helped fund Jesus' ministry. Salome, the mother of James and John, was present at key moments. So, were Mary of Bethany and her sister Martha—both women of deep faith and connection to Jesus.

Some would say to women, "Stay home, be quiet and tend the children." Yet, there were many women of various social standings who were out on the road with Christ and his dis-

ciples. They would have slept beside the road as Jesus and the disciples did. How awkward was that?

These women didn't retreat when things got messy. They followed Jesus to the cross. They were present at His death, helped care for His body, and returned to His tomb when others hid in fear. In fact, women were the first to witness and proclaim the resurrection. That's no small detail.

Where were Peter, James and John? Hiding. If you wanted to find them, you'd need a woman to point the way.

I've experienced firsthand the quiet strength and bold faith of women in ministry. When I first felt the call to serve God, it was a missionary who preached the sermon that broke my heart open. I stepped forward to the altar, unsure but hopeful. And then came Sister Conger—a woman who began weeping and wailing beside me. At first, I was annoyed. But when I looked closer, I realized: she was crying for me.

No one had ever done that before. Her prayers shattered my pride. They were the kind of prayers that birth callings, mends hearts, changes lives. I wouldn't be in ministry today without her and the many women who prayed for me.

Behind so many pulpits,

churches and callings are women. Faithful, unseen, powerful women—serving, sacrificing and crying out to God. Jesus saw them. He valued them. And He invited them to walk alongside Him.

And we would do well to do the same.

Dave Holland pastored churches for thirty-eight years before retiring in Destin, Florida. 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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## South Walton Live Music Scene August 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 throughout the week. Visit www. oldfloridafishhouse.com.

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Sundays: Russ Whitten 5-9 p.m. Dueling Pianos 7-10 p.m.

## 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.:

Aug. 16: Brett Stafford Smith

Aug. 17: Jim Armstrong

Aug. 23: Zack Mannino

Aug. 24: Ray Hitchell

Aug. 30: Brett Stafford Smith

Aug. 31: Matt McCarthy

### AJ's Grayton Brunch & Live

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. Enjoy live music with the Christon Birge Duo 12-4 p.m., the Pickled Pickers at 5 p.m., and the Heatherlys 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



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

Aug. 15: Catalyst

Aug. 20: Mile Witty

Aug. 22: Derek Givans

Aug. 27: Derek Givans

Aug. 29: Alston Weeks

## Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

Live music concerts take place in the Baytowne Events Plaza every Wednesday night from 7-9 p.m. Various local and regional artists perform throughout the year - see the lineup. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Free and open to the public.

Aug. 13th: 12Eleven Aug. 20th: One False Move

Aug. 27th: Saltwater Revival Sept. 3rd: Below Alabama



#### **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. Don't miss: Cadillac Willy 25th Anniversary Party from 6-9 p.m. August 29th! Catch the Catalyst Dance Band every Sunday, Brett Stafford Smith every Monday, 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'

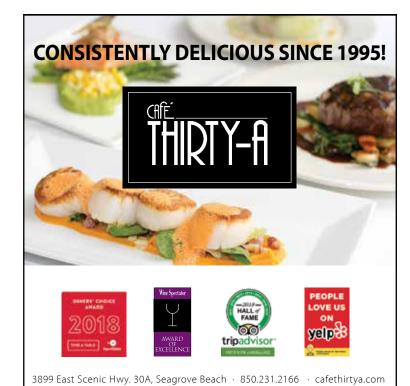
@ The Bay features The Sand Ole' Opry with Mike Whitty & Friends on stage from 4-8 p.m. Mike brings in new musicians to play every week.

## Groovy Saturdays at Hilton Sandestin Beach

Join Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa for Groovy Saturdays for live music from 3-6 p.m. This event is free to attend and open to both Hilton guests and the public. Grab a cold drink and soak up the sunshine with friends and family. For more information, visit HiltonSandestin-Beach.com.

## Stinky's Backyard Sessions Saturdays

Stinky's Backyard Sessions, an outdoor music experience, takes place every Saturday in August from 4-7 p.m. Offering locals and visitors a laid-back, family-friendly atmosphere with great tunes, cold drinks, and unbeatable views, the Backyard Sessions have no cover charge. Just sunshine, live music, and the authentic Stinky's vibe you love—now in the backyard. Learn more: stinkysfishcamp.com.



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Dining & Entertainment

## Pirates + Food + Booze = Fun at Pirate Brew Fest 2025

#### **Pirate Brew Fest 2025**

Ahoy, mateys! Ready yer sea legs and polish yer tankards, Pirate Brew Fest is droppin' anchor at Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill on November 1, 2025, from 11 AM to 3 PM! This free-for-all shindig features a bounty of local breweries and spirit-makers handing out free samples and swag faster than a cannon volley.

Festivities go from 11am to 3pm.

#### **Pirate Brew Fest Fun**

There's no better way to unleash your inner buccaneer than at Pirate Brew Fest, where the air will be filled with the clink of frothy steins and the roar of Coconut Radio's live islandrock tunes. You'll test your seadog skills in axe throwing and pirate games, snag swag and free samples from the region's finest breweries and distillers, and feast on Fudpucker's flamegrilled burgers, hot dogs, and savory pirate-inspired specials. Wander among talented art vendors peddling hand-crafted treasures, then marvel at rare beer relics brought ashore by the BCCA Spearman Chapter of the Bama Cannas. Whether you're dueling for axe-throwing bragging rights, dancing to live music under the sun, or simply sipping a cold one while soaking up the salty atmosphere, Pirate Brew Fest promises four hours of rollicking, friendly fun that'll have you shouting "Yo ho, let's go!" all the way home.

#### **Pirates & Destin, Florida**

Legends whisper that during the Golden Age of Piracy, cutthroats and corsairs crept into the sheltered coves of today's Emerald Coast, right off the shores of Destin and Fort Walton Beach, to prey on Spanish treasure galleons laden with New World silver. Rumor has it that Jean Lafitte's informants slipped him word of rich cargo slipping past Destin Pass, while buried chests are said to lie beneath Fort Walton's sugar-white sands, cursed to guard their secrets. Even now, anglers trolling the Gulf just beyond Okaloosa Island sometimes haul up barnacled cannonshot and rusted fittings, ghostly souvenirs of the

buccaneers who once danced with fate in these sun-kissed wa-

### Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill

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

The anticipation for Pirate Brew Fest 2025 reflects a broader community excitement, drawing visitors from across the United States. Known for hosting vibrant events like Gatorfest, Teen Night, Kid's Day, the Noon Year's Eve Balloon Drop, Kick-Off Parties for EC Volleyball and Jeepalooza, and Jazz Dinner Shows, Fudpucker's continues to be a beacon for family entertainment, making it the perfect venue for Pirate Brew Fest 2025.

#### **Food, Fun & Pirates**

What's on deck at Pirate Brew Fest 2025: axe throwing and swashbuckling pirate games to test your sea-dog mettle, free samples and swag from the Emerald Coast's finest breweries and distillers, Fudpucker's flame-grilled burgers, hot dogs, and pirate-inspired bites, a treasure trove of handcrafted art and beer-branded merch, beer history and rare memorabilia

courtesy of the BCCA Spearman Chapter of the Bama Cannas, and live island-rock vibes from Coconut Radio—all against a backdrop of salty sea-air revelry where eye-patches

and tricorns are highly encouraged and admission costs you not a single doubloon!

SO, STOP BY AND HAVE A SOME FUN at Pirate Brew Fest – ya scalawags! Visit Us in Destin.

20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy Destin, FL 32541 www.Fudpucker.com





## Filipino Pansit with Shrimp & Lime + How To YouTube Video

By Susan Benton

Have you tried Pancit? It is pure comfort food in our home, right up there with chicken adobo as far as Filipino recipes go. It is a noodle dish often served on birthdays for longevity. We crave a taste of the Philippines now and then, as my father was stationed in Subic Bay during the bicentennial of 1976, when I was in elementary school. What memories! Many Filipinos use chicken, pork, shrimp, or sometimes a combination of the three, but our housemaid Lourdes (a smart young lady who was assigned to our family) cooked with shrimp, lots of calamansi lime juice, rice noodles, and fresh vegetables. Like a good pot of gumbo in Louisiana, or a shrimp boil here on the Gulf Coast, there are as many recipes for Pancit as there are Filipino families in America today. So, feel free to adjust the recipe to your taste. I always use low-sodium soy sauce, and with this dish being a stir fry, make sure all ingredients are prepped and ready to go. For this recipe, we used brown rice noodles made with 100% whole grain. They are a great source of dietary fiber (50% per serving) and are gluten-free. You can also use the standard Bihon noodles.

### Pancit with Shrimp & Lime

Serves 4

- 1 8-ounce package of rice noodles
- 1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken
- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup oil (peanut or vegetable)
- 1 small onion, diced



- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and develned
- 3 carrots, julienned or finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 3 celery stalks, julienned (about 1 cup)
- 2 1/2 cups napa cabbage, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Heat a large wok or sauté pan

to medium-high. Add

Stir fry the onions until they turn clear, about 1-2 minutes. Add garlic. Be careful not to burn the garlic.

Add the celery and carrots. Lightly stir fry 2 minutes.

Add the cabbage and shrimp and stir fry 2-3 more until shrimp are

pink and not translucent.

Pour the mixture into a bowl

Pour the mixture into a bow and set aside.

Pour the chicken stock into the heated wok. Once it starts boiling, turn the heat down to medium. Add rice sticks, soy sauce, and fish sauce. Boil for another 5-7 minutes until there is approximately 1/4 cup stock left. Do not stir, but use tongs to lift the noodles in an up-and-down motion to absorb the sauce. Add the shrimp mixture back into the wok, and lightly fold the stir fry until all the liquid has evaporated. Add freshly ground pepper to taste. I squeeze lime juice over the top of each serving (actually, a lot of lime juice as it is great with this dish).

#### **Garnishes:**

4 calamansi or limes, quartered

2 eggs, hard-boiled and sliced2 stalks green onions, greenand white parts chopped

Tip: No need to pre-soak the noodles in warm water for this recipe, boiling the noodles in the stock infuses more flavor and keeps the noodles moist.

Note: Edward Wood of Wood's Fisheries in Port St. Joe. Florida knows more about wild shrimp than anyone in this region, and would be the point of contact for purchase. You can find his shrimp at Maria's Seafood in Pensacola. Wood's, founded in 1860, is a fifth-generation business at the forefront of the movement to promote environmentally friendlier wildcaught shrimp from American waters, netted directly from their natural environment. Wood's is one of the first domestic shrimp producers to use Trace Register, a global database of catch information and product life history from source to sale. They define what true traceability is, 100% transparency. Destin Ice in Destin is also a go to source for quality seafood.

See the recipe on live video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGCP\_YiJb\_4



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## Why and How to Begin Taking Music Lessons: Unlocking the Joy and Benefits of Music

Whether you're inspired by a favorite song, looking for a new hobby, or eager to expand your brain's capabilities, music lessons can be a life-changing experience. Learning to play an instrument not only unlocks creativity but also offers mental, emotional, and social benefits. Here's why you should consider taking music lessons and how to start your journey.

## The Benefits of Music Lessons

1. Cognitive Boost: Music training strengthens brain functions, enhancing memory, problem-solving, and even mathematical abilities. Research shows that learning to play an instrument stimulates both the left and right hemispheres of the brain, improving overall cognitive flexibility.

# **2. Emotional Well-Being:** Music is a form of emotional expression. Whether you're playing a soothing melody or an energetic tune, making music can help reduce stress, increase happiness, and provide a sense of accomplishment. It's a unique outlet for self-expression and emotional release.

# **3. Discipline and Focus:** Mastering an instrument requires patience and practice. Through regular lessons, you'll learn the value of consistent effort, time management, and perseverance. These skills extend

beyond music, benefiting other areas of life such as school or work

**4. Enhanced Creativity:** Music is a form of art, and learning it opens doors to creative and critical thinking. Whether composing your own music or interpreting a song, lessons push your creative boundaries, fostering a sense of accomplishment and imagination.

### How to Begin Taking Music Lessons

Starting music lessons is simple and accessible. We can help you and here's how to get started:

1. We can help you choose an Instrument: Look for which instrument excites you. If you're not sure, our studio will let you try a few instruments. We offer trial lessons for beginners. Popular choices include Piano (acoustic-electric), Guitar (Bass-Lead-Electric-Classical-Acoustic), Ukulele (Baritone-Tenor-Alto-Soprano), Voice (male or female), or drums (at any age 5 and older). Any of our eight teachers can recommend where to purchase and or find your instrument.

2. We have qualified Teachers: They are not only skilled at their instrument but also experienced in teaching. Ask to briefly visit the teacher



to see if you are a "good fit". Studio 237 Music Lessons offer beginner-friendly programs, very much like having a private tutor.

3. We provide around 20 weeks to meet your goals: Start with learning basic notes and simple songs. Don't rush the process; music is about enjoying the journey, not just the destination. Be patient with yourself as you develop your skills.

**4. Practice Regularly:** Consistency is key to making progress. Set aside time each day to practice, even if it's only for 15-30 minutes. Over time, you'll notice a significant improvement.

Whether it's mastering your first song or jamming with friends, music has the power to bring joy and connection.

Taking music lessons is an enriching experience that can enhance your cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, and social life. Whether you're a total beginner or returning to music after years of rest, the key is to start. Explore, enjoy, and let music transform your life one note at a time.

Studio 237 Music Lessons, located in Santa Rosa Beach, FL, has a staff of eight teachers ready to help you begin your musical journey. To begin a good start, contact us at 850.231.3199 and/or email us at studio237music@gmail.com. Our teachers are ready to start teaching in August. Visit/register on our website at www.Studio237Music.com.

**5. Have Fun:** Music is meant to be enjoyed. Don't focus solely on perfection; embrace the joy of playing and learning.



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## United Way Emerald Coast Celebrates Achievements at Annual Meeting

United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC), a local non-profit dedicated to improving lives and building stronger communities, hosted its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, July 29th at The Place on Beal in Fort Walton Beach. The sold-out event presented by Eglin Federal Credit Union brought together more than 100 stakeholders including donors, volunteers, board members, elected officials, community leaders, and partners.

The evening celebrated UWEC's achievements from the past year and highlighted the power of collaboration in addressing the region's most pressing needs. Through compelling stories, meaningful recognition, and a shared vision for the future, the event reaffirmed the organization's commitment to transparency, impact, and collaboration.

"It's been a privilege to serve alongside such a missiondriven team," said outgoing Board Chair Matt Zasada of Carr, Riggs & Ingram. "United Way Emerald Coast is more than an organization; it's a catalyst for change and a trusted partner in our community. I leave this role feeling proud,



UWEC's Board of Directors accepts the first corporate contribution towards their new fiscal year from Florida Power and Light. From left to right, Erika Peterson, Kelly Jasen, Bernard Johnson, Sheila Fitzgerald, Jessica Leavins, Emily Tash Pickens, Matt Zasada, Jason Fulghum, Clint Aden, Joe Gordon, Hong Potomski, Ed Burns, Jenna Sheffield, Kim Cox, Jason Davis, and Dustin Cosson.

inspired, and optimistic about what lies ahead."

During the program, UWEC unveiled several highlights from the 2024–2025 year, including:

17,135 volunteer hours coordinated

More than 56,000 lives impacted

More than \$700,000 awarded through 63 grants to 34 local vetted non-profit programs

A total community impact of \$2.6 million, an increase of more than \$200,000 from the prior year

"This past year was proof of

Emerald Coast continues to show up for this community in meaningful ways. We're proud of what we've done and even more excited about what's to come."

Several awards were presented, including the President's

panding our reach to deepening

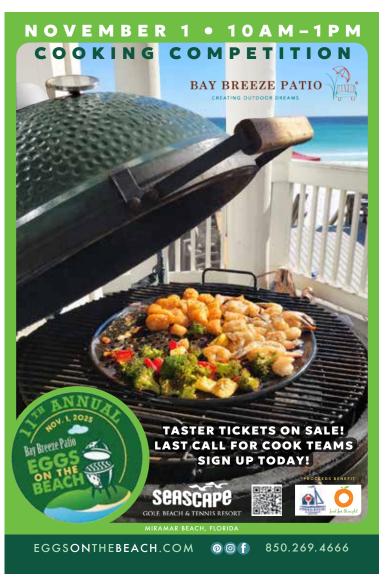
our partnerships, United Way

Several awards were presented, including the President's Circle, which honors UWEC's most generous corporate partners. This year's recipients were Eglin Federal Credit Union and Forever Warriors by Step One Automotive Group, recognized for their outstanding commitment to giving back.

As UWEC looks to the future, the organization remains focused on uniting people and resources to tackle complex challenges and create lasting positive change across Okaloosa and Walton counties.

To learn more about United Way Emerald Coast or get involved, visit www.united-way. org or follow @uwemeraldcoast on social media.





what we can accomplish when

we work together for the greater

good," said UWEC President &

CEO Kelly Jasen. "From ex-



## FWC Recognizes Walton County Landowner for Wildlife Conservation Efforts

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently recognized Michael Jenkins of Walton County for his exemplary wildlife habitat management on his private property in Walton County.

Jenkins has implemented a variety of conservation practices to benefit gopher tortoises, white-tailed deer and other native wild-life species. His efforts include reforesting with longleaf pine, prescribed burns and planting native plants to support pollinators, all aimed at enhancing the food, shelter, and water resources on his property.

To show appreciation for the work done by landowners to conserve our state's wildlife habitat, the FWC's Landowner Assistance Program created the Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program to formally honor landowners by awarding them with a sign to display on their property and a certificate recognizing their habitat conservation efforts.

The Jenkins family purchased the land in 1998 out of a desire to own property away from the hustle of real estate and construction. In 2001, Jenkins converted his first 30-acre peanut field to loblolly pine. Since then, he has again converted that field and refashioned it into longleaf pine.

In 2005, and again in 2008, Jenkins planted longleaf pines on additional fields across his property. His vision for an exceptional wildlife habitat has increased exponentially. Jenkins's collaboration with the FWC, Florida Forest Service and the Univer-

Don't Miss Out On Our Next Issue! Call (850) 399-0228 to Run Your Ad!

SoWal Life is printed and delivered to every home & business in Santa Rosa Beach and 30A each month! sity of Florida has developed his habitat management strategies considerably over the years.

A portion of the property offers outstanding conditions for gopher tortoises and has recently been designated as an FWC-approved gopher tortoise recipient site, which is a place where displaced tortoises can be relocated from development zones.

In addition to planting longleaf pine, Jenkins also plants fruit and nut-bearing hardwoods and flowering groundcovers to support pollinators. His goal is to transform all his property into a thriving wildlife landscape and create a lasting conservation legacy for future generations.

Private and public lands provide the habitat necessary to maintain sustainable wildlife populations. The efforts of private landowners to manage their own land to benefit wildlife and its habitat complement the efforts of public agencies and are critical to ensuring that future generations will have the opportunity to experience and enjoy wildlife in its native habitat. Without private landowner efforts, countless plant and animal species would be at risk of significant population declines, which could result in them becoming candidates for listing on state or federal threatened and endangered species

Private lands play a critical role in wildlife conservation by



FWC Biologist Ed O'Daniels Presenting Landowner Michael Jenkins with his certificate and sign. Photo by Ian Stone UF-IFAS

protecting and restoring rare habitats like the longleaf pinewiregrass ecosystem and by managing farms, ranches and forests that provide habitat to many species. While public land protects many species of wildlife, these properties form a fragmented landscape of habitat. Private lands connect these islands of

public conservation land and provide critical habitat linkages and corridors necessary for many species to thrive.

FWC's Landowner Assistance Program offers a written management plan to guide landowners interested in working toward meeting the requirements for the Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program. Interested landowners of 20 acres or more can apply online. For more information, visit MyFWC.com/LAP and click on "Landowner Recognition Programs."

FWC's Landowner Assistance Program biologists provide technical assistance to private landowners, helping them develop management plans for their property that maximize benefits to wildlife and people. These biologists can also assist with finding financial assistance to complete important habitat restoration projects on private lands. To learn more about this program or to find help and resources for managing wildlife on your property, check out our "Wildlife and Habitat Assistance" section online at MyFWC.com/LAP or call your FWC Regional Office and ask to speak to a LAP biologist.







## Walton County Receives \$3.4 Million in Appropriations from State

Walton County continues to reap benefits from the legislative actions of Sen. Jay Trumbull and Rep. Shane Abbott. This week in Tallahassee, the Legislature approved \$500,000 for the Walton Community Health Center -Coastal Branch (HF 2065/SF2686) and \$2.9 million for the U.S. 331 Bridge Lighting and Gateway Project (HF 1987/SF 2682). That's a total of \$3.4 million in appropriations.

The county had previously

received \$1.7 million for the bridge lighting project to cover the cost of design and permitting. This year's funding will be applied to the construction of the project. Once completed, the new bridge lighting will provide a spectacular gateway to the most beautiful beaches in the world.

The planned improvements to the current Walton Community Health Center in south Walton County will provide the additional space needed to facilitate and expand the existing partnership and medical residency program between the Walton Health Department, the Florida State University Medical College and Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital. This will provide first-class medical care for Walton County citizens and help attract needed medical professionals to our county.

"On behalf of the entire Walton County Board of County Commissioners and



the citizens of Walton County, I would like to thank our local State legislative delegation – Rep. Shane Abbott and Sen. Jay Trumball for their continued support and steadfast commitment to the needs and to the future of Walton County and its citizens," said Walton County Commission Chair Donna Johns.

## Houseplants Take Center Stage at the Green Thumb Garden Club's First Member Meeting of the Year

By Kathleen Edge, Publicity & Website Chair

Kicking off a great year of interesting educational programs is a presentation on the basics of happy houseplants. The Garden at Peach Creek will share advice on how to select the right houseplants for indoor spaces based on light requirements as well as watering and other care. The Garden at Peach Creek is a local Walton County business and we are very excited to have them present to GTGC.

The meeting is at the Westwinds Conference Center at Sandestin, 4700 Westwinds

Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550 on September 17, 2025. The check-in begins at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. Attendees will have lunch, which is included in the \$30 event fee.

A local florist will be presenting at the October meeting along with the annual members-only bazaar presale. Members will have an opportunity to view and purchase handcrafted trees, wreaths, garlands and other items at the presale. Non-perishable food items and gift cards for the upcoming holidays will also be collected to benefit Caring &





THE GARDEN

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Sharing of South Walton's food pantry assistance program. The meeting is on October 15, 2025, at Westwinds Conference Center.

GTGC's largest scholarship fundraiser, the fifth annual Holiday Bazaar, is on November 15, 2025, at Cantina Laredo Grand Boulevard in their rear meeting room and the enclosed outdoor patio. Bazaar hours are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Past year's events sold out, so be sure to save the date and come early for the best selection.

Green Thumb Garden Club welcomes new members. GT-GC's website www.greenthumbgardenclubinc.org contains detailed information about how to join the Club and specifics on meetings, activities, and events. For additional information, please visit the website or email greenthumbgardenclubinc@gmail.com.

The Green Thumb Garden Club, Inc., located in Walton County, Florida, is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to stimulate interest in the beautification of Walton County, furthering the education of its members and the public in botany, community beautification, conservation of natu-

ral resources, environmental awareness, loral design, gardening, horticulture, and nature studies and instill in our youth the love of gardening and respect for the environment.



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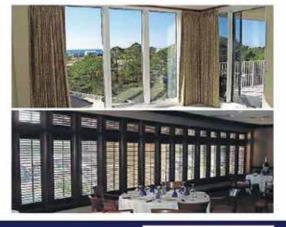
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