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Postal Customer Local

Walton County Tourism Offers Complimentary Day-Use Admission to Topsail Hill Preserve and Grayton Beach State Parks



Walton County locals and visitors can once again enjoy complimentary day-use entry to Grayton Beach State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Walton County Tourism is covering day-use fees to highlight the amenities and variety of eco-tourism experiences available in South Walton. This year marks the 11th year of admission coverage

for Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and the 9th for Grayton Beach State Park.

"Our state parks are hidden gems in Walton County, and being able to showcase their majesty through this program is tremendous," said Matt Algarin, tourism director for Walton County. "We encourage our visitors and

PARKS continued on page 2

Local Artist Clint Eagar Signs Global Deal With Oscar-Winning Film "Flow"

Clint Eagar, the internationally acclaimed artist and designer known for his emotionally charged, visually intricate works, recently inked a global licensing deal with *FLOW*, the Oscar and Golden Globe-winning animated film, a work which pushes at the boundaries of independent cinema.

The new partnership gives Eagar, a Walton-county based artist, creative control to produce original artwork and a creative line of consumer products and gifts based on the characters, themes, and aesthetic of *FLOW*. The collaboration will result in a worldwide collection of *FLOW*-inspired fine art, décor, and lifestyle merchandise, set to reach international markets by the end of 2025.

"This is more than a licensing deal," said Eagar. "It's a shared vi-

CLINT EAGAR
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Sept. 18 - Oct. 12



Oct. 23 - Nov. 2



Nov. 28 - Dec. 31



More Info and Tickets: www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org





CLINT EAGAR

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sion of how visual storytelling can move across mediums, connect with people emotionally, and leave a lasting impact."

Created in Latvia, "FLOW" is a dialogue-free animated feature that follows a grey cat separated from its family by a devastating flood. The cat's journey unfolds through a beautifully rendered, wordless narrative that explores themes of survival, resilience, hope, and unlikely friendship with a cast of expressive animal companions. "FLOW" won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, outpacing other contenders, and was described as "a silent masterpiece that radiates humanity in a world without humans."

Clint Eagar is no stranger to global design. A creative force with over 30 years of experience, Eagar has developed licensed products for top brands under the license including Disney (The Lion King, Pocahontas), and Fiestaware. His ability to blend artistry with mass appeal makes him uniquely suited for this new chapter of "FLOW".

Over the course of his career, his work has spanned fine art, home décor, and consumer design—one of the reasons he's such a good fit for translating this deeply emotional film into a physical world of merchandise. Eagar's own artwork, particularly his Futurescape serieswhich debuted at the Aqua Art Miami Show—is a perfect aesthetic match for FLOW's silent storytelling and emotional arcs.



His futuristic, human-animal hybrids, bold compositions, and richly symbolic textures complement the tone and visuals of the film.

Through this licensing collaboration, Clint Eagar will create a curated collection of original artworks and contribute to the design of select gift and home décor items inspired by the film's powerful visual storytelling. His work will celebrate FLOW's signature emotional depth, bringing the spirit of the film into beautifully crafted, globally resonant designs.

"The magic of *FLOW* is how it speaks directly to the heartwithout a single word," said Eagar. "Translating that kind of emotional storytelling into visual art and design is an incredible creative opportunity."

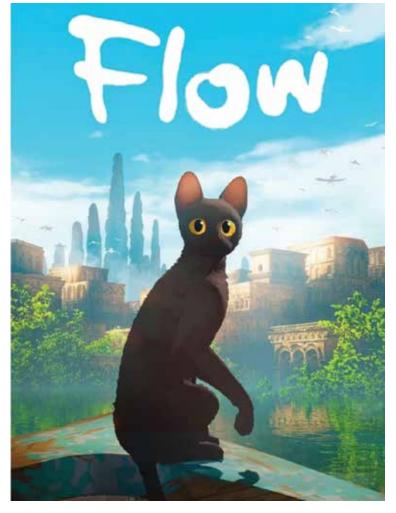
The collaboration between FLOW and Clint Eagar signals an evolution in how animated films can extend their emotional resonance beyond the screen. Rather than producing traditional artwork, Eagar is introducing mixed media techniques that mirror the film's visual atmosphere—layering texture, light, and form to recreate the immersive, cinematic quality of FLOW in physical space.

By fusing his fine art background with innovative materials and formats, Eagar aims to make the spirit of the film tangible and enduring, offering fans a way to experience the story long after the credits roll.

"This isn't just about merchandise—it's about preserving the emotional experience of the film," said a licensing executive close to the project. "Clint's vision brings a tactile, lasting

quality that connects art collectors, fans, and new audiences in a fresh and meaningful way."

As both a fine artist and an experienced product designer, Clint Eagar's entry into the FLOW universe represents the kind of creative synergy that's special in this industry. This deal may be the first of its kind for the Latvian studio behind FLOW, but it signals the beginning of a much bigger movement: storytelling that doesn't just live on screen, but in our homes, hearts, and everyday spaces. From gallery walls to global shelves, Eagar is bringing the soul of FLOW to life—one brushstroke, one character, and one story at a time.



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PARKS

continued from page 1

residents to explore our state parks and experience our community in a new way."

Free entry is available during regular hours, typically 8 a.m. to sunset. This year's program started on Memorial Day weekend and runs through Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 1.

For more information on Topsail Hill Preserve State Park visit: https://www.visitsouthwalton.com/listing/topsail-hillpreserve-state-park.

For more information on Grayton Beach State Park visit: https://www.visitsouthwalton .com/listing/grayton-beachstate-park.

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Upcoming Events

Family Fun at The Village of Baytowne Wharf

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

Grand Boulevard Lawn Games

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

The REP Rumpelstiltskin in Seaside Mondays

The Seaside REP Theatre presents Rumpelstiltskin Mondays at 6 p.m. through Aug. 4 at the Seaside Amphitheater. This



complimentary event will entertain the entire family. Step into the magical storybook world of Rumpelstiltskin where young Biddy, a humble peasant girl, must spin straw into gold. This captivating twist on a beloved classic is packed with adventure and humor. Visit LoveTheRep.

Wild Sea Turtle Wednesdays

Join South Walton Turtle

Watch on Wednesday mornings for Wild Sea Turtle Wednesday at The Big Chill 30A from 9-11 a.m. Learn about sea turtles and take the Jr. Ocean Ranger pledge to help keep our beaches clean, dark and flat for nesting sea turtles and baby hatchlings. The event is free and open to the public. Visit the fundraising table to paint, adopt a hatchling or purchase merch.



The REP Snow White in Rosemary Beach Wednesdays

The Seaside REP Theatre presents Snow White, kids' theatre every Wednesday at St. Augustine Green in Rosemary Beach at 6:30 p.m. through August 6. This enchanting version of the classic Brothers Grimm fairytale features a heartwarming story, unforgettable characters, and many laughs, making it a delightful experience for the entire family! Visit LoveTheRep.com.

Huck & Lilly @ Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays

Huck & Lilly will perform

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

Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic June 19-21

Timed to coincide with the peak of the Gulf Coast's blue marlin season, and located at the South's number-one ranked resort destination, the Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic at

Continued on next page





Upcoming Events

Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort sets the new precedent for world-class sportfishing tournaments. This annual event offers something for everyone. The spectacular nighttime weigh-ins are held at the Baytowne Marina at Sandestin and are open

to the public. For registration, dockage, rules and schedule of events, visit fishecbc.com.

Grayton Beach Wine Walk June 19

The Grayton Beach Wine Walk is held every third Thurs-

Keep Walton County Beautiful Beach Cleanup Event Rescheduled to July 5

Keep Walton County Beautiful, a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, dedicated to preserving the county's natural environment, has rescheduled their beach cleanup event due to inclement weather. Originally scheduled for May 10, the new cleanup event will be held on Saturday, July 5.

More details, including locations and theme, will be forthcoming.

About Keep Walton County Beautiful:

Keep Walton County Beautiful, an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, helps preserve the natural resources that make Walton County special through education, beautification, litter prevention, waste reduction and recycling programs. Keep Walton County Beautiful is funded by the Walton County Tourism Department. Please visit keepwaltoncountybeautiful.org/about-us/ and follow us on Instagram, Twitter/X and Facebook to learn more.



day from 5-7 p.m. beginning at Shacks Art. Stroll around to 6 unique merchants and indulge in a variety of wines and hors d'oeuvres. Then head back to Shacks deck for dessert, more wine and Live Music. The Dancing Raffle starts at 7 p.m. Win great gifts from artists, merchants, and awesome local spots around 30A. \$25 per person. Attendees are encouraged to purchase tickets at Shacks the day of or prior to the event.

Red, White & Baytowne July 4

Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf this 4th of July for the spectacular Red, White, and Baytowne celebration! Enjoy LIVE music on the Events Plaza Stage from 7-9:15 p.m. from

Tanner Gray Band, followed by a fireworks display that will light up the night sky at 9:15 p.m. The Village of Baytowne Wharf will also host kids' activities including kids' crafts, face painting, and balloon sculpting.

Seaside Independence Day Celebration July 4

Seaside's Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks Spectacular will take place July 4th in the Seaside Amphitheater. A favorite among locals and visitors alike, the day is filled with patriotic spirit, music, and fun! The Block Party begins at 9 a.m. featuring family fun, a REP performance, ECTC Musical performance, bike decorating contest, and hot dog eating contest. Come back at night to enjoy the Sinfonia Gulf Coast Pops Concert at 7 p.m. followed by a spectacular fireworks show over the Gulf at 8:30 p.m.

Rosemary Beach 4th of July Bike Parade & Celebration

The Rosemary Beach July 4th Celebration features fun for the whole family! The morning festivities begin at 7:30 a.m. with the annual Breakfast & Bike Decorating Contest in North Barrett Square followed by the Bike Parade & Block Party. Enjoy sweet treats from Kona Ice as well as face painting, airbrush tattoos, balloons, colored hair spray and more!

Farmer's Markets

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

Grayton Locals Market Thursdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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

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

Rosemary Beach Sundays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.





Community

Animals at the Beach in Walton County

By Helen Petre

The beach is a hard place to live. It is constantly bombarded by wind and waves. There is no place to hide except in the sand because there are no plants and there is little to eat. Yet, organisms are successful at living there. Coquina and sand fleas, or mole crabs, are common in the swash zone on Walton County beaches, as shown in the Florida Fish and Wildlife photo. Coquina are clams, and a significant food source for sandpipers and plovers. Sand fleas are crustaceans, like crabs and lobsters. They do not bite. They eat decaying matter and are excellent bait for pompano. Coquina and mole crabs are indicators of healthy beaches.

Ghost crabs (Ocypode quadrata) dig burrows four feet deep in order to reach the water table and keep their gills wet. Their white color blends in with the white quartz sand, and they are amazingly fast. Ghost crabs come out at night to eat dead things the tide has washed in. They also eat sea turtle eggs. They would drown in the surf.

Pinfish, (Lagodon rhomboides) are the most common bait fish caught in seines or dip nets in sea grass beds along the coast. E.O. Wilson lost the vision in his right eye at the age of seven when a pinfish he caught jumped up and hit him in the eye.

Blue crabs turn red when cooked. Besides humans, crabs are food for sharks, rays, and large fish. They eat small fish, like pinfish, and other crustaceans, like mole crabs, and clams, like coquina. They even eat detritus, plants, and animal waste.

All these animals can be easily seen on the beach or in the surf.

The beach is a great place to visit, but to many animals, it is home. Helen Petre is a retired USDA biologist and college biology professor. She spends her time volunteering, teaching, and writing science articles to share her interests with future generations.

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Pinfish. Wikipedia.



Blue crab (Callinectes sapidus) is a native swimming crab, unlike the ghost crab, which lives on the sand and would drown in the surf.



Florida Fish and Wildlife photo of Donax variables (coquina) and Emerita talpoida (sand fleas).



Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Ghost crab.



Female crab with wide apron like the dome of the United States Capitol.



Male crab with skinny, pointy apron, like the Washington Monument.

New Luxury Yacht 'Sol y Luna' Sets Sail from Baytowne Marina



A stylish new addition has arrived at Baytowne Marina in Sandestin—Sol y Luna, a 54-foot luxury yacht operated by SunVenture Cruises. This custom-designed vessel offers a range of unforgettable experiences on the waters of Choctawhatchee Bay and beyond.

Guests can enjoy a 1.5-hour narrated eco-dolphin cruise, where they'll encounter dolphins in their natural habitat while learning about the local marine ecosystem. For a longer adventure, the 4-hour Crab Island excursion includes complimentary floats and water toys, perfect for soaking up the Florida sunshine.

Sol y Luna is also available for private charters, making it an ideal venue for weddings, rehearsal dinners, corporate events, or sunset celebrations. With a spacious deck layout, comfortable amenities, and a Coast Guard-certified crew, every cruise promises a relaxing, upscale experience.

Departing from the Baytowne Marina inside the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Sol y Luna is poised to become a new favorite for both locals and visitors.

To learn more or book your cruise, visit sunventure-cruises.com.

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Exciting Changes at Eagle Springs Golf Course



By Paul Williams

The Eagle Springs Golf Course, still basking in the glow of its 100th anniversary, is teeing up fresh surprises for players. Out on the driving range, three weathered vintage boats now sit as quirky new targets, their faded hulls glinting in the Florida sun. Players like Jan Richards, Tom Bauer, and David Delahoussaye can't get enough of

them, relishing the sharp clank of a well-struck ball against metal—a sound that echoes across the range like a golfer's victory chime. "It's like hitting a bull-seye," Jan shared with a grin. The trio, however, dreams of a few tweaks: yardage signs on the boats to dial in their shots and four ball washers—two up front, two in the back—to keep their gear spotless after those muddy

range sessions.

Over at Hole 11, the green is getting a dramatic facelift. A sturdy retaining wall now braces an expanded layout, with fresh fill shaping a bolder challenge. Lake Stage Stand, named in the recent 5 Lake Naming Contest, looms larger than ever, its glassy surface daring golfers to carry their shots over the historic waterway once traveled by stage-



coaches. The contest itself was a highlight of the centennial, with Director Shane Supple proudly receiving a plaque to mark the milestone, honoring names like Lake Harbeson and Lake PAR that root the course in Walton County's storied past.

Adding a heartfelt touch near Hole 11, a Wind Telephone has been installed, its simple wooden booth and rotary phone a quiet tribute to the father-golf connection. First seen at the Father's Day 2024 Pinehurst US Open, this symbolic feature lets players whisper messages to loved ones lost, carried away on

the breeze—a fitting nod to the deep ties many share with this game. "It's a beautiful way to remember my dad," one golfer shared, his voice soft as he hung up the receiver.

Looking ahead, Superintendent Grounds Keeper Jonathan Patron is already eyeing the next big project: the Nest pitch and putt, set to break ground in October. With its rolling fairways, shimmering lakes, and a century of stories, Eagle Springs continues to be a golfer's haven where history and innovation swing in perfect harmony.



www.golfemeraldcoast.com | www.eaglespringsgolf.com

All About Colonel Bogey

By Paul Willms

The term "bogey" in golf has an interesting origin tied to British military culture. In the late 19th century, "Colonel Bogey" emerged as an imaginary "standard opponent" for golfers, representing a benchmark score of one over par on a hole. This concept was popularized by British serviceman J. Ricketts, who in 1914 published the marching tune "Colonel Bogey." The tune is said to have been inspired by a military officer who preferred whistling a descending minor third—heard at the start of each melodic line-over shouting "Fore!" during golf

Later, English composer Malcolm Arnold expanded the tune's legacy with "The River

Kwai March," composed for David Lean's 1957 film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, set during World War II. This counter-march added a cinematic dimension to the original melody. The tune also made a cultural nod in the short-lived series *Jesse Stone* (starring Tom Selleck), where the character watches the film repeatedly and humorously connects it to a scene where a Japanese prison camp commander urges starving prisoners to "be happy in your work," a phrase Jesse echoes to a motel cleaning lady.

Thus, "Colonel Bogey" bridges golfing tradition and military music, evolving from a whistled golf call to a globally recognized march.

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Panhandle Wildlife Rescue Opens **New Rehabilitation Hospital**

Panhandle Wildlife Rescue (PWR) is proud to announce the grand opening of its new, full-scale wildlife rehabilitation center and hospital in Freeport, FL. PWR is a vital part of the Florida Panhandle, providing life-saving care and rehabilitation to native wildlife species across 11 counties from Navarre to Tallahassee.

The new facility will allow PWR to expand its mission of rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife, admitting between 1,000 and 2,000 patients annually. With a focus on medical care, orphan rearing, and intensive rehabilitation, PWR gives Florida's wild animals a second chance at survival in one of the fastest-developing and ecologically rich regions in the country.

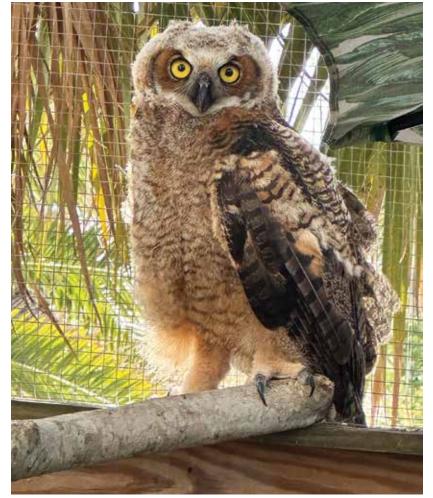
"The opening of this facility, thanks to a transformative donation from Ryan Jumonville and Family, marks a major step forward in our commitment to the wildlife of the Emerald Coast," said Shelby Robinson, founder and executive director of Panhandle Wildlife Rescue.

The Florida Panhandle is home to the most biodiverse terrestrial ecosystem in the contiguous United States. From the upland pine forests to the pelagic depths of the Gulf, PWR treats hundreds of species every year, striving to mitigate the growing impact of human development on native wildlife.

One of their current patients is a handsome bald eagle rescued from the side of a highway in Bay County, likely clipped by a car while feeding. Wildlife Harbor (WH), who help with many calls in Bay County, rescued him late one night. He was stabilized at WH overnight, then transferred to PWR the

following morning for a thorough medical examination that revealed he had multiple metacarpal fractures on his left wing. These types of fractures are often difficult to stabilize due to the size of the hollow bones present and are also often injured during recovery due to their distal location. After PWR staff gathered radiographs and bloodwork to check for the possibility of lead poisoning, PWR veterinarian, Dr. Phil Blumer, opted to surgically place a pin in the largest affected bone, a procedure that took just under an hour. Since the surgery, the eagle has been having daily physical therapy, laser treatment, and has been kept in an enclosure that prevents excessive movement. During his last doctor's visit, he has shown great signs of progress but still exhibits a limited range of motion and will require weeks more of physical therapy before he can be placed in a flight cage for conditioning. Wildlife rehabilitation takes teamwork, from the public to specialists with advanced equipment, to other organizations, and volunteers. PWR is currently fundraising to finish their 100-foot flight cage, not only for this patient, but also for the hundreds of other raptors that come through their doors each

Sometimes, injured adult patients are not the most difficult intakes, like the eagle above. Although injuries come with intense treatment plans, surgical procedures, and long timelines for recovery, our orphaned raptors often require longer care plans that come with life lessons and an enormous appetite. PWR currently has five owl and six hawk fledglings in care. In these cases they always try to encourage re-nesting if



it's a safe option but sometimes mom or the baby is injured, the nests are over a body of water, predators are stalking the young on the ground, they are sick or injured so mom kicked them out of the nest, or finders just don't want them renested back on their property. Although they successfully re-nest around 70% of downed raptor nestlings and fledglings, it still leaves their clinic full with the remaining 30%. Raptor moms are very attentive and protective, and when mom is present, nearly 100% of renestings are successful, even if they aren't returned to the native nest. These cases are often difficult to navigate, as PWR must take into consideration many variables to

determine when these patients truly need human intervention. Several of their patients had siblings who were predated upon, fell into artificial bodies of water and nearly drowned, were left in the middle of a highway with no nest in sight, or their mom had no interest in caring for them once returned. If these patients are unable to be renested, they are often in PWR's care for 4-6 months, where they are taught how to self-feed, how to fly, how to hunt live prey, and everything in between (while ensuring they retain a healthy fear of humans). Their techniques vary among species, so each patient will have the greatest success of sustaining itself when eventually released back into the wild.

They get bloodwork done to track health throughout their stay, and weekly medical checkups to monitor progress. PWR encourages the public to take a photo and pin the location of a young raptor so they can send staff to canvass the area. It's so important to return them to the family unit if at all possible. Then, even when they can successfully fly and hunt prey and it's time to let them return to freedom, there are external factors that can't be controlled, such as secondary rodenticide poisoning. Each time a hand-raised raptor is released, the team worries they'll come back through their doors after eating a poisoned rodent. Secondary rodenticide toxicity comprises about 25% of admitted adult raptor species, and it's preventable! Most don't think of the effects up the

June/July 2025

food chain when poisoning rats and mice in their home, but it causes death and suffering in the local raptor population, and in many instances, the effects can't be reversed. So, before you think about using rodenticides, please consider a friendlier option for native wildlife. We are also trying to fundraise additional raptor mews for patients like these, since our caseload is so high this year. If you'd like to donate or sponsor an enclosure, please reach out to PWR.

Some things to know about Panhandle Wildlife Rescue:

PWR works very closely with Wildlife Harbour in Panama City Beach. Combined, PWR

Continued on next page



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Community

WILDLIFE

continued from page 2

consists of three humans serving the same region and quantity of patients that was once serviced by eight employees, so compassion and kindness go a long way, especially during baby season when they receive 100 or more calls per day. Wildlife Harbour founder, Cindy Levine, has been working with PWR staff for over three years and her skills and dedication to Florida's wildlife is incredible. With Cindy's willingness to go on rescues in Bay County while concurrently running her own rehabilitation center, it allows for patients to get into care quicker than waiting for our staff to respond on some occasions

PWR needs volunteers! Rescue, nursery, release, medical, etc. IF anyone is looking for an opportunity to work hands-on with wildlife, please reach out to jim@panhandlewildliferescue. org

Meet our staff:

Shelby Robinson is CEO, with 15 years of experience in wildlife rehabilitation around the country. Shelby started working with wildlife during graduate school in Seattle and hasn't stopped since. She has directed two larger facilities previously, then founded PWR with co-founders Jim Johnson and Raven Smith in March of 2024. Jim Johnson (co-founder) has been working with Shelby for five years and has mastered being the best raptor dad, hand-raising hundreds of orphaned raptors during his tenure. Jim is the lead rescue technician and has driven thousands of miles to offer rescue services to wildlife in need, spanning 14 different counties. Raven Smith is a nursery specialist, giving unmatched care and love to orphaned native wildlife. Her compassion and care is second to none, and it is thanks to her that PWR exists today.

Although nearly 80% of forwarded calls come from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, PWR is completely funded by supporter donations and currently receives no state, local, or federal funding. The workload is tremendous, and they are on call 24/7/365. With the addition of their new facility and 10 acres, it gives them the opportunity to assist more patients in need, but also increase their resources, making



Chief Medical Officer Phil Blumer DMV with Lucky the Eagle





it possible to provide the best care possible. They are fundraising to build more enclosures so they can increase their intakes and buy formulas, food, medical supplies, and support our rescue team's efforts. To date, PWR has assisted over 200 different species of patients, ranging from huge alligator snapping turtles to red-tailed hawks, to tiny pinky squirrels and all rabies vector species. They accept all native Florida wildlife and work to help the public find resources for exotic pets and fowl. They also (WH, too) respond to any requested services for containing rabies vector species.

Big shout out to Emergency Veterinary Clinic in Niceville and Destin as they assist with patient intakes and allow the PWR team the use of their digital radiograph machine while PWR works to obtain funding for their own medical clinic, so if anyone is interested in donating towards those efforts, it would be so greatly appreciated.

Finally, PWR's "Respect the Locals" campaign highlights the increasing frequency of human/wildlife interactions in the region. Through education and citizen science initiatives, the campaign empowers residents and visitors to coexist more peacefully with native Florida species. "Nothing feeds the soul

more than watching a once-broken creature return to the wild," says Raven Smith, head of PWR development.

Their 24-hour hotline is (850) 889-1104, and the address for the actual facility is 5951 Highway 20 in Freeport, but they also have an alternate facility for intakes, which is 256 Miley Road in Freeport.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or-

ganization, Panhandle Wildlife Rescue receives no federal, state, or local funding. All operations, including rescues, surgeries, critical care, and a 24/7 wildlife rescue hotline, are funded entirely by community donations. For more information, to donate, or to get involved, visit www.panhandlewildliferescue. com.

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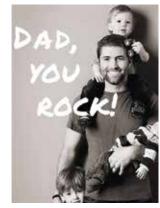
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Looking for a delicious way to celebrate life's sweet moments? Whether it's a summer wedding, the 4th of July, or just because—Smallcakes has you covered in the most flavorful way. Known for its playful slogan, "Maybe a Cupcake Will Help?"—and we agree—it's a cupcake paradise bursting with award-winning creations that have wowed celebrity judges and delighted locals alike. June brings a fresh lineup of specialty cupcake flavors and colorful, flavorful frostings that are as beautiful as they are tasty.

From gourmet cupcakes and mini cupcakes to birthday cakes, wedding cakes, edible-logo custom treats and even "pup" cakes for your furry friend, every item is made from scratch and baked fresh daily. There's even housemade ice cream, jumbo cookies, cupcakes-in-a-jar, brownies, gourmet popcorn, cookie cakes and gluten-free goodies to keep every sweet tooth satisfied.

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Lock In Your Future: Why Now Is a Smart Time to Buy a Home Be On The Coast™ Real Estate Group

Thinking about buying a home or second home this year? You're not alone—but you may also be wondering if now is the

right time or if you should wait.

Here's the truth: homeownership remains one of the smartest ways to protect yourself against rising costs—especially during times of inflation. As prices climb, both home prices and rent continue to rise, too. The key difference? Owning a home lets you stabilize your biggest monthly expense: your housing payment.

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Celebrate in Sparkle: Custom Jewelry for Every Summer Occasion Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

From the 4th of July to unforgettable "yes" moments, Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry has the perfect piece to mark any occasion. Whether you're planning a proposal or simply want to dazzle in red, white and blue, owner Ashleigh Woolly invites you to discover a custom jewelry experience like no other.

Looking for inspiration? A stunning Ceylon sapphire or an art deco-style diamond ring with a ruby halo could be just the statement you're after. Beyond Measure offers a curated collection of one-of-a-kind pieces also in coastal summer hues, along with an array of vibrant gemstones and brilliant diamonds.

Perhaps you'd like to try on the dazzling "Bubble Bands" to stack or wear solo, or explore the shop's full selection of bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. And Ashleigh's passion for helping couples design custom engagement rings and wedding bands makes every visit feel personal and special.

Let Ashleigh design something just for you—because every celebration deserves sparkle beyond measure. Hours: Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (850) 424-7011

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Groom Like a King Pure & Couture Salon | Pure Collective Salon

Upgrade the grooming game of the special man in your life—or your own—with expert hair care and styling products from Pure & Couture Salon or their sister salon, Pure Collective at Grand Boulevard.

At Pure & Couture, men's grooming is anything but basic. Their curated collection of hair and skincare products is designed to hydrate, protect and elevate—because looking good shouldn't come at the expense of healthy hair and skin. You'll find top-tier grooming creams, clay effect sprays and a range of pomades that deliver the perfect hold without buildup or dryness.

Even better, their stylists are pros at helping you choose the right products for your hair and scalp—whether it's fine, thick, curly or thinning. These professional-grade products help you achieve your hair goals daily, not just on special occasions.

Ditch the drugstore and give the gift of confidence. Book a cut, explore premium products or just stop by for advice from the experts.

Call (850) 424-3935 or visit pureandcouture.com or purecollectivesalon.com to book for your "dad, you or your special event. Because great hair is always in style.

(850) 424-3935 pureandcouture.com purecollectivesalon.com

Make a Splash with Personalized Beach Style Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

If you're beach-bound, poolside, or road-tripping this summer, personalized accessories are a must—and Frill Seekers Gifts has everything you need to stand out in style.

Add flair (and function) with embroidered beach towels, sunhats, or tote bags featuring your name, monogram, beach house name, or favorite phrase. Not only do these custom touches make your items instantly recognizable on a crowded shore, they also bring serious style points.

Coordinate your beach towel with your swimsuit for a photo-ready look—think bold solids or playful stripes that match or complement your suit. Toss on a cool pair of shades and you're officially summer-ready!

Frill Seekers' fan-favorite zipper swimmie bags are perfect for stashing wet swimsuits, and their team can personalize them with a stylish two-tone name.

Pro tip: a great beach towel doubles as a chic cover-up or cozy wrap when the breeze kicks in—or for warming up by a beach bonfire.

Shop the summer collection in-store at City Market Bayside or online at FrillSeekersGifts. com.

Because summer style should always come with a personal touch

Free gift wrapping, too! Visit the store Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

(850) 460-2700 facebook.com/FrillSeekersGifts frillseekersgifts.com



Food For Thought Outreach Receives \$58,398 Grant From The St. Joe Community Foundation's "Read to Feed" Program

Food For Thought Outreach, a local 501(c)3 organization that works to bridge the meal gap in the lives of food-insecure children in Walton and Okaloosa counties, is pleased to announce they have received a \$58,398 grant from The St. Joe Community Foundation's "Read to Feed" program.

The Foundation's Read to Feed initiative grants \$0.25 to Food For Thought Outreach for each Accelerated Reader ("AR") test with a score of 80% and above completed by Walton County School District elementary students. In

Read to Feed. We are so proud of our students who achieved 233,592 total AR points!"

"The St. Joe Community Foundation is proud to continue this collaboration with the Walton County School District and Food For Thought Outreach to support the Read to Feed Program," said April Wilkes, executive director of St. Joe Community Foundation. "Not only does it provide an incentive and encouragement for youth to enhance their literacy skills, but it also gives them a glimpse of what

to Feed is the perfect embodiment of our mission. During the 2024-25 school year, Food For Thought

most out of their education. Read Outreach provided weekly services to over 3,600 food-insecure children in Walton and Okaloosa Counties. Grant funds like these

from the St. Joe Community Foundation provide critical funding for our programs."



the 2024-2025 school year, Walton County elementary students successfully scored above 80% on 233,592 AR tests to set \$58,398 as the Foundation's contribution to Food For Thought Outreach. This surpassed the 2023-2024 school year of 220,445 AR tests, which provided \$55,111.50 to the organization. Since program inception in the 2022-2023 school year, the Read to Feed initiative has raised over \$167,000 to support the mission of Food For Thought Outreach.

"This is just epic," said Cathy Hall, coordinator of instructional support/ESOL for Walton County School District. "Last year at the school board meeting, we were challenged to beat our Read to Feed 2024 total of \$55,111.50, which was an amazing accomplishment, and we did it by raising \$3,286.50 additional dollars for a total of \$58,398 for

it means to serve others through Food For Thought Outreach's mission.'

The funds raised through the Read to Feed program will be used to further Food For Thought Outreach's goal to bridge the meal gap and empower students to get the most out of their education. Currently, over 3,600 children are enrolled in their yearround programs and all funds raised from the program will go towards those programs and help even more kids throughout the

"We are so happy to see how this initiative continues to drive reading results across the Walton County School District," said Tiffanie Nelson, founder and CEO of Food For Thought Outreach. "Our mission at Food For Thought Outreach is to remove the negative impacts of hunger and empower children to get the





It's Turtle Time!

By Heather Bennett Eye

It's that special time of year again on the Emerald Coast. Sea turtle nesting season has officially begun! So what does that mean? From now until Halloween, our beaches become a vital nesting ground for several species of sea turtles, many of which are threatened or endangered. Whether you're

nests, protecting them from accidental damage by people, pets, or vehicles. They monitor the nests throughout the incubation

After about 50 to 60 days, hatchlings begin to emerge, usually under the cover of darkness. These tiny turtles instinctively look for the brightest horizon, which under natural conditions

reach the water.

Dark: Turn off any artificial lights that face the beach at night. Bright lights from homes, businesses, and flashlights can disorient hatchlings, leading them away from the ocean. If lighting is necessary, use turtle-safe options like red or amber LED bulbs.

Flat: Before leaving the

Sea turtles have been making this journey for millions of years, but their survival now depends more than ever on human awareness and cooperation. By keeping our beaches clean, dark, and flat, you're playing a vital role in protecting one of nature's most awe-inspiring creatures. Please help educate others. Many people aren't aware of how simple actions like turning off a porch light can save dozens of lives. Let's work together to ensure these incredible animals have a safe start to life. The sea turtles are counting



a local or just visiting, your actions can make a big difference during this critical period, and this means keeping the beaches clean, dark and flat.

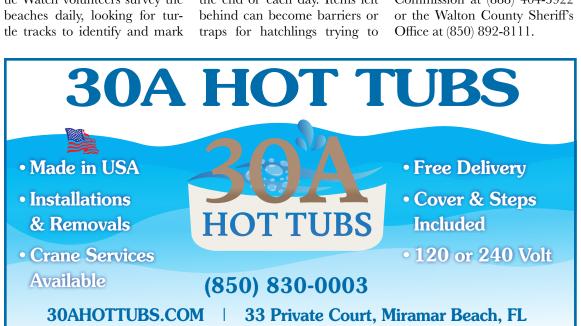
Each summer, female sea turtles return to our shores, often the very beach where they were born, to lay their eggs. In Walton County, nesting typically occurs in the dry sand above the high tide line, closer to the dunes. The South Walton Turtle Watch volunteers survey the

is the reflection of the moonlight on the ocean. From there, they begin their treacherous journey to the water, dodging predators and battling the surf.

To give these hatchlings the best possible chance of survival, we encourage everyone to help keep our beaches clean, dark,

Clean: Remove all trash, leftover food, beach toys, and especially beach furniture at the end of each day. Items left beach, fill in all holes and knock down sandcastles. Deep holes and uneven sand can trap baby turtles or redirect them off course.

Please make sure to respect nest markers and avoid walking through dune areas. If you see a hatchling struggling, don't touch it. Instead, contact the South Walton Turtle Watch Hotline at (850) 865-4503, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at (888) 404-3922



Impact100 Global Conference 2025 Calls for Community Support

al Conference will take place October 26-28 at the stunning Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa. Hosted by Impact100 Global in collaboration with five local chapters-Impact100 NWF, Mobile, Pensacola Bay Area, Baldwin County, and Gulf Coast—this biennial event celebrates collective giving and powerfully reflects the strength and unity of the Impact100 community.

Impact100 is a global movement of local philanthropists who unite to find and fund local nonprofits addressing their community's most pressing problems. The model is simple but powerful: At least 100 women come together and donate \$1,000 each, pooling their resources to fund grants of \$100,000 or more that will support nonprofits in their local community.

Since its founding in 2001, Impact100 has expanded to more than 75 chapters across four countries, delivering nearly \$160 million in grants, with continued growth each year. In 2024 alone, the five host chapters awarded \$2.3 million in high-impact grants to local nonprofits along the Gulf Coast.

This year's conference theme, "Tides of Impact100: Renew, Recharge, and Rise," sets the tone for three days of insight, inspiration, and impact. Attendees will enjoy engaging sessions led by dynamic speakers, including two-time Olympic gold medalist Ruthie Bolton, retired Major General Jeanne Leavitt, and Impact100

The 2025 Impact100 Glob- Founder Wendy Steele. The conference offers inspirational programming, hands-on leadership development, and meaningful connection opportunities- all designed to amplify the power of collective philanthropy. More than 250 changemakers are expected to attend, traveling from across the United States and as far away as Australia.

> "Attendees from Impact100 communities around the globe will come together at the Impact100 Global Conference eager to learn, connect, and be inspired," says Wendy Steele, Founder of Impact100. "The beautiful Sandestin setting will be a draw not only for those nearby, but also for those traveling from the far corners of our philanthropic movement."

> To ensure the success of this landmark event, Impact100 Global is seeking sponsors from the local community and beyond. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various levels, offering businesses and individuals the chance to gain exceptional visibility among a global network of philanthropists while aligning with a mission that empowers women to transform lives and communi-

> This inspiring event is open to the public. Registration is now open and discounted room rates are available for attendees until September 26th, 2025. For more information on sponsorship opportunities or to register for the conference, please visit www.impact-100global.com.





By Dr. Karen DeVore

If there's one thing I wish more people understood about their health, it's this: you cannot out-supplement or out-caffeinate your way through poor sleep. Sleep is not a luxury or a badge of productivity to skip—it's foundational to healing, balance and long-term wellness. At the Tortoise Clinic, where we approach health through both integrative and holistic lenses, sleep is often the thread that ties it all together.

We live in a culture that applauds hustle, thrives on stimulation and often views rest as a weakness. Yet, as a practitioner, I've seen time and again that when sleep suffers, everything else starts to unravel—hormones become imbalanced, digestion slows, inflammation increases,

The Underrated Power of Sleep

cravings intensify and mental clarity disappears.

Why Sleep Is Your Body's Reset Button

During sleep, your body performs its most critical behind-the-scenes work. Cells repair. Muscles recover. Hormones reset. The brain processes and detoxifies. In fact, deep sleep is when your body releases growth hormone, which helps repair tissues and regulate metabolism. Your liver is busy detoxing. Your immune system recalibrates. And your nervous system has a rare moment to truly rest.

When sleep is disrupted or insufficient, the effects can be wide-ranging and sneaky. You might wake up exhausted despite getting "enough" hours. You might feel wired at night and sluggish in the morning. You might have trouble losing weight, staying focused, or regulating mood. And here's the kicker: traditional labs may show everything as "normal."

That's where a holistic approach makes all the difference.

The Integrative Approach to Sleep

In integrative medicine, we don't just ask how many hours are you sleeping? We ask:

- How do you feel when you wake up?
- Do you have trouble falling asleep—or staying asleep?
- Do you feel wired at night and wide awake at 2 a.m.?
- Are you struggling with anxiety, hormone shifts or night sweats?
- Are you using screens late at night? Eating late? Skipping morning sunlight?

We look at the entire picture—nervous system function, cortisol rhythms, melatonin production, hormone balance, stress exposure, nutrition, lifestyle and more.

What many people don't realize is that sleep disturbances are often not about the sleep itself—they're symptoms of deeper imbalances. At the Tortoise Clinic, we blend Western diagnostics and Eastern wisdom to get to the root. That might include looking at adrenal fatigue, estrogen/progesterone shifts, thyroid dysfunc-

tion, or gut inflammation—all of which can disrupt your rest.

Beyond the Sleep Aids

It's tempting to reach for sleep aids or melatonin when nights get restless. And while they can offer short-term relief, they rarely address the why.

We prefer to ask: What is your body trying to tell you?

Sometimes it's a stress response that needs rewiring. Other times it's low progesterone, blood sugar instability or even chronic inflammation. Instead of masking those signals, our job is to decode them—and guide your body back into balance.

That might mean incorporating acupuncture to calm the nervous system, adaptogenic herbs to support stress resilience, magnesium to relax tight muscles or simple lifestyle shifts like screenfree evenings and earlier meals.

Introducing: The Sleep Assessment

To better understand the sleep patterns and hormonal rhythms of our patients, I'm thrilled to share that we've launched a new, non-invasive sleep assessment at the Tortoise Clinic. This easy, athome saliva test measures your melatonin and cortisol levels at key times throughout the night, along with progesterone, giving us a clearer picture of what's happening behind the scenes.

Unlike standard tests that offer a snapshot in time, this assessment helps us understand how your sleep hormones fluctuate overnight, guiding more precise and personalized care—without the need for blood draws or guesswork.

If you're tired of feeling tired—or if sleep has quietly slipped out of your routine and left chaos in its place—know this: rest is not a weakness. It's your body's greatest tool for repair.

And you deserve more than temporary fixes. You deserve answers, insight and support that meets you where you are.

At the Tortoise Clinic, we believe healing happens one steady, intentional step at a time—and sometimes, the first step is simply learning how to rest.



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Schedule your in-person or virtual consultation today!

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Book Review

Becoming Supernatural: How Common People are Doing the Uncommon

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL MCMANUS, LCSW

"Becoming Supernatural: How Common People Are Doing the Uncommon" by Joe Dispenza is a captivating blend

of science, spirituality, and personal development that invites readers to explore their potential for transformation. In this book, Dispenza presents a compelling case for how individuals

can harness the power of their minds to create extraordinary changes in their lives.

The book is structured into two main parts: the science behind the phenomena and practical applications. Dispenza delves into the latest research in quantum physics, neuroscience, and epigenetics, illustrating how thoughts and emotions can influence our reality. He articulates complex concepts in an accessible manner, making it easy for readers to grasp the implications of his findings.

One of the most engaging aspects of "Becoming Supernatural" is the myriad of real-life stories from individuals who have experienced significant healing and transformation through the principles Dispenza teaches. These testimonials serve as powerful motivators, demonstrating that the techniques he describes can lead to tangible results.

Dispenza emphasizes the importance of meditation and visualization as tools for personal change. He provides step-bystep guidance on various meditation practices, encouraging readers to delve into their subconscious and reprogram their beliefs and habits. This handson approach empowers readers to take charge of their lives and cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness.

However, some readers may find that Dispenza's reliance on anecdotal evidence and spiritual concepts can come across as unscientific. Skeptics might question the validity of some claims, particularly those related to miraculous healings. Nevertheless, for those open to exploring the connection between mind and matter, the book offers a wealth of insights and practical strate-

In summary, "Becoming Supernatural" is a thought-provoking read that challenges conventional beliefs and encourages readers to embrace their potential for change. Joe Dispenza's blend of scientific research and practical advice makes this book a valuable resource for anyone interested in personal growth, healing, and the power of the mind. Whether you're a seasoned practitioner of meditation or a curious newcomer, this book is likely to inspire



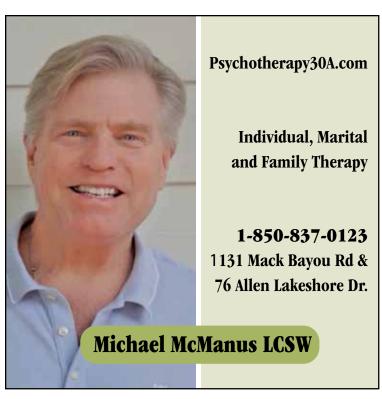
you to unlock your own supernatural abilities. While I don't agree with everything in this book, I believe there's enough thought-provoking content to make it worth reading.

Michael McManus MSW LCSW has been a practicing psychotherapist for several decades in the Florida panhandle. He and his wife Angela have raised their 4 children here in Santa Rosa Beach, and in their spare time and enjoy Yoga, hiking, biking cooking and exploring Michael can be reached by phone or by text at 1(850) 837-0123 or on his website: psychotherapy30A.com.

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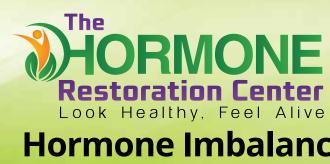


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IRMAA and the 800 Racket



By Christian Regalado

If you're like some folks I talk with, you've been expecting your Medicare Part B premium this year to be \$185, but are surprised to see yours is more. This, my friend, is IRMAA. What's that? IRMAA, the "Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount" is an additional charge added to your monthly Medicare Part B and (potentially) Part D premiums if your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) exceeds certain limits.

When you begin benefits, any additional premium costs you may owe are based on the MAGI from your tax return beginning two years prior to the year you start Medicare. And then it's adjusted annually, so if your income goes down, IRMAA does too. Depending on one's MAGI, monthly premiums paid for Medicare Parts B and D can rise. For Part B, premiums begin rising at \$106,000 for individuals and \$212,000 for joint income tax filers. Part D premiums are affected at higher levels. And for the highest income earners, Part B premiums may be \$628.90 per month and \$85.80 per month for Part D this year.

If your income has decreased and you wish to contest your IR-MAA charges, you can do so on IRS form SSA-44 which allows for reconsideration based on life changing events.

On another note, I've heard from several clients about receiving multiple calls a day at times from solicitors talking about changes in Medicare that offer more benefits. I usually get at least one call a day from these telemarketers myself. They start by asking if you have Medicare Part A and Part B. If you say yes,

they will advise you that you may qualify for a Medicare Plan with more benefits, and they can connect you to a licensed broker to find out. This is slick; Medicare doesn't allow brokers to make unsolicited calls—you have to give them permission to talk to you! So don't give them your personal information; they also sell it to other telemarketers. Just hang up!

We're outside of the Annual Enrollment Period, so you can't change your Advantage plan right now, anyway, without a following conditions: Cardiovascular Disorders, Chronic Heart Failure or Diabetes. For more information and to see if you are eligible to enroll now, give me a call and not an 800 number.

Of course I'm biased, but these telemarketing business models that make commissions by convincing 800 number callers to switch out of their perfectly suitable Advantage plan and/ or collect their personal information in order to sell it to other telemarketing companies just rub me the wrong way. As someMedicare consultations are offered at no cost. It's much better to find a local broker who can educate you about all your options, and who will still be available to you after your enrollment. If you think you may qualify for a Complete Care plan

or have any questions, give me a call. Remember my services are free to you and I am always happy to help a neighbor. Reach out anytime! Email Christian@evergreenhealthins.com or call (850) 687-7606.





qualifying event such as a residency move or a medical change that makes you eligible for a Chronic Condition or Complete Care plan. Not all insurance companies offer these plans. To qualify, you must have one of the

one who's been doing this for a while now, I can tell you it isn't uncommon for someone to call and inquire about potentially switching plans, only to find out they're better off sticking with the plan they've already got.





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Your Whole-Hearted Yes



By Stephenie Craig

Are you overscheduled? Perhaps you're rushing, exhausted and regretting your full calendar. Maybe commitments are positive like kid activities, time with friends, volunteer work, a celebration. However, when those events become the reality of your week and month, you

want more time to just be with people, to be with yourself, to slow down and be present in the moment.

Saying too many yeses is tempting with many options and cultural encouragement to be involved or be left behind. Saying yes feels good and comes from a genuine place, but excessive yeses create feelings of regret and resentment regarding your time. Excessive yeses are a result of poor boundaries, guilt, fear of disappointing others, fear of being judged by others, obligation, proving your worth, fear of missing out, trying to earn approval, and attempting to keep yourself and others from experiencing uncomfortable feelings.

While saying no is healthy, it



can be scary and hard. Saying no can upset people, result in missing out and creates uncomfortable feelings. However, learning to say no opens the pathway to your whole-hearted yes. Your whole-hearted yeses are commitments in alignment with your deep values and purpose. You can find your whole-hearted yeses by imagining you are at your life's end reflecting back on how you spent your time. What yeses feel worthwhile? What yeses might you regret? Will you feel good about doing 10 things with exhaustion and obligation? Will you feel better about doing three things with presence, connection and meaning?

Saying no and embracing

whole-hearted yeses allows you to release overwhelming stress. Your no's allow you to embrace simple joys and be present in your life. Saying no creates space to notice the vibrant color of the sky, the squirrel in the yard, the unfiltered laugh of a child, the snuggle of a pet, the flirty smile of your significant other. Your no's create space to appreciate rest, creativity, nature, unrushed conversation and your spiritual life. No makes way for the

beauty of your deep and profound yes. So, how do you begin the journey to your whole-hearted yes?

Five Ways to Find Your Whole-Hearted Yes

1. Evaluate your sched**ule.** Look at your week/month. Notice how you feel. Are you exhausted? Do you have a sense of dread about commitments? Are you wishing for quality time for things that matter most to you? If yes, acknowledge it's time for a change.

2. Begin cutting longterm commitments. Think through how many commitments you'd like to have on any week/weekend to feel balanced.

Discuss with your family. Determine which current commitments are keepers based on your values and desired number of healthy commitments. Decide which commitments go. Perhaps each child has a limit on extra-curricular activities. Maybe you don't renew your membership on a board or social group. Maybe you volunteer for one very important cause instead of five moderately important causes. This won't be easy and you will likely find sacrifice is required to create more mar-

3. Start saying no to short-term commitments. If you have decided you want no more than two weeknight commitments and two weekend commitments, once you've used up your whole-hearted yeses, no is the answer to other opportunities. Or swap one opportunity for another so you are holding your boundary on commitments.

4. Process your uncomfortable feelings. You might feel guilt, fear of missing out, fear of upsetting others. These feelings are normal and you can feel them and remember your whole-hearted yes to fewer high priority commitments is worth much more in the world than your exhausted, resentful half-hearted, over-committed yes. Also, remember you are the only person who can set boundaries for yourself in the pursuit of joy and purpose.

5. Unapologetically communicate your whole-hearted yeses and your healthy no's to others. People who don't respect your healthy no's are not respecting your boundaries. You have no reason to be ashamed of wanting to give whole-hearted yeses. People in your life can learn to hear, "Thank you so much for the invitation. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. I won't be able to join the event due to other commitments."

Embracing your no and your whole-hearted yes can feel difficult at first. However, over time, it brings joy and flourishing to your life and relationships. Connect with us for counseling and coaching support along your journey at Journeybravely.com.

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Sean of the South



By Sean Dietrich

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

And that was that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



No more TV means no more rich dudes in courtrooms talking about rappers' prostitution rings. No more news anchors gleefully saying the words "Harvey Weinstein." No more commercials urging me to purchase

gold, Colonial Life insurance, or any other valuable service Joe Namath provides.

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

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

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

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

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

No. Without electricity there was nothingness.

I felt lost and disconnected. Where was I going to get my excitement? How was I going to adequately feel afraid? How in the WORLD was I going to defend my principles on social media by engaging with people whom I've never met and subsequently calling them buttholes? What in the world was I going to do with myself?

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

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Musing

A Pastor's Ponderings: Here



By Rev. Pete Hyde

It was the summer of 1968. The base model 1963 Chrysler Newport (the only options were automatic transmission and power steering) was loaded to overflowing. A 14-foot john boat was strapped to the roof rack. A nine-horsepower Sears outboard was loaded into the trunk. Camping, fishing gear

and supplies for a week filled every other inch of the car, including the middle of the front bench seat. Father and son rose early in the morning to start the trip. We needed to be on the road by 5:30 a.m. for some reason (because Dad said so). By 5:25, we were on the road from Topeka, Kansas to Beaver Lake in LaRue, Arkansas, to spend a week on the lakefront lot dad had purchased a few years before.

We arrived in LaRue late in the afternoon. The boat and motor were unloaded at the water's edge. A suitable campsite was found and set up. Dinner was prepared on a Coleman stove. We wandered down to the lake to see if the fish were biting. There was a spring about ten yards out from the shore that had been covered when the lake filled. A worm on a hook cast in the general area would bring a



catch of a hand-sized perch on every try.

As the sun set, we had caught enough perch. It was almost too easy. With no breeze, the lake mirrored the colors of a beautiful northwest Arkansas dusk. From somewhere across the glassy lake came the lonely call of the whip-poor-will. I had never heard that lonesome song in the night. A moment or two later, the call was returned from just behind us. Back and forth, the lonely lament filled the cool evening with a calming song of God's creation. It was a moment I will never forget, and each evening I would listen to the song of the whip-poorwill until my eyes closed for the

Last night, before bedtime, I stepped out onto the back porch.

The air was sauna-thick with humidity. Warm lights came from the homes around the neighborhood. A dog down the street yapped at something. It was nighttime, quiet except for the sound of an occasional car running down 30A, speeding, of course. The amber glow of the streetlight cast an eerie glow across the front yard and street. The moon, showing only half its face, looked down from a hazy, sometimes cloudy gray night sky. Stars were only visible once in a while when the haze and the clouds cleared randomly.

I stood there in the silence. Maybe I was waiting for God to speak as he spoke to Elijah in the silence. Then, from back in the dark woods across the road in Topsail State Park, the lonely call of a whip-poor-will

shot through the stillness of the night. "Whip-o-will... whip-o-will... The solitary call in the night reminded me of that first time I heard a whip-poor-will call in the night. My dad has been gone forty years now, but whenever I hear the call of the whip-poor-will, I have a feeling he is still with me.

As I stood quietly on the porch last night reflecting on the struggles of my life, I believe the whip-poor-will call was also a reminder that God is with me in the struggle and in the victory. In the darkest night of the soul, in the stillness of the lonely feelings of despondency... whip-o-will... I am with you... I am with you... I am with you...

When Elijah finally quit running from the struggles of life and sat in desperation under the broom tree in the desert calling out to God to take his life, God sent angels with food and drink and rest to renew his body and spirit for the task ahead. Whipowill. . . whip-o-will. . . whip-o-will. . I am with you... I am with you... I am with you...

God is with you and me every day. Stop, look, listen this week. God is here.

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



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Lee Campbell

Musing

A Slow Pass



By Rick Moore

I decided to skip my usual drive on Highway 98 and take Scenic Gulf Drive instead. The speed limit was twenty miles an hour. With the car windows down, slowly cruising along the beautiful shores of the Emerald Coast, I noticed several people parasailing. I longed to be up there, high above the waves, riding the air currents without a care in the world. But this moment of peace was interrupted when my phone rang. After checking the caller ID, I made the rare decision to let the call go to voicemail. That one simple choice changed the entire outlook of everything that happened for the rest of the dayin a very positive way. It was my moment of solitude. Having moments of solitude doesn't mean you're lonely; it means you're enjoying being alone. Taking time to be alone may be exactly what you need to relieve



Earlier that day, I had encountered a situation that brought on extreme anxiety. I became nervous and started to stutter. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, and given very little time to resolve a difficult matter, it felt like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. Being pressured to move quickly can lead to panic attacks. We all experience anxiety. It's often driven by a strong desire to succeed or to impress others. If this happens to you, pause and take a deep breath. Stop and think. Be where your feet are. Take a moment to regain your composure. Quit magnifying the causes of your stress, and let go of your problems. When the immediate crisis is over, find time to decompress. Those of us who live near the coast are so blessed to be able to visit the beach and listen to the waves. Neurologists say listening to waves positively

influences our nervous system. Ocean waves follow a rhythmic pattern of 12 cycles per minute, mirroring the breathing pattern of a relaxed person. This is why sitting on the beach is such a great place to chill.

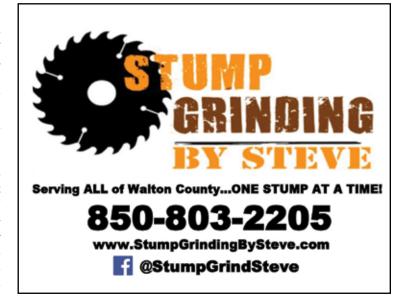
Some anxiety comes from external sources we can't control, while other anxiety comes from internal sources we can control. Don't take yourself so seriously. Forget about others' perceptions of you. More importantly, forget about your own perception of you. Forget how well you did—or didn't—perform. Forget your failures. Forget the pressure to keep up with the neighbors. Instead, incorporate healthy hab-

its and get plenty of rest.

Another way to relieve stress and anxiety is to spend quality time with others. Shortly after we purchased annual passes for a theme park in Orlando, my wife unexpectedly had to have a major procedure on her hip. We debated whether she was well enough to make the trip. The decision was made to rent a wheelchair inside the parks. Friends we were going with encouraged us to get a Fast Pass, which allowed us to experience more rides in a shorter time. A Fast Pass is nice, but my question was: where can we get a "Slow Pass?" There are times when the thrill of riding every

rollercoaster in the park is fun, but the truth is, there are also times I just like to slow down. Fortunately, we found a good mix—skipping the long lines without feeling pressured to race off to the next ride. I enjoyed the new attractions, but my favorite time in the park was sitting on a bench, just talking with friends. Treat yourself today to a "Slow Pass." It's free—and it leads to a better you. Your family will be glad you did, your co-workers will be glad you did, and most of all, you will be glad you did.

Rick Moore is Communication Pastor at Destiny Worship Center







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The Christian Capitalist Podcast:

Discussions of Hard Work and Generous Giving

By RICH SANDERS

The Christian Capitalist: The Gospel of Hard Work and Generous Giving offers a clear vision to people who work hard in all levels of the American economy: the more we make, the more we give. Founded on the concepts of the book, this movement is mobilizing Christians across the country to embrace business success and radical generosity as acts of worship.

The Christian Capitalist Podcast is based on discussions with people who embrace these concepts and encourage others to do the same. In the coming months, we will feature guests on the podcast from the Emerald Coast with inspiring stories of hard work and generous giving to the poor and needy in our community. With Christian Capitalists, "Locals Get It" refers both to readers and listeners hearing the message from our podcast guests and the poor and needy receiving the blessings that these hard-working people share with our community!



At its core, The Christian Capitalist movement is not about prosperity for its own sake, but about thanking God for the blessings we receive by sharing them with our poor and needy neighbors. It teaches that we are created in God's image to

work—diligently, ethically, and joyfully.

The message is particularly urgent today. Christianity is in decline in America, especially among younger generations, while interest in socialism has grown. At the same time, many

wealthy Christians feel conflicted by the Bible's warnings about riches. The Christian Capitalist addresses these tensions head-on, offering a theology of wealth that is neither indulgent nor ashamed. Instead, it offers a call to action: work hard and give generously to the poor and needy in Jesus' name!

The Christian Capitalist Podcast amplifies voices living out this ethic in the real world—business, family, and community leaders who demonstrate that success and generosity are not mutually exclusive. From a realtor who provides holiday gifts to families in shelters, to business owners mentoring others in faithful entrepreneurship, these stories reveal the transformative power of using wealth for good.

Importantly, guests of The Christian Capitalist Podcast don't promote a prosperity gospel, which promises wealth in exchange for faith. Instead, it promotes a "gospel of hard work and generous giving," rooted in Scripture and mod-

eled after Jesus' commandment to love our neighbors.

As Paul wrote to Timothy two thousand years ago, the wealthy are not to be arrogant or trust in riches, "but to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share" (1Tim. 6:18).

That's the heart of The Christian Capitalist: a renewed Christian ethic of work and giving that brings glory to God and good to others. In a world in need of both economic wisdom and spiritual revival, this message is timely, transformative, and profoundly needed.

The Christian Capitalist Podcast is available through links on the website at christiancapitalist. life.

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







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Upbeat Ideas for Music Learning this Summer

Summer break offers students a well-deserved rest from the demands of school, but for music students, it can also mean a loss of progress without consistent practice and instruction. Retaining musical skills over the summer requires thoughtful engagement, consistency, and creativity. Here are effective ways to help students maintain and even enhance their musical abilities during the summer months.

1. Establish a Flexible **Practice Routine**

While daily practice is ideal, it's important to keep it manageable and fun during the summer. A flexible schedule, perhaps 15 to 30 minutes, 3 days a week, can prevent skill regression without overwhelming the student. Encourage students to pick their own practice times and mix in pieces they enjoy. This approach builds autonomy and keeps their love for music alive.

2. Set Short-Term Goals

Setting small, achievable goals can give students a sense of direction. These might include learning a new song, mastering a tricky passage, or improving note reading. Short-term goals make summer practice feel purposeful and rewarding. Parents and teachers can help students outline these goals at the beginning of the break.



3. Explore New Music and **Styles** Summer is a great time

for musical exploration. The "Parents" website has great ideas to have music fun with your children: www.parents. com/preschool-music-activities-2764608. Students can be encouraged to learn songs from different genres or cultures, or to try writing their own songs. Or pull out that vintage record player and play some old LPs on it that you find at the thrift or online store.

4. Use Technology and Apps

There are numerous fun and interactive music apps and online tools designed to reinforce learning. From rhythm games to ear-training exercises, these tools can supplement regular practice and improve core skills. Websites such as www.classicsforkids.com/music-games, www.pbskids.org/games/muwww.insidetheorchestra. org/musical-games/#strings, and www.kids.carnegiehall.org/ quizzes provide engaging interactive music games.

5. Participate in summer music events

Attending a music camp or live performance can be a transformative experience. Many of the local restaurants and family venues have live music daily during the summer with fun, memorable songs. Children glean lots of musical creativity by watching professional performers up close. These experiences can motivate students and encourage them when they return to lessons with renewed energy, creativity, and perspective.

6. Perform Informally

Encouraging students perform for family, friends, or at community events can keep them engaged. These low-pressure performances help develop confidence and give students a reason to keep practicing. Recording performances and sharing them can also serve as both a motivational tool and a keepsake of their progress.

7. Involve Family and **Friends**

Support from family can make a big difference. Parents don't need to be musicians themselves, they can show interest by asking questions, listening to practice sessions, or helping set up a practice schedule. Peer practice or jam sessions with friends can also keep the experience social and enjoyable. Or try writing a song together.

Maintaining musical progress over the summer doesn't have to require intense discipline. By keeping practice enjoyable and integrating music into daily life, students can return to their regular lessons refreshed and possibly more advanced than when they left. With the right approach, summer break can be a bridge to greater musical growth.

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2025 ECTC Summer Theatre Camps

Mini Player Camps (Ages 5-7)

For rising kindergarteners, half-day camps run Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Each week features a different theme inspired by popular musicals and films. Tuition \$250 which includes a \$30 non-refundable registration fee.

June 16-20 Seussical June 23-27 Moana June 30-July 4 Encanto July 7-11 Trolls

Seussical the Musical (Grades 2-5)

A two-week musical theatre camp featuring characters from Dr. Seuss's beloved stories. Engage in group singing and choreography, culminating in ticketed performances. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday - Friday. Tuition \$375. June 16-27, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., ECTC at Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach



Camp Broadway: Rock and Pop! (Grades 2-5)

Act, sing and dance to popular rock and pop songs by artists like Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande. The program includes theatre games and improvisation exercises. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday - Friday, \$375. June 30-

July 4, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., ECTC at Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach

Acting for Film: Harry Potter Edition (Grades 5-12)

Learn the essentials of acting for the camera using scenes and

materials from the Harry Potter series. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday – Friday. Concludes with a final showcase. \$375. July 7-11, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., ECTC at Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach

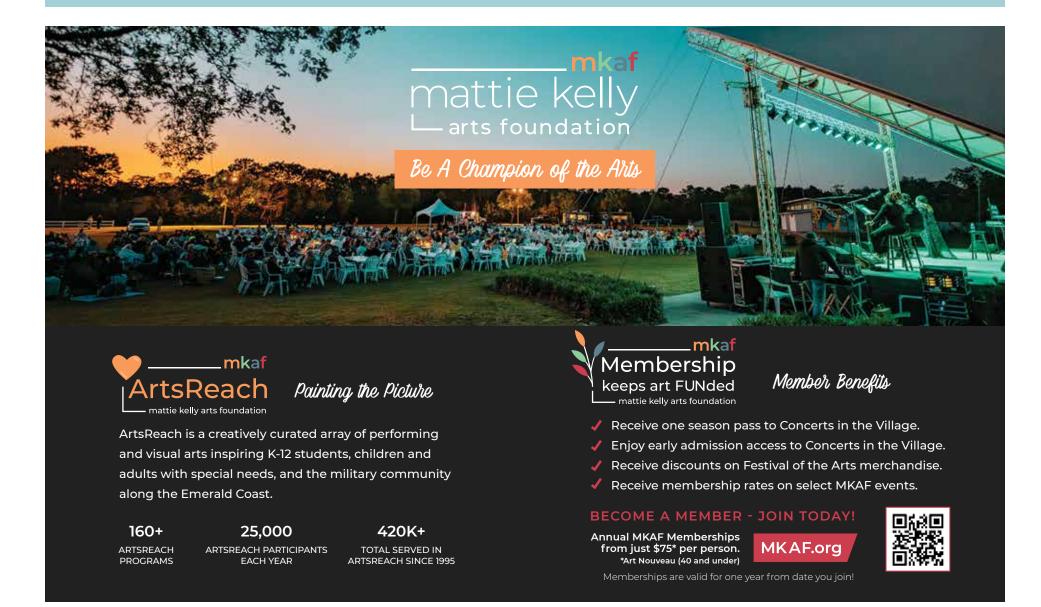
Too Many Detectives at the Murder Mansion -Non-Musical (Grades 6-12)

A two-week straight play camp. Develop comedic timing and ensemble work through a murder mystery storyline. 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. Final performances last Friday & Saturday. \$675. June 16-27, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., ECTC at Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach

Beetlejuice JR! Musical Theatre Intensive (Grades 6-12)

A three-week intensive camp. Work on acting, voice, and dance through the production of "Beetlejuice JR!" 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday – Friday. \$1,125. July 14-August 1, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., ECTC At Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach. *Final Performances: Friday, August 1, 7 p.m. and Sat., Aug. 2, 7 p.m.

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Sinfonia Youth Orchestra Celebrates Seniors and Expands Awards Scholarships

Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Sinfonia Youth Orchestra (SYO) capped off its 2024–2025 season with an uplifting and memorable Spring Concert entitled "Out of This World" on Sunday, May 4, at Destin High School. The free concert series featured nearly 100 student musicians performing intergalactic-inspired music across two concerts showcasing all levels of the SYO music education programs.

Kalle Guerrero, a homeschool student and French horn player, was named the 2025 recipient of the Grace Fulcher Memorial Scholarship, awarded annually to a Sinfonia Youth Orchestra senior who demonstrates exceptional leadership and service. Guerrero's involvement spans a wide range of impactful activities including founding a homeschool co-op, mentoring peers, and supporting individuals with disabilities—all while excelling musically.

Two additional scholarships were introduced this year, each carrying a \$500 award. Ava Mc-



Callister, a violinist from South Walton High School, was selected by teaching staff to receive the Exemplary Character Scholarship, which honors a student who consistently demonstrates integrity, compassion, and resilience. The inaugural Talented Musician Scholarship went to Zaki Beckler, a tuba player from Gulf Breeze High School, in recognition of his musical excellence and creativity throughout his time in the program.

The 2025 Sinfonia Youth



Orchestra graduating class includes nine talented student musicians from across the region: Zaki Beckler (tuba, Gulf Breeze High School), Sheamus Drummond (percussion, Destin High School), Sage Floyd (violin/oboe, homeschool), Kalle Guerrero (French horn, homeschool), Sunny Kelley (clarinet, Destin High School), Tyler Lewis (trumpet, Crestview High School), Dalton Lester (bassoon, Baker High School), Ava McCallister (violin, South Wal-



ton High School), and Elisha Whiddon (trumpet, Baker High School).

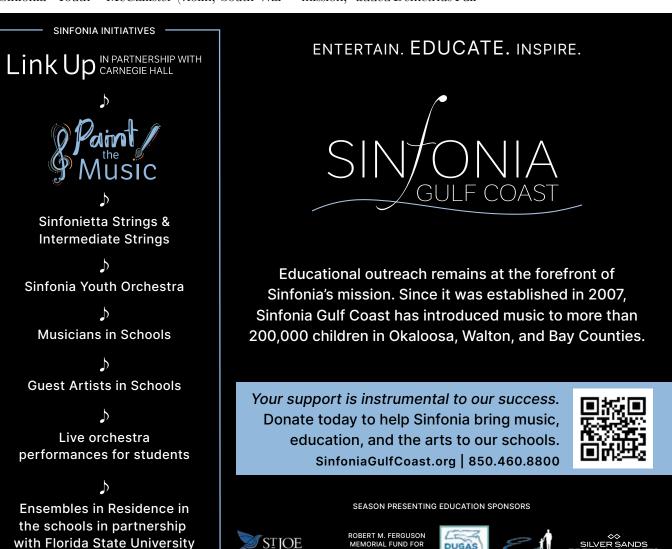
"These students are not only talented musicians—they're future leaders, educators, and creators," said Sinfonia Youth Orchestra music director Margaret Gordon. "Their contributions have helped shape our ensemble and their impact will be felt long after they graduate."

"Education is the cornerstone of Sinfonia Gulf Coast's mission," added Demetrius Fuller, Sinfonia Gulf Coast music & artistic director. "Honoring our seniors and awarding scholarships reflects our commitment to shaping not only great musicians but great citizens."

Since it was established in 2007, Sinfonia Gulf Coast has served more than 220,000 children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. SYO programs include the Symphonic Orchestra, for intermediate to advanced (All-State level) middle and high school student musicians who play strings, winds, brass, and percussion; Sinfonietta Strings, open to beginning string students; and Intermediate Strings, open to intermediate string players. SYO will open auditions for 2025-2026 in June.

For information on how to audition for the Sinfonia Youth Orchestra or to support its education initiatives, contact Margaret Gordon at mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org or call (850) 460-8800.







Business Profile: Spotlight on Phoenix Restoration

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

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

From his days on the court as a basketball player to his time coaching and mentoring players, Travis has always carried a strong sense of leadership and heart. That same spirit now fuels his work with Phoenix Restoration, where he's become known across the Florida Panhandle for



reliability, integrity, and genuine care for the community. His journey has been nothing short of incredible, transforming lives through service, bringing comfort in crisis, and building a 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 impact-

ing our community with care, skill, and faith at the center of 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.

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Leadership Walton Applications Are Now Open

The Walton Area Chamber of Commerce is now accepting applications for the 2025–2026 Leadership Walton Class, a dynamic program designed to empower emerging and established leaders through professional development, community engagement, and lasting connections.

What sets Leadership Walton apart from other programs in the area is that participants not only receive a nationally recognized Dale Carnegie Certification, but they are also paired with a dedicated mentor who guides them throughout the 9-month journey. This powerful blend of hands-on support and professional training offers a truly unique experience not found in other local leadership programs.

Leadership Walton is more than just a class; it's a transformational experience. Participants gain confidence, sharpen leadership skills, and expand their professional networks while developing a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities throughout Walton County.

Whether you're looking to grow personally or your business wants to invest in future leaders, Leadership Walton is a powerful tool for long-term success. The program cultivates future-ready leaders who are passionate about making a meaningful impact where they live and work.

Applications are open now, don't miss your opportunity to be part of a program that shapes leaders, strengthens businesses, and builds a better Walton County for all.

Learn more and apply today: www.waltonareachamber.com/ leadership-walton.For questions or additional information, please contact Gabby at Gabrielle@waltonareachamber.com



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Gulf Coast Prepared: Readying Your Property for Extreme Heat & Storms

By Todd Morris

I've lived and worked along Florida's Gulf Coast long enough to know how quickly things can change. One minute, the sun's out and the beach is calling—and the next, you're pulling out storm prep checklists and securing the shutters. The good news? A little maintenance ahead of time can save you a whole lot of trouble later.

As someone who's been part of this community for years—

living here, working here and walking through plenty of job sites—I've seen how a little planning goes a long way. Folks who keep up with maintenance usually come through storms and long summers with fewer problems and a lot less stress. So, if you're like me—someone who'd rather be fixing things before they break—here's what you should know.

The Quiet Culprit — Heat and Salt Air: Living and

working this close to the coast has its perks, but the salt air and summer heat can quietly wear things down. Salt particles in the air settle on your windows and frames, especially anything metal. Over time, they eat away at the finish and start corroding anything they touch—including your window seals. Once those seals go, you're looking at foggy glass, less insulation and more strain on your air conditioning.

The heat doesn't help either.

Hot days followed by cooler nights cause your windows to expand and contract constantly. That stress makes seals crack and eventually fail. Once moisture starts getting between the panes, you've got a problem that's only going to get worse.

Cleaning your windows regularly gets rid of the salt before it can do any real damage. And when your windows are clean and working like they should, your home stays cooler, your energy bills stay lower and you avoid costly replacements down the line.

Recognizing Warning Signs — Protecting Against Damage: Take a slow walk around your home or business and really look at each window. Run your hand along the edges. If anything feels soft, warped or drafty—make a note of it. A little attention now could save you a big repair bill later.

Foggy windows, sticky frames or signs of water leaks? Don't ignore them. Are you seeing cloudiness between the panes? That's not dirt—it's usually a broken seal. These are early signs your window seals might be compromised. Rust on hinges or latches? That means salt and moisture are doing damage. Mildew or mold around the corners? Water might already be getting in.

Even small things—like a rise in your energy bill—can point to problems with your seals or insulation. If you don't address them, these issues can let water seep into your walls and framing, leading to rot, mold and major structural problems.

The sooner you catch these issues, the better. Keith Window Company is a great go-to for that kind of work.

Storm Readiness — Windows, Doors and Shutters: Once you've checked for warning signs, a solid storm plan starts with a hands-on look at your windows and shutters. Check your window seals by looking for cracks in the caulking or feeling for any air leaks around the edges—especially on windy days.

When it comes to shutters, don't wait for a storm to see if they work. Open and close them a couple times each season to make sure the tracks are clear and everything locks in place like it should. Spray a little lubricant if they're sticking.

And don't overlook your yard. Make sure large tree limbs are trimmed back away from your home. Branches that hang near windows or doors can snap off in high winds and do serious damage.

Hurricane season's no joke. If windows are dirty, trapped grit and salt can scratch the glass when shutters go up—like sandpaper in high winds. A proper cleaning before storm prep helps avoid that.

While you're at it, give your doors, screens and storm shutters a once-over. I recommend calling Higgins Home Repair or Seaview Glass & Mirror if you need screen or patio door work. For new windows, City Glass or G&S Glass are solid choices.

Also—don't leave outdoor furniture or signs unsecured. It doesn't take much wind to turn something small into a big problem. And check the weather-stripping and caulking on your windows and doors. If it's peeling or cracked, water's going to find a way in.

And here's the bigger picture: fixing these issues now doesn't just save you money—it strengthens your home or business before the next big storm. Solid seals, dry walls and windows that work like they should all add up to a structure that's ready to handle whatever weather rolls in.

Community Strength — **Your Local Experts:** We've got a strong community here on the Gulf Coast. At Fish Window Cleaning, we take pride in teaming up with other local pros to help you stay ready, safe and in control—no matter what the season brings.

If window care is on your list this season, we're always here to help. Fish Window Cleaning works across the Gulf Coast and can take one more task off your plate—so you can focus on enjoying all the good parts of coastal living, with fewer surprises.



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Hurricane Season Is Here—Are You Prepared?

Essential Tips for Homeowners

By Byron Toups

As hurricane season approaches, it's more important than ever to ensure your family and home are ready for whatever Mother Nature may bring. Storms can be unpredictable, but with the right preparation and knowledge, you can minimize risks and protect what matters most. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you get started.

1. Plan Ahead: Your Family's Safety Comes First

- Create an Emergency Plan. Start by sitting down with your family to discuss what to do in case of a hurricane. Make sure everyone knows the emergency contacts, including fire, police, family, neighbors, friends, tree services, utility companies, and your insurance agent.
- Develop a Communication Strategy. Choose someone outside the danger zone as your central contact. Use text messages during the storm, as they often work even when calls don't. If all else fails, communicate through social media.
- Decide on Meeting Locations. Pick safe spots both inside and outside your neighborhood where you can meet if you get separated or if an evacuation order is issued.
- Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit. Stock up on essentials like water, non-perishable food, medications, flashlights, batteries, and first aid supplies. Plan for at least three days' worth of supplies.
- Practice Your Plan. Run through your emergency plan with your family so everyone knows what to do and where to

2. Stay Informed: Knowledge Is Power

- Set Up Multiple Alert Systems. Don't rely on just one source for weather updates. Purchase a NOAA weather radio (preferably with a hand crank), enable wireless emergency alerts on your cell phone, and follow reliable weather apps or websites.
- Monitor Updates Regularly. Keep an eye on forecasts from the National Hurricane Center and your local National Weather Service office. Follow them on social media for real-time updates.



• Know Your Location. Familiarize yourself with your county and location on a map. This will help you understand evacuation routes and local warnings.

3. Review Insurance and Document Belongings.

- Check Your Insurance Coverage. Review your homeowner's insurance policy to understand what is and isn't covered. Keep your insurance agent's contact information in your phone and in a safe, accessible place offsite.
- Create a Home Inventory. Use your cell phone to video each room of your house, including the contents of cabinets and closets. Make a detailed list of your belongings and store the video and list in the cloud for safekeeping.
- Why It Matters. A thorough home inventory can speed up the claims process and ensure you receive fair compensation if your home is damaged.

4. Inspect and Repair Your Roof.

- Hire a Licensed Professional. Have your roof inspected by a trusted and licensed roofing company. They will check for damaged or loose shingles, tiles, or panels, as well as issues with vents, skylights, and chimneys.
- Look for Warning Signs. Pay attention to curling, loose, missing, or torn shingles; cracked or unattached tiles; dents, loose screws, or rust on metal panels; and leaks around vents, skylights, and chimneys.
- Address Problems Promptly. Repairing minor issues now can prevent major damage during a storm.

5. Secure Soffits

• Use Stainless Steel Screws. Attach soffit material securely to the fascia and channels using stainless steel screws. • Apply Sealant. Use polyurethane sealant over the screws and allow it to dry for 72 hours. This extra step helps protect your home from wind and water damage.

Why Choose a Fortified Roof? The Gold Standard in Storm Protection

RoofPro Roofing is proud to be the area's only provider of Fortified Roofing—a system designed to meet the strictest standards for wind and storm resistance.

Fortified roofs are built with enhanced features such as sealed roof decks, ring-shank nails and impact-resistant shingles, providing superior protection during hurricanes and severe weather.

The Science Behind Fortified Roofs: Proven Results

Recent research highlights the effectiveness of Fortified construction:

A groundbreaking study by the Center for Risk and Insurance Research (CRIR) at the University of Alabama examined over 40,000 properties affected by Hurricane Sally. The findings are clear: homes built to the IBHS FORTIFIED standard were 70% less likely to have an insurance claim compared to traditional construction.

Peer-reviewed and real-world tested, the study confirmed that FORTIFIED homes suffered significantly less damage and required fewer insurance claims. When a claim was filed on a FORTIFIED home, the average damage was 22% less severe than on a standard home.

The financial impact is equally impressive. The report estimates that if every affected home had been built to the FORTIFIED Roof standard, total damage would have been reduced by more than \$147 million—saving homeowners \$42 million and insurers \$105.6 million in losses.

Even more compelling: Homes with a FORTIFIED Roof designation outperformed homes roofed to building codes with very similar requirements by nearly 40%. This demonstrates the importance of the program's rigorous documentation and review process, ensuring that every Fortified Roof meets the highest standards.

Take Action Today: Protect Your Home and Family.

Don't wait until the storm is on the horizon. By planning ahead, staying informed, and investing in a Fortified Roof from RoofPro Roofing, you can enjoy peace of mind knowing your home is built to withstand even the toughest storms.

Ready to protect your home? Contact RoofPro Roofing today for a free estimate and learn more about Fortified Roofing solutions! Your family's safety and your home's resilience are worth it. Call 850-332-3330.





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Storm-Ready Starts with Coverage: What You Need to **Know Before Hurricane Season**



By Julie A. Martin

As we do every year, Bay Life is bringing readers up-to-date guidance on preparing for hurricane season—this time with the help of local expert Abora Insurance. With this year's storms predicted to be more frequent and intense and Hurricane Season beginning June 1, making sure your homeowner's and flood insurance policies are in order is more critical now than ever.

Here are the essential coverages every Florida homeowner should review now:

Hurricane & Wind Coverage

Most Florida policies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) include hurricane, named storm or wind/ hail coverage under a separate deductible. Ideally, your wind coverage should be included in your main home policy to avoid gaps. If your insurer doesn't offer wind in your area, you'll need a stand-alone wind policy-and must ensure coverage details match to avoid surprises.

Tip: "Hurricane" coverage typically offers the best protection, applying your larger



deductible only to named hurricanes. Smaller deductibles would apply to other wind-related damage.

Coverage A (Dwelling Limit)

Make sure your home is insured for today's rebuild costsnot what it cost years ago. Data shows nearly 2 in 3 homes are underinsured. If disaster strikes, inadequate coverage could leave you paying thousands out of pocket.

Loss of Use (or Loss of Rents)

This coverage pays for temporary housing if your home is unlivable. For landlords, Loss of Rents ensures continued income during repairs. Not all rental policies include this—check with your agent. Remember, there needs to be direct physical damage to trigger this coverage. Some rental policies don't include Loss of Rents so you will want to read your policy or call your insurance agent so you know for sure.

Law or Ordinance Coverage

Florida's building codes change often, especially after major storms. If your home needs to be rebuilt to new code, this coverage helps cover the added cost. Most carriers, if they have it available, offer either 10%, 25% or 50% coverage. This percentage is tied to your Dwelling Limit. If you have extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance cover-

age is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play. After storms like Hurricane Michael, this protection proved essential.

Flood Insurance

Standard homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage—and floodwaters can result from both hurricanes and regular rain events. While some carriers offer limited flood endorsements, most homeowners need a separate flood policy. Although there are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy, it is infrequent.

You have two main options:

- NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program): For most insureds, your flood policy will be a separate policy written through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program), and, unless your lender requires the policy, or you're closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective.
- Private Flood Insurance: Growing in availability, often with broader coverage and less waiting, Private flood insurance is an alternative. Many of the private markets in in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

Call (850) 424-6979 or visit www.getabora.com to review your policy before the next storm blows in.

Stay ready. Stay protected. We're here each year to help you do just that.

Abora Insurance has served Destin, Niceville, Fort Walton Beach, Miramar Beach, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach for over a decade. They work with top-rated carriers to tailor coverage for home, auto and life insurance.

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FPL Announces Planned Upgrades for Walton County to Continue Building A Stronger, Smarter Grid

The company's smart grid technology prevented more than 800,000 outages during active 2024 hurricane season

We're upgrading your neighborhood! In 2025, FPL plans to make the following upgrades in Walton County as part of its ongoing commitment to reduce outages and restore power faster following major storms:

- 68 miles of power lines will undergo inspection or vegetation trimming, addressing one of the leading causes of power outages.
- 5,292 power poles in Walton County will be inspected, strengthening or replacing those that no longer meet FPL's industry-leading standards.
- Five intelligent devices will be installed as part of smart grid technology upgrades on main, neighborhood and underground power lines. These automated smart switches help identify outages and reroute power to prevent more widespread interruptions.
- Across Northwest Florida: FPL continuously pioneers new technology and strengthens the



energy grid to improve reliability for its customers and avoid outages during good weather and bad, including:

- 32% fewer wooden transmission structures in Northwest Florida as part of FPL's efforts to harden the grid with steel and concrete structures.
- 90 miles of neighborhood power lines placed underground in Northwest Florida.
- 9,100 smart grid devices installed in Northwest Florida to improve outage detection and response.
 - State-of-the-art technology

is being used to detect, maintain, and limit the impact of trees and debris that come into contact with FPL equipment.

A word from Bernard Johnson, senior external affairs manager for FPL: Our dedicated team is committed to providing customers in Walton County with safe and reliable electric service, all while keeping bills as low as possible. Although no energy grid is storm-proof, these upgrades have improved service reliability by more than 63% since 2018 in Northwest Florida, enhancing reliability

day-to-day and during hurricanes and severe weather for our customers.

For perspective: An annual report filed March 1 with the Florida Public Service Commission details how FPL delivered the best service reliability in

company history last year. This includes the company's lowest average number of minutes an FPL customer experienced an outage, surpassing the previous company-best performance set in 2023.



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