



JUNE 2026
VOL. 11, NO. 1

SOWAL Life

PRSR STD
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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Santa Rosa Beach, FL
PERMIT NO. #11

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Ten Years Later: How a Dream, a Turtle and Local Support Started It All

By LORI LEATH MILLER

Ten years ago, many South Walton residents could still remember when Highway 30A felt more like a scenic backroad than a nationally recognized brand. Growth was already underway, but the area still carried the slower rhythm and small-town familiarity locals cherished. Summers were busy, but the quieter months still belonged to the teachers, fishermen, artists, restaurant owners and entrepreneurs who formed the backbone of the community before much of the country fully discovered it.

Then came 2016.

That was the year newspaper man Dave White arrived from New England carrying a simple, but ambitious, dream: to create a publication devoted entirely to the people, stories and spirit of South Walton.

Like so many who now call this area home, Dave's connection to the Emerald Coast actually began years earlier



(Left to Right) Paul Willms, Sales; Sarah Stewart; Scott Miller; Lori Leath Miller; Dave White; Lisa and Ray Cyr; Grace Ann Russell, Sales; and Denise David, Sales. Not pictured: Jamie Zimchek, Editor SOWAL Life and PCB Life; John Tower, Accounting; Dawna Shackley, SOWAL Life Graphic Designer; Kim Harper, Life Media Art Director.

during visits with friends Ray and Lisa Cyr, owners of Studio 237 Music School in Santa Rosa Beach. They introduced him to the charm, beauty and strong sense of community found throughout South Walton. What started as admira-

tion soon became something more — a desire to move here permanently and become part of the community itself. And he did.

Ray helped introduce Dave to local business owners and community leaders while

Dave shared the vision for an all-positive publication centered on storytelling, connection and, most importantly for local business owners, direct-

10 YEARS
continued on page 3



Walton County Launches Expanded Beach Tram Service with Inaugural Ride to State Parks

Walton County will launch an expanded Beach Tram service connecting visitors to Grayton Beach State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park.

Walton County Tourism is again offering complimentary day-use entry to Grayton Beach State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, and getting there is easier with the Beach Tram service.

BEACH TRAM
continued on page 2



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 Community

BEACH TRAM

continued from cover

This free tram service is designed to reduce vehicle traffic and parking pressure near the parks, supporting Walton County's commitment to preserving the natural ecosystems that make our community special. Riders will always know what to expect before they arrive, as the tram operates in coordination with state park capacity limits to en-

sure visitors are informed of park availability before boarding.

With the addition of state park access, the Beach Tram network expands public beach access for visitors and residents through routes operating from two facilities:

393 Municipal Parking Facility (1668 S County Hwy 393, Santa Rosa Beach), Operating daily from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Ed Walline Express: Ride

directly to Ed Walline RBA. Departs every 10 minutes

Dune Allen Local: Stops include: Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, Dune Allen RBA, and Fort Panic RBA. Departs every 30 minutes

Grayton Municipal Parking Facility (1505 County Hwy 283 S, Santa Rosa Beach)

Grayton Express: Ride directly to Bets “Beachmama” Haynes Regional Beach Access

Departs every 10 minutes. Daily from 6 a.m. – 9:45 p.m.

Blue Mountain Local:

Stops include: Blue Mountain RBA, Gulfview Heights RBA and 393 MPF. Departs every 30 minutes. Runs from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Grayton Beach State Park Express: Ride directly to Grayton Beach State Park

Departs every 30 minutes. Runs from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

For route schedules and additional information, please contact Beach Operations at (850) 267-4578 or visit WaltonTransportation.com.

For more information about the Complimentary Day-Use Admission to Topsail Hill Preserve and Grayton Beach State Parks, please visit walton-countyfltourism.com/press/wct-offers-complimentary-day-use-admission-topsail-hill-pre

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10 YEARS

continued from cover
mail distribution.

But a brand was still needed that truly reflected the local lifestyle. That inspiration came through South Walton resident and the paper's first-year editor Sarah Stewart. She suggested the now-iconic sea-glass blues and greens, a turtle "mascot" and logo, and a tagline that instantly separated locals from tourists: "Locals get it," which, to be clear, they did. And still do.

And just like that, SoWal Life was born.

The concept was simple — deliver the publication directly to mailboxes and fill it with stories locals actually cared about: community happenings, events, arts, local personalities, hometown heroes and positive news. Nationally known author Sean Dietrich came aboard alongside monthly columns such as the now longtime faith-based column, A Pastor's Ponderings. With no established playbook, the small team juggled ad sales, last-minute content submissions, production challenges and tight deadlines while working to prove the concept month after month. The vibe was less "breaking

news" and more "Hey, did you hear about this?" As SoWal Life continued gaining momentum and reader support, a second SoWal Life edition was launched to expand the publication's reach to Miramar Beach. The strong response confirmed what Dave White and the team had believed from the beginning: people were hungry for positive, community-focused local media that celebrated the place they called home.

The Next Chapter

What started as one community newspaper soon became something much bigger.

In 2018, publisher Lori Leath Smith became a partner in launching Destin Life, bringing the same all-positive, community-centered concept into the Destin market. The response was immediate and enthusiastic.

The momentum continued with the launch of Bay Life in 2019. Through another business partnership, Lori and Scott Miller introduced the publication to the Bluewater Bay community, followed shortly thereafter by a second Bay Life edition serving Niceville and Valparaiso. Growth continued across the Emerald Coast with

the addition of PCB Life in Panama City Beach, FWB Life in Fort Walton Beach and the newest publication, Freeport Life.

As the family of publications expanded, Scott recognized the need for a stronger umbrella brand to unite the growing network. Together, they established Life Media Group, creating a

cohesive identity for what had become a thriving collection of community-focused media outlets.

Today, Life Media Group encompasses eight all-positive community newspapers, digital platforms and specialty publications serving readers across the Emerald Coast. The organization is supported by a dedicated team of 13 staff members, along with a talented network of writers, photographers, designers,

contributors and community partners who help bring each publication to life every month. While each publication maintains its own unique hometown personality, the mission has remained the same from the beginning: celebrate local people, support local businesses, strengthen community connections and shine a light on the positive stories happening all around us every day.

"Readers have embraced the publications as their own," says Dave. "Many say they read the papers cover-to-cover each month for local events, uplifting stories and hometown happenings often difficult to find elsewhere. Others intentionally support businesses they discover inside the pages." Life Media direct-mails and distributes more than 87,000 hyper-local copies monthly throughout the Emerald Coast while also reaching thousands more readers digitally through websites, e-newsletters and social media platforms. More than newspapers, Life Media has always been about connection — and interaction. We love hearing from our readers, receiving story ideas, celebrating accomplishments, spotlighting businesses and learning about the people and organizations making a difference throughout our communities. Some of our readers and advertising partners have been with us since the very beginning, and for that loyalty and support, we are deeply grateful.

The Next Decade

As Life Media moves into its next decade, the mission remains unchanged: sharing positive stories and celebrating the faith, family, businesses and community spirit that make our area so special.

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Community

Coastal Seniors Update for June

NEW OFFICE HOURS FOR COASTAL SENIORS - Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

COASTAL SENIORS

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***New* - South Walton Game Group** - will meet every Monday in June from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Padgett Park. Sign up on Sign Up Genius email. To be added to the email list, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Exercise Classes - Angela Gibson will lead classes every Tuesday and Thursday at 10 a.m. at Padgett Park. Cost is \$5 per class for CSSW members and \$10 for non-members. Weights and bands are used for classes. Sign up on Sign Up Genius email. To be added to sign up list, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Core Class - Angela Gibson will lead a 30 minute core class every Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. at Padgett Park. A yoga mat and Pilates ring are used for this class. Cost is \$5 per class for CSSW members and \$10 for non-members. For information or

screening, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Watercolor Painting Class - Karen Peterson will teach beginners watercolor painting on Friday June 5, 12, and 26 from 8:45 - 12 p.m. at Padgett Park. All supplies will be provided. Cost is \$20 for members and \$40 for non-members. Sign up on Sign Up Genius email. To be added to Sign up email, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

Northwest Florida Health Council - Will Provide Free Health Screenings On June 18 From 9 - 11:30 a.m. at Padgett Park.

Pickleball - Beginner Pickleball 101 at Walton Sports Complex Courts on June 17 at 6 p.m.

This beginner class is open to Walton County residents only. (Ages 18 and up) Registration is required. Register through Parks and Rec Website at secure.recl.com Email Sandy Gulak at sowaipickleball@gmail.com for more information. Class is FREE and equipment is provided or you may use your own. Open play at Boys and Girls Club has ended for the summer but will resume after Labor Day. Please join the SoWal 30A Pickleball Association on Facebook for more information and weekly updates and check the CSSW calendar at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org

Monthly Meeting - Monthly meeting will be Friday June 19 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at

Padgett Park. Guest speaker will be Mary Swift who will give information on the very popular game of Mahjong. A light lunch will be served. Sign up on Sign Up Genius email. To be added to Sign Up Genius, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com to be added.

Mahjong - Mary Swift will host a Mahjong group every Monday at 1:00 p.m. at Padgett Park. For more information contact Mary Swift at (210) 722-7939 or on Facebook join The Emerald Coast Social Club-a Mahjong Group.

Water Aerobics - Two classes will be held each Monday and Wednesday in June at 9 a.m. and at 10:15 a.m. at Watersound Fountains pool located

at 65 Origins Pkwy, Inlet Beach. Cost is \$5 for members and \$10 for non members. A pool noodle and set of water bells are used for class. Sign up on Sign Up Genius email. To be added to Sign Up Genius, email coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com

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



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Community

Introducing Peter the Pelican: Coloring for Conservation is a Sweet Deal at Pecan Jacks

By HEATHER BENNETT EYE

SoWal Life and Pecan Jacks are teaming up again to continue promoting conservation and sharing how we can keep sea turtles and other sea life safe by keeping our beaches #cleandarkflat.

If you've read any of the Life Media publications, Sowel Life, Destin Life, PCB Life, Bay Life, and now Fort Walton Life, you've probably noticed our sea turtle logo. That logo came to life in the form of Theodora "Theo" of South Walton, who represents all the endangered sea turtles.

Theo's mission has always been to raise sea turtle awareness, and donations for local organizations like Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles (FOSWST). They are an all-volunteer organization started in 2015 dedicated to promoting sea turtle conservation through awareness and education. They locate and monitor sea turtle nests and oversee the protection of their hatchlings, along with educating visitors about the delicate ecosystem, and

the necessity of keeping our beaches #cleandarkflat and what it means to #leavenotrace.

Joining Theo in her mission, is Peter the Pelican, who is introduced in the new kids coloring book, "Theo and Peter's Pollution Solution," written by Melanie Hawkins with illustrations by Bethany Anderson, and published by Sowel Life. In the coloring book, Theo and Peter teach the importance of conservation while embarking on a fun adventure.

Readers learn about obstacles that turtles and other sea life must currently navigate, and what we can do to keep our beaches clean. From the moment Theo hatches on the beach and meets Peter for the very first time, the two form an unlikely friendship built on kindness and teamwork. When



Theo gets stuck in a hole left behind by a beach umbrella, Peter pushes and pulls until she's free. Later, out in the open ocean, it's Theo's turn to return the favor, chewing through tangled trash and debris to free Peter. It's a reminder that we're all in this together.

You can buy Theo of South Walton sea turtle plush toys (stuffy), key chains, Christmas ornaments, and a children's book about her adventures from participating partners, like Pecan Jack's. The coloring book and Peter the Pelican stuffy are also now available for purchase at

all three Pecan Jacks locations. When you purchase a Theo or Peter the Pelican stuffy at Pecan Jack's, you will receive a free kid's ice cream.

Pecan Jacks:

Corner of Gulf Place and Ed Waline: 4368 W County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

Grayton Beach: 32 E County Hwy 30A, Unit 105, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

Seagrove Beach: 4771 E County Hwy 30A, A102, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

It's up to us to not only help Theo and Peter in their mission, but to have a mission of our own to respect and preserve sea life in our precious ecosystem along The Emerald Coast. Please support SoWal Life, Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles, Pecan Jacks and other local organizations that help us continue to spread the important message of conservation and keeping the beaches #cleandarkflat.

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Calling All Snowbirds: A New Way to Enjoy the 30A Lifestyle

Along Florida's Panhandle coast, the seasons feel a little different. Winter mornings arrive with soft sunlight and cool breezes off the Gulf. Afternoons stretch into easy walks, long lunches, and time outdoors. It's the kind of place people return to year after year — especially those who know the magic of 30A.

For many seasonal residents, the question has never been whether to return, but how to make those months feel more refreshing and restorative.

At Watersound Fountains, a retirement community in Inlet Beach, more returning residents are discovering a new way to enjoy the coast. Instead of managing a second home or coordinating short-term rentals, they're choosing seasonal retirement living — a simpler, more flexible way to spend the months they love most along the Panhandle.

Here, the focus is on enjoying the lifestyle without the usual responsibilities that come with homeownership. No insurance policies to track. No property taxes to manage. No upkeep waiting after a storm or a long

stretch away.

Instead, days open up naturally.

Mornings might begin with coffee as sunlight fills the windows. Some residents start the day in the fitness center or by the pool. Others prefer a walk through the surrounding protected forest or a quiet breakfast with neighbors before deciding what the day will hold.

Wellness classes, social gatherings, and chef-prepared dining offer easy ways to stay active and connected. And with the beaches, shops, and restaurants of 30A just a short drive away, there's always something to explore.

But what many people appreciate most is the sense of ease.

Life here is designed to remove the background worries that can follow a second home. Maintenance is handled. Daily details are taken care of. Support is available if needed. Residents are free to focus on the things that drew them to the coast in the first place — fresh air, time with friends, and the simple pleasure of being near the water.



Watersound Fountains recently introduced a Seasonal Commitment Plan, created specifically with snowbirds in mind. The program allows residents to enjoy the community during the months they love most while maintaining flexibility throughout the year.

For some, it's a chance to escape colder climates without the burden of managing another property. For others, it's a way to stay close to family or return to a place they've loved visiting for years.

Whatever the reason, the appeal is simple: more time enjoying the Panhandle lifestyle, with fewer responsibilities behind the scenes.

And once people experience it, many find themselves wondering why they waited so long.

Watersound Fountains Retirement Living is located at 65 Origins Parkway in Inlet Beach.

To learn more about seasonal retirement living near 30A or ask about the Seasonal Commitment Plan, call (850) 904-3835 or visit WatersoundFountains.com.

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Community

If We Want Authenticity, We Have to Initiate It

Walk into almost any major retailer right now and you'll see the same pattern: racks packed tight, new collections already replacing last month's inventory, markdown signs quietly preparing for the next cycle. The system depends on constant turnover. More product. Faster releases. Shorter relevance.

That model works in cities built on trend velocity. It doesn't feel right on 30A.

This coastline moves differently. The light changes daily, but the landscape remains. The dunes don't reinvent themselves every month, and Western Lake doesn't rebrand each season. There's a steadiness here — a quiet consistency — and it makes you question why everything else has to move so quickly.

Fast fashion has conditioned us to expect constant novelty. Weekly drops. Micro-trends. Clothing produced in such large quantities that disposal is factored into the business model. When something fades, stretches, or falls out of style, replacing it feels easier than keeping it.

But speed carries a cost.

Not only environmentally, but culturally. It shifts how we value what we wear. When garments

are built to be temporary, our attachment to them becomes temporary too.

There's a difference between buying something because it's inexpensive and buying something because it feels right. One fills space. The other earns it.

Along 30A, where lifestyle is deeply tied to place, that distinction matters.

At Captured Clothing 30A, we've tried to avoid the fast-fashion, mass-produced approach as much as we can. Not because it sounds good in marketing language, but because it doesn't align with how we want to operate. Producing in limited runs forces discipline. When quantities are smaller, decisions carry more weight. Fabric selection matters. Construction matters. Fit matters. You consider whether a piece will still feel relevant next season — not just next week.

It also requires accepting that when something sells out, it may stay sold out.

That isn't about scarcity as a tactic. It's about restraint as a principle. It keeps creativity honest and prevents excess from quietly stacking up in back rooms and landfills. It allows space for



evolution instead of overproduction.

Spring on the coast reinforces that philosophy. The season isn't about excess — it's about refinement. A well-constructed layer for cool mornings. A sweatshirt that holds its shape after exposure to salt air and sun. Colors that feel drawn from the shoreline rather than pulled from a corporate forecast.

Quality reveals itself over time. Stitching that doesn't twist. Fabric that softens instead of thinning. Structure that endures beyond a single season.

Well-made clothing doesn't demand attention. It earns loyalty.

Sustainability is often presented through bold claims and certifications, but sometimes it's simpler than that. Sometimes it's choosing to produce less. Resisting the urge to overstock. Being comfortable selling through instead of marking down. Designing pieces meant to be worn repeatedly, not photographed once and forgotten.

In a community that depends

on the health of its environment, restraint isn't abstract. Our dunes, our rare coastal lakes, and our shoreline exist because someone chose preservation over expansion. Because someone understood that more isn't always better.

Clothing can follow the same philosophy.

As both a retailer and a photographer, I'm drawn to what endures. The same stretch of water looks different every day, but it never loses its identity. That thinking shapes our Modus Made pieces — smaller releases, thoughtful construction, and designs intended to outlive a single season.

Authenticity doesn't happen by accident. It requires intention. It requires the willingness to produce differently, even when speed would be easier.

If we want authenticity — in our communities, in our businesses, in what we wear — we have to initiate it.

We have to choose better over more. Quality over quantity. Longevity over immediacy.

The Gulf doesn't compete. It endures.

What we create, and what we choose to wear, can do the same.



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Keeping Homes Looking Their Best During the Busy Summer Season



BY KYLE SPARKS,
OVATION PAINTING

Summer along the Emerald Coast brings energy, visitors, and

long days by the water. Homes across Destin, Santa Rosa Beach, and surrounding community's welcome family gatherings, vacation guests, and plenty of activity.

With that activity comes extra wear on a home's interior. High-traffic areas such as hallways, stairwells, and kitchens tend to show scuffs and marks more quickly during the busy months.

Fresh paint plays an important role in maintaining those spaces. Durable coatings help walls resist everyday wear while keeping

rooms looking bright and clean.

For property managers and rental agencies, the condition of a home's interior can influence the entire guest experience. Clean, well-maintained walls help create a welcoming environment that guests remember.

Kyle's Tip:

"If you're looking for early signs a room needs repainting, check light switches, hallway corners, and areas around door frames. Those are usually the

first places we see wear."

Even during a busy season, it's helpful to take note of areas that may need attention later in the year. Planning ahead makes it easier to schedule projects during quieter months.

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Greenway Station 30a Announces New Mid-Week Farmers Market

Greenway Station 30A is proud to announce the launch of its new weekly farmers market, bringing together local farmers, artisans, and vendors in the heart of South Walton.

The market will officially kick off on Wednesday, May 20 and Thursday, May 21, and will continue every Wednesday and Thursday throughout the summer from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Located at 4771 E. County Highway 30A in Santa Rosa Beach, the Greenway Station 30A Farmers Market will offer

a curated selection of fresh produce, locally made goods, and handcrafted items. The market is designed to create a vibrant, mid-week gathering place for both residents and visitors to shop, connect, and enjoy the 30A lifestyle.

"We're excited to introduce a mid-week market that gives the community more opportunities to support local vendors," said Diane Kolopanas, 30A Farmers Market organizer. "Greenway Station is the perfect setting for a relaxed, high-quality market

experience."

The Greenway Station 30A Farmers Market aims to become a staple summer destination, offering a convenient and enjoyable way to shop local while experiencing the charm of the 30A area.

Event Details: Greenway Station 30A Farmers Market on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. 4771 E. County Hwy 30A Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.



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 Community

What Wild Things Live in Florida Panhandle Springs?

BY HELEN PETRE

Lots of living things are in our springs. Florida is blessed with lots of clear, cold, freshwater springs. All of our springs have karst topography and are filled with water from the Floridan Aquifer. Some springs are in state and county parks, and some are on water management land with free, accessible, 68-degree F water any time we decide to jump in.

What is in there with us? The springs are home to many wild organisms. If you look before you jump, you will see fish. Most people call all the small fish minnows. Science geeks know better. All small fish are not minnows, and all minnows are not small.

Here are a few organisms at home in our springs:

Those fish swimming around the edge are probably sunfish (*Lepomis* species). Bluegills, or bream, brim, or sunnies, (*L. macrochirus*) have vertical stripes. They nest in shallow water on sandy bottoms. The male makes the nest, invites the female to lay her eggs, and fertil-

izes them. Then the father to be guards the eggs until they hatch.

Bluegills, and other sunfish, also live in swallow water in rivers, lakes and ponds.



Male bluegill Wikipedia.

Eastern mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbroki*) are small fish that stay near the surface. They have live births. The females are the big ones. Gestation takes about a month and results in about 50 young. The young mature in about a month. Besides mosquito larva, adults eat the young. Mosquito fish consume mosquito larva, but so do bluegills and many other fish.

Mosquito fish live in our cold springs, but they also live in warmer ponds and rivers.

Mosquitos prefer warm water, so springs are not a hot spot for mosquitos. It is a good

thing mosquito fish are omnivores. They eat any insect larva, algae, and detritus.



Female Eastern mosquito fish. Wikipedia.

Other than fish, springs are good homes for turtles. The River cooter, (*Pseudemys concinna*), is the most commonly seen turtle. River cooters are often basking in the sun, sometimes piled up on top of each other. They are quick to dive in when they perceive a threat. Cooters look like yellow bellied sliders, but sliders usually live in warmer, darker water, and are more yellow.

Male cooters are smaller than females and have long nails. They stroke the female during courtship. After mating in the water, the female lays about 15 eggs on land. The hatchlings are round, about one inch in diameter, green and yellow.

River cooters eat mostly

plants. They can stay underwater for long periods of time because they can take oxygen from the water through their cloaca, or their butts.



River cooters. US Fish and Wildlife.

Another common springs turtle is the Loggerhead musk turtle (*Sternotherus minor*). When musk turtles feel threatened, they stink, just like skunks.

Loggerhead means big head, and this five-inch-long turtle has a big head to crunch snails and crayfish. Like cooters, musk turtles stay in the water, but if they do come out, they can run pretty fast. We have one at the E.O. Wilson Center. Turtle Bob named him Elon.

After mating in the water, females lay two or three eggs on the shore. Hatchlings are about one inch long.

Yes, there are snakes at springs too. Brown water snakes (*Nerodia taxispilota*) are large, common snakes that are often in or around freshwater. They have a big head attached to a skinny neck. Because they sort of look like cottonmouths, people tend to be frightened of them, but fear not, they are not venomous. They mate in trees and give birth to about 40 live young, each about ten inches long.

Although they are nonvenomous, if threatened, they bite vigorously and defecate, which likely induces the offender to leave them alone. They are really just big snakes that hang out in trees over water and eat fish.

Next time you visit the springs, enjoy the animals that live there. Since you know their names, they are your friends! Jump in and enjoy this paradise we share!

Helen Petre is a retired biologist, enjoying life on the Panhandle. If you have any science, nature, or wild questions, or have suggestions for articles, please email: petrehelen@gmail.com.



Musk turtle and brown water snake. Wikipedia.




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 Community

Investing: The China Pendulum

By Clint Gharib, AIF®, CFED®

For years, the West and many investors underestimated China.

China was often viewed as little more than a low-cost manufacturing economy dependent on Western consumers and innovation. Instead, it became a global industrial powerhouse with

growing influence in technology, energy, infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and trade. Its ability to rapidly scale manufacturing, build infrastructure, and coordinate long-term industrial priorities surprised much of the world.

Today, however, the pendulum may be swinging too far in the op-

posite direction.

The current narrative increasingly portrays China as economically inevitable and strategically unbeatable. But history suggests investors should be cautious with that assumption.

China clearly has major strengths. Its manufacturing scale



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and industrial coordination remain advantages the West cannot easily replicate overnight. China has also demonstrated an ability to compete aggressively in electric vehicles, battery technology, renewable energy infrastructure, and certain areas of advanced manufacturing. But China still faces both internal and external constraints.

One example is China's increasingly difficult balancing act in the Middle East. As investor and writer Ben Hunt recently observed, China has spent billions building productive relationships with Saudi Arabia and the UAE while also maintaining longstanding support for Iran and close ties with Russia. Hunt argues that "Beijing has no good options" because any meaningful shift risks alienating one side of the region or another. China wants stability, trade, and energy access, but those competing interests increasingly complicate its strategic position.

China's growing debt burden also matters, something I discussed previously in "China's Debt Monster Grows." Years of rapid property expansion, infrastructure projects, and local government borrowing boosted growth but also created long-term financial pressures. Debt can fuel expansion for years, but eventually it narrows strategic choices and can become an obstacle to economic and geopolitical ambition. Demographic pressures and slowing population growth may add further challenges in the years ahead.

For investors, the larger lesson may matter more than the geopolitical debate itself.

Investors often assume current trends will continue indefinitely. We saw it with Japan in the 1980s, housing in 2006, and technology stocks during the dot-com era. Markets rarely move smoothly from one trend to the next. Major transitions are often accompanied by significant volatility as narratives swing from one extreme to

another.

That does not mean investors should ignore China's rise or the global competition reshaping markets. It does mean portfolios should avoid being built around assumptions of either American decline or Chinese dominance.

In uncertain environments, adaptable businesses, diversified supply chains, strong balance sheets, and companies with pricing power often matter more than betting heavily on a geopolitical outcome.

Markets frequently swing from complacency to fear and back again. Long-term investors are usually rewarded more by balance and discipline than by chasing whichever global narrative feels most dominant at the moment.

For additional perspective see: Oxford Retirement Advisors Blog.

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Butterflies in Motion, Scholarship Awards, Garden Dedication and Officer Inductions Wrap Up a Perfect Year for Green Thumb Garden Club

BY KATHLEEN EDGE, PUBLICITY & WEBSITE CHAIR

Sixty members and guests enjoyed a picture-perfect meeting day at one of Walton County's most beautiful locations, Eden Gardens State Park.

Butterflies in Motion is a program of the Santa Rosa County Master Gardeners Association. Jenny Weber and Chris McLean brought the mobile house to the Park and provided a fabulous educational program about butterflies complete metamorphosis.

In 2026, GTGC was able to increase scholarship awards to the highest level in their 70-year history. Generous donations and fund-raising projects supported by members and the local community have allowed GTGC to present two \$2,000 college scholarships plus \$1,500 each to 4H Youth Camp Tim-poochee, E.O.Wilson Natural-ists' Camp and Westonwood Ranch. College scholarship winners are Kaelynn Green, University of West Florida and Cali Caravello, University of Washington Seattle.

Members and guests also toured the fully renovated Eden

Gardens Butterfly Garden. The centerpiece of the Garden, the beautiful fountain, is now in perfect operating condition surrounded by a brick border and butterfly-attracting flowers and bushes have been planted. Green Thumb unveiled a granite marker showing the Club's support for the Garden since 1990. Long-time member, Barbara Young, a



Walton County Master Gardener, presented the inspiring history of the Butterfly Garden.

Last year's Board of Directors were honored, and next year's Club Officers were inducted. 2026/2027 Officers are Lori Echols, President; Barbara Gahagan, Vice President; Kathleen Edge, Treasurer; and Kathy Bilello, Secretary.

Next year will kick off with the September

2026 member meeting. Details about how to join Green Thumb Garden Club, the programs, projects and more can be found on the website at www.greenthumbgardenclubinc.org or email greenthumbgardenclubinc@gmail.com

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

education of its members and the public in botany, community beautification, conservation of natural resources, environmental awareness, floral design, gardening, horticulture, and nature studies and instill in our youth the love of gardening and respect for the environment. Please note: Programs are subject to change.





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Community

Abide With Us Builds Community, Faith and Purpose for Walton County Teens

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

If your middle schooler or high schooler is looking for a place to find community and serve, Abide with Us ministry at Church at the Bay in Santa Rosa Beach might just be what you're looking for. Founder and veteran Jeremy Vanhooze, along with his wife, Kacy, and their incredible team, have created a youth movement in Walton County that is rooted in John 15 and passionate about Jesus, community, and living truth. It's a unique opportunity for local teens to come together, not only to deepen their faith but also to explore questions openly. "We want to bridge the gap, but it's also meant to be a place where teens who don't typically go to church on a Sunday can come and just see what the body of Christ is like. We've even had teens come from parents who have challenged them to see that God's not real."

Abide with Us isn't looking to replace youth groups, but provide an additional place

for students to meet. Whether they are looking for a place to socialize, grow spiritually, or be mentored to lead, teens are welcome. "We have our meetings on a Thursday, because we don't want to compete with youth groups, which typically meet on a Wednesday. We want our youth to be at church with their parents first, but we did want to offer another outlet for them to be within the body of Christ."

With so many community youths struggling with a sense of belonging, isolation, and a way to get connected, Abide with Us might be the answer. "God really used my time in the military to prepare me for something much greater. Being in the service showed me I was responsible for more than just my own life and what it means to be part of something bigger than myself."

Through Abide With Us, we're leading a generation facing so much pressure from the dis-



ABIDE

continued on page 17



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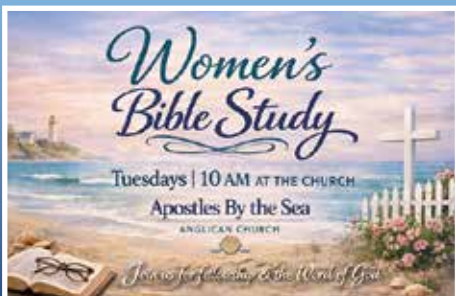
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Chad Watson, Minister of Music

Ashley Wallace, Children's Minister

Emily Cason, Guest Services Coordinator



Gardening Through the Heat: A South Walton Summer Guide

If you've lived in South Walton long enough, you know summer gardening here is less about fighting the heat and more about learning to work with it. Between the salt air, sandy soil, afternoon storms, and relentless humidity, our gardens demand a different philosophy than what works farther north.

The good news? Some plants absolutely thrive here.

Summer in Walton County is the season for heat-loving color and resilient native textures. Vinca, pentas, lantana, salvia, and blue daze flourish when many traditional flowers surrender to the sun. These plants are not only durable but attract butterflies and pollinators, bringing movement and life into the landscape. UF/IFAS gardening experts consistently recommend heat-tolerant varieties for Florida summers, especially in coastal regions like ours.

For edible gardening, summer requires a mindset shift. Tomatoes and lettuce usually struggle once nighttime temperatures remain high. Instead, South Walton gardeners find success with okra, citrus trees, blueberries, blackberries



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and peaches. You might also try planting your herbs in containers which can be moved. Herbs love the sun in the spring but being able to move your herbs to the shade might give them a longer life than sitting in full sun in the summer.

One of the biggest mistakes locals make is overwatering. Sandy soil drains quickly, but daily shallow watering weakens roots. Deep watering two or three times a week encourages stronger, more drought-resistant plants. Mulch also becomes essential this time of year. A thick layer of pine straw or



bark helps lock moisture into the soil while protecting roots from extreme afternoon temperatures.

Container gardens are especially popular around 30A patios and porches, but they require str-

ategic plant choices. Heat-tolerant combinations like bougainvillea, succulents, lantana, and trailing dichondra create dramatic summer color without constant main-

tenance. Larger pots also help retain moisture better than small decorative containers.

Of course, truly successful South Walton gardening starts with respecting the local environment. Native plants such as sea oats, dune sunflower, palmetto, yaupon holly and railroad vine evolved specifically for our coastal conditions. They tolerate salt spray, intense sun, and shifting sands while helping preserve the natural beauty of our dune ecosystem.

There's something grounding about tending a garden through a Florida summer. It teaches patience, adaptation, and restraint. Not every plant belongs here — but the ones that do reward us with abundance.

In many ways, gardening on the Gulf Coast mirrors life near the water itself: you stop resisting nature and learn to grow alongside.

For more local gardening tips, stop by Clay 30A at 4808 E County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. Phone (850) 231-2150 for more information, or visit their website at Clay30A.com.



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 Community

South Walton Fire District Recognizes Lifeguards and Firefighters for Successful Cardiac Arrest Response

By MACKENZIE McCLINTOCK,
SWFD PUBLIC INFORMATION
OFFICER

South Walton Fire District recently recognized four lifeguards and seven firefighters with Lifesaving Awards for their response to a cardiac arrest on the beach in Seaside on April 12, 2026.

The incident began when Full-Time Lifeguard Trent Mayr observed bystanders assisting an adult male to shore near his tower. Mayr entered the water and found the patient unresponsive and without a pulse. He upgraded the call to “CPR

in Progress” and began resuscitation efforts with assistance from bystanders.

Full-Time Lifeguard Zac Morgan, Seasonal Lifeguard Alice Fleeman, and Beach Safety Officer Levi Rice arrived and joined Mayr in providing care. The team managed the patient’s airway, performed chest compressions, applied an automated external defibrillator (AED), and delivered shocks. They then applied a LUCAS mechanical CPR device and moved the patient off the beach.

Approximately 10 minutes after the initial water rescue, the

patient was transferred to firefighters from South Walton Fire District Station 2 at the Coleman Pavilion.

Firefighters continued care and initiated additional Advanced Life Support interventions. Crews achieved return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC), meaning the patient regained a pulse. Eventually, the patient also began breathing on his own again.

In follow-up with the patient’s family and hospital staff, the District learned that he is expected to make a full recovery.



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“Successful outcomes like this are the result of consistent training and strong coordination between our beach safety and fire crews,” said SWFD Fire Chief Ryan Crawford. “Cardiac arrest requires immediate intervention, and the responders on this incident recognized the problem, started treatment without delay, and continued delivering high-quality care all the way through transport.”

The district recognized the responding personnel with lifesaving challenge coins on April 30 in a private ceremony alongside the patient’s family and Seaside staff members. Additional recognition came at the South Walton Fire District’s Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting on May 11, in an effort to build advocacy between crews, district leadership, and Seaside.

Ultimately, this positive outcome was possible due to the partnership between SWFD and Seaside that supports lifeguard operations. The private-public agreement began between SWFD and Seaside in 2025, following discussions between the two entities about the critical need for enhancing beach safety after the closure of the Van Ness Butler Regional Beach Access in 2024.

“The closure unfortunately created a three-mile gap between our lifeguard towers in Seagrove Beach and Grayton Beach,” said SWFD Fire Chief Ryan Crawford. “Seaside

stepped up to provide its residents and visitors with lifeguard protection, which allows us to more effectively prevent and respond to emergencies in an area with a historically high call volume. This call proves why that lifeguard tower matters for not just Seaside, but anyone within the vicinity of our care.”

Lifesaving Award Recipients include:

Lifeguards

Full-Time Lifeguard
Trent Mayr

Full-Time Lifeguard
Zac Morgan

Seasonal Lifeguard
Alice Fleeman

Beach Safety Officer
Levi Rice

Firefighters

Sergeant/EMT Rob Hall

Firefighter/Paramedic
Adam Baker

Firefighter/Paramedic
Griffin Usher

Firefighter/Paramedic
Tony Evans

Firefighter/Paramedic
John Dowd

Firefighter/EMT
David Shepherd

Firefighter/EMT Mike Mosley

South Walton Fire District congratulates all award recipients and extends its best wishes to the patient and his family.

Walton County Offers Day-Use Entry to Grayton Beach State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

Walton County is once again offering 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 ecotourism experiences available in South Walton. This year marks the 12th year of admission coverage for Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and the 10th for Grayton Beach State Park.

“Walton County’s state parks offer a unique way to experience our destination, bringing

together our beaches, trails and coastal dune lakes in one place,” said Matt Algarin, tourism director for Walton County. “This program creates additional opportunity for visitors and residents to explore and enjoy everything these parks have to offer.”

Enhanced access to the parks will be available this year via Walton County Tourism’s Beach Tram. This service provides a convenient and eco-friendly way to enjoy the parks without worrying about parking, helps reduce traffic congestion and protects the natural surroundings

along the way. More information about tram routes and schedules will be posted on WaltonTransportation.com when available. “We are incredibly thankful for our partnership with the state

parks and to Rep. Shane Abbott who worked diligently with us and at the state level to expand access,” Algarin said.

Free entry to the two parks is available during regular hours,

typically 8 a.m. to sunset. This year’s program starts on Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 22, and runs through Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 7.

ABIDE

continued from page 14

trajectories that are coming from a hundred different directions. We see them searching for a sense of belonging, the identity and purpose God has for them, even if they can’t explain it. We call these students to a higher standard and challenge them to take responsibility for their actions. We pray that it goes far beyond just inspiring them. We want to help build something inside them that lasts no matter what they face in life.”

So, what can families expect on a typical Thursday? “Our worship team starts with music, and that can be anywhere between 15 minutes and 45 minutes. We then break into peer-led small groups to discuss the study. Once we return, I will share a message, and then there will be time for fellowship before everyone leaves for the night. We typically go from 6 p.m. to around 8:30 p.m.”

In addition to Thursday gatherings, Abide With Us also leads a community outreach initiative called Project Groundwork. Teams of teens and adults visit neighborhoods throughout the area to ask residents about service and prayer needs within the community.

This August, the ministry will host “Rooted Retreat: Power and Witness” from Aug. 6-9, 2026. The retreat is designed to launch students into the 2026-27 school year grounded in Scripture and equipped to return to their schools with a bold, Spirit-filled faith.

Abide With Us meets Thursdays at 6 p.m. at Church at the Bay for worship, real conversations and community that feels like family. Organizers describe the atmosphere as laid-back, honest and centered on Jesus. The church is located at 24388 U.S. Highway 331 S. in Santa Rosa Beach.

The ministry also hosts Stand Firm Saturdays — separate Bible studies for guys and girls held the first Saturday of every month. Students walk through a chapter of the Bible together, discuss what it means to live for Jesus and build community through fellowship and shared activities.

If your family or business would like to get involved, visit www.abidewith.us. Jeremy can also be reached by emailing hello@abidewith.us or calling him directly at 615-809-6065.

Michelle Ruschman is a local artist, speaker, and writer. She can be reached at michelleruschman@gmail.com or michelleruschman.com.

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 Community

Champions at Last: South Walton High School Baseball Captures Florida 3A State Title

By LORI MILLER

History has been made for our Seahawks!

In dramatic walk-off fashion, the South Walton High School baseball team captured the Florida Class 3A State Championship this season — delivering one of the most exciting finishes in 2026 Florida high school baseball and bringing home the program’s first-ever state baseball title.

The championship victory came in unforgettable style as South Walton executed a perfectly timed suicide squeeze in the bottom of the seventh inning to defeat North Broward Prep 6-5 in the FHSAA state finals. The thrilling finish quickly drew statewide and national attention across sports media and baseball platforms.

For Walton County, the title represents far more than just a win on the scoreboard. It marks the culmination of years of dedication, coaching, player development and community support

surrounding one of the area’s rising athletic programs.

The Seahawks’ championship roster also reflects the increasingly high level of talent emerging from Northwest Florida. Among the standout athletes leading the historic run is Coleman Borthwick, a nationally recognized Auburn baseball commit regarded as one of the top two-way prospects in the country.

Borthwick, who plays both on the mound and in the field, has garnered attention for his powerful bat, commanding pitching presence and elite size and athleticism. Recruiting outlets have ranked him among the top players in the Class of 2026, with fastball velocities reportedly reaching the mid-90s.

South Walton also celebrated another Auburn connection this season as Parker Granse announced his commitment to play baseball for Auburn University, further highlighting the caliber of athletes coming



through the Seahawks program.

In fact, the Seahawks’ championship roster featured one of the deepest collections of college baseball talent in Northwest Florida in recent memory. In addition to Auburn commits Coleman Borthwick and Parker Granse, South Walton’s roster included Virginia commit Griffin Loy, Mississippi State com-

mit Denton Lord, Florida State commits Lyndan Flanary and Braxton Varnes, South Alabama commit Vaughn Howard, Georgia Southern commit Frank Wells and Georgia Tech commit Charlie Willcox — underscoring the remarkable level of talent that fueled the historic state-title run.

As celebrations continue

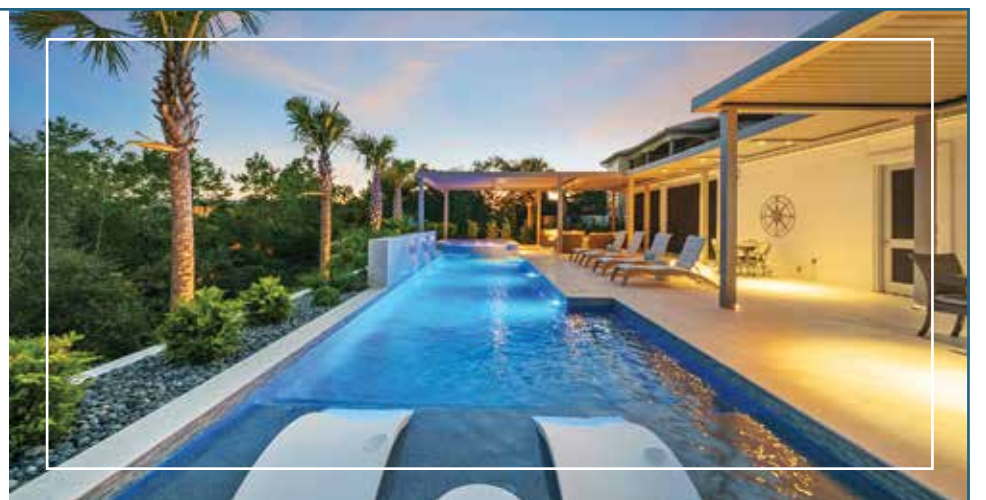
across South Walton, the championship is already being viewed as a defining moment not only for the school but also for local athletics as a whole.

For the players, coaches, parents, families and fans who believed this day could come, the Seahawks are now officially state champions.



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Someone They Trusted

June Is Elder Abuse Awareness Month – and the Most Dangerous Person in a Senior’s Life Is Often the Last One You’d Suspect



BY TED TOEDTE, CRIME PREVENTION SPECIALIST, WCSO

“Elder abuse doesn’t usually look like violence. It looks like someone helping — right up until the moment they aren’t.”

Every year in the U.S., one in 10 older adults experiences some form of elder abuse — and many endure multiple types simultaneously. That is not a fringe problem. That is your neighbor. Your parent. The widow at your church. The veteran down the street.

And the numbers only tell part of the story. Only one in 24 cases of elder abuse is ever reported to authorities. For every case that surfaces, dozens more stay buried — hidden by fear, shame, and the heartbreaking reality that 60 percent of elder abusers are family members, most often spouses or adult children.

June is National Elder Abuse Awareness Month, and every year on June 15th the world recognizes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Elder abuse is a crime. It is happening in our community right now. And we can stop it — but only if we are willing to see it.

The consequences of elder abuse are severe. Older adults who are abused are twice as likely to be hospitalized, four times as likely to enter a nursing home, and three times as likely to die prematurely. This is not a quality-of-life issue. It is a life-and-death one.

The World Health Organiza-

tion estimates that 320 million seniors will suffer from elder abuse by 2050. The time to act is not later. It is now.

What Elder Abuse Actually Looks Like

Most people picture elder abuse as something dramatic — a physical assault, a visible injury. The reality is far more layered.

Physical Abuse — Unexplained bruises, injuries inconsistent with the explanation given, sudden weight loss, poor hygiene, or untreated medical conditions.

Emotional Abuse — Threats, belittlement, cutting seniors off from loved ones. A senior who seems fearful or withdrawn around a specific person may be experiencing it right now.

Financial Exploitation — The fastest growing form. Unauthorized use of funds, forged signatures, sudden changes to wills or accounts. Seniors lose at least \$2.6 billion every year to financial abuse alone — and only one in 44 cases is ever reported.

Neglect — Whether intentional or not, failure to provide adequate food, medication, or hygiene care causes real and lasting harm.

Scams: The Other Threat At The Door

Seniors are the primary targets of organized scam operations — and the tactics are growing more sophisticated every year. The most common include government impersonation calls threatening arrest or benefit suspension, grandparent scams now using cloned voices powered by artificial intelligence, tech support fraud that gains remote access to financial accounts, and door-to-door contractor schemes that collect deposits and disappear.

The red flags are the same

across every scheme: urgency, secrecy, and unusual payment methods. If someone is pressuring you to act immediately, asking you to keep it secret, or demanding payment by gift card or wire transfer — stop. Hang up. Call someone you trust.

Warning Signs Every Neighbor Should Know

- Unexplained changes to financial documents, wills, or account beneficiaries
- Unpaid bills despite adequate income
- A caregiver who speaks for the senior or refuses to leave them alone with visitors
- Withdrawal from friends, church, or family activities they previously cherished
- Sudden new companions with unusual influence over financial decisions

Abusers depend on isolation. Your visits — even brief, casual ones — break that isolation and change everything.

The WCSO Safety Net Daily Call-In Program

The WCSO Safety Net Program provides daily check-in calls for seniors who live alone or lack regular daily contact with family or friends. If a call is missed and contact cannot be made, a welfare check is initiated promptly.

To further enhance this service, members of the Sheriff’s Posse conduct personal home

visits to participating seniors — bringing a human presence and a friendly face to those who may otherwise go days without one. This combination of daily phone contact and in-person visits creates a powerful safety net that keeps our most vulnerable residents connected, checked on, and cared for.

This program exists because isolation is one of the greatest threats a senior faces — not just from abuse or scams, but from medical emergencies, falls, and simply going through a day without hearing a friendly voice. Enrollment is free.

The WCSO Crime Prevention Unit is available to present to faith communities, senior centers, civic organizations, assisted living facilities, neighborhood associations, and any group that wants to protect the seniors in their community. Presentations are free, conversational, and tailored to your audience — covering elder abuse awareness, scam prevention, and available local resources. To schedule, call (850) 892-8111 or email crimeprevention@waltonso.org.

June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Make a decision this month — pick one senior in your life and show up for them. Visit. Call. Pay attention. It costs nothing. And it could mean everything.

If something feels wrong, say

something. Every call matters. Every visit matters. Every one of us matters.

Ted Toedte is a certified Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) practitioner and Crime Prevention Specialist with the Walton County Sheriff’s Office Crime Prevention Unit. With over 30 years of law enforcement experience spanning both Florida and California, he brings a broad, field-tested perspective to crime prevention work. He can be reached at (850) 892-8111 or crimeprevention@waltonso.org

WCSO Safety Net Program – Free Enrollment

Daily check-in calls for seniors living alone

Missed calls trigger an immediate welfare check

To enroll: (850) 892-8111 crimeprevention@waltonso.org

WCSO Crime Prevention Unit
Walton County Sheriff’s Office

(850) 892-8111
crimeprevention@waltonso.org

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The Modern Men's Health Conversation

BY DR. KAREN DEVORE

June is Men's Health Month, and it's time to broaden the conversation around what men's health actually means.

For years, it was almost expected that men would only seek care when something became impossible to ignore such as when symptoms disrupted daily

life or concern from others became unavoidable. That mindset is starting to shift.

More men are thinking about longevity, prevention, recovery, and performance. They're paying attention to sleep, nutrition, strength, and how their bodies function before a crisis happens. And that shift matters.

Because many of the issues men experience daily are common, closely tied to overall health, and often more manageable when addressed early.

I hear consistent themes from men across all stages of life and from the people who care about them.

"Why don't I feel like myself



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anymore?"

This concern rarely comes out directly. More often, it shows up as fatigue, low motivation, irritability, poor recovery, or unexplained weight gain.

While aging plays a role, what I often see is the cumulative effect of chronic stress, poor sleep, under-recovery, inconsistent nutrition, declining muscle mass, and sedentary work.

Modern life doesn't support physiology well. Many men are overstimulated, under-recovered, and running at a high level while quietly depleted. Over time, that catches up but the body is often highly responsive with consistent support.

"Why am I gaining weight around my stomach even though I'm trying?"

Abdominal weight gain isn't just cosmetic; it's often a metabolic signal.

As muscle declines and stress stays elevated, the body becomes more efficient at storing fat, especially around the midsection. Blood sugar becomes less stable, energy drops, recovery worsens, and cravings increase.

Many men feel like they're trying, but habits are often more inconsistent than they realize such as skipping meals, under-eating protein, relying on convenience foods, eating late, or cycling between restriction and overeating.

What works better is returning to fundamentals including prioritizing protein, maintaining muscle, walking regularly, strength training, improving sleep, eating consistently, and supporting recovery.

The goal isn't perfection; it's consistency and long-term metabolic resilience.

"Why am I exhausted but still sleeping poorly?"

Sleep disruption has become so normalized that many underestimate its impact.

Sleep affects metabolism, recovery, mood, cognition, inflammation, and hormone regulation. Yet many men operate in a chronically sleep-deprived state relying on caffeine, late-night stimulation, alcohol, and inconsistent schedules while expecting optimal performance.

Sometimes the issue is sleep apnea. Sometimes it's chronic stress or years of running in "go mode" without real recovery. Improving sleep often changes far more than expected.

"Why do I feel more anxious, irritable, or mentally checked out?"

These symptoms are often rooted in physiology as much as psychology.

Brain fog, low motivation, irritability, and anxiety frequently reflect an overloaded system including poor sleep, unstable blood sugar, chronic stress, and inflammation layered onto demanding lives.

Many men are balancing work, family, and responsibility while running on empty. This is where preventive care matters, not because every symptom is serious, but because early understanding can prevent years of unnecessary struggle.

"Why is this starting to matter more now?"

At some point, often in the late 30s, 40s, or 50s, health stops feeling theoretical. Energy changes become more noticeable, recovery slows, and small shifts become harder to ignore.

At the same time, many begin noticing changes in others like aging parents, friends facing health issues, or loved ones deal-

TORTOISE

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Summer on the Green at ECTC

By CAMERON HUGHES

Summer is teeing up for an unforgettable day on the course as Emerald Coast Theatre Company hosts its first-ever Charity Golf Tournament on Monday, June 29 at Noon at the exclusive Burnt Pine Golf Club in Sandestin. Benefitting ECTC Youth Education Programs, this exciting inaugural event will bring together community leaders, local businesses, golf lovers, and supporters of the arts for an afternoon packed with great food, drinks, prizes, live entertainment and giving back to the next generation of performers.

Known as the crown jewel of Florida golf, Burnt Pine Golf Club offers a breathtaking course experience overlooking the Choctawhatchee Bay, featuring rolling fairways, stunning natural scenery, and one of the most sought-after private golf destinations in the region. Players will enjoy an elevated tournament experience from start to finish, including lunch provided by Firehouse Subs before play begins and post-tournament food included following the event.

Throughout the day, golfers can also enjoy complimentary beverages provided by Tito's Handmade Vodka, Birdie Cocktails, and Odd Pelican Beer Company while networking, competing, and supporting arts education along the Emerald Coast. Every player will receive


one free mulligan, and excitement will build across the course with contests, prizes, and more throughout the tournament.

One of the biggest highlights of the day will be the Hole-In-One Challenge, where players will have the opportunity to win a Rolex watch — provided by McCaskill & Company.

Proceeds from the tournament directly support Emerald Coast Theatre Company's Youth Education Programs, helping provide camps, classes, top teaching talent, scholarships, and training opportunities that inspire creativity, confidence, and community in young performers that carries far beyond the stage.

ECTC would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the generous outpour from our sponsors and supporters who are making this inaugural event possible: Alice and Jerry Zich, Jim and Tammy Pierce, Chancey Design Architecture, Seaside Sport, McGill Escrow & Title, Shades Bar & Grill, The Agency, Cafe Thirty-A, Jennifer Crawford with Own at the Beach Keller Williams, and Dave and Jo Menary.


Sponsorship opportunities and team registrations are still available, and community support is already helping make this inaugural tournament one of the standout celebrations of the summer.



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Community

Sea Turtle Nesting Season Returns!

BY GRACE ANN RUSSELL

The month of May marked the return of many long-awaited events for South Walton; the end of school year, gentler breezes and a warmer gulf. Amidst the excitement of all-things-summer was the start of sea turtle nesting season. The season runs from May 1 through October 31 along Florida's Gulf Coast, and local volunteers are already preparing for another season of education, awareness, and conservation

For the volunteers at Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles (FOSWST), nesting season is much more than a date on the calendar. It is months of community outreach, school education programs, beach ambassador efforts, and reminders to both locals and visitors that even the smallest actions can make a difference for these threatened marine animals.

Founded in 2015, FOSWST is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization dedicated to sea turtle conservation through awareness and education. While South Walton Turtle Watch monitors and protects nests, FOSWST focuses on helping the pub-

lic understand how human behavior impacts nesting turtles and hatchlings.

One of the organization's most recognizable messages is the phrase "Clean. Dark. Flat." Beachgoers are encouraged to remove trash and beach equipment before leaving for the night, keep beachfront lighting low and turtle-friendly, and flatten holes or sandcastles that could become obstacles for nesting turtles or hatchlings trying to reach the water.

These efforts matter. Female loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles return to Florida beaches each year to lay their eggs, often depositing more than 100 eggs in a single nest. Yet survival remains difficult. Experts estimate that only about one in 1,000 hatchlings survives to adulthood.

Artificial lighting remains



one of the greatest threats during nesting season. Hatchlings instinctively move toward the brightest horizon — historically the reflection of moonlight on the Gulf. Today, bright condo

lights, flash photography, and beachfront activity can disorient them, sending them inland instead of toward the water.

That is why local education efforts have become so important in South Walton. Through beach ambassador programs, school visits, public events, and informational materials distributed throughout the community, FOSWST continues to build awareness one conversation at a time.

Protecting sea turtles starts with community awareness, and every small act of stewardship helps give the next generation of hatchlings a fighting chance.

Theo the Turtle, a plush stuffed animal created to inspire conservation awareness, donates a portion of every purchase to Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles. Theo's mission is to help sustain the sea turtle population along the Gulf Coast by encouraging children to connect with marine life in a tangible way.

You can find Theo in various shops along highway 30A, as well as surrounding area's. Theo's mission is a small example of how education, heightened awareness, and community engagement each play a vital role in achieving one common goal- protecting our precious marine life right here in the heart of Walton County.



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Leadership Walton Class Leaves Lasting Impact at Westonwood Ranch

There's a new addition at Westonwood Ranch — and it came with a generous dose of teamwork, compassion and community spirit.

The Walton Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Walton Class of 2025-26 recently completed its annual class service project in support of Westonwood Ranch, building new goat shelters and climbing perches while also raising \$4,125 to help further the nonprofit's mission.

Located in Freeport, Westonwood Ranch serves teens and young adults with autism and related developmental differences through a unique farm-based learning environment. The nonprofit offers a full-time day program, equine therapy, after-school activities and summer camps designed to help participants build confidence, independence and important life skills.

For members of Leadership Walton, the project became more than just a class assignment. It was an opportunity to step into hands-on service while learning firsthand about the impact Westonwood Ranch is making in the lives of local families. "As a class, we are so thankful for the opportunity to make a meaningful community impact while learning more about the incredible work being done at Westonwood Ranch," said Courtney Blackerby, Leadership Walton class president. "Their mission, heart and dedication to serving others is truly inspiring, and it has been an honor to support such an amaz-



ing nonprofit that is making a lasting difference in our community."

The class spent time constructing shelters and play structures for the ranch's goats — an important part of the ranch environment that helps create engaging, interactive experiences for participants. In addition to the physical improvements, the class presented Westonwood Ranch with a donation check totaling \$4,125.

Each year, Leadership Walton participants select a local nonprofit to support through a collaborative class project. Past projects have included transforming office spaces for A Bed 4 Me and building a study room for the DeFuniak Springs Public Library.

Since 2000, Leadership Walton has helped develop emerging and established leaders across Northwest Florida,



connecting professionals with opportunities to grow their leadership skills while serving our community.

For the Class of 2025-26, the project at Westonwood Ranch reflected exactly what the program hopes to inspire — leadership rooted in service, teamwork and lasting local impact.

For more information, visit www.waltonareachamber.com/leadership-walton.

TORTOISE

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ing with diagnoses that once felt distant.

What was once abstract becomes personal. For many men, this isn't about fear. It's about staying capable, present, and well for the people who depend on them.

"How do I know if something is actually wrong?"

The body often signals change long before disease becomes obvious through shifts in energy, sleep, weight, recovery, and lab

markers.

That doesn't mean every symptom is dangerous. But it also doesn't mean it should be ignored. Paying attention to your health is a practical way to protect long-term quality of life.

The Bigger Picture

Men's health isn't about quick fixes or single solutions. It's about staying strong, protecting metabolic and cardiovascular health, maintaining clarity, preserving muscle and mobility, improving resilience, and building sustainable habits.

It requires a more compre-

hensive approach looking at how systems interact rather than treating issues in isolation.

Health optimization isn't just for athletes or people in crisis. It's for everyday men who want to feel well, function well, and stay ahead of preventable decline.

You don't need perfection.

You don't need extremes.

And you don't need to wait until something breaks.

It starts with awareness, followed by consistent action and the right support to understand what your body is telling you.

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HAPPENINGS AROUND THE BEACH JUNE 2026

Farmers Markets

Grand Blvd. Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Grayton Locals Market Thursdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Hibiscus Guest House
 Seaside Amphitheater Saturdays and Tuesdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Peddlers Pavilion Sundays

9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Rosemary Beach at North Barrett Square Sundays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Greenway Station 30A Wednesdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 The Big Chill 30A Thursdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Village of Baytowne Wharf Family Fun

Sallywag Sundays: Watch as featured pirate Captain Davy takes you on an adventure with two magic shows on stage at 7 and 8 p.m. Movie Mondays: A free to attend event, grab a lawn chair or blanket and cozy up on

the Events Plaza Lawn for a featured film on the big screen at 8 p.m. Boomin' Tuesdays: Baytowne lights up the night with fireworks over the lagoon at 9:15 p.m. Before the show, enjoy a dance party starting at 7:15 p.m. with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza. Thursdaze Lights Show: Experience a unique aerial display that blends technology and coastal charm at Thursdays 9 p.m.



Wild Sea Turtle Wednesdays at The Big Chill 30A

It's all about turtles every Wednesday from 9-11 a.m. at The Big Chill 30A! Join the South Walton Turtle Watch to learn about wild sea turtles and how to help protect them. Talks will begin promptly at 9 & 10 and last about 10 minutes. Children attending will receive a complimentary string backpack filled with goodies while supplies last! You can paint a wooden sea turtle to take home or get a new South Walton Turtle Watch bracelet from the merchandise table supporting local conservation efforts.

ECTC Children's Theater at Seaside Mondays

Step into a world of magic, mischief, and moonlit romance as Emerald Coast Theatre Company presents A Midsummer Night's Dream in a family-friendly adaptation at the SEASIDE Amphitheater. Beginning at 6 p.m. Mondays through August 3, bring a blanket and enjoy dinner from any of Seaside's delicious eateries. This joyful retelling of Shakespeare's beloved comedy brings love, laughter, and live theatre to Central Square. It's an enchanting experience for audiences of all ages.

Huck & Lilly @ Seaside Amphitheatre Tuesdays and Thursdays

Huck & Lilly will perform LIVE in the Seaside Amphitheater Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-5:45 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!

BIG BLVD Bash at Grand Boulevard Tuesdays

The BIG BLVD Bash, a summer dance party and more will take over Grand Park at Grand Boulevard on Tuesdays through June 30th, from 6-8 p.m. Learn a few new dance moves, enjoy great music, and dance the night away on the BLVD! In partnership with Emerald Coast Theatre Company, join Dance Party Host and Instructor Teresa Lombardi alongside DJ Max in Grand Park for nights filled with music, dancing, and summer fun. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, grab dinner or drinks from your favorite Town Center spots, and settle in for a new weekly tradition designed for easy nights and good company.

Guided Plant Tour at Topsail State Park June 15

Join Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and Master Gardener Bill Kuenstler on the third Monday of each month from 9-11 a.m. for a Guided Plant Stroll. The stroll begins at Tram Stop #2. This program is free with regular park admission.

Peach Festival at Hammock Bay June 20-21

Join The Windmills at Hammock Bay in Freeport for the Peach Festival. Featuring live music, numerous vendors, food trucks, a petting zoo, pony rides and more, this family-friendly event is the perfect way to spend a beautiful summer day.

Fish Out of Water Father's Day & Live Music June 21

Treat dad to dinner this Father's Day at Fish Out of Water (FOOW), the signature on-site restaurant of WaterColor Inn in WaterColor. Served from 4-10 p.m., enjoy prime rib, half-price draft beer, and quality family time. Live music from Brett Stafford Smith from 6-9 p.m.

Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic June 17-21

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HAPPENINGS AROUND THE BEACH JUNE 2026



Celebrate America's 250th!

Join in these celebrations and fireworks shows:

Rosemary Beach Star-Spangled Spectacular July 2

A bike parade, block party, live music, fireworks and more! Celebrations begin at 7:30 a.m., with fireworks at 9 p.m.

America Salutes - A Musical Celebration of 250 Years at Grand Boulevard July 2

Presented by Emerald Coast Theater Company from 6-8 p.m.

Star-Spangled Food Truck Festival at Destin Commons July 3

Celebrate with a diverse selection of international cuisine, live music, face painting, a photo booth, fireworks and a lively, family-friendly atmosphere 5-9 p.m., with fireworks at 9 p.m.

Alys Beach Donut Eating Contest & Celebration July 4

Celebrate with one of Alys Beach's sweetest traditions: the Donut Eating Contest sponsored by Charlie's Delights beginning at 9 a.m. Concerts start at 7 p.m., with fireworks at 9 p.m.

Seaside Independence Day Celebration July 4

Seaside Independence Day Celebration July 4 The day kicks off at 9 a.m. with the annual block party featuring the Emerald Coast Theatre Company performing Ragged Old Flag, the National Anthem, and a full patriotic performance. 10 a.m. Huck & Lilly; 11 a.m. Children's Patriotic Bike Parade; 11:30 a.m. Wlid Bill's Beach Dogs Hot Dog Eating Contest; 2-4 p.m. LIVE MUSIC in Krier Plaza; 7 p.m. Sinfonia Gulf Coast Patriotic Pops Concert; 8:30 p.m. Fireworks.

Red, White & Baytowne July 4

Let freedom ring with a night full of live music, family fun, and all-American celebration beginning at 6 p.m. and cap off the night with fireworks at 9:15 p.m.!

Alys Beach Concert & Fireworks July 4

The Five Star Funk Lounge concert begins at 7 p.m. with fireworks to follow at 9 p.m.

ing experience celebrating the culture of Peru. Beginning at 5 p.m., savor a thoughtfully curated three-course meal as Chef Andrea Campoblanco showcases the rich flavors of her homeland. Seating is limited for this exclusive event. Call (850) 629-0376 to reserve your place by June 20.

CAA Come Play with Clay June 27

Unleash your inner artist at the Come Play with Clay workshop, a unique experience hosted by the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the CAA's Bayou Arts Center. June Project of the Month- Botanical Leaf Imprinted Platter. In this "open studio" style class, each participant will receive 2 lbs. of clay and the freedom to choose your own adventure—bring your own project ideas to life or create the featured project of the month with guidance from your instructor. Learn More and Register: <https://www.culturalartsalliance.com/event-details/come-play-with-clay-with-sarah-bumanglag-6>.

Rags to Riches Regatta June 27

The 29th edition of the annual Rags To Riches Regatta returns to Grayton Beach. Born on the beaches of Grayton Beach in 1981, the Rags to Riches Regatta is more than a race—it's a living piece of South Walton history. The small catamaran race is a tradition among SoWal sailors, families, friends, and Grayton Beach lovers. Come out to

watch the regatta take off from the shores of Grayton Beach as they race to Seagrove Beach and back to Grayton. Crooked Island Captain's Party June 26 at Chirringo Grayton 5-7:30 p.m. RACE DAY: Boats Transported onto the Beach by Official Permitted Vehicles 8-10 a.m. 29th Rags to Riches Regatta Race begins at 11 a.m.

Paper Bear Screenings at Seaside July 12 & 24

The Paper Bear invites the community on a heartfelt journey into the forests and coastal wilds of Northwest Florida at 7:30 p.m. Blending live-action storytelling with hand-drawn animation, the film follows a father



and son as they venture into the woods to document real Florida black bears, sharing campfire stories, local history, and the magic of the natural world along the way. Visit thepaperbear.org.

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



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resort destination, the 24th annual Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic at Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort sets the new precedent for world-class sportfishing tournaments.

This annual event offers something for everyone. Most importantly, for the angling teams, there's the deep blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico, red-hot billfish action, and cool green cash. While on-shore, both the teams and their families can enjoy the

wide variety of recreational activities offered at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort and The Village of Baytowne Wharf. The spectacular night time weigh-ins are held at the Baytowne Marina at Sandestin and are open to the public.

A Taste of Peru at Watersound Fountains June 25

Watersound Fountains, an exclusive resort-style 62+ Independent Living community, invites you to an exclusive tast-

 Community

People Of South Walton

Sowing Seeds on the Emerald Coast: Chris Howse Brings a Mission to South Walton

BY HEATHER BENNETT EYE

Some people find their way to South Walton by chance. For Chris Howse, it was love, though, he'd be the first to tell you it took a little faith to get here.

His wife, Jessica, put down roots in South Walton four years ago, building a career as a property manager, quickly becoming part of the fabric of the local community. Chris, meanwhile, was living in North Carolina. The two met through a dating app run by their church. Both are devout members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and marrying within their

faith was important to them. Jessica asked him to come visit her, and a cross-country courtship later, he made the move south. He's now called South Walton home for the last year and a half. The two married in September, and are now expecting their first child, a baby boy.

Working remotely has allowed Chris the freedom to work from anywhere, so he found the transition to South Walton easy. In his fundraising role, he works with high-net-worth donors, over the phone or by Zoom, flying out as needed. He also found he enjoys the likeminded people in our community. "It's super pro-

liberty, pro-America here," said Chris. "I'm not used to that, and so it was just all too nice."

Earning a degree in Political Science from Brigham Young University, Chris has spent his career in civic engagement. For several years he worked as a field representative for Turning Point USA, traveling to college campuses across the country to promote free markets, constitutional principles, and active citizenship. In that role, he organized large events featuring nationally recognized voices like Charlie Kirk. Chris also organized a major pro-life event in Michigan in the lead-up to a statewide abortion



referendum.

Today, Chris channels that same energy into children's education and development. He fundraises for the Libertas Network, which oversees the widely known Tuttle Twins educational series. The books are used by homeschooling families and found in hundreds of schools and libraries across the country, introducing children to concepts like entrepreneurship, financial literacy, inflation, personal responsibility, civics, and American history.

"The Tuttle Twins gives us a chance to take back control of the education system and have millions of new children have their minds, which are still malleable as clay, believing in free markets, America and liberty, at a much younger age," stated Chris. "I'm passionate about helping equip the next generation."

Chris also fundraises for the Children's Entrepreneur Market program, an initiative that gives kids the chance to launch real small businesses in community event settings. "We partner

with community events like fairs and carnivals, downtown annual events that already have all of the traffic, and that way the kids get hundreds, if not thousands, of organic customers, and that's where all of the learning takes place," said Chris. "They're learning supply and demand, marketing, self-confidence, and work ethic all at once."

For Chris and Jessica, South Walton is now considered home, and as they prepare for the arrival of their son, and continue building their lives along the Emerald Coast, they're investing in the community around them. Chris is looking to get involved in local politics, and public speaking engagements with the local schools to give presentations on the Tuttle Twins and civics.

You can connect with Chris on LinkedIn at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chris-howse27/>. If you'd like to know more about Libertas, the Tuttle Twins, and the Kid's Market, please visit their website at: <https://libertas.org>.



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BY CHRISTIAN REGALADO

Navigating Your Medicare Milestone: A Helpful Guide to Turning 65

Turning 65 is a beautiful milestone, especially when you get to celebrate it right here along our stunning Emerald Coast. But as that big day approaches, your mailbox starts overflowing with glossy brochures, and your phone won't stop ringing with high-pressure offers. It can get overwhelming and difficult to know who to trust.

As an independent insurance broker based right here in Santa Rosa Beach, my goal is simply to cut through all that noise. Let's break down how Medicare actually works so you can step into this next chapter with complete confidence.

Before we look at specific plans, we need to talk about the foundation of your coverage: Original Medicare, which is managed by the federal government. It is divided into two main pieces.

First is Part A, your hospital insurance. For most folks who have worked and paid Medicare taxes for at least ten years, Part A won't cost you a dime in monthly premiums. It's there to help cover inpatient hospital stays, skilled nursing facilities, hospice, and some home health care. The second piece is Part B, your medi-

cal insurance. Part B does carry a monthly premium that can shift a bit each year and amounts vary based on income. For most people it is currently \$202.90. This is what handles your outpatient care including things like regular doctor visits, preventive checkups, lab work, and medical equipment.

Now, while Original Medicare covers a whole lot of ground, it isn't a complete safety net. It carries deductibles, and more importantly, it only covers 80 percent of your Part B medical expenses. There is no cap on that remaining 20 percent. If life throws you a serious health curveball, that 20 percent can add up to a mountain of expenses before you know it. Plus, standard government Medicare doesn't include routine dental, vision, or prescription drug coverage.

To protect your savings, you generally have to choose between two very different paths: a Medicare Supplement or a Medicare Advantage plan.

The first path is a Medicare Supplement, often called Medigap. These plans are offered by private companies to step in and pay that remaining 20 percent of your outpatient costs. The biggest selling point here is total freedom. You can see any doctor, specialist, or hospital in the country including top-tier facilities right here in Florida, as long as they accept Medicare. There are

no network restrictions and no jumping through hoops for prior authorizations. The trade-off? These plans have higher monthly premiums, and you will need to buy a separate Part D plan for your prescriptions.

The second path is Medicare Advantage, or Part C. Think of this as an "all-in-one" alternative. Private insurers contract with the government to manage your benefits, often bundling your medical, hospital, and prescription drug coverage together. Folks love these because they frequently feature very low, or even zero-dollar monthly premiums,

alongside nice perks like routine dental, vision, hearing, and even gym memberships. However, you must stick to a specific network of doctors. Down here in NW Florida, these networks vary wildly. You might also need referrals or pre-approvals to see a specialist.

When it comes to Medicare, there is no such thing as one-size-fits-all. That is why working with a local independent broker matters. Unlike a captive agent who works for one specific insurance company, I work directly for you. My job isn't to push you toward one specific path; instead,

I am here to help you navigate both options and find the absolute best, most competitive plan whether you decide on Medicare Advantage or a Medicare Supplement.

I partner with multiple top-rated carriers so we can objectively compare options across our entire local market. We will sit down together, cross-reference your exact prescriptions, make sure your trusted local doctors are in-network, and find a plan that fits your budget. As a local, I

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Make Men's Health A Priority This Summer

By CLAUDIA EMAMI, MD, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, ASCENSION SACRED HEART EMERALD COAST

June is Men's Health Month, a nationally recognized observance focused on awareness, prevention and education regarding the health of men and boys. It's easy to get caught up in summer activities, but this is the perfect time to take charge of your health.

Statistics show that men often lag behind women in preventive healthcare. In fact, women are 33% more likely to visit a doctor than men. This gap often leads to delayed screenings and less favorable health outcomes. At Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, we want to remind men to schedule a yearly checkup.

Your first line of defense: Primary care

One of the best ways to stay healthy is through regular visits with a primary care doctor. During these visits, your doctor will review your health and family history to recommend the right screenings and services for you.



Beyond a general physical, your doctor can order essential bloodwork to check:

- Heart health: Blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which are early indicators of heart problems.
- Diabetes risk: Blood sugar levels to identify pre-diabetes or manage existing conditions.
- Testicular health: Physical exams to check for lumps or nodules.

Understanding cancer risks and screenings

Early detection leads to better

outcomes. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men, and we encourage all men to discuss their risk factors with their doctor. While many believe only older men are at risk, 35% of diagnoses occur in men younger than 65.

Screening usually involves a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test. For those at average risk, clinicians may offer a baseline PSA test between ages 45 and 50. However, Men of Black ancestry or those with a strong family history, should discuss

starting screenings as early as age 40.

Lung cancer also remains a significant concern. At Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, we offer low-dose CT lung screenings for eligible adults between the ages 50 to 80 who are current smokers, or who have quit within the last 15 years and have a 20 pack-year history. This quick, painless imaging test takes only minutes and can find nodules when they are most treatable.

Strengthening your heart
Heart disease remains the

leading cause of death for men in the United States. Many men don't realize they have a condition until they experience symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath or extreme fatigue.

At Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, we offer advanced heart imaging, including heart calcium scoring. This quick, non-invasive CT scan detects plaque build-up in the arteries even in early stages, allowing you to make informed decisions about your health.

Take the next step

Prioritizing your health is a sign of strength. This month, we encourage you to embrace a diet of whole foods and aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

To find a doctor near you visit ascension.org/doctors.



Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the Communities of 32459, 32461 and 32413
Circulation: 12,500 households
P.O. Box 1424
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

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As you approach 65, be confident knowing that we got this. Reach out today, and let's figure out the right path together. I look forward to your call. Reach out anytime!

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Love Connection More Than Being Right



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Do you find yourself grumbling about people doing things the wrong way? If they would just do or see things the right way, which just happens to be your way, the world would be a much better place? If slow drivers would drive in the right lane, if your friend would understand your intentions and know you weren't trying to hurt them, if your family would load the dishwasher correctly, if people would vote the right way, if others would move through the world living the same way as you, the right way, the world would be right.

While it is important to clarify and live by your beliefs, not everyone is going to share your perspective, practices, faith, personality, and preferences. In fact, even your closest people might prioritize and live differently than you. You can choose to use energy judging, being frustrated, and trying to control or shame behavior of others. Or, you can accept there are many ways to be a person and the only person you can control is yourself.

How people live is based on

personality, personal strengths, upbringing, faith background, education, geographic location, social culture, mentoring relationships, personal mistakes and personal experiences. Once layered together, you find many expressions of being human, some of which create discomfort for you. Discomfort is by nature challenging and can motivate you to believe the solution is to change others to be more like you and to admit you are right. In reality, interacting with people who are different from you is actually one of the life's greatest growth tools.

When you encounter differences, you can judge, distance, grumble, or, you can learn to seek curiosity, understanding, kind communication, and acknowledging humanity in disagreement. Respecting differences does not mean abandoning your values. Instead, it means acknowledging that both you and the other person can both be lovable human beings while expressing values differently. It also means choosing between prioritizing being right or being meaningfully connected to others. I often tell couples in my office, "You can keep prioritizing being right and eventually split up, or you can loosen your grip on being right and prioritize curiosity about the other person's experience."

So, how do you loosen your grip on being seen as right and pursue understanding and connection while still living by your values?

7 Ways to Love Connection More Than You Love Being Right

1. Explore and clarify your own values. Think about how your values have been shaped, what your values are, and what makes your values important to you. Reflect on how it feels to you when others respect your values vs. when others minimize, shame, or disrespect your values.

2. Notice differences. Notice when you find yourself frustrated, irritated, or judging someone else who is living differently from you. Notice any instincts to belittle others or assume negative things about the personhood of others doing things differently.

3. Remember what you can control and what you can't. You have been put in charge of managing your thoughts, feelings, behavior, choices, and your boundaries. You have not been given any control over others thoughts, feelings, behavior, choices, or boundaries. Try moving toward a deep acceptance of placing your energy where it belongs and letting go of trying to control others.

4. Reach for curiosity over judgement. Try asking genuine, curious questions seeking to understand how others have arrived at different conclusions about how they live. Seek to humbly

grow and learn from these conversations rather than assuming you have everything figured out. Wisdom is found in being both a learner and a teacher.

5. Pursue mutual respect. Hold to your own values which will sometimes mean you disagree. Try speaking openly and kindly about the difference. Also, remember others embrace their values with as much conviction as you do. Respect their humanity as much as you would like them to respect yours in disagreement.

6. Evaluate your intentions. Sort when it's time to speak up about what you believe is right from care, advocacy and love vs. the urge to speak from a place of insecurity, self-righteousness, or needing to be seen as right.

teousness, or needing to be seen as right.

7. Lean into connection. Remember people need connection with God and others. Remember that God loves each person and does not fear values conflicts. Treat others with love and patience God extends to you as you imperfectly navigate life.

Be honest and kind with yourself and others as you address patterns around being right and being connected. Learning to prioritize connection over being right can be both relationship and life changing. Connect with us along your journey for counseling and coaching at journeybravely.com.



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DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

You're at the gym, pushing for that final set, but the explosive power just isn't there. Back at the office, you're staring at the same report for the tenth time, your focus drifting as a familiar cloud of irritability settles in. By 2:13 a.m., you're staring at the ceiling, heart racing, replaying the day's endless list while a thin layer of sweat cools on your skin.

It's easy to shrug this off as "just getting older," but this slow erosion of muscle, mood, and mental sharpness is often a biological decline, not an inevitable part of aging. While national health trends often highlight mental health and sleep during specific awareness months, maintaining your peak performance is a year-round commitment to your biology.

Precision Performance, Not a Rollercoaster

At The Hormone Restoration Center, we use bioidentical pellets to optimize hormone levels so your body stops sabotaging your efforts. Unlike messy gels that can rub off on your family or weekly injections that cause emotional "spikes and crashes," pellets provide a steady, consistent

release that mimics your body's natural rhythm.

How Pellet Therapy Restores Your Foundation:

- Mental Focus & Resiliency:

Hormonal imbalance is frequently the hidden driver behind "brain fog" and a loss of your competitive edge. Pellets support GABA—the calming brain chemical—and keep serotonin steady, sharpening your focus and eliminating the irritability that can strain your professional and personal life.

- Tactical Recovery & Sleep: When testosterone is low, sleep becomes "fragile".

Pellets help your body optimize melatonin and lower nighttime cortisol so you aren't wide awake at 3 a.m. They stabilize your internal thermostat, meaning you wake up recharged rather than restless.

- Muscle Retention & Physical Power: Your physical foundation depends on testosterone as the primary driver of protein synthesis. Optimized levels pre-

vent your body from breaking down muscle for energy, helping you regain the strength, lean muscle mass, and recovery speed you need to perform at your best.

baseline evaluation, including blood testing of sex hormones and key metabolic markers. The insertion procedure is brief, performed right here in the office, and involves zero downtime.

Most men feel the "lifting of the veil" within the first two weeks, with reliable peak performance by week six. We don't "set it and forget it"—we check labs after insertion to ensure your levels are dialed in perfectly for your specific goals.

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What Really Works in Therapy



BY MICHAEL MCMANUS, LCSW, PSYCHOTHERAPIST, SANTA ROSA BEACH, FLORIDA

People come into my office carrying things they've never said out loud. Old grief. Quiet shame. The slow ache of a marriage that feels more like roommates. Patterns they can't explain and can't seem to stop, no matter how hard they try.

After decades in this work, one thing has become clear to me: therapy works, though probably not for the reasons you think.

It's Not the Technique. It's the Relationship.

The research on this is striking. After thousands of studies comparing different types of therapy, the data keeps pointing to the same thing: the relationship between therapist and cli-

ent matters more than anything else. Not the method. Not the approach. The connection.

Researcher Bruce Wampold devoted years to studying what actually drives change in therapy. What he found surprised a lot of people in the field. Specific techniques account for a relatively small piece of what works. What accounts for far more? Empathy. Trust. The simple feeling that someone is genuinely in your corner, not evaluating you, not rushing you, not quietly wishing you'd hurry up and get better.

This isn't a knock on techniques. The therapists who have devoted years to mastering EMDR, Gottman Method, or any number of evidence-based approaches are doing something real and valuable. A good technique in the hands of a skilled, connected therapist is a genuinely powerful thing. The relationship is just the ground it has to grow in.

Carl Rogers, one of the most respected therapists of the last century, saw this clearly long before the studies caught up. He believed that when people feel truly heard, without judgment and without an agenda, something in them begins to

soften and shift. Not because they were fixed. Because for once, they didn't have to hide. That idea has held up remarkably well over time.

You Have to Feel It, Not Just Understand It

Here's something I've seen over and over sitting with people in real pain: understanding something doesn't automatically change it. You can know exactly why you keep doing something, trace it all the way back, name it, talk about it until you're blue in the face, and still keep doing it.

Real change happens when you feel something different, not just when you think something different.

Researcher Bessel van der Kolk spent his career demonstrating that pain and trauma don't just live in the mind. They live in the body. In the tension held in the shoulders. In the breath that stops when things get hard. In the way people shut down or snap without quite knowing why. Before real healing can happen, a person has to feel safe, not just be told they're safe, but actually feel it somewhere deeper than thought.

For a lot of people, that's not

a small thing. That's everything.

The Most Healing Thing Is Being Witnessed

The most powerful moment in therapy is rarely a dramatic breakthrough. It's usually quieter than that. It's when someone finally says the thing they've never told another living soul, and the person sitting across from them doesn't flinch. Doesn't rush to fix it. Doesn't shift uncomfortably in their seat. Just stays.

That kind of staying changes people. When someone holds space for your full truth, not the cleaned-up version, not the one crafted to make others comfortable, and remains steady, something shifts. For anyone who has spent years managing how much of themselves they allow others to see, being fully known and not abandoned is one of the most healing experiences there is.

That's not a technique. It's something much older and much more powerful than that.

What Actually Changes People

It isn't the homework assignments. It isn't landing on the perfect diagnosis or finding the right approach. What changes people, and what I've watched change people time and time again, is being genuinely seen. It happens inside a relationship honest enough to hold the truth, sturdy enough to weather the hard moments, and real enough to remind them they are not alone in this.

What I know for certain is this: no one has ever walked out of my office changed because of a worksheet. But they have walked out changed because they felt, maybe for the first time, that they were truly heard, truly seen, genuinely understood, not judged for a single moment, and absolutely worth showing up for.

Michael McManus, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. He can be reached at psychotherapy30a.com or by phone or text at 1-850-837-0123.

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Wellness

Effects of Weight Loss Injections Seen in a Dermatology Office

BY BRIDGET SULLIVAN, PA-C
COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND
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Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), also known as the weight loss shot, is commonly prescribed and used for patients to help with weight loss, diabetes and other medical conditions. Examples include Semaglutide, Tirzepatide, and Liraglutide. They have become very popular and widely prescribed within the last two to three years. Studies have shown that these medications have proven to have a myriad of medical benefits and have improved the health and longevity of many of their users. Some of the medical benefits include: weight loss, cardiovascular risk reduction, improved blood sugar control, reduced kidney disease progression, blood pressure and cholesterol improvements, sleep apnea improvement, and reduced inflammation and improved metabolic health. Additional potential benefits are currently being studied in the fields of addiction/ craving reduction, fertility/ metabolic reproductive health, heart failure, Alzheimer's disease, and neuroprotection. With all of these benefits, it is no wonder



that these medications have become so popular and widely prescribed.

There are side effects to consider when taking these medications. The potential side effects and precautions should be thoroughly discussed with the medical provider prescribing these medications to you. Some of the side effects seen in the dermatology office setting include: reduction in inflammation, hair thinning, facial volume loss, and body skin laxity.

A positive side effect and benefit of these medications is their anti-inflammatory effects.

A recent trial (The TOGETHER- PsO trial) found that adding tirzepatide to a psoriasis medication, ixekizumab (Taltz), significantly outperformed Taltz therapy alone. This trial highlights the anti-inflammatory effects of GLP-1's and how the anti-inflammatory effects can secondarily improve inflammatory skin conditions. These skin conditions include, but are not limited to, psoriasis, eczema, hidradenitis suppurativa, and polycystic ovary syndrome.

A side effect of these medications that is becoming more

commonly seen in the clinic is hair loss and increased hair shedding. According to the Dermatology Times, "Hair loss affects approximately 70% of GLP-1 users per cross-sectional survey data- far higher than reported in clinical trials. It is multifactorial: telogen effluvium, nutritional deficiencies, and possible precipitation of androgenetic alopecia in susceptible individuals." It is therefore important to monitor for nutritional deficiencies with labs, eat the proper amount of protein, and take a multivitamin to help combat excessive hair loss and shedding.

Another common side effect seen in the dermatology office

is facial volume loss, commonly called "Ozempic face." Our face has multiple fat pads. When we lose a significant amount of weight, we lose facial volume, including fat, collagen fibers, and bone resorption. This can cause skin laxity, hollowing, and jowls. This can be treated with collagen-stimulating procedures (for example, Sculptra or microneedling facials) and fillers.

Lastly, a common side effect that has been seen in the office is skin laxity and excess skin of the body. Weight loss reduces thick collagen fibers and increases elastic fiber density, resulting in lax, structureless skin and sagging. This can be reduced by building muscle and lifting weights. Also, surgical intervention from a plastic surgeon might be recommended.

GLP-1s, also known as the weight loss injections, have had many significant medical breakthroughs and have improved many lives. However, there are many side effects that are not readily discussed and observed. With the confidence of weight loss sometimes comes the unintended effects of the conditions listed above. The good news is that there are remedies and solutions to these conditions. As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your skin health and wellness, always reach out to your dermatology medical provider.



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Redefine Your Marriage: From Destructive Conflict Patterns to Validating Connection



By JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PhD

Marital conflict follows patterns. Your conflict style influences your partner's response, and together those reactions shape the conflict patterns in your relationship. Some of these patterns are constructive, while others are destructive. The good news is that as you improve your conflict patterns, you can also improve the quality of your relationship.

To understand the conflict patterns in your relationship, first identify the conflict styles you and your partner use during disagreements. Then consider how those styles trigger and reinforce each other to create predictable patterns.

Conflict Styles

Conflict styles vary based on two dimensions: *assertiveness* (pursuing personal goals) and *cooperativeness* (meeting others' needs). These five styles reflect those differences and illustrate the different ways people handle disagreement.

Competing: "I win, you lose" Pursuing your own needs with little regard for your partner's.

Accommodating: "I lose, you win" Prioritizing your partner's needs over your own, sometimes yielding completely to keep the peace.

Avoiding: "I lose, you lose" Withdrawing from conflict with-

out pursuing your own needs or supporting your partner's.

Collaborating: "I win, you win" Seeking a solution that fully meets both partners' needs.

Compromising: "I win and lose; You win and lose" Giving up something to reach a middle ground that partly satisfies both.

Destructive Conflict Patterns

Distressed couples often fall into one or more of these common destructive conflict patterns:

The Demand-Withdraw Pattern occurs when one partner uses a Competing style (seeking immediate change) while the other uses an Avoiding style (withdrawing to keep the peace). One partner pushes for a conversation or criticizes, causing the other to feel attacked and pull away. The more one pursues, the more the other withdraws, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of frustration. The Result: The demanding partner feels abandoned, and the withdrawing partner feels overwhelmed or trapped.

The Withdraw-Withdraw Pattern occurs when both partners rely heavily on an Avoiding style. Both sweep issues under the rug

to avoid discomfort and "agree to disagree" without addressing the root problem. The Result: On the surface, the relationship may look peaceful. Beneath the surface, emotional distance grows, intimacy declines, and quiet resentment builds over time.

The Win-Lose Escalation Pattern occurs when both partners adopt a Competing style and fail to regulate negativity. Neither is willing to cooperate or listen. The conversation quickly shifts from the disagreement to personal attacks, defensiveness, and a hostile battle to "win" at all costs. The Result: Emotional safety erodes. Winning becomes more important than protecting the relationship, leaving both partners feeling hurt and unvalued.

The You Win, I Surrender Pattern occurs when one partner consistently uses a Competing or Collaborating style while the other chronically accommodates. To avoid conflict, the accommodating partner gives up their own needs and yields to the other's preferences. The Result: This imbalance breeds silent resentment. Over time, the accommodating partner may feel unappreciated, unfulfilled, and invisible, which

can lead to sudden blowups.

The Quick Compromise Pattern occurs when a couple rushes to compromise instead of doing the harder work of collaborating to find a true win-win solution. Compromise can help with quick decisions, but overusing it creates strain. The Result: Because both partners give up something they value, repeated quick compromises can lead to "compromise burnout," leaving neither person feeling fully satisfied nor understood.

Constructive Conflict Patterns

Happy couples may occasionally slip into a destructive conflict pattern. When they do, they tend to catch themselves quickly and return to their more typical Validate-Collaborate Pattern.

The Validate-Collaborate Pattern is a highly effective two-step approach to relationship conflict. To use this respectful pattern, partners first validate each other so they can then successfully collaborate on a solution.

Validating focuses on emotional connection and respect. Partners prioritize listening, showing empathy, and communicating that the other person's feel-

ings make sense—even if they do not agree with their perspective.

Collaborating focuses on problem-solving and integration. Partners combine their ideas to create a creative, "win-win" solution in which neither person has to sacrifice core needs.

Bottom line: You and your partner can improve your relationship by breaking destructive conflict patterns and shifting toward validating and collaborating. Doing so can create constructive conflict patterns that strengthen intimacy and satisfaction rather than erode them.

Let me know if I can help.

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



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 Musing

A Crash



BY KIRK MCCARLEY

The first recollection was of being asked to provide a name and date of birth. Check, initial test passed. Next, I recall triage and waiting for additional medical personnel to arrive for airlift to a Trauma II facility one county over from where the accident had taken place.

Like many physical and recreational activities, cycling presents an element of hazard. Though a conscientious cyclist aims to be equipped with a good helmet and a variety of other protective equipment, entanglements with pickup trucks typically do not favor the bike or rider.

God and good fortune were merciful on this occasion. Following the helicopter journey I was assessed by the trauma team:

A concussion, requiring 16 sutures.

Five broken ribs.

A mildly separated right shoulder.

Like Demosthenes, another

opportunity provided to “live to fight another day.”

Post-accident, recovery has progressed nicely. Already back on that same bike, with physical therapy ongoing to restore joint order and rebuild the impacted damaged muscles.

Since the incident, I’ve learned of the preponderance of bike fatalities. In 2023, 1,155 bicyclists were killed in traffic crashes in the United States, a seminal mark and an 86% increase from the 2010 low point. Although cyclists account for just 1% of all trips, they represent 2-3% of all motor vehicle-related deaths.

Call it what you will, a second chance, survival, determination, or toughness, this most recent episode has prompted me to ponder how we respond to “do overs.” How are our perspectives and priorities changed and what are the implications for our next steps forward? What is our responsibility to live a life of gratitude and to find inspiration in being literally jolted into a new and different chapter?

Admittedly, I don’t have answers to these questions, however, I do sense that what I’ve experienced has provided me a new crossroads to determine a reset and potential for reinvention going forward. Others of you who have endured your own precarious episodes may well have arrived at similar contemplations. The implications



can often seem to carry over into any number of life aspects, both personal and professional.

For one, you now have a new story that not only further brands you but unites you with

other kindreds who also own a unique tale. How have you taken advantage of your platform? For me, it depends upon the audience. With school age children who ask about the wounded forehead or knees, it presents an opportunity to tout the efficacy of wearing a helmet. No doubt, without one my outcome would have been far less positive.

For other populations, it presents an opportunity to be an example to get back on the “horse.” My bike has already been adjusted and repaired and a new helmet procured. Those of us advanced in years already do not take for granted that the days of cycling and vigorous exercise will inevitably have limits anyway. Be undeterred, fight

those boundaries.

In the world of our jobs and businesses, to what degree can these setbacks provide inspiration? Is there a new or different business strategy that deserves consideration or a launch? Are you sensing renewed courage that’s prompting a boldness to prospect with previously untapped or overlooked contacts or resources? Has the experience prompted a more refined and focused clarity to your idea?

Most importantly, I must say that a critical component to not just our physical, but mental healing is our ability to forgive others. The driver of the vehicle that collided with me misinterpreted my left turn signal. Though I have no memory of either the collision or its immediate aftermath, I do know that he stopped to render me aid until health care professionals arrived on scene. Two days later I contacted him to advise that I was recovering and expressed appreciation for his assisting me. Further, I added that accidents happen and that I fully forgave him for what had occurred. He expressed that he was experiencing significant remorse and was relieved to be released from that feeling of guilt.

Not only have I have now earned a new acquaintance, but I would hope that we both are celebrating redemption.



Dr. Levi, the chiropractor and owner of Benson Chiropractic, provides gentle, specific, and results-driven care for all ages. He has treated patients from as young as one hour old to 90 years old utilizing a specific adjustment technique that is safe and effective for patients of all ages. Dr. Levi has had the privilege of treating patients from a variety of backgrounds including military, professional athletes, pregnant mothers, first responders, musicians, and many others. He is passionate about helping patients experience a balanced brain and body to achieve optimum healing and function.

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Sean of the South: You Can Tell a Lot About a Person



BY SEAN DIETRICH

My granddaddy said you can tell a lot about a person by the way they treat a dog. Someone who treats a dog badly, is a bad person. A person who treats a dog with regard and deference is a good egg.

Right now, my wife is holding our blind coonhound, Marigold. She holds our rescue adoptee like a baby. Not like a dog.

Marigold's face was struck with a blunt object. Her optic nerve scarred over. She lost her vision. The doctor removed one eye.

"What probably happened," the vet said, "is that someone paid a lot of money for this hunt-

ing dog, but Marigold turned out to be gun shy."

Her abuser wasn't happy about shelling out thousands of bucks for a dog who doesn't like noise. So he took his frustration out on the animal. He used a hard object. Perhaps the butt of a rifle.

My wife is softly humming to Marigold. "I love you," she is quietly singing to the animal.

We've had our dog several years now. Life with a blind dog was tricky at first. Not like having a regular dog at all. When we feed Marigold treats, for example, you have to touch her to let her know you're near. Then, Marigold simply opens her mouth widely, gyrating her head back and forth.

"I don't know where you are," she's saying, "but I'm opening my mouth to make it easier for you."

Marigold's internal schedule is all screwed up, too, because blind dogs can't sense light or darkness. So they have no idea what time it is. Sometimes Marigold wakes up at 1 a.m. and starts licking my face. And I start cussing and I say, "Please go back to bed." Where-



upon Marigold barks with glee. Because there is nothing half as fun as 1 a.m.

But, we love this animal. Namely, because we don't have kids. As a result, my wife and

I have a huge vacuum in our hearts. Which is why we sometimes fall deeply in love with other people's children. And it's embarrassing because they aren't ours, and people look at us funny.

Marigold is like our kid. Because this blind dog needs us for everything. She can't do anything for herself.

She needs us for simple tasks like finding her food bowl, or walking through new places. We hold her when she has nightmares—which is common for blind animals. We talk to her, from whatever room we are in, just so she knows where we are in the house.

It's been the most rewarding animal relationship I've ever had. And whenever I see Marigold crawl onto my wife's lap, when I see this woman speak softly to this wounded animal, when I see her stroke Marigold's fur and kiss her broken skull, I feel something profound.

Jamie Dietrich holds the animal like an infant. She kisses the mangled scars where Marigold's eye used to be.

"Oh, I love you so much," whispers my wife. She is a woman who is filled with compassion and goodwill. And she has proven to me that my grandfather was absolutely right

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Musing

Christian Capitalist: David Costa - Good to Golden



By RICH SANDERS

David Costa, a Christian Capitalist and entrepreneur, brings joy to thousands of people every day through one of the most popular restaurants in the world: McDonald's! With 30,000 restaurants around the globe, Costa Enterprises owns and operates twenty-one of them all over Northwest Florida.

David's father began working on the idea of owning and operating a McDonald's while he was still on active duty as an Air Force officer and stationed at Eglin AFB. For nearly 30 years, David and his family have been dedicated to making the McDonald's experience a magical one for all their customers.

David's entrepreneurial spirit

developed from an early age. When he was in middle school, he started a business that sold a hot commodity like the famous French Fries his restaurants now serve every day: candy!

As a man of deep faith, David now leads an organization of over 1,000 employees that cares about its community and is dedicated to giving back. The charitable arm of the organization, Costa Cares, has a mission to provide outstanding community service through various fundraising efforts, such as supporting local schools, partnering with churches, working with international and national charities, and offering any help or services that a community may need.

For example, over the past four years, Costa Cares has served breakfast to over 1,100 local student athletes and coaches at the All Sports Association's Annual Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) Breakfast hosted at Northwest Florida State College.

"McCafé with a Cause" fits in line perfectly with the Christian Capitalist motto: "the more we make, the more we give!" For

every McCafé coffee purchased on Mondays throughout the year, Costa donates 50 percent of their coffee proceeds to a different local charity each month.

Recently, Costa also donated \$100,000 to create a playroom in the Studer Family Children's Hospital at Ascension Sacred Heart in Pensacola, offering children and families a place to unwind, relax, play, and have fun while their siblings or family members are being cared for in the hospital.

David and his wife, MJ, are preparing to open a landmark facility on the Emerald Coast this month. The Costa Union Club in Niceville will include MJ's signature coffee shop, a podcast studio, meetings rooms and networking events. It is built on a simple idea: people don't need more information, they need the right space!

David plans to publish a book called Good to Golden later this year that will explore the leadership lessons that he has learned over the years with the goal of inspiring his managers to get "un-stuck" and all business pro-



fessionals to do their best at work and in their personal lives.

David recently appeared on the Christian Capitalist podcast (recorded at the Union Club studio!), and you can listen to the entire episode on SOWAL Life's website. We are excited to share inspirational stories of hard work and generous giving to the poor and needy in the name of Jesus

Christ, like David Costa!

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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A Pastor's Ponderings: Fathers



By REV. PETE HYDE

They stood at opposite ends of a long dark hallway - one in his 70s and the other in his 40s. It was a tense meeting. They met once before when the younger was still a small child, but there were no memories, only questions tucked away in the younger one's mind and heart. The elder had wondered throughout his life what became of this young life he dropped off at the orphanage so many years before.

The meeting took place after

much prayer and discussion. God had a hand in the arrangements for the meeting - the right contacts had been made, information was easy to acquire, and thousands of miles had been traveled easily. A language barrier separated the two strangers but yet related men, which made the meeting even more difficult and tense. It was father and son meeting for the first time since the father gave up the younger for adoption at the age of two. Over the next few days, a relationship was built - not a deep one, but a relationship. Answers came that led to more questions. Given his life circumstances, the father did the best and loving thing for his son as a single parent with little prospect for being able to raise a child successfully.

A man stands at a graveside in the sweltering Oklahoma August heat. Only about ten people came to the service in-

cluding family. Taps played in the distance. The firing squad squeezes off the 21 gun salute that pierces the quiet of the small town cemetery. He stands by the grave. Everyone is gone except his immediate family. He reflects on the life of his father - his adopted father. He was a strict man, a flawed man, a driven man. Being number one was his only option. The typical son things ran through his mind as he stood by the final resting place of the man who raised him - baseball games, golf, fishing, camping, military life, anger, temper, drinking, the final months as this one who shared his life began to deteriorate.

He turns and gets in the car and seldom returns to the quiet of that place. It's been almost thirty years, but the hole in son's heart is still there. He knows in his mind and his training has taught him it won't go away. Per-

haps he needs to return to that spot more often.

He now takes a few minutes to reflect on his role as a husband and father. He hopes he hasn't done irreparable damage to his children. He hopes he has been the husband he has worked so hard to be. He said and did the things he said he would never say and do from his childhood. He is sorry sometimes. He is so proud of how they turned out and how his children have handled life. He knows he is blessed beyond measure to have a woman at his side God placed there specifically for him. He doesn't tell them enough. Now he is a grandpa and a whole new role opens up.

He sits in the quiet of the church sanctuary before anyone else is there, before the phone begins to ring, before the week's schedule begins to cloud his perspective. His Father is there - his Father in heaven. He has been

blessed. No, life hasn't always been easy, and struggles are at the same time past, immediate and long range. But God's fatherly hand has been on his shoulder for a long time, even when he didn't acknowledge it. He pauses in these few quiet moments to give thanks on this Father's day to his heavenly father for the blessing, guidance and protection granted to him throughout his years.

Regardless of your experience of or your relationship with your father, remember today the influence, touch and presence of your Heavenly Father before Father's Day buzzes off the calendar and is forgotten until next year. He is with you every day and that's all we really need to face whatever is before us.

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

Successful Veterans Appreciation Lunch on April 21!

A Superior Mechanical recently held its inaugural Veterans and First Responders Appreciation Lunch in Okaloosa County. "We were blown away by the attendance of Veterans from every branch and local First Responders," shared Jimmy Thorpe, founder of this 24-year-old, veteran-owned business. The HVAC winner, Mr. Nick Azzarita, served 20 years in the US Air Force in the Korean War and in Vietnam. The following 20 years, he served as a math teacher at Niceville High School. "To say this gentleman is humble is an understatement," shared event organizer Marta Thorpe. "There couldn't have been a nicer human being to win this."

Thank you to event sponsors: Beachworx, Chelco, Blanken Fi-



nancial Management, NHance Cabinet Makeovers, United Community Bank, One Beach Real Estate specializing in Homes For Heroes, Randy Wise Homes, Gulf Coast State College VBOC, and Okaloosa Vet

Center. Also present at the event was the Chamber Choir from Rocky Bayou Christian School, the Niceville High School ROTC, and a beautiful invocation by Pastor Dave Butler. "Big thanks to Jeff and Christi at the

Niceville Community Center," added Marta.

Save the date for the next Appreciation Lunch: Tuesday, October 20, 2026. For information

on sponsoring, contact Marta Thorpe at (850) 814-3822. For general information, visit us at ASuperiorMechanical.com.

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Dining

A Friday at Fish Out of Water

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE

We arrived at Fish Out of Water (FISH) on a Friday in late spring, just before sunset. The WaterColor Inn & Resort's upscale-casual restaurant, known for its beautiful Gulf view, fresh seafood and coastal atmosphere, was in high gear and bustling with patrons. We were escorted to our table out on the balcony, overlooking the beach, as 99 Red Balloons played on the house system, adding to the energy and all-over happy vibe of FISH. Now, when I write a Restaurant Review, it generally includes three elements: Food, Service and Atmosphere. Tonight included a fourth component: The incredible view. I've got to admit, the white sandy beaches and turquoise Gulf waters in Northwest Florida just never get old!

Naptalee, our server, came over to greet us and quickly set us up with a couple of cool elixirs: the Cat on a Hot Tin Roof for Jimmy and a Cucumber Elderflower Margarita for me. Jimmy's "Cat" – crafted with Cathead



Honeysuckle Vodka and fresh lemon – was a cool, tart slap in the face with a jalapeno punch. My margarita, made with Sauza Blanco Tequila and St. Germain, blended fresh lime with floral notes. Fish Out of Water's full bar features beer, wine, and a beautiful array of Specialty and Elevated Cocktails.

We ordered two classic appetizers: the Shrimp Banger with huge, succulent, crispy shrimp – so fresh they tasted like they were caught that morning, served with a Remoulade (aka the "Come-back Sauce") and grilled lemon. The Chargrilled Caesar was an elevated take on the classic: tender, grilled Romaine leaves under a creamy (but light) Caesar drizzle, topped with house-made croutons and hand-shaved Parmesan. Other classic FISH starters include Bay Scallop Ceviche, Pan-Seared Blue Crab Cakes with yuzu crema, and Burrata & Arugula: oven-roasted heirloom tomatoes, baby arugula, blistered Sicilian olives, toasted pepitas, and pomegranate balsamic.

As we enjoyed the aperitifs, Executive Sous Chef Michael arrived at our table. We enjoyed a wonderful chat and shared a sunset photo together. Chef – whose parents came from Sicily, Italy – hails from Long Island, NY. At 16 years old, while still in high school, this young chef was published in the New York City-area news journal, Newsday. Following high school, he attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, and fol-

lowing college, studied Southern Cuisine extensively for several years. Before coming to Fish Out of Water, he served as Banquet Chef at WaterColor LakeHouse. Prior to that, he spent eight years with The Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach, where he started as a Cook III and worked his way up to Banquet Chef during his tenure with the property. His colorful resume includes celebrity weddings and banquets, working with Celine Dion and Tyler Florence among others. "I became a chef because I like to see people enjoying food," he shares. "I am passionate about what I do, and I hope that comes through."

For our entrees, upon Naptalee's recommendation, Jimmy tried the Black Grouper, blackened with Cajun Cream Sauce... so meaty yet so delicate and juicy! I enjoyed the Tuna Steak with Ginger-Lime Ponzu... a beautifully tender piece of fish, cooked medium and perfectly rare in the middle. Other fresh fish that evening included Swordfish and Red Snapper. All seafood dishes are served with garlic mashed pota-

toes and green beans prepared al dente. Other entrees that caught my eye include Cajun Garlic Shrimp & Grits, Braised Beef Short Ribs over polenta, Gulf Shrimp Tacos with chimichurri, and Beef Tenderloin with corn & mushroom ragout.

This decadent meal was finished off with coffee and dessert: the incredible Death by Chocolate fudge cake (FISH's most popular dessert, per Naptalee). Surprisingly light, moist cake is layered with dark, rich ganache, and was served alongside a very satisfying cup of coffee brewed with Hill & Brooks premium coffee from Mobile, AL.

Fish Out of Water serves lunch and dinner, Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and brunch on Saturday and Sunday starting at 8 a.m. open until 10 p.m. The restaurant offers first-come, first-served seating, and online ordering is available. For directions and to view the menu visit www.dinefish30a.com; for more information call (850) 534-5050.

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South Walton Live Music Scene June 2026

30Avenue Summer Concert Series Every Evening

Come out to 30Avenue for the Summer Concert Series from 6-9 p.m. on the green. LIVE MUSIC every night in June. Gather your people for dinner, sips, shopping and live music under the stars. Guests are encouraged to bring a blanket or low-back lawn chairs. See the full lineup at www.thirtyavenue.com/calendar.



Wine & Song at NEAT Tuesdays

Join NEAT in Alys Beach for Wine & Song every Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. Enjoy 4 wines for \$30 per person or choose a bottle from the Uncorked wine list and enjoy it with your small plate and shareables from open to close. Wines will be posted every Tuesday on Facebook & Instagram.

Baytowne Wednesday Night Concert Series

Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf as they host the Wednesday Night Concert Series, a free weekly tradition on the Events Plaza Stage from 7-9 p.m. featuring local & regional talent from all kinds of genres. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets & your crew for some great tunes!

- June 17: The Typos
- June 24: Sunshine Wranglers
- July 1st: Below Alabama
- July 8th: Scratch 2020
- July 15th: The Aces Band

Here Comes the Sun Summer Concert Series at Rosemary Beach Wednesdays

Wednesdays in Rosemary Beach mean music, family and fun. Here Comes the Summer Summer Concert Series takes over the St. Augustine Green on Wednesdays through August 5, from 7-8:30 p.m. Bring your blankets and chairs to enjoy a free night of music under the stars.

- June 17: Rock Mob
- June 24: Gage Cowart
- July 2: Western Green: Will Thompson Band
- July 8: Davis & The Love
- July 15: Scratch 2020

Bands on the Boulevard Summer Music Series Thursdays

Experience Grand Park transformed into an open-air concert setting where friends, families, and neighbors can gather to enjoy live performances from talented musicians in a relaxed coastal atmosphere from 6-8

p.m. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, grab dinner or drinks from your favorite Town Center spots, and settle in for a new weekly tradition designed for easy nights and good company.

- June 18: The Wildlife Specials
- June 25: Cadillac Willy
- July 2: America Salutes - A Musical Celebration of 250 Years of Freedom

Sounds Like Summer: 30A Songwriters Showcase Thursdays

The Watersound community invites you to join them for Sounds Like Summer Thursdays through August 13, featuring live music, theater, children's activities and more under the shade of The Pavilion at Watersound Town Center. With ample parking, a covered pavilion, and even ceiling fans, all events are free and open to the public.

June 18th: 30A Songwriters Showcase – Paul McDonald & The Mourning Doves

June 25th: Children's Play – ECTC Rising Stars

July 2nd: 30A Songwriters Showcase – Bob Schneider & Jill Andrews

July 9th: Children's Play – Voices of Valor

July 16th: Christmas in July

HarborWalk Coastal Country Concert Fridays

Coastal Country Fridays are back at HarborWalk Village in Destin and they are bringing the heat! Every Friday night through July 31, Harborwalk Village's Main Stage comes alive with high-energy live country music, waterfront views and the kind of Friday night energy that makes the Emerald Coast the best place to be all season long. Free to attend. On-Site Parking fee, good for same day returns.

Groovin' on the Green June 28

Enjoy an evening of live music in Carillon Beach. The 2026 Groovin' on the Green concert series takes place on the Carillon Beach Village Green from 7-9 p.m. Bring a beverage of choice, chairs, blankets & coolers. Free admission! Town restaurants will

be open. Check social media for artist announcements and updates.

Old Florida Fish House Weekdays

For over a decade, Old Florida Fish House has proudly featured local live music. Catch artists playing inside the coveted bar and lounge area, as well as in the large outdoor dining space situated among the palm and oak trees under the twinkling lights next to Eastern Lake, throughout the week. Saturday Brunch with live music 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Dueling pianos Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Visit www.oldfloridafishhouse.com for more info.



FOOW Live Music Fridays and Sunday Brunch

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

AJ's Grayton Brunch, Crawfish and Live Music

AJ's is the place to be to celebrate all things Sunday Funday in Grayton Beach! Recharge your weekend at Brunch with Bottomless Mimosas 11 a.m.-3 p.m. The talented Christon Birge Duo plays live music at noon. Then enjoy The Pickled Pickers 5-8 p.m. Check ajsgrayton.com for live music throughout the week.



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Demetrius Fuller Named To Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Board

Sinfonia Gulf Coast founder and artistic leader earns international distinction

Sinfonia Gulf Coast proudly announces that Founder/Music & Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller has been appointed to the board of directors of the prestigious Van Cliburn International

Piano Competition, widely regarded as one of the world's premier classical music competitions and a global platform for launching the careers of exceptional pianists.

Held in Fort Worth, Texas, the Cliburn has been a defining force in classical music since its founding in 1962, celebrating artistic excellence and providing career-making opportunities for young



Concert Artists, where Sinfonia Gulf Coast presents an annual prizewinner, further reinforcing his dedication to rising talent.

Now in his 20th season leading Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Fuller has played a transformative role in shaping the cultural landscape of Northwest Florida through bold programming and meaningful community engagement.

An internationally recognized conductor and accomplished clarinetist, Fuller has earned critical acclaim for his dynamic leadership and artistic vision. He trained at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he received both bachelor's and master's degrees in music. As a musician, he has performed in notable venues and festivals worldwide, including the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago and festivals in Italy, Estonia and across the United States.

Fuller's career is distinguished by collaborations with celebrated artists including Roberta Flack, Patti LaBelle, Bernadette Peters, Kristin Chenoweth, Vanessa Williams and Pink Martini, among others. His commitment to contemporary music has led to numerous commissions and premieres, including works by Tan Dun, Chris Brubeck and Nico Muhly, underscoring his reputation as a forward-thinking arts leader.

pianists through its internationally renowned quadrennial competition, education initiatives and global concert tours.

Fuller's appointment reflects his longstanding commitment to cultivating the next generation of artists. Through Sinfonia Gulf Coast and his broader industry involvement, he has consistently championed emerging musicians—creating pathways for them to perform, connect and build sustainable careers.

"This is a natural extension of the work we're already doing," said Fuller. "Whether through the Cliburn, Young Concert Artists or our own stages, it's about identifying extraordinary young talent and giving them meaningful opportunities before they are absorbed into the larger agency system. That early access can be transformative—for the artist and for our audiences."

Fuller has developed a strong working relationship with the Cliburn in recent years, attending the competition as an invited industry guest and engaging directly with medalists—occasionally presenting them in Sinfonia Gulf Coast performances early in their careers. This collaboration mirrors his work with Young

Beyond the podium, Fuller is a passionate advocate for the arts and arts education. He currently serves on the board of Young Concert Artists and has held leadership roles with organizations including Musicians for Harmony. Locally, his service spans a wide range of philanthropic and cul-

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Natural Harmony: Music and the Beach

The rhythm of ocean waves, the warmth of the sun, and the gentle breeze rolling across the shoreline create a peaceful setting unlike any other. For many people, a beach vacation is more than a getaway, it is a chance to rest, reflect, and reconnect with themselves. Music often becomes the perfect companion during these moments, offering comfort, joy, and inspiration while lifting the spirit in ways words alone cannot describe.

Music and the beach share a natural harmony. The steady crash of waves resembles a calming rhythm, almost like nature's own melody. When favorite songs blend with the sounds of the sea, stress begins to fade away. Whether someone is listening through headphones while walking along the shoreline or hearing live soft acoustic music from a beachside café, music has the power to deepen feelings of peace and relaxation.

One reason music is so comforting during a beach vacation is because it connects deeply with emotions. Gentle melodies and uplifting lyrics can calm anxious thoughts and help people feel fully present in the moment. Live instrumental music, reggae rhythms, acoustic guitar songs, or tropical tunes often create feelings of warmth and freedom. As the sun sets over the water, music can turn an ordinary evening into a meaningful memory filled with gratitude and serenity.

Music also strengthens the emotional connection people feel with special places. Years later, hearing a certain song can instantly bring back memories of sandy beaches, salty air, and carefree summer days. A single melody can transport someone back to a family vacation, a romantic sunset walk, or laughter shared with friends around a beach bonfire. Dancing and just having fun. In this way, music becomes part of the memory



itself, preserving emotions that might otherwise fade with time.

For many vacationers, music provides healing and renewal. Modern life can be busy and overwhelming, filled with schedules, noise, and constant distractions. The beach naturally slows life down and music helps complete that experience. Listening to soothing songs while watching waves roll onto the shore can quiet the mind and refresh the soul. It creates space to think clearly, dream again, and appreciate life's simple blessings.

Music can also energize and inspire beach adventures. Upbeat songs played during a morning jog on the sand or while paddleboarding across the water can fill people with motivation and happiness. Families dancing together near the shoreline or friends singing along during a sunset cruise often discover that music brings people closer together. It encourages laughter, movement, and shared joy that becomes part of the vacation experience.

Perhaps most importantly, music reminds people to feel deeply. The beach already awakens the senses with beautiful scenery and the endless motion of the ocean. Music adds another emotional layer, turning peaceful moments into unforgettable experiences. Together, music and the beach create a powerful combination that comforts the heart and lifts the spirit.

In the end, a beach vacation is not only about escaping routine; it is about renewing the soul. Music becomes the soundtrack

to that renewal, soothing worries, inspiring happiness, and helping people treasure each moment beside the sea.

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tural institutions, including the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, Cultural Arts Alliance and Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center.

His appointment to the Cli-

burn board further amplifies Sinfonia Gulf Coast's national presence and reflects a continued commitment to supporting young and emerging musicians—on the Emerald Coast and far beyond.

How to Prepare for a Hurricane: Safety Tips from Florida Power & Light

At Florida Power & Light Company (FPL), safety is the cornerstone of our commitment to customers and employees. It is not a matter of if, but when the next hurricane will hit our state, which is why it's important to be proactive in planning for the six-month-long hurricane season.

Whether you're a longtime Floridian or new to the state, having a plan in place is the best way to stay safe this storm season. Below is a list of what you can do before, during and after a storm.

What is a Hurricane Emergency Plan?

- Determine whether your home or business is located in a flood or evacuation zone and review local evacuation routes.
- Determine your backup power source or make arrangements to relocate if a storm warning is issued.
- The Division of Emergency

Management recommends that drivers keep their gas tanks at least half full throughout hurricane season. Electric vehicle (EV) owners should aim to maintain a charge between 50% and 80% at all times.

- Reach out to your local emergency management office if you or anyone you know has special medical needs, in case of evacuations. Apply for our Medically Essential Service designation if someone in your home relies on electric-powered equipment.

What Should a Hurricane Emergency Kit Contain?

- Build an emergency kit with non-perishable food, bottled water, flashlights, batteries, medications, and a first-aid kit. Don't forget phone chargers, power banks, and a waterproof container for important



documents.

- Don't forget information such as include insurance policies, health cards, birth certificates, Social Security cards, a list of emergency contacts, and a recent copy of your FPL bill.

How to Prepare Your Home for a Hurricane?

- Install approved hurricane shutters over windows and doors or using alternate covering such as plywood.
- Move patio furniture and outdoor items indoors, fasten doors and windows, and cover valuables and furniture with plastic and move away from windows.
- Turn off and unplug unnecessary electronics, including pool equipment, and set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings to keep food fresh longer during an outage.
- DO NOT attempt to trim trees or vegetation near overhead power lines yourself – only hire qualified professionals to trim trees and other vegetation near power lines. Visit FPL.com/trees for more information on our tree trimming policies.
- Look up and note the location of power lines before you begin working on a ladder. Be sure that any ladders or scaffolds are far enough away so that you – and the ends of the tools you're using – don't come within 10 feet of power lines.

What are Important Safety Steps After a Hurricane?

- If you're planning to use a portable generator, read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions. Be sure to set it up outside – not in your home or garage – and connect appliances directly to it. Do not wire your generator directly to your home's breaker or fuse box, as the power you generate may flow back into power lines and cause injuries.
- Stay far away from and do not touch any downed power lines or flooded and debris-laden areas that may be hiding downed power lines.

How Can Floridians Stay Informed After a Storm?

- Bookmark FPL.com and save 1-800-4-OUTAGE (1-800-468-8243) to your cell phone to report and check the status of your restoration.
- Stay informed by following your local news and @inside-FPL for updates on storm conditions and heed warnings.

FPL works year-round to be ready for severe weather and urges customers to prepare by making safety a priority this storm season. For more tips, visit FPL.com/storm.



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Estate Planning Documents for New Adults to Consider



By JON CARROLL

Once your child turns 18, their legal status changes. Parents lose the legal authority they have relied on for nearly two decades. Even if that child is still living at home, the law now considers them an adult. In an emergency, a hospital may refuse to share information. A bank may decline to speak with a parent. A university may withhold academic records.

We all want our children to become independent, to make their own decisions and to learn to navigate the world, but there are still times when it can be valuable for a parent, guardian or other trusted person to be able to make decisions, access certain records and obtain information on the child's behalf. Therefore, once your child reaches this milestone birthday, parents and guardians should have a conversation with their young adult and determine whether it makes sense for the 18-year-old to have certain basic documents in place to help

navigate unexpected situations.

Of course, as the child is now a legal adult, the decision to sign these documents and who to grant authority to act for them is ultimately the child's decision to make.

Durable Power of Attorney

Once a child turns 18, parents no longer have the authority to handle financial or legal matters without written authorization. A Durable Power of Attorney allows the young adult to appoint a trusted adult, such as a parent, to manage financial affairs if needed.

This document can be critical if issues arise involving a lease, car purchase, banking problem, insurance claim, or suspected fraud. Without it, a parent may be unable to act, even when time is of the essence. In Florida, Durable Powers of Attorney must comply with specific statutory execution requirements to be valid.

However, you should be aware that for a Power of Attorney to remain valid while incapacitated, the Power of Attorney must take effect when it is signed. This means that upon signing a Power of Attorney, the agent has a great deal of authority over the child's financial and legal matters.

Designation of Health Care Surrogate

Medical privacy laws strictly limit access to an adult patient's

health information. Once a child turns 18, doctors and hospitals generally cannot discuss medical conditions or treatment with parents without authorization.

A Designation of Health Care Surrogate allows the student to name someone to make medical decisions if they are unable to do so. It also permits access to medical records and communication with healthcare providers.

HIPAA Authorization

Some may not wish to grant full decision-making authority but still want their parents to have access to medical information. A standalone HIPAA authorization allows designated individuals to receive medical updates without broader powers. This can provide reassurance while preserving the student's independence.

Typically, when you attend a doctor's appointment or other medical visit, a HIPAA release is amongst the myriad of documents you will sign at check-in.

Living Will

Although difficult to contemplate, a Living Will allows a young adult to state their wishes regarding life-prolonging procedures in the event of a terminal condition or persistent vegetative state. By documenting their decisions, family members are relieved from guessing their loved ones' wishes during an emotionally turbulent time.

FERPA Authorization

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Although FERPA permits colleges and universities to disclose records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for fed-

eral income tax purposes, the law does not require schools to do so. Institutions often require proof of dependency and may have their own internal policies governing disclosure. Colleges and universities will have their own FERPA release form, which is often found on the institution's website.

Preparing these documents is typically straightforward and relatively inexpensive. More importantly, they remove legal obstacles during times of stress. Having the conversation about your child's wishes is an important part of adulting.

Jon Carroll is a licensed attorney. The information in this column is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and does not constitute legal advice, nor establish an attorney client relationship. Consult a qualified attorney in your jurisdiction for legal advice specific to your situation.

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Eglin Federal Credit Union Opens New ATM/Video Teller Drive-thru in Santa Rosa Beach

Eglin Federal Credit Union is pleased to announce its Santa Rosa Beach ATM/Video Teller Drive-thru located at 4634 U.S. Highway 98 W. is now open.

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Freeport Branch. Our employees are looking forward to providing 5-Star Service, Support and Solutions to more Eglin Federal Credit Union members in Walton County.”

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