



AUG./SEPT. 2026
VOL. 10, NO. 3



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

Postal Customer Local

The Ripple Effect of a Great Teacher

Bree O'Donnell inspires students through discovery, mentors fellow educators and now stands among Florida's top five teachers.

BY LORI LEATH MILLER

Every once in a while, a story comes along that's really bigger than the headline. This is one of those stories.

Yes, Walton County educator Bree O'Donnell has been named one of five finalists for Florida's 2027 Teacher of the Year—an exceptional accomplishment all on its own. Chosen from more than 180,000 public school teachers and 74 District Teachers of the Year across Florida, O'Donnell now stands among the state's top five educators.

But what struck me most wasn't the award. It's what the award represents. As someone who spends a great deal of time highlighting the people, businesses and organizations that make a difference in our area communities, I find myself asking a simple question: What is Walton County doing right?

The answer, I believe, can be found in educators such as Bree O'Donnell. A



fourth-grade math and science teacher at Dune Lakes Elementary School, O'Donnell is well-known for creating classrooms where students don't simply sit and listen. They move. They explore. They experiment. They inquire. They learn by doing.

Her students have tracked data with sidewalk chalk, test-

ed gravity through hands-on experiments and participated in interactive scavenger hunts that transform learning into discovery. Instead of relying solely on textbooks, she creates opportunities for students to experience concepts firsthand. That's not only the kind of teaching that sparks curiosity, but also the kind

that students remember.

What I love most about Bree's story is that her success isn't built around awards or titles. It's built around helping students see learning as something exciting rather than something they have to do. She creates opportunities for children to be curious, engaged and confident in their abilities—qualities that often last far beyond a single school year.

What makes O'Donnell's recognition even more impressive is that her impact extends far beyond her own classroom. She recently helped develop Walton County's districtwide fourth-grade science and mathematics pacing guides, helping ensure consistency and excellence for students across the county. She also leads her Professional Learning Community, where teachers col-

GREAT TEACHER

continued on page 2



A New Heart, A New Beginning:

Community Celebrates Miracle for 8-Year-Old Sadie Long

BY TRISH LECLERE

Less than 3 months ago, eight-year-old Sadie was enjoying a normal sunny Spring day at Van R. Butler Elementary School when she fainted. Life changed in an instant.

Sadie was rushed for emergency medical care. What began with a trip to Panama City quickly escalated to Sacred Heart Pensacola before she was airlifted to a pediatric cardiac center in Orlando.

SADIE LONG

continued on page 2



With 18 years of expertise, SecureVision delivers customized **fiber internet, TV, and phone services** to **HOAs, COAs, short-term rentals, and multifamily properties** along the Gulf Coast.

Call Today 251-216-9434 | Email sales@secvis.com | Visit www.secvis.com



Fast Fiber Internet • Bundled Services • Worry-Free Support






ADVENTURE Awaits

We offer a wide selection of Street Legal **Electric** and **Gas** carts. Get yours now!

Shop by brand.

✓ Club Car	✓ Atlas	✓ Garia	✓ Epic/Icon
✓ GEM Car	✓ Star EV	✓ EVolution	
✓ Yamaha	✓ Hunt VE	✓ Denago EV	

(850) 622 2000
www.ElectricCartCompany.com
Sales@ElectricCartCompany.com
5426 US Hwy 98 W Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

 Community

SADIE LONG

continued from page 1

There, doctors delivered devastating news. Sadie had been diagnosed with a rare genetic heart condition that can cause dangerous heart rhythm disturbances and progressive heart failure. To protect her from sudden cardiac arrest, surgeons implanted an internal defibrillator. While the device could save her life in an emergency, it was not a permanent solution.

Eventually, it became clear that Sadie's only hope was a heart transplant. Arrangements were made for Sadie to meet with the transplant team at UF Shands in Gainesville. What followed were many tests and monitoring to determine if she was a candidate for the transplant list. She was. Due to the seriousness of her heart failure, she was placed on the list as a priority transplant, Status 1A.

No one knows when the perfect heart will arrive. So, Sadie was confined to the hospital to wait. Her environment had to be sterile, so that she would be healthy when the day came.

Sadie's mother, Rose, never left her daughter's bedside. While she lived in hospital rooms hundreds of miles from

home, Sadie's sister remained in Walton County surrounded by family, friends, classmates, and a community eager to help shoulder the burden.

Those who know Rose describe her as one of the kindest people they've ever met—a devoted mother whose deep faith and quiet strength have carried her family through unimaginable circumstances.

Then came the morning that changed everything. It was sister Harper's 10th birthday. While she was celebrating here in Santa Rosa Beach, Rose was sitting beside Sadie's hospital bed, still dressed in sweatpants and a T-shirt, gently waking her daughter for morning medication when there was a knock at the hospital room door.

Expecting a nurse, she instead found three of Sadie's cardiologists. One of them looked at her and asked, "Have you heard the news?" Then came the words every transplant family longs to hear: "We've accepted a heart on her behalf."

After the doctors left, mother and daughter sat together absorbing what they had just heard. "I looked at her and said, 'They found your heart,'" Rose wrote. The two cried tears of joy before calling the people



they loved most to share the life-changing news.

Yet even in one of the happiest moments of her life, Rose's thoughts turned to another mother. "My heart soared for the possibility that tomorrow Sadie will go through surgery and have her angel heart," she wrote. "But I won't lie—the mother in me grieves with the mother on the other side of this. I'm very aware that in order for this miracle to come to us, someone else had to make the choice to have their child be an organ donor. My heart stays with that family."

Her words are a poignant reminder that every transplant carries two stories—one of heartbreaking loss and another of extraordinary hope. Though understandably nervous, Sadie



faced surgery with remarkable courage. "I'm nervous because it's surgery," she told her mother. "But, I'm also very excited and ready to have my new heart."

On July 13, surgeons successfully transplanted Sadie's new heart. While the surgery marked a life-changing milestone, it was also the beginning of a long road to recovery. The months ahead will include rehabilitation, medications to prevent rejection, countless follow-up appointments, and ongoing medical care.

Throughout every step of this journey, Sadie's family has been embraced by an outpouring of love from neighbors, classmates, teachers, Community Church of Santa Rosa Beach, and people across Walton and Okaloosa Counties. Prayer chains have

stretched throughout the community, reminding them they are not walking this road alone.

For many, Sadie's story has become a powerful testament to faith, perseverance, modern medicine, and the extraordinary gift of organ donation.

Today, because one family made the courageous decision to give the gift of life during their darkest hour, another little girl has been given the chance to grow up.

As Sadie begins this new chapter with a new heart, her family asks for continued prayers—not only for her healing, but also for the anonymous donor family whose unimaginable loss made this miracle possible.

Some stories remind us how fragile life can be. Others remind us how precious it is. Sadie's story is both.

To receive updates on Sadie's recovery or make a donation to support her family during this journey, visit: SupportNow: <https://www.supportnow.org/long-family>.

Update from August 7: "Sadie walked out of the hospital today. We had to take a few breaks on the way out, but she walked out."

GREAT TEACHER

continued from page 1

laborate, analyze student data and share best practices. Under

her leadership, that team has been recognized as a model

for the entire district. In other words, she's not just helping students succeed—she's helping teachers succeed, too.

Florida Education Commissioner Anastasios Kamoutsas praised O'Donnell for demonstrating "an unwavering commitment to student achievement and a relentless focus on continuous improvement."

Walton County Superintendent Russell Hughes, also Florida's 2024 Superintendent of the Year, described her as an educator who motivates students, uplifts colleagues and plays a vital role in her school community.

Those are impressive words; but perhaps the greatest measure of a teacher isn't found in awards, accolades or rankings. It's found years later when a former student remembers a lesson and gains confidence, because someone believed in them, or chooses a path because a teacher helped them discover what was possible or where their hidden talent lies. That's the true ripple effect of great teaching.

One proud parent shared that their child advanced three

levels in math under O'Donnell's instruction at Dune Lakes Elementary, describing her as the kind of teacher who helps students believe in themselves while achieving remarkable academic growth.

While O'Donnell's recognition places her among Florida's elite educators, it also shines a spotlight on the quality of education taking place throughout Walton County. And perhaps that's what makes this story so special.

Yes, it is about one exceptional teacher. But it is also about the students she inspires, the colleagues she mentors and the community that supports educational excellence. It is about a school district that has now produced two Florida Teacher of the Year finalists in the past three years. In 2025, Paxton School science and aerospace teacher Heather Stewart was named one of Florida's Teacher of the Year finalists. Now, in 2027, Dune Lakes Elementary's Bree O'Donnell has earned the

Continued on page 6



PERFECT
IN WALTON COUNTY
2027

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITES! AUG. 31 - SEPT. 18



PerfectInWaltonCounty.com

From incredible dining to outdoor adventures, help spotlight the businesses, activities and people that make Walton County your perfect place.

Events Around the Beach

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.

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.

Queens of the Tiles: Mahjong at Ovide Aug. 17 & 31
Brunch, bubbles, and a little friendly competition! Join Ovide for Queens of the Tiles, a lively Mahjong social where guests can sip, shuffle, and socialize over brunch favorites and wine. Get in the game from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Guided Plant Tour at Topsail State Park Aug. 17
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.

Emerald Coast Foundation's Children's Charity Poker Run Aug. 21-22
The Emerald Coast Foundation's Children's Charity Poker

Run returns with a fresh new look and a new home at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, raising vital funds for children's charities across Northwest Florida that support local youth and families in need. Formerly known as the Emerald Coast Poker Run, the weekend will bring together boating enthusiasts, sponsors and supporters for one of the nation's largest boat poker runs, featuring on-resort accommodations, overnight slip rentals, boat and trailer storage, and a lineup of social events. Learn more and register today: emeraldcoastpokerrun.com.

Biophilia Center Back to Nature Aug. 22
The forest is calling — and so are some very special intergalactic guests! Join the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. for Back to Nature, a day packed with wildlife, fun, and adventure for the whole family. Meet ambassador animals, explore the Reptile Room, bounce, play, raffle, and grab a bite from the food trucks — and

keep your eyes open for some mysterious visitors who love photos. May the forest be with you. Bring a towel and spare change of clothes for water activities! Visit cowilsoncenter.org.

Pairing & Sharing Wine Dinner Benefit Aug. 27
This memorable evening brings together community members and supporters who share a passion for giving back. Proceeds from the event directly benefit Caring & Sharing of South Walton, helping provide food, financial assistance, counseling, and case management to neighbors in need throughout Walton County. The evening begins with a cocktail hour featuring passed hors d'oeuvres. Guests will then be seated for an intimate four-course dining experience by Swiftly Catered, with each course thoughtfully paired with exceptional wines from Jessup Cellars. Tickets: [https://www.](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pairing-sharing-wine-dinner-with-jessup-cellars-tickets-1988335629392)



[eventbrite.com/e/pairing-sharing-wine-dinner-with-jessup-cellars-tickets-1988335629392](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pairing-sharing-wine-dinner-with-jessup-cellars-tickets-1988335629392).

Wine & Fries: Golden Hour for Good at The Alice Aug. 28
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northwest Florida's signature fundraiser returns with waterfront views, wine, local brews, McDonald's famous French fries, live entertainment and auctions from 6-9 p.m. Proceeds help families remain close to children receiving medical treatment.

Continued on next page





LAUREN K
FINE JEWELRY • NYC

McCASKILL & COMPANY
— Finest Jewelry & Watches —

13390 Highway 98 West | Destin, FL
(850) 650-2262

Community

EVENTS

continued from page 3

Tickets are \$115. Purchase tickets at givebutter.com/c/wine-and-fries.

Ranger Led Hike at Eden Gardens State Park Sept. 1

Meet up on the paver block pad at 10 a.m., adjacent to the screened-in pavilion. The hike will meander through two distinct natural communities, Xeric Hammock and Floodplain Swamp. A ranger will share information about the flora and fauna found throughout the park and specific to the natural communities being hiked through. The event is free with paid park entry fee.

Perfect Hues: Baytowne Wharf Art Fest Sept. 4-6

This Labor Day Weekend, join us for Perfect Hues: Baytowne Wharf Art Fest. Each evening from 5-9 p.m., stroll The Village streets as you browse a variety of artwork from local and regional artists. Enjoy LIVE music throughout the festival 7-9 p.m. nightly, and a spectacular fireworks show over the lagoon on Sunday at 9 p.m.

Come From Away at ECTC Sept. 10-27

Don't miss the most produced musical of this year and winner of over thirteen international awards, including a Tony Award! This inspiring true story follows a tiny Canadian town that welcomed thousands of travelers who were grounded on 9/11. Tickets and information can be found at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

9/11 Day of Honor & Live Music @ Fish Out of Water Sept. 11

FOOW invites you to a Day of Honor in remembrance of 9/11 from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Enjoy special Chef and beverage features, as well as patriotic live music by Jamah Terry from 6-9 p.m. Reservations are not accepted; seating is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. All active and retired military personnel, veterans, law enforcement officers and emergency service professionals (with proper ID) will receive 50% OFF all day!

4th Annual "Bags on the Porch" Cornhole Tournament Sept. 12

Grab your favorite cornhole partner and get ready to toss some bags for an incredible lo-



cal cause! The Destin Rotary Sunset Club's Sandy Bags tournament promises friendly competition, plenty of laughs and a great day at The Back Porch.

Not playing? Come cheer from the sidelines, enjoy the action and support the teams. Proceeds benefit Fore Her, which provides support, transportation and treatment assistance to local women facing breast cancer, as well as other Rotary community initiatives.

Life Media is excited to return as a tournament sponsor! This event is amazing fun for a meaningful cause, and we're honored to be part of it again this year.

Player registration, donations and sponsorships—starting at \$150—are available at tinyurl.com/sandybags2026. Learn more about Fore Her at foreher.org.

13th Annual Soldiers on the Water Sept. 19

For 13 years, Soldiers on the Water has brought together the local community to honor com-

bat-wounded veterans through a day of fishing, fellowship and appreciation. The event is made possible through the generosity of volunteer charter captains, community sponsors and countless volunteers who donate their time and resources each year.

The event is offered at no cost to participating combat-wounded veterans. Organizers expect more than 100 veterans to participate this year.

Veteran check-in begins at 7 a.m. behind Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer. Charter boats will depart at 8 a.m. for a morning of world-class fishing.

Following the fishing excursion, return for an afternoon of fellowship, dinner and an awards presentation recognizing accomplishments such as the day's biggest catch and most fish caught.

For more information: Brandon Schwartz, Brandon@ecaor.com, 850-243-6145.

Battle for the Buckle at Harbor Docks Sept. 23-27

The 2nd Annual Weston-

wood Ranch Battle for the Buckle brings together anglers, business leaders and community supporters for four days of competitive fishing, camaraderie and giving back. Tournament highlights include a \$10,000 winner-take-all White Marlin prize and more. The tournament supports Westonwood Ranch and its mission to empower teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through life-skills education, workforce development and meaningful employment opportunities. Register at westonwood.org/battleforthebucklefishingtournament. For additional information, contact tournament director Joe Donovan at (850) 572-3695.

14th Annual Fore Her Golf Outing Sept. 25

Golfers of every skill level are invited to think pink and hit the Links Golf Club at Sandestin for a great local cause. Presented by Emerald Coast Hospice Care, the outing includes a Bloody Mary Bar from Ruby Slipper Cafe, breakfast from Chick-fil-A, 18 holes of golf, the popular "Dress Like a Lady Hole," food at the turn and an after-party featuring lunch, music, prizes, giveaways and raffle drawings. Funds raised help Fore Her offset living expenses for local breast cancer patients undergoing treatment along the Emerald Coast.

Early BIRDIE registration through Sept. 1. Register at foreher.org/golffouting. Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are also available; contact Amy Walsh at amy@foreher.org.

Destin Seafood Festival Sept. 25-27

The Destin Seafood Festival returns for its 48th year, transforming the Destin Harbor into a mile-long celebration of fresh Gulf seafood, live music and coastal culture. The festival features five stages of live music with local and regional artists. The pedestrian-friendly, waterfront boardwalk and docks become a feast for the senses as more than 75 local food and craft vendors, plus Destin's favorite restaurants, serve up seafood specialties, cold drinks and handmade art. For more information and tickets, visit DestinSeafoodFestival.com.

SAVE THE DATE

EMERALD COAST ASSOC. OF REALTORS® PRESENTS

13TH ANNUAL SOLDIERS ON THE WATER

FOR COMBAT WOUNDED VETERANS

PLEASE JOIN US SEPT 19TH

DESTIN FISHING FLEET MARINA
210 HARBOR BLVD. DESTIN, FLORIDA 32541

For more information, please contact Brandon Schwartz
Brandon@ecaor.com

TO BECOME A SPONSOR: SCAN ME

TO REGISTER YOUR BOAT: SCAN ME

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT: SCAN ME

CARING & SHARING OF SOUTH WALTON

Pairing and Sharing

A WINE DINNER
benefiting
CARING & SHARING OF SOUTH WALTON

Thursday AUG 27 | 6PM

ROSEMARY BEACH TOWN HALL

MORE DETAILS AT CARINGANDSHARINGSOWAL.ORG



When the Gut Speaks First: Understanding the Back-to-School Stomachache

BY DR. KAREN DEVORE

The first week of school has arrived. The backpacks are packed, the lunches are made, and after one last search for a missing shoe, everyone heads out the door. Then, just as you're reaching for the car keys, your child quietly says, "My stomach hurts."

For many parents and caregivers, this scene is as much a part of the back-to-school season as shopping for school supplies and navigating busy car lines.

The child who seemed perfectly healthy all summer suddenly doesn't want breakfast,

Sometimes, the gut speaks first. That can look like stomachaches, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, changes in appetite, or even changes in bowel habits. The question isn't whether these symptoms are real; it's why they're happening.

One of the most helpful things parents and caregivers can do is look for patterns rather than focusing on a single episode.

Does the stomachache happen only before school? Does it improve later in the day? Does it appear before a test, after a difficult interaction with friends, or on Sunday evenings before the week begins?

Patterns like these may suggest the nervous system is playing a role, but they don't rule out an underlying medical condition. Pain that wakes a child from sleep, is accompanied by

developing nervous system. For some children, those demands may show up in the digestive tract long before they have the words to explain what they're experiencing.

What Can Parents and Caregivers Do?

If a child says, "My stomach hurts," and otherwise appears well, the first response doesn't always have to be finding the medicine cabinet. Instead, create a

few minutes of calm.

Turn off the television or music. Set aside phones and other screens. Sit together quietly. Offer a reassuring hug, hold their

Continued on page 21



complains of a stomachache before school, or makes repeated trips to the bathroom. Naturally, families wonder: Are they getting sick?

Sometimes they are. But sometimes, the stomach is simply the first place the body speaks.

The brain and digestive system are in constant communication through what scientists call the gut-brain axis. When children experience change, whether it's a new teacher, new classmates, academic expectations, a disrupted routine, or the excitement and uncertainty that naturally come with a new school year, the digestive system may respond before children have the words to describe what they're feeling.

fever, persistent vomiting, blood in the stool, unexplained weight loss, poor growth, or continues regardless of the situation deserves prompt medical evaluation.

Rather than asking only, "Where does it hurt?" it can also be helpful to ask: "When does it happen?" "What was happening just beforehand?" "Has anything changed recently?"

Sometimes those questions provide clues that the symptom alone cannot.

Today's children navigate full schedules, academic expectations, extracurricular activities, changing friendships, and a constant stream of information. While these experiences are a normal part of growing up, they can place greater demands on a



TORTOISE CLINIC INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

HOLISTIC HEALTH • ACUPUNCTURE
MASSAGE • APOTHECARY

Now Offering
PRIMARY CARE
PEPTIDE THERAPIES
SPECIALTY TESTING
IN-HOUSE LABS
IV INFUSIONS
HRT

Scan the QR code to learn more and book today!



BEST IN DESTIN
VIP DESTIN MAGAZINE READER CHOICE AWARD ★ 2026

2441 U.S. HWY 98, SANTA ROSA BEACH, FL 32459
TORTOISECLINIC.COM | 850.267.5611



\$30 OFF
NEW PATIENT OFFER
Present this coupon and receive \$30 off any service at the Tortoise Clinic. One coupon per person.

FLIGHT: To Heights Unseen

By DR. JOSHUA BLEDSOE

The beginning of a new school year always brings excitement, anticipation, and a renewed sense of purpose across Walton County. On August 11, our students returned to classrooms filled with educators and administrators who are ready to help them learn, grow, and reach new heights.

Although students enjoyed their summer break, our educators have remained hard at work. Professional development opportunities throughout the summer have allowed our teachers and leaders to strengthen their skills, exchange ideas, and prepare for a successful 2026–2027 school year.

During our two-day Admin Institute in Pensacola, administrators from across the District



came together for focused, intensive planning. Every discussion centered on identifying opportunities for improvement and finding new ways to help each student thrive. Our administrators also attended the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium Conference in South Walton, where collaboration with fellow educational leaders allowed iron to sharpen iron. These experiences help ensure that our schools continue learning, evolving, and implementing the most effective educational strategies.

On August 3, EPIC Day brought every educator in Walton County together to celebrate our shared mission and establish the theme for the year: FLIGHT: To Heights Unseen. This theme reflects our commitment to helping every student rise beyond expectations, discover possibilities they may not yet see, and develop the knowledge, confidence, and character needed to soar. Just as flight requires preparation, courage, and a clear sense of direction, reaching new heights requires students, families, educators, and our community to move forward together.

In the week leading up to the first day of school, teachers worked tirelessly to prepare their classrooms, finalize lessons, and create welcoming environments

for our students. From arranging desks and organizing materials to planning meaningful learning experiences, they carefully prepared for the moment our children walk through the doors.

We are grateful for the dedication of our teachers, administrators, support professionals, families, and community partners. Together, we are ready to make the 2026–2027 school year one filled with discovery, achievement, and opportunities for every student.

Families are encouraged to follow their school’s social media accounts and visit the District website for important announcements and other information.

The runway is ready, and the destination is filled with possibility. Let’s take FLIGHT—To Heights Unseen!

GREAT TEACHER

continued from page 2

same distinction.

They say lightning doesn’t strike twice in the same place. Walton County just proved otherwise. At first glance, some might call it coincidence. But at some point, success like this stops looking like coincidence and starts looking like culture.

Two Florida Teacher of the

Year finalists in three years. A superintendent who was named Florida’s 2024 Superintendent of the Year. Exceptional educators, engaged school leaders and a community that values education. Together, they tell the story of a district committed to helping students succeed.

This year, O’Donnell stands as the only educator from Florida’s Panhandle among the five statewide finalists. That’s a re-

markable achievement for her, for Dune Lakes Elementary and for Walton County.

Behind every successful student is a teacher who cared enough to make a difference. And behind every great teacher is a community that values the work they do. Congratulations, Bree O’Donnell. Thank you for representing Walton County so well and for reminding us that some of the most important



work happening in our community takes place every day inside a classroom.

BRIGHT BLUE POOLS

Commercial & Residential
Pool Remodeling
No Pool Too Big



We'll Make Your Pool Look New



Professional Plastering and Tile
Blue Diamond Finish • Pebble Finish
10 Year Guarantee • Free Quotes

Our owner, Curtis Nelson, makes it a point to be on the jobsite for every project to ensure everything goes according to plan.

Plastering Pools Since 1975

850.496.2025
BrightBluePools.com

Proudly serving the entire Florida Panhandle!



It's just not clean unless it sparkles!

CLEANING SERVICES:
Home - Business - Vacation Properties - Deep Cleaning
Construction Cleans - Move-In / Move-Out

What they are saying:
"I use Sparkles for my vacation rental, and the guests ALWAYS rave about how clean it is. Highly recommend!"

CALL TODAY!
850.517.5581

Visit us on the web:
www.sparklescleaningflorida.com

SEE COUPON IN BACK OF PAPER



Deer Moss Creek®

New homes in a vibrant community of Niceville, Florida



621 CHAMOMILE COURT
4 Bedroom | 3.5 Bath | 2,761 SF
\$899,000 | construction completed
Listed by Val Waters Auclair 850.855.6205



729 REINDEER ROAD
4 Bedroom | 3 Bath | 2,092 SF
\$586,000 | ready November 2026
Listed by Kelly Shephard 850.543.7353



221 FOXGLOVE RUN
4 Bedroom | 3.5/.5 Bath | 3,539 SF
\$1,219,990 | ready October 2026
Listed by Jodie Snell 850.621.6535



721 REINDEER ROAD
5 Bedroom | 3 Bath | 2,259 SF
\$617,000 | ready December 2026
Listed by Yeska Sand 850.368.5936



723 REINDEER ROAD
4 Bedroom | 3.5 Bath | 2,600 SF
\$695,000 | ready September 2026
Listed by Val Waters Auclair 850.855.6205



251 FOXGLOVE RUN
4 Bedroom | 3 Bath | 3,994 SF
\$1,425,000 | ready December 2026
Listed by Crystal Tingle 850.218.4618



Contact Ruckel Properties for a full list of available lots.

PHASE 11 LOTS

SIZE: 0.16 - 0.26 ACRE

PRICE: \$100,000 – \$149,000

PHASE 7A ESTATE LOTS

SIZE: 0.49 – 0.64

PRICE: \$209,000 - \$269,000

70th RPi

ANNIVERSARY 1955 - 2025

Ruckel Properties, Inc.

REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

850.678.2223

RUCKELPROPERTIES.COM

Visit our model homes in Deer Moss Creek®

1413 CLARY SAGE LANE

Monday - Saturday 12 - 4 pm

Sunday 1 - 4 pm

301 GAZELLE COURT

Friday & Saturday 12 - 4 pm

Sunday 1 - 4 pm

E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center to Open to the Public Every Friday Year Round

The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, operated by Nokuse Education Inc. on the 55,000+-acre Nokuse Plantation, announced today that for the first time in its history, it will welcome the public every Friday, year-round, beginning September 4, 2026. Previously accessible primarily through scheduled school field trips and special events, the Center will now offer standing weekly public admission, giving visitors of all ages the chance to explore its trails, exhibits, and ambassador animal habitats through self-guided exploration, animal chats, animal encounters, hikes, feedings, and other hands-on activities.

The expanded access reflects the Center’s ongoing mission to connect the community with the natural world and build on its work as one of Northwest Florida’s leading environmental education resources. Home to more than 40 ambassador animals and serving more than 6,500 K-12 students and com-



munity members each year, the Biophilia Center has long offered educational programming for schools and groups; the move to permanent, year-round Friday public hours makes that experience accessible to individual visitors and families on a regular, ongoing basis for the first time.

General admission for Public Fridays is \$15 for ages 13 and up, \$10 for ages 4–12, and free for children 3 and under.

School field trips are also welcome on Fridays at a rate of \$10 per student and chaperone, with teachers and bus drivers admitted free. All ages and grade levels are welcome, and schools are encouraged to schedule visits in advance.

For visitors who plan to attend regularly, the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center also offers an updated Bio Membership program, which includes free weekly Friday admission along with additional benefits such as free entry to select annual events, gift shop discounts, and more.

“We’ve always welcomed schools and groups to experience Nokuse Plantation, but Public Fridays lets anyone walk through our gates and connect with these animals and this landscape any week of the year. It’s a simple idea, but it’s one we’ve wanted to do for a long time, invite our neighbors in to see what we get to see every day.” –Daniel Milana, Director of Development and Communications

The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center encourages residents and visitors throughout Walton, Okaloosa, Bay, Holmes, Washington, and surrounding counties to take advantage of the new weekly public access. Individuals and schools interested in scheduling a visit can call (850) 835-1824 or email information@eowilsoncenter.org.

About the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center

The E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, operated by Nokuse Education Inc., is an environmental education facility located on the 55,000-plus-acre Nokuse Plantation preserve in Freeport, Florida. Founded in 2009, the Center is home to more than 40 ambassador animals and serves more than 6,500 K-12 students and community members annually through hands-on educational programming focused on Florida’s native wildlife and habitats.

LARGEST SELECTION OF STREET LEGAL CARTS



EXCLUSIVE GIFT
Present this layout upon purchasing a cart to receive an exclusive gift.




SALES • SERVICE • PARTS AND ACCESSORIES • FINANCING • RENTALS

Join the *Neighborhood* Fun

SHOP BY BRANDS

Garia
Star EV
EVolution

GEM Car
Hunt VE
Club Car

Yamaha
Denago EV
Atlas

Epic/Icon
Hunt VE



They Searched Everywhere, then They Found Watersound Fountains

Gerald and Sheree McKenzie searched farther than most before deciding where retirement would begin.

When they started thinking about retirement, they didn't limit themselves to one city — or even one country.

Over the years, they explored retirement destinations across Florida's Gulf Coast and considered places as far away as South Africa. They weren't simply looking for a beautiful home. They wanted a place that fit the life they had imagined for themselves: active, connected, close to nature, and close to family.

Eventually, that search led them to Watersound Fountains in Inlet Beach.

"It was just a good situation for us," Gerald says.

For Gerald, the day often starts outside.

Some mornings begin with golf at a nearby course before returning home for a fitness class or a swim. Other days start with a walk to Watersound

Town Center for coffee before the day unfolds from there.

One of the things that surprised him most wasn't just the beauty of the area—it was how easily everyday life came together.

"You really don't need a car here at all," Gerald says.

Within walking distance are restaurants, coffee, Publix, community events, and everyday conveniences that make the neighborhood feel connected rather than isolated. Just beyond the community, protected forest and nature paths offer another kind of access — quiet, beauty, and room to breathe.

That ease continues inside the community, where dining, wellness, learning, and social connection are designed to feel just as natural as the neighborhood around it.

Gerald enjoys an active schedule.

Sheree prefers a quieter pace.

Both found exactly what they were hoping for.



"You can be as active as you want to be here," Gerald says.

That flexibility is one of the things Members talk about most. Some mornings begin with movement. Others with coffee and conversation. Some days include beach outings, lectures, live music, or time with friends. Others are intentionally slower.

There isn't one right way to spend retirement here.

After careers that took them across the country—and years spent searching for the right place to settle down—the McK-



enzies discovered something they weren't expecting.

The destination mattered.

But the shape of everyday life mattered even more.

Today, that shape includes nearby golf, walkable mornings, chef-prepared meals, new friendships, and being close enough to family that seeing one another no longer requires weeks of planning.

For Gerald and Sheree, Watersound Fountains didn't simply end their search.

It gave them the kind of life they had been searching for all along.

Discover retirement living near 30A. Call 850-601-3174 or visit WatersoundFountains.com to schedule your visit.

Sunlight. Salt air. Space to breathe.

Experience refined, resort-style retirement living, grounded in wellness and the coastal beauty of the Panhandle.

No insurance.
No property taxes.
No upkeep.
More freedom.

Learn More About Savings in Bloom



RETIREMENT LIVING 65 Origins Parkway, Inlet Beach, FL 32461
WatersoundFountains.com | 850-601-3174

Community

Scenic Walton Celebrates Momentum on Community Initiatives Across Walton County

Recent milestones highlight collaborative efforts to advance resilient infrastructure, community beautification, and scenic preservation across Walton County.

Meaningful change happens through collaboration, persistence, and a shared vision for the future. Scenic Walton is celebrating significant progress on several initiatives that will help shape Walton County for generations to come, including advancing countywide underground utilities planning, securing additional funding for the Freeport Gateway Landscape Project, and moving the 30A West Gateway Landscape Project closer to reality.

One of the most significant milestones came when funding

for an Opinion of Probable Cause, the critical first step toward developing a countywide underground utilities implementation plan, advanced into Walton County's draft 2026/2027 budget. The study will evaluate the scope and implementation of a countywide initiative to underground overhead utilities that would strengthen hurricane resilience, improve electric reliability, enhance public safety, preserve scenic beauty, and support long-term economic development. Scenic Walton also recognizes the many residents who voiced their support for underground utilities during Walton County's Strategic Planning process and commends the South Walton Community Council for helping encourage



community engagement.

Scenic Walton is also celebrating the City of Freeport's recent \$100,000 Florida Department of Transportation Highway Beautification Grant, which doubles the funding available for the city's U.S. 331 Gateway Landscape Project. Scenic Walton worked alongside City planning staff to help identify the project, develop the initial design through its Walton Safe & Beautiful Program, and encourage the City to pursue additional state funding. Once completed, the project will create a more welcoming northern gateway into Freeport while enhancing roadway aesthetics, improving stormwater management, and incorporating landscape features that naturally calm traffic. Scenic Walton extends its appreciation to the Freeport City Council, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, AICP, Sean Daly and Ruppert Landscape, and the Florida Department of Transportation. A special word of thanks goes out to the St. Joe Community Foundation for funding the Walton



Safe & Beautiful program.

Momentum is also continuing in South Walton as the 30A West Gateway Landscape Project has advanced into the proposed budget for the Walton County Tourist Development Council. Scenic Walton is pursuing the project in partnership with Friends of Scenic 30-A to create an attractive western gateway to Scenic Highway 30A while adding entry signage at both ends of 30A recognizing it as both a Florida Scenic Highway and a Federal Scenic Byway. Notably, the project remains the only capital improvement project included in the proposed TDC budget, reinforcing the importance of investing in beautification, placemaking, and the visitor experience.

"These projects may look different on the surface, but they all share the same purpose: protecting what makes Walton County special while investing in its future," said Leigh Moore, Executive Director of Scenic Walton.

"Whether we're advocating for underground utilities, helping communities secure beautification funding, or enhancing our scenic corridors, each of these initiatives improves quality of life while preserving the character that makes Walton County such a remarkable place. We're grateful to our community partners, local governments, and residents who continue working alongside us to move these important projects forward."

Together, these milestones demonstrate growing momentum for resilient infrastructure, scenic preservation, and thoughtful community development throughout Walton County. Scenic Walton remains committed to working with public and private partners to ensure future growth protects the natural beauty and unique character that define our communities.

For more information about Scenic Walton and its initiatives, visit ScenicWalton.org.

THE MARKET SHOPS

Restaurants & Retailers

THE MARKET SHOPS

11TH ANNUAL

BLOODY MARY FESTIVAL

BENEFITING Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, FL

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 10, 2026

11AM - 2PM

\$65 IN ADVANCE

\$75 AT THE DOOR

TO PURCHASE TICKETS, VISIT

THEMARKETSHOPS.COM

TICKET INCLUDES:

UNLIMITED BLOODY MARYS

CRAFT BEER

BUBBLY BAR

SPIKED SELTZERS

LIVE MUSIC & DJ

SEC FOOTBALL

LOCAL EATS & SHOPPING

PHOTO BOOTH

CIGAR BAR

CUSTOM TRUCKER HAT BAR

9373 BARRAND COAST PARKWAY, MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA | Located at the Entrance to Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort | themarketshops.com

VISIT SOUTHWALTON.LIFE
TO READ OUR LATEST ISSUE

EccO Motors.com

Your Everything Golf Car & LSV Shop.

850-837-2600

147 Professional Place

LITHIUM BATTERY UPGRADE!

As low as \$1,995.00 installed

Includes: Charger, Meter, Charge Port, DC Converter

Our Mobile Repair Experts can bring your cart back to

PEAK PERFORMANCE!

Hide It, Lock It, Take It

Doing Your Part for National Vehicle Theft Prevention Month



BY TED TOEDTE, CPS, CRIME PREVENTION SPECIALIST, WCSO

It only takes a minute. You run into the store for a gallon of milk, leaving the car running with the AC on to fight off the Florida summer heat, doors unlocked “just this once.” You walk back out to an empty parking spot. By the time you realize what happened, the car, and whatever was inside it, is already gone.

August is the final peak month of summer travel, and with it comes heightened national attention on property and vehicle crime. The National Crime Prevention Council and NHTSA use this month to spotlight a simple, seasonal problem: with more people traveling, more cars sitting in driveways and parking lots, and more valuables left in plain sight, vehicle theft and break-ins tend to climb. The good news is that most of it is preventable.

Vehicle thefts nationally have actually fallen for two straight years, largely thanks to better anti-theft technology and closer cooperation between automakers and law enforcement. But the crime hasn’t disappeared, and one part of it is creeping back up: catalytic converter

theft, which had dropped sharply, is rebounding in some cities as precious metal prices climb again. A converter can be cut out from underneath a parked car in under two minutes.

Here at home, WCSO’s message hasn’t changed in years, and it still works: hide it, lock it, take it. Deputies say the overwhelming majority of the car burglaries they respond to involve a vehicle that was left unlocked, with something valuable sitting on the seat. It’s an easy crime to prevent and an easy one to become a victim of if you skip the basics.

What Our Local Data Shows

A five-year look at our own case data backs up the national trend: reported auto thefts in Walton County fell from 67 in 2021 to 27 in 2025, a decline of roughly 60 percent. That’s real progress, and it lines up with what NICB is seeing nationwide.

The more useful finding is where these crimes are happening. Over the last five years, 56 percent of all reported auto thefts in Walton County occurred at a residence or apartment, and another 10 percent happened in a parking lot or garage, together accounting for two out of every three incidents. Roadway thefts were a distant third at 12 percent. In other words, this isn’t primarily a retail-lot or highway problem; it’s a driveway, carport and apartment-complex problem.

CPTED for Apartments and Parking Lots

Because residential and multifamily properties account for

most of the thefts we see, this is exactly where Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) makes the biggest difference.

WCSO’s Crime Prevention Division offers free CPTED assessments for apartment complexes, HOAs and parking lots. A walkthrough looks at lighting levels, sightlines between units and parking areas, landscaping that may be hiding vehicles from view, and where cameras would do the most good.

Property managers and HOA boards can request an assessment at no cost, and many of the fixes we recommend are low-cost changes that make a real difference in reducing crimes of opportunity.

One more way to help: register your home or business security cameras with WCSO at waltonso.org/camera. It doesn’t give deputies live access to your feed; it simply lets us know a camera is nearby so investigators can reach out if footage might help solve a case. Walton County also partners with Flock Safety’s license plate reader network, which has made it dramatically harder for someone to steal a car here and simply drive away.



“The overwhelming majority of the car burglaries we respond to involve a vehicle that was left unlocked, with something valuable sitting on the seat.”

spread the word. WCSO’s Crime Prevention Unit has “Hide It, Lock It, Take It” rack cards and metal yard signs available at no cost for any business, apartment complex or neighborhood that wants to help reinforce this message locally. Reach out to us to request a supply for your lobby, clubhouse or parking area. You can call 850-892-8111 or email crimeprevention@waltonso.org.

None of these steps take more than a few minutes, but together they make Freeport a harder target for the crimes of opportunity that drive most vehicle theft. Do your part this month: hide it, lock it, take it.

Ted Toedte is a Crime Prevention Specialist and certified CPTED practitioner with the Walton County Sheriff’s Office, with more than 30 years of law enforcement experience in Florida and California.

Vehicle Theft Prevention Checklist

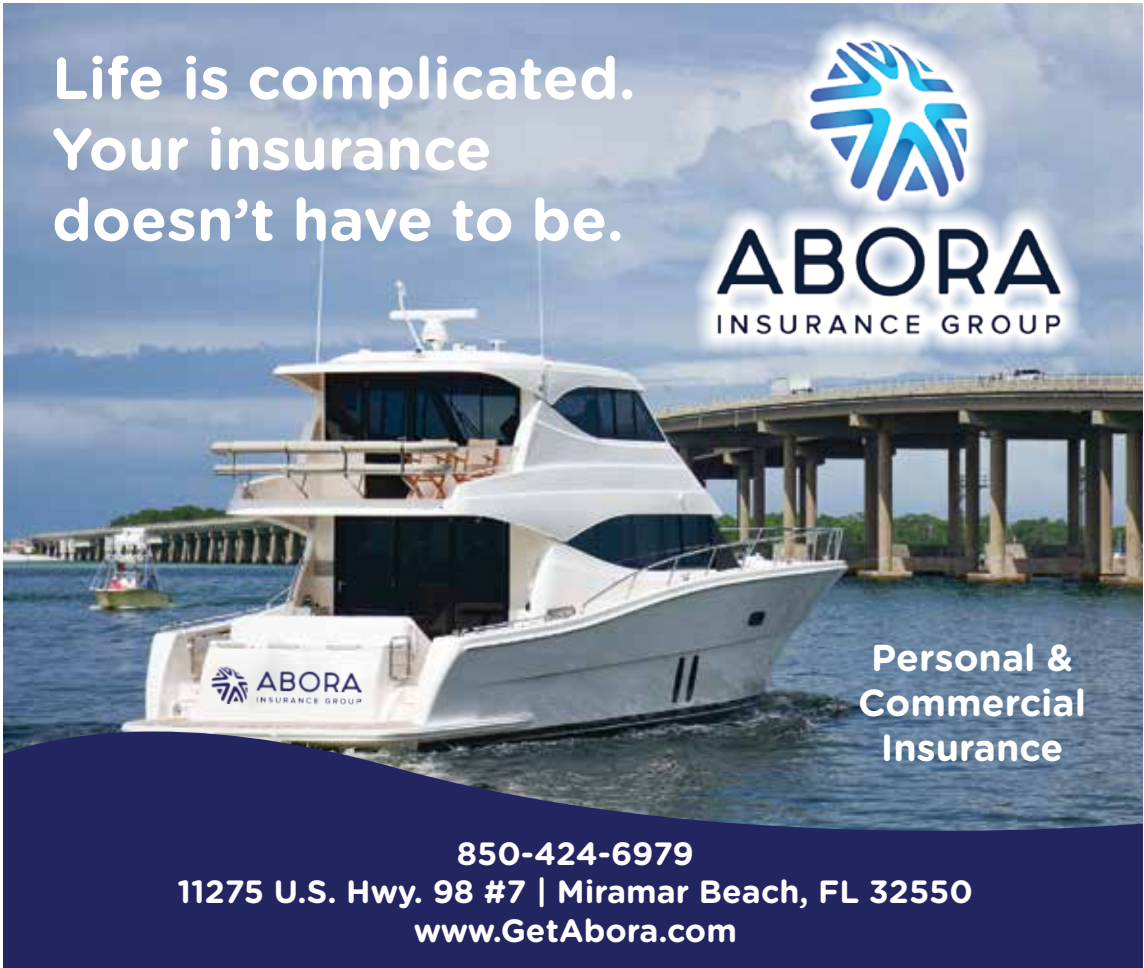
- Hide it: Never leave purses, electronics, or packages visible on a seat, put them in the trunk before you arrive, not after you park.
- Lock it: Lock every door, every time, even in your own driveway. Most car burglaries in Walton County involve an unlocked vehicle.
- Take it: Never leave keys or a fob in the car, even “just

- for a minute.”
- Park in well-lit areas and, where possible, off the street or behind a fence.
- Consider a steering wheel lock, kill switch, or GPS tracker for added protection.
- If you drive a hybrid or truck, ask a local shop about a catalytic converter shield, theft of these is rising again.

Life is complicated.
Your insurance
doesn't have to be.



ABORA
INSURANCE GROUP



Personal & Commercial Insurance

850-424-6979
11275 U.S. Hwy. 98 #7 | Miramar Beach, FL 32550
www.GetAora.com

 Community

Trends & Treasures!



Pet Personalities & Football Weekends, Perfectly Beaded Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

The end of summer may feel early for holiday shopping, but personalized gifts require a little extra time—and Frill Seekers Gifts has a memorable option for the pet lovers on your list.

The Beaded Pet Coin Purse transforms a favorite pet photo into a hand-beaded keepsake. Dogs, cats, horses and even bearded dragons have been featured! Mother-daughter co-founders Heidi and Peyton LoCicero and their team help customers select the bag and bead colors, add the pet's name in contrasting hues and create a custom accessory designed to spark conversation.

Choose from coin purses, wristlets or clutch handbags. For football weekends, shop clear stadium bags, beaded purse straps, game-day coin purses customized with a name and school colors, and football-themed entertaining pieces.

Because personalized and hand-beaded creations take time—game-day coin purses require approximately three to four weeks. So, order now. Free gift wrapping is available in-store.

Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

City Market Bayside, 4495 Furling Lane, Suite 130, Destin
(850) 460-2700
frillseekersgifts.com

A Fresh Look for the Season Ahead Pure & Couture Salon | Pure Collective Salon

A new school year, a fall event or a walk down the aisle can all inspire a fresh look. The talented hair and makeup artists at Pure

& Couture Salon and Pure Collective Salon help clients discover the styles and techniques that complement your individual features.

Makeup artists assess facial structure and highlight each client's best features. For hair, a loose style can create natural volume while soft waves frame the face. Other popular wedding looks include polished ponytails, beautiful braids and styles enhanced with extensions for added volume and length.

For brides, the team works with each client and her bridal party to bring the wedding-day vision to life, whether services are provided in the salon or on location. Available services for weddings, special events and seasonal refreshes include consultations, trial sessions, airbrush makeup, blowouts, lash extensions, spray tanning and hair extensions. Step into this season with “pure” confidence. Book today and experience the difference artistry makes.

(850) 424-3935

pureandcouture.com | purecollectivesalon.com

Pure Collective Salon: 600 Grand Blvd., Ste. 102

Sweeten the Back-to-School Season Smallcakes: A Cupcakery

Before summer slips away and school schedules take over, there's still time for a colorful celebration—and Smallcakes is ready to make it sweeter.

From flamingo-topped pool-party carrot cakes to piano-key cupcakes, every creation can be customized for life's sweetest moments. Stop by for 13 signature cupcake flavors, four rotating specialties, house-made ice cream, jumbo cookies, cookie cakes, brownies and even pupcakes for four-legged family members. August favorites

include tropical-inspired treats bursting with color and flavor.

Smallcakes can also add a sweet touch to back-to-school kickoff parties, faculty gatherings, team celebrations and teacher welcome gifts. Customize cakes, cupcakes or cookies with school colors, logos, photos or personal messages to make the start of the year feel extra special.

Planning a birthday, shower or corporate event? Smallcakes can create something memorable for those occasions, too. The mini 12-pack sampler offers a delicious way to try them all.

At Smallcakes, if you can dream it, they can cake it.

Mon.–Sat., 11 a.m.–7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

(850) 842-9002

SmallcakesDestin.com | @SmallCakesofDestin

A New Season Deserves a Little Sparkle Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry

August is a season of transitions, milestones and new beginnings—all wonderful reasons to add a little sparkle. At Beyond Measure Fine Jewelry, owner Ashleigh Woolly blends timeless elegance with fresh seasonal style. The showroom features one-of-a-kind, coastal-inspired pieces in vivid gemstone colors and cuts, perfect for marking a milestone, popping the question or elevating your everyday look.

Custom design is Ashleigh's specialty, who believes jewelry should be personal. From wedding bands and engagement rings to heirloom-worthy creations, she helps couples and clients celebrate life's biggest moments with jewelry that feels personal. The collection ranges from bold statement pieces to refined classics. After all, every romantic proposal starts with a custom engagement ring!

Visit the store for a curated, one-on-one shopping experience and discover—or create—something unforgettable.

Celebrate with the Summer Sale and receive 20% off with promo code Summer2026.

(850) 424-7011

Facebook.com/beyondmeasurejewelers

beyondmeasurejewelry.com

Start the School Year Strong CRYO850 Performance & Recovery Center

New schedules call for renewed focus, and CRYO850 Performance & Recovery Center is helping students and athletes begin the school year with an edge. The CRYO850 team works with coaches, trainers and parents—from middle school through college—to support wellness, encourage recovery and help reduce the risk of injury.

The Performance Center features Visionbody Wireless EMS Training and Reflexion Neuroscience Vision Training. EMS uses adjustable stimulation to support strength, mobility and fat-burning in a 20-minute session. The Reflexion Vision Board focuses on hand-eye coordination, reaction time, peripheral awareness and concentration. It can also establish individual performance baselines and provide useful information when monitoring recovery after an impact.

Full-time students under age 25 receive 40% off the Student Day Pass, which includes six Traditional Circuit services: whole-body cryotherapy, localized cryotherapy, red light therapy, compression therapy, infrared circuit sauna and vibration plates. These services are available on a walk-in, first-come basis, making them easier to fit around changing school, practice and game schedules.

Send CRYO850 a direct message on Facebook or Instagram, call, schedule a team night or organize a team fundraiser.

(850) 279-4145

cryo850.com

Follow @CRYO850

The Perfect Place for Your Next Chapter Might Be Closer Than You Think Be On The Coast™ Real Estate Group

Brian K. Locicero, REALTOR® | BeOnTheCoast.com

Those of us who live here already know what makes Destin and the Emerald Coast special. The question isn't always whether to move to the coast—it may be how to make coastal living fit your next stage of life.

Perhaps you're ready to downsize, move closer to family, find a neighborhood that better suits your lifestyle or purchase an investment property. You may even be searching for a nearby home for parents who are ready to retire where the rest of the family already lives.

The qualities locals enjoy every day also make this area appealing for the long term: a mild climate that encourages outdoor living, access to local physicians and regional hospitals, convenient airports for visiting family, and year-round community events and activities. Florida also has no state income tax on Social Security benefits, pensions or 401(k) income.

Whether your next move takes you across town, into a neighboring community or simply closer to the lifestyle you want, Brian Locicero can help you find the property and neighborhood that feel like the right fit.

brian@beonthecoast.com

(850) 739-3800

BeOnTheCoast.com

FWC Recognizes Several Landowners Across The Panhandle For Wildlife Conservation Efforts

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is recognizing several individuals for their outstanding wildlife habitat management in northwest Florida.

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

The FWC is recognizing the following landowners for implementing a variety of conservation practices to restore and enhance wildlife habitat on their property for both game and non-game wildlife species:

- Charles Livingston of Gadsden County with Crossbow Land Company LLC
- Steve and Susan Roeser of Holmes County with The

- Woodland Springs Farm
 - Gary Breilmayer and Family of Okaloosa County with Good-Mayer LLC
 - Calvin Robinson of Okaloosa County with The Fleming Creek Farm
 - Edwin Henry of Okaloosa County with the Welannee Plantation
 - Brett Wilson and Family of Walton County with Limestone Creek Farms
 - Gary Johnson and Family of Walton County with Square-J Farm
- “We’re recognizing these landowners for their enduring commitment to the ecosystem and its wildlife, plants and animals,” said Ed O’Daniels, FWC Private Lands Regional Coordinator. “Through their stewardship and dedication, they have helped preserve these natural resources not only for themselves, but for future generations to enjoy and benefit from them. Recognizing and supporting



PHOTO BY FAITH FLAWN
Gary Johnson, Square J Farm FWC

responsible landowners is essential, as their commitment to stewardship helps protect biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem health, and preserve the natural heritage we leave to future generations.”

The aforementioned landowners range in their experience, as some have a few years of land stewardship and others,

several decades. The commendable practices of this group are many, and include longleaf pine replanting, prescribed burning, hardwood tree management, the establishment of a family tree farm, the introduction of pollinator-friendly plants, and the development of wildlife openings. The combined efforts of these varied land management initiatives have significantly benefited a wide range of local species, including bobwhite quail, turkeys, gopher tortoises, white-tailed deer and fox squirrels. Additionally, members of this group have accolades that extend beyond the FWC, as it includes recipients of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Stewardship Forest Certification and the National Wild Turkey Federation Wild Turkey Woodlands Recognition Program.

The FWC’s Landowner Assistance Program offers a written management plan to guide landowners interested in

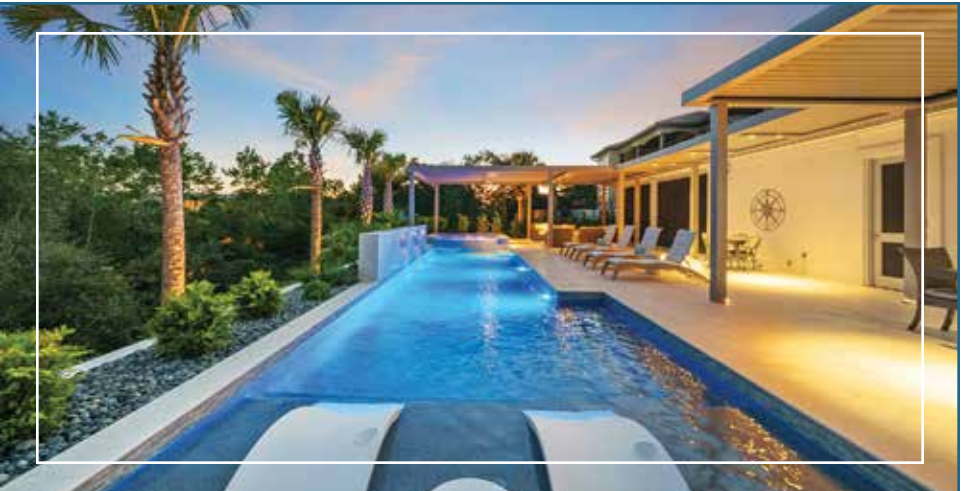
working toward meeting the requirements for the Wildlife Habitat Recognition Program. Interested landowners of 20 acres or more can apply online. For more information, visit MyFWC.com/LAP and click on “Landowner Recognition Programs.”

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



EMERALD COAST POOLS

Build Your Dream Pool



Elevate Your Outdoor Space

Custom Designed Pools & Spas

Emerald Coast Pools designs and builds custom pools with a commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, and personalized service.

Pool Renovation Services

Pool Resurfacing • Tile Installation • Structural Damage Equipment Replacement • Spa and Jacuzzi Additions Deck Repair or Replace • Paver Installation & Repair Saltwater Conversions • Pool Heating Systems Outdoor Kitchens • Fire Pit Installations

 Community

Wellness in Your Home

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE,
WWW.ASUPERIORMECHANICAL.COM

One of the fastest growing wellness trends, growing at a rate of nearly 24% per year, is a thought-provoking sector known as Wellness Real Estate. It represents a cultural and economic shift, where homes are no longer seen as just shelters but as infrastructure meant to actively enhance health span, mental wellbeing, and longevity. It is a design and development trend that integrates neuroscience and architecture. It features ergonomic spaces for movement and mindfulness: dedicated spaces for cold plunges, saunas, daily fitness and yoga, mental relaxation, and meditation.

Wellness Real Estate creates environments in the home that support brain health, reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and promote overall wellbeing. Here are eight elements:

Circadian Lighting - Mimics the natural progress of sunlight. Think: cooler, brighter lights in the morning to boost energy, and warmer, dimmer lighting in the evening that supports better sleep.

Aromatic Design - Approaches fragrance as environmental neuroscience to elevate mood, cognitive function, and health. This built-in diffusion system of essential oils is inte-



grated directly into the HVAC system. Think eucalyptus in the home gym; lavender in the bedroom.

Acoustic Insulation - Reduces sensory overload and mental fatigue through sound-masking and noise-dampening architectural materials.

Biophilic Design - Incorporates aromatic plants and herbs directly into the architecture, which allows for natural, plant-based fragrances and helps with air purification.

Low VOC Paint (Volatile Organic Compound) - Emits fewer hazardous airborne chemicals and odors ~ especially important for the bedrooms



of family members with allergies.

EMF Home Shielding - Electro Magnetic Fields affect our nervous system regulation, leading to bad sleep. Modify your living environment with shielding fabrics and conductive paint to reduce EMF from outside sources like cell towers.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) - Indoor air is estimated to be 2x to 5x more polluted than outdoor air. Toxic microparticles include VOCs from paints, cleaning supplies and air fresheners. Biological pollutants such as mold, mildew, pet dander and pollen. Combustion pollutants like carbon monoxide (CO) and secondhand smoke. And Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can build up in homes.

Most AC companies use the standard, high-efficient Merve 13 filter that captures 98% of airborne, fine microparticles, but for truly clean air in the

home, an Air Scrubber is essential. These advanced, whole-home air purification systems are installed directly into the central air ductwork and utilize activated carbon filters to capture 99.98% of airborne contaminants.

Water Purification and Water Softening - Who doesn't want to drink pure water that tastes and smells good? Reverse Osmosis uses a semi-permeable membrane to remove harmful contaminants from drinking water. Whole-home water softening treatments remove hard chemicals from the water - namely calcium and magnesium - and scale build-up in the pipes - to preserve the home's entire plumbing system and appliances like sinks, dishwasher, and washing machine. Soft water also feels silkier on the skin, is better for your hair, and requires less soap, shampoo and laundry detergent to achieve the same lather.

comes from the Upper Floridan Aquifer. In Bay County, the water comes through the Aquafer into Deer Point Lake. Through environmental runoff and treatment processes, local water contains elements including Chlorine, Copper, Aluminum, Barium, Radium, Nitrate, Blue-Green Algae, and Cyanobacteria which, if ingested, can affect our liver and nervous system. When we do a Water Assessment in a home or business, we are looking for not more than one part per million (PPM) of any of these common toxins.

"Wellness in the Home" embraces a variety of facets, including carefully designed architecture, distinct materials utilized in the home construction process, and placing special systems in the home to optimize Clean Air and Pure Water - the very essence of our bodily health and mental wellbeing. For more information on increasing wellness in your home, feel free to call me at (850) 814-3822.

What's in Our Local Water?

Our primary source of water for the entire Florida Panhandle



Free Water Assessment

What is in your home's water?

The water you: ■ Drink ■ Bathe in ■ Wash Dishes ■ Wash Clothes

A Superior Mechanical will come do a Free Water Assessment in your home or business. Call us by July 31, 2026.

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE WATER ASSESSMENT: CALL 850-258-3225



SPECIALIZED WATER SOLUTIONS



Stay Cool As A Cucumber
SUPERIOR MECHANICAL
Veteran Owned Business
850.258.3225

VISIT ASuperiorMechanical.com
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR
WATER FILTRATION, REVERSE
OSMOSIS & WATER SOFTENERS.

LICENSED & INSURED: CAC1821064, CFC1431881, EC13004739

Rotary Club of Destin

4TH ANNUAL SANDY BAGS

"Bags on the Porch" CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY SEPT. 12, 2026
9AM - 2PM
THE BACK PORCH DESTIN, FL

BENEFITING FORE her™
Supporting Women Strengthening Futures and other local Rotary initiatives



PRESENTING SPONSOR
Okaloosa Gas District

REGISTER TODAY!

BAGGIN' RIGHTS	TOSS BOSS	CORN STARS	T-SHIRT
SPONSOR \$900	SPONSOR \$500	SPONSOR \$150	SPONSOR \$150
1 INCLUDES CUSTOM CORNHOLE BOARDS OR YETI COOLER 1 BUSINESS LOGO OR EVENT T-SHIRT 1 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS PROMOTING SUPPORT 1 2 TEAMS IN TOURNAMENT (4 PEOPLE) 1 4 EVENT SHIRTS	1 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS PROMOTING SUPPORT 1 1 TEAM IN TOURNAMENT (2 PEOPLE) 1 2 EVENT T-SHIRTS	1 1 TEAM IN TOURNAMENT (2 PEOPLE) 1 2 EVENT T-SHIRTS	1 COMPANY LOGO ON EVENT SHIRTS
			

SCAN TO REGISTER

HELPING LOCAL WOMEN FACING BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL SUPPORT! DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIP REQUESTS ON THE SPONSOR CARD!

<https://tinyurl.com/sandybags2026>

LEARN MORE OR DONATE! FOREHER.ORG

More Than a Crossing: How the Inlet Beach Underpass is Reconnecting a Community

By BOBBY PARKER

As the sun begins to set in Inlet Beach, a different kind of traffic now moves beneath Highway 98.

Families stroll toward dinner with sandy feet and beach towels draped over their shoulders. Cyclists coast through the underpass on their way to evening reservations at 30Avenue. Students laugh as they walk together toward the beach during the school day. What was once a stressful crossing dominated by speeding traffic has quietly transformed into something far more meaningful. A connection point for everyday life in South Walton.

For years, Highway 98 served as both a gateway and a barrier for Inlet Beach.

On the south side of the highway sat the beaches, Scenic Highway 30A, and the coastal lifestyle that has long defined the area. North of the highway, neighborhoods, restaurants, and gathering spaces continued to grow as Inlet Beach evolved into one of the fastest-growing communities in Walton County. Despite being separated by only a few lanes of traffic, the two sides often felt disconnected from one another.

Crossing Highway 98 on foot or by bike was possible, but it rarely felt comfortable or inviting. Families loaded bicycles onto cars for short trips. Visitors staying north of the highway often drove to the beach rather than walking. Those staying south of the highway rarely ventured north without getting behind the wheel.

The completion of the Inlet

Beach Underpass has begun changing that dynamic in ways that are both visible and deeply personal to the community.

What was once simply a transportation challenge has become an example of how thoughtful infrastructure can reshape the way people experience a place. The underpass is no longer just a route beneath a highway. It has become part of the daily rhythm of Inlet Beach itself.

Few people have had a clearer view of that shift than Bryan Corr, developer of 30Avenue.

"Traffic into 30Avenue was not limited by the highway," Corr said. "But more people chose to drive instead of bike or walk."

That distinction gets to the heart of why the underpass matters. The challenge was never simply access. It was the experience of moving through the community safely and comfortably outside of a vehicle.

Today, Corr says visitors and residents alike are beginning to embrace a different pace and a different way of experiencing Inlet Beach.

"We are seeing more pedestrian and bike traffic since the underpass opened," he said. "The visitors to the area are beginning to discover the safer option of crossing the highway."

The impact is showing up in ways both large and small.

Students from Ohana Institute now regularly walk through the underpass to access nearby beach areas during school hours for recreation. Families staying north of the highway are biking south for beach days without



loading everyone into a car. Visitors staying south of Highway 98 are now crossing north to shop, dine, and explore places they may never have previously

considered visiting on foot.

What once felt like two separate parts of Inlet Beach is beginning to feel connected again.

That transformation is also

being felt by businesses throughout 30Avenue. Corr says one of the clearest signs of the underpass' success has come directly from tenants themselves.

"Tenants have requested more bike parking areas to reduce the number of bikes parked by their front door," he said.

It is a small detail, but one that says a great deal about how daily behavior is changing. Rows of bicycles outside restaurants on a warm evening tell a more meaningful story than traffic counts ever could. They represent people choosing

Continued on next page

MUSIC AT CHRIST THE KING FALL 2026 SERIES

Roman Street
Sunday, August 23 | 3:00PM
www.romanstreet.com



Musical Conversation:
Sacred Harp History & Practice
Saturday, August 29 | 1:00PM



Emerald Coast Community Singers
Celebration of American Music
Sunday, September 13 | 3:00 PM
www.emeraldcoastcommunitysingers.com



Spotlight on Community Musicians: Spooky & Blessed Music Concert for Halloween & All Saints Day
Sunday, November 1 | 3:00PM



Studio 237 Recitals
Saturday, December 5
10:30AM & 1:00PM



Emerald Coast Community Singers
Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
Sunday, December 13 | 3:00PM



All concerts free • Donations welcomed



480 N County Hwy 393
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

For details of concerts and events,
visit Christ the King Music Ministries
at www.christthekingfl.org



Sliding Glass Doors Hard to Open?
Dont Replace It, We Can Fix It!

Fast and Affordable Repairs
FREE ESTIMATES! Fully Insured

- Roller Replacement
- Track Maintenance
- Locks & Handles
- Highest Quality Parts

850-987-5433

www.BeachsideSlide.com

BEACHSIDE SLIDING GLASS DOOR MAINTENANCE, LLC.



South Walton Beach Safety Lieutenant Earns "Soldier of the Year" Title

BY MACKENZIE MCCLINTOCK,
SWFD PUBLIC INFORMATION
OFFICER

When the Army National Guard set out to find its best soldier, they found one of South Walton's own. Brandon Brown, a Beach Safety Lieutenant for the South Walton Fire District, has been named the 2026 Army National Guard Soldier of the Year.

Brown earned the title during the 2026 Best Warrior Competition, held at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. The prestigious competition brought together high-performing Soldiers from across the United States to determine the National Guard's top service members.

Through four demanding

days, competitors completed more than 25 physically and mentally challenging events designed to evaluate every aspect of military readiness. The competition tested physical fitness, marksmanship, land navigation, tactical proficiency, leadership, and decision-making under pressure, all while soldiers were enduring Florida's triple-digit heat index.

"This recognition speaks to Brandon's character more than anything else," said South Walton Fire District Fire Chief Ryan Crawford. "No matter which uniform he's wearing, he leads by example and represents this District with professionalism and integrity. We're incredibly proud of him and all he's



accomplished. This sort of service and performance is simply exceptional."

Brown advanced to the national competition after winning company, state, and regional-level Best Warrior competi-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND THE BROWN FAMILY.

tions, earning the opportunity to represent Florida on the national stage.

Within South Walton Fire District, Brown serves as a Beach Safety Lieutenant and Director of the Junior Lifeguard Program, where he leads efforts to educate local youth in open water safety, surf lifesaving skills, and leadership. He is also a certified drone pilot and serves

as a mentor to the lifeguards under his supervision.

"Whether he's mentoring and coaching others, protecting visitors on our beaches, or performing in his military role, Brandon approaches every responsibility with humility, discipline, and a genuine desire to serve," Crawford added. "We strive to hire and retain this level of leadership within our Beach Safety Division, and this speaks volumes to what our lifeguards are capable of achieving."

South Walton Fire District congratulates Lieutenant Brown on this remarkable achievement and extends its support to all the Soldiers who competed in the 2026 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

INLET BEACH

continued from previous page

to slow down, spend more time outdoors, and experience South Walton in a more connected and active way.

For Corr, that shift aligns naturally with the vision behind 30Avenue and the larger culture of the area itself.

"A healthy lifestyle is part of the overall vitality of 30A," he said. "People love to get out and

walk and bike."

One of the biggest changes he has noticed is the rise in what he calls "bike to dinner" traffic at night as visitors and locals move between the beach communities south of the highway and the restaurants and businesses north of it.

The underpass itself also reflects a larger vision for how infrastructure can enhance community character rather than detract from it. Organizations

like Scenic Walton have long advocated for thoughtful and context-sensitive solutions that improve safety and connectivity while preserving the pedestrian-friendly nature and scenic beauty of South Walton. Rather than viewing the project as simply a transportation improvement, the focus remained on how it could strengthen quality of life and help maintain a sense of community as growth continues across the area.

That vision was further elevated through the involvement of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County, whose contribution helped transform the underpass into something far more inviting than a standard pedestrian tunnel. Public art and placemaking elements create a space that feels welcoming, creative, and reflective of the coastal community surrounding it. Instead of rushing through a dark concrete corridor, pedes-

trians and cyclists now move through a space that feels intentionally designed for people.

For Corr, the larger impact of the project ultimately comes down to unity.

"Inlet Beach 10 years ago was a tale of two towns, the North and the South," he said.

That divide is beginning to fade as safer and more convenient access changes the way people move throughout the community.

"Now that safer and convenient access across the highway is available, we are starting to see more vacationers staying on the North side, and those staying on the South side are biking and walking north to shop and dine."

The true success of the Inlet Beach Underpass may not be measured only in safety improvements or traffic patterns. Its greatest impact may be found in the ordinary moments now unfolding every day beneath Highway 98. Children walking to the beach. Couples biking to dinner at sunset. Families exploring more of the community together without needing to load into a car.

For a place that once felt divided by the highway running through its center, those moments are helping Inlet Beach feel connected again.



Local, professional photographer specializing in families, weddings, and events. My passion lies in creating lasting memories through photographs, and I cherish the opportunity to be part of such meaningful moments!



205-567-2779
savvyleighphotography@gmail.com
www.savvyleighphoto.com





Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Announces 2026 Amateur Photo Contest Winners

The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) has announced the winners of its 2026 Amateur Photo Contest, part of the Mattie Kelly Environmental Initiative. Launched earlier this year, the contest challenged amateur photographers of all skill levels to capture the natural beauty and ecological heritage of the Choctawhatchee Bay and the surrounding Northwest Florida region.

April: Sarah Brock
May: John Cooper
June: Jessica Temple
July: Jennifer Pawlik
August: Anna Brotzman
September: Whitney Walker – 3rd Place Winner
October: Richard S. Ives
November: Richard S. Ives – 1st Place Winner
December: Randal R. Ketchem – 2nd Place Winner

grams, can be found at basinalliance.org.

Mark Your Calendar:
Family Bay Day Returns
September 26

Community members will have another chance to cele-

brate the Bay this fall at the annual Mattie Kelly Family Bay Day, set for Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park. The free, family-friendly event features exploration stations,

hands-on learning activities, and the always-popular fish printing, giving kids and adults alike the chance to connect with the bay up close. The only cost is the park's standard \$5 per vehicle entrance fee.



Twelve winning images, one for each month, will appear in the 2026 Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Photo Contest Calendar, offering a year-long look at the Basin through the eyes of local photographers:
January: Bill Horn
February: David Bailey
March: David Bailey

“These images are a reminder that people are paying attention to this watershed, and that connection is exactly what keeps it protected,” said Alison McDowell, Executive Director of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance.
Winning photos, along with more on CBA’s ongoing pro-

CHECK OUT OUR NEWLY RENOVATED LOCATION!



GET OUT. GET ACTIVE. BE INSPIRED. LIVE YOUR PASSION.

Silver Sands Premium Outlets



 Community

Summer Freshwater Fishing on the Panhandle



By HELEN PETRE

Florida is the fishing capital

of the world, and the panhandle offers an incredible diversity of fishing experiences. Our emerald green, clear water, and white sand beaches provide a productive surf fishing experience, and our fresh and brackish water offer land and kayak fishing. Then, of course there is

offshore redfish, which is the life experience we all dream about.

Thankfully, though, you do not need a boat to surf fish or freshwater fish. Surf fishing for pompano is fun in spring, but as beaches get crowded and hot, freshwater fishing offers an alternative that requires little



Male redear sunfish guarding eggs. Wikipedia.

more than a pole and bait and is cooler and quieter.

One of a child's most memorable experiences is often that first fish catch. It is an experience that can lead to a lifetime of conservation and sportsmanship and teach skill, independence, achievement and respect for nature. Kids who learn to fish, and adults who learn skills, are self-confident and dependable. Now is a great time for a family fishing experience.

er, which flows southwest from Alabama.

Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)

Besides bass, the Panhandle is an exciting place to fish for sunfish, bluegill (or bream, or brim) are the most common summer sunfish. They are fun to catch and great to eat. These are panfish with vertical stripes. Bluegill live in rivers, streams, springs, and lakes. They spawn in summer, building nests in shallow water on sandy bottoms. Nests are in groups of about 35; a collection of shallow, scooped out areas all together in one area. The male makes the nest, invites the female to lay her eggs, and fertilizes them. Then the father to be guards the eggs until they hatch, in a week or so.

Bluegill eat mostly insects, but worms are the most successful bait. Use a small #6 hook with a split shot sinker about six inches up the line.

Another Panfish: Redear Sunfish

Redear sunfish are popular sportfish, sometimes called shellcrackers. They look like bluegill, but are slightly larger, and have a distinctive red mark on the gill cover. At home in warm water of lakes, streams, and ponds, redear sunfish live in the vegetated areas near logs, often in groups. In warm weather, they sometimes congregate around lily pads.

Redear favorite foods are snails, clams, and mussels, hence the name shellcracker. Redear crush the shell, eat the meat, and spit out the shell fragments.

Males make nests in groups, in somewhat deeper water than

What Will You Catch?

Largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

Largemouth bass is the most popular gamefish in North America, and Florida's freshwater fish. Bass is everyone's favorite warm water fish. Bass are really fun to catch because they put up a good fight. Largemouth bass spawn in spring, and are easier to catch then, but summer is still a good time to catch them in lakes, rivers, and ponds. They prefer vegetated shorelines and live for ten years in the wild.

Bass are carnivores. In the wild, they eat fish, mollusks, and insects. The best live bait is a golden shiner hooked through the lips with a large hook (2 to #5). Use a medium rod with 14-to-20-pound test line. If using artificial bait, plastic worms work well.

Adult bass are apex predators, but young are prey for herons, larger bass, and catfish.

Catch bass in the Choctawhatchee River, accessible from Ebro, and the backwater lakes that surround the river, or fish in Holmes Creek, a spring fed tributary of the river. Bass are plentiful in the Yellow Riv-

BOOTH SPACE SELLING OUT FAST

for the Largest and Best TWO-DAY Business Event in NorthWest Florida



Saturday & Sunday • October 10th & 11st, 2026
at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center



CLICK HERE TO REGISTER
OR FOR MORE INFO

SPONSORED BY  AND THE FOLLOWING AWESOME BUSINESS OWNERS

Mention You Saw This Ad in Life Media and Receive A 10% DISCOUNT on Your Booth Space



To Become a Vendor or Sponsor in This Great Event - Contact
Wes Fell (Event Promoter) at 850-353-2832 or WesFell@Cox.Net
More Info & Registration Form at www.ParadisePromotionsfl.com

This is Another Great Paradise Promotion



New Service - Crab Island Express

Easiest, Most Affordable, and Fun way to Crab Island - \$69

(plus taxes and fees)

When the sun is out, and the water is pretty, hop on a pink tiki boat for a crab island adventure with family and friends. See 20% discount coupon in back of paper.

2 hr Open Party trip, max of 14 passengers • Mondays / Wednesdays / Thursdays / Sundays
Tikis Depart Top of the Hour 11am / 12 noon / 1 pm / 2 pm

B.Y.O.B. - Bottled water provided • Upscale Tiki Boat with a restroom, music, and water toys

Offered by Destin Private Tiki

Located on the Destin Harbor Boardwalk, at Heron Harbor Marina, 314 Harbor Blvd, Destin

Ph: 850-424-1119 | www.DestinTiki.com

Locals: Ask about the Locals Only Unlimited Access Pass

Only \$40 / mo plus taxes and fees x 12 mo.

You and free guest. Available exclusively to residents of Okaloosa and Walton Counties.
See details for limitations and restrictions. Call Michelle 850-424-1119.

Continued on next page

Family Medicine Residency Program Reaches Full Capacity; Expands Community Healthcare Access

The Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Family Medicine Residency program has hit a major goal. As of July 1, the program is officially at full capacity with 18 resident doctors. This means the program has reached its plan to have six residents per class for each of its three training years.

"We are ecstatic to work together to create more access to healthcare," said Holly Holt, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Walton County. "We are grateful for these partnerships that have

made it a reality."

A big part of this success comes from a special partnership. The resident doctors get their hands-on training at the Walton Community Health Center. This facility is owned and run by the Florida Department of Health in Walton County. This partnership is the foundation of the residents' training. From their very first day, the residents are responsible for their own patients. This allows them to build long-term relationships and provide the kind of consistent care that local

families rely on.

To keep up with the growing number of doctors and the high demand for healthcare, the residency program has gotten creative with the space. They moved office space into shared office spaces, converted the residents workspace into a place for nurses to chart and moved residents to a conference room with workstations. This will allow for the addition of four brand-new clinic rooms, including an integrative health room that will focus on mental health and osteopathic adjustments. Once

the renovations are complete, the total number of exam rooms will be 12. This change allows the clinic to run more smoothly and see more patients.

"Our goal is to blend service with education," said Joshua A. Hodge, MD, Program Director, Florida State University Family Medicine Residency at Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast. "By expanding our space and our resident team, we are doing more than just training doctors. We are filling a real gap in healthcare for the people of Walton County."

The impact will be significant. With 18 residents working and the new clinic spaces, the program will be able to handle 400 more appointments every month. That brings the clinic's total capacity to about 900 appointments each month. This is a huge help for the local area, especially since nearly 70% of the patients at the clinic do not have insurance. Without these extra appointments, many people might not get the preventative care they need, which would force them to rely on emergency rooms for help.

FISHING

continued from previous page

bluegill, lure in females, and induce them to lay eggs by making a popping sound. The female produces thousands of eggs, and then moves on to find another male, while the male fertilizes and fans the eggs to remove sediment and provide oxygen for a week until hatch. First year growth is about five inches. After that, fish grow about an inch a year.

Redear are caught most often on worms, small shrimp, or jig heads, with small hooks (6 to #10). Use small spinning rods with two-to-four-pound test. Redear are good fighting, good eating fish.

Warmouth (*L. gulosus*)

Warmouth are like other panfish, but they have a red eye and a large mouth. There are dark lines radiating from the eye that look like war paint, hence the name. Warmouth swim in swampy, still, darker water than other sunfish. They spawn all summer building solitary nests next to submerged objects. Warmouth eat crayfish, insects, and fish, mostly in the morning. They are ambush predators, hiding in vegetation and then aggressively attacking prey. They appear to sleep at night.

The same baits and lures work for warmouth as for other sun-



Warmouth. Wikipedia.

fish, just in muddy waters.

Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

Catfish are hard pulling fish that live deeper in lakes and are active after sunset. Chicken and beef liver, and worms are good baits because catfish smell to find food in the dark lake bottoms. Catfish have taste buds all over their bodies to help them locate food, but they do not eat decaying materials or detritus. They eat crayfish and mollusks.

Males become darker, with dark lips, and a swollen head, while females become lighter during the summer spawning season.

Adults are 20 inches long. Meat is white, crisp, tender, and tasty. Catfish are for eating. Fish on the bottom with a sturdy #2 to #4 hook, and a heavy split shot sinker. FWC stocks catfish in Juniper Lake, Walton County.

Where to Fish?

Sunfish are in any year-round rivers, streams, backwaters, and ponds, with larger fish in larger



water bodies. The Yellow and Choctawhatchee Rivers are sure to please. Fish where tributaries enter the larger rivers, especially Holmes Creek, a spring fed tributary of the Choctawhatchee. Sunfish love cover. Anywhere around logs, stumps, vegetation, or stuff in the water is where they are.

Juniper Lake, in Walton County, is periodically stocked with catfish and bass, bream, and crappie. Bass may be a bit farther

out in colder water in summer, and catfish are on the bottom.

Simon Horaist, owner of Dixie's Yards and More in DeFuniak Springs (pictured left), caught this four and half pound largemouth on Juniper Lake in May.

Florida summers are hot, but the fish still bite. Opportunities for freshwater fishing abound. This is the perfect time for family fun, but teaching children

to fish is more than fun. It is an education in patience, skill, and achievement. You are making memories, but you are also developing an appreciation for nature and encouraging responsibility for protection of the environment. Family fishing produces self-confident, persistent, capable, analytical people. Go outside and enjoy the Florida Panhandle.

Helen Petre is a retired biologist. Any ideas or suggestions for articles about nature, wild things, and science, please email: petrehelen@gmail.com.

FLORIDA MEDICAL CARD

Elevate Your Wellness in 2025 with Kaya Life!

Cannabis Consultations for a Healthier, Happier You!

SCAN ME TO BOOK A VISIT!

KAYA LIFE CANNABIS CLINICIANS

www.thekayalife.com 850-233-1235

30A HOT TUBS

- Made in USA
- Installations & Removals
- Crane Services Available

30A
HOT TUBS

- Free Delivery
- Cover & Steps Included
- 120 or 240 Volt

(850) 830-0003

30AHOTTUBS.COM | 33 Private Court, Miramar Beach, FL

VISIT US ON THE WEB
SOUTHWALTON.LIFE

Create and Highlight the Good



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG,
JOURNEY BRAVELY

I was enjoying some sunshine and air show aviation when two adult drunk guys proceeded to fist fight and roll their tent onto our chairs and umbrella. Later, I noticed a mom struggling to both carry beach bags and her crying toddler. Then, a kind stranger walked her bags to her car so she could carry her child. Then, I saw 3 people get out of their cars to check on a woman who fell on a bike. Shortly after, a kind couple helped my son carry a cooler. When I recounted these events to my husband, it struck me that what I emphasized most was the unpleasant and irritating fist fight.

Why is it so much easier to focus on bad behavior than good? Negativity is often louder and more attention grabbing than goodness. We like to feel

in control and when others are engaging in behavior outside of our values, it makes us feel out of control and our brain alerts us. Additionally, focusing on the negative behavior in others can let us off the hook because our behavior isn't as bad.

Generally, when things are going well, it is easy to overlook the good. We get up, get in our cars, go to work, interact with others, come home, all the while forgetting to notice the good warm sun, the good of having money for gas, the good of having meaningful work, the good of relationships that make us smile, and the good of a nice home at the end of the day. And while we are overlooking the good, our brains are scanning for danger and alerting us to bad drivers, a person who looks dangerous, the person yelling out the window in the parking lot, the mean person in the checkout line, the humidity, and people leaving trash on the beach.

Focusing on bad behavior over the good in life can leave us feeling we need to protect ourselves, become cynical, isolated, and embrace a negative mindset. The great news is our brains are trained through patterns of repetition so while brains naturally scan for danger, we can retrain our brains to recognize the



patterns of good in the world. And, when you begin to seek the good, you will find good happening all around. People are creating good donating time to pick up trash, sweep boardwalks, and fill in holes on the beach for sea turtles. People are creating good starting meal trains and Go Fund Me pages for those who need support.

Neighbors are creating good by mowing each others' lawns and buying baked goods from one another's children. Volunteers are creating good serving in food pantries and clothing closets for those who could use some community support.

We cannot control the drunk brawlers on the beach, but we

can control how we show up in the world. We get to decide if we will create and highlight the good. We get to decide if we will go out of our way and inconvenience ourselves to create more good in the world. So, how do you shift more focus to the good?

5 Ways to Create and Highlight the Good

Pay attention. Notice when you are annoyed and why. Notice when you are inspired by others doing good and how that feels. Notice your responses in both scenarios. Which are you giving more energy and attention?

Shift energy. When you notice yourself giving more attention to bad than good, say to yourself, "I want to give more energy to noticing and creating goodness." Seek justice in helpful ways when appropriate and when it's not, let go of your righteous indignation and put your energy where it counts.

Watch. Look for opportunities to create good even when it inconveniences you. Do something kind and unexpected for someone in your home. Find

a way to be a good and kind neighbor. Seek ways to create goodness in the larger world. Be creative and have fun with creating goodness.

Name goodness. When you see goodness, talk about it with others. Tell someone their goodness inspired you. Practice naming good things in your life daily.

Repeat until it's a habit. Choose a day each week to create good. Fold goodness creating practice into something you do each week like going to the grocery store or grabbing coffee. Connect creating goodness with specific times like holidays. Put reminders in your phone until it becomes second nature.

The world can feel dark and frustrating at times. And, regular people doing simple good things really does make a transformational difference. Enjoy creating some good and invite others to join you. To connect with us along your growth journey, find us at Journeybravely.com.



Look Healthy, Feel Alive!

Personalized Hormone & Wellness Care

At The Hormone Restoration Center, we help you restore balance, energy, and confidence through personalized, science-backed care—designed for your body and your life.

Bio-Identical Hormone Therapy • Thyroid Optimization • Weight Loss • Anti-Aging & Aesthetics

Miramar Beach, Florida
850-837-1271
thehormonerestorationcenter.com

**BEST IN DESTIN**



Dr. Chern, MD,
Sue Griffin, ARNP
Presley Pulse, APRN





JOURNEY BRAVELY



Stephenie Craig, LCSW
Therapist
918-221-9987 | stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com

Todd Craig
Life & Leadership Coach
918-740-1232 | todd@journeybravely.com

www.journeybravely.com

Not 65 Yet? Here's Your Bridge to Health Coverage



By CHRISTIAN REGALADO

I hear a version of the same story every year from some of my clients. A spouse retires, enrolls in Medicare, and the other spouse loses coverage they'd relied on for years. They look at the ACA Marketplace, see the sticker price, and decide to go without insurance rather than pay it. Then open enrollment closes, and they feel stuck. If that's you, take a breath. You have more options than you probably realize, and a few

things have changed for the better this year.

The first thing worth knowing is that you may still have a path back to an ACA plan. Losing coverage because your spouse aged into Medicare counts as a qualifying life event, opening a sixty-day Special Enrollment Period to sign up for a Marketplace plan outside the regular fall window. If that window has closed, the next option is the standard Open Enrollment Period, which runs November 1 through January 15 in most states, Florida included. Before you assume you've missed your chance, it's worth having me check your specific timeline.

The bigger piece of news is that short-term health insurance has become more useful again. For the past couple of years, federal rules limited these plans to four months total, a poor fit for anyone facing a longer gap. In August of 2025, federal reg-

ulators stopped enforcing those limits while they reconsider the rule, and insurers in many states, Florida included, can once again offer plans with longer terms, some stretching up to twelve months with the ability to renew for up to three years depending on the carrier. Unlike ACA plans, short-term medical can be purchased any time of year, so there's no enrollment window to miss in the first place.

I want to be upfront about what these plans are and what they are not. Short-term medical is available to people ages 18 to 64, so it fits squarely in that window between losing employer coverage and reaching Medicare eligibility yourself. Short-term plans are medically underwritten, meaning your health history factors into whether you qualify and what you pay, and they don't have to follow ACA rules, which is part of why they cost less. There's no guarantee of cover-

age for pre-existing conditions, benefits like maternity care aren't required, and insurers can cap what they'll pay out over a year or a lifetime. One real advantage is how quickly coverage can begin, often within 24 hours after an injury or 7 days after the onset of an illness, which matters if you're closing a gap in a hurry. Many short-term medical plans are also offered as affordable PPO options, giving you more flexibility in which doctors and providers you can see. Still, I don't recommend them as a permanent replacement for comprehensive coverage, since comprehensive plans are guaranteed to renew regardless of your health, cover pre-existing conditions, and include essential benefits short-term plans aren't required to offer.

There's one other bridge option worth mentioning. Fixed indemnity plans pay a set cash benefit for a covered service or

hospital day, rather than a percentage of your actual costs, and pair well with Short Term Medical for stronger coverage.

I don't see myself as just an insurance broker. I see myself as an educator first, and my job is to make sure you understand your options and to help guide you toward a plan tailored to your needs.

My advice to anyone without health insurance is simple. Don't assume the door is closed just because open enrollment has passed. Give me a call, let's get your real numbers and compare a short-term bridge plan against what a subsidized Marketplace plan might actually cost. The math often looks different once someone runs it properly. I'd be happy to be that person for you.

Call me, Christian Regalado, at (850) 687-7606, or email christian@30ahealthins.com. You can find more on our website at www.30AHealthins.com.

GUT SPEAKS

continued from page 5

hand, or simply be present. Children often take emotional cues from the adults around them, and a calm presence can be incredibly grounding.

Encourage slow breathing. A simple technique such as box breathing can help calm the nervous system: inhale through the nose for four seconds, hold for four, exhale gently for four, and pause for four before repeating. Younger children may enjoy imagining they're smelling a flower on the inhale and slowly blowing out birthday candles on the exhale.

Offer a few small sips of water and allow the moment to slow down.

These simple steps aren't meant to replace medical care. They create an opportunity to observe whether symptoms be-

gin to settle while helping children reconnect with their bodies.

If stomachaches have happened around previous school years, don't wait until the first difficult morning to talk about them. A relaxed conversation a few days before school starts can go a long way.

Ask open-ended questions: "What are you most excited about this year?" "Is there anything you're a little nervous about?" "I remember your tummy bothering you before school last year. How are you feeling about going back?"

Sometimes children don't know exactly what's bothering them until they're given a safe space to think about it. If this has been a recurring pattern, consider letting your child's teacher or school staff know ahead of time. A little extra reassurance or simply having another trusted

adult aware of the situation can make the transition easier.

Supporting the whole child also means supporting healthy daily habits. Consistent sleep, balanced meals with protein and fiber, regular movement, outdoor play, hydration, and opportunities for meaningful conversation all help children adapt more effectively to change.

Not every stomachache is related to the nervous system, and it's important not to assume it is. If stomachaches become frequent, interfere with school or daily life, or are accompanied by concerning symptoms, reach

out to your child's pediatrician. They know your child's medical history and can help determine whether additional evaluation or treatment is needed.

Perhaps the most important takeaway is this: Symptoms are information.

Rather than asking only, "How do we make this go away?" it can be equally valuable to ask, "What might this symptom be trying to tell us?"

Sometimes the answer lies in the digestive system. Sometimes it's the nervous system adapting to change. Often, it's a combination of several factors.

As another school year begins, remember that children don't always have the words to explain what's happening inside. Sometimes the gut speaks first.

When families respond with curiosity instead of assumptions, they become better equipped to recognize when a child simply needs reassurance, when they may need a little extra support, and when it's time to partner with their pediatrician. Because every symptom has a story, and sometimes, listening is the first step toward understanding it.



Audiologist Dr. Mandy Rounseville-Norgaard
Accepting New Patients
850-517-6977

42 Business Centre Drive, Unit 306
Summit Building • Miramar Beach
Check us out on Facebook!

miramarbeachaudiologyassociates.com

• Path of Grace Thrift Stores •

RECOVERY THROUGH FAITH



Please Consider Donating to Support Women in Recovery and to Reunite Families

ITEMS NEEDED FOR STORE & MINISTRY:
Artwork — Paddle Boards — Vehicles — Kayaks — Apparel — Appliances — Boats
Jewelry — Household Goods — Furniture — Electronics
Come in to see our beautiful chalk painted furniture!

10962 U.S. Hwy. 98 W, Miramar Beach | 850-654-8500 Call for Pickup



Sean of the South: **Lightning Bugs**



BY SEAN DIETRICH

It's a quiet night in Avondale. The sun is low in the western sky. The air is lit with lightning bugs. There are a few neighborhood kids, playing in front yards, trying to catch them with Tupperware.

And the memories are getting so thick you have to swat them away like gnats.

I remember the first time I ever heard a lightning bug called a "firefly." I was 11 years old. A kid from California had recently moved into our neighborhood. He got excited when the front yards were alight with summer lightning bugs.

He said, "Look, fireflies!" All us kids looked at the new boy as though his cheese had slid off his cracker. Fireflies? "They're not fireflies," said Margaret Ann. "They're LIGHTNING BUGS."

Truer words. "No they're not," he answered. "They're FIREFLIES." "What the [expletive] is a firefly?" said my cousin, Ed Lee. "They're bugs that light up."

We howled with delight. My cousin Ed Lee almost peed himself. "Californians!" my cousin remarked.

Then the Californian went on to tell us he'd never seen lightning bugs before. He said they didn't have them in the Golden State. We were aghast. No lightning bugs? That was like not knowing Jesus. Or Dale Earnhardt.

"You've never seen lightning bugs?" we said in disbelief.

The Californian shook his head stating that, no, he'd never seen anything like these bugs with the iridescent hindparts.

Which gave us great pride.



Because, you see, ever since this Californian had come to our school, he immediately became the hippest kid in our hillbilly class.

Namely, because he had wavy blonde hair, a skateboard, and he knew what tofu was. And one time, for Show and Tell, the kid declared that he had gone surfing. The girls in the class went crazy for him and indicated that they would be interested in bearing his offspring someday.

But he'd never seen lightning bugs. And this made us very proud.

"Wanna catch lightning bugs?" suggested my cousin.

Replied the Californian, "You mean you can CATCH fireflies?"

"No," answered Cousin Ed Lee. "But you can catch lightning bugs."

So we raided my mother's kitchen cabinets. We emerged from the house with Ball mason jars—something else the Cali-

fornian had never seen before.

"These are funny-looking jars," he said. "And they have funny lids."

"These are moonshine jars," said Margaret.

"What's moonshine?" said the Californian.

You have to worry about America's youth.

The next thing we knew, we were all outside, using mason jars the way the Good Lord intended—to catch lightning bugs (fireflies). Which as it happens are neither bugs nor flies. They are beetles.

To catch a lightning bug, you had to have good technique:

You must (1) take the jar in your right hand; then you must (2) hold the lid in your left hand; then (3) you fling the jar through the air haphazardly like one who hath consumed too much moonshine; whereupon you (4) slam the lid over the jar and shout, "I got one!" even if this is a lie.

It was okay to lie about catching lightning bugs because nobody paid any attention to you inasmuch as they were all busy trying to catch their own. We were all chasing the nanoscopic glowing dots.

Once we had jars full of lightning bugs, the Californian asked, "Now what do we do with 'em?"

Margaret replied, "You just look at 'em."

"Then you let them go," added Cousin Ed Lee.

"LET THEM GO?" answered the Californian. "But why go to the trouble of catching so many if you're just going to set them free?"

"Because," said Sandra. "They only live 30 days."

We were mesmerized by the bright dots in our mason jars, lit up like miracles, meandering to and fro. Their little butts glowing greenish-yellow.

"I'm going to keep my fireflies," said the Californian.

"You can't," said Margaret. "Lightning bugs have to go free so they can make babies."

"They have to make babies," said Sandra, "or else we'll never have lightning bugs again."

So we kept them for a few minutes. We observed them closely. Then, immediately after our mothers called us inside for supper, we wandered down to the creek and let them all go. We watched the insects fill the night with millions of tiny lights.

"They're so beautiful," said the Californian. "I wish beautiful things lived longer lives."

Truer words.

Sean Dietrich is a columnist, and novelist, known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Southern Living, The Tallahassee Democrat, Good Grit, South Magazine, Alabama Living, the Birmingham News, Thom Magazine, The Mobile Press Register and Life Media publications, and he has authored seven books.

DESTIN SMOKE SHOP

16055 Emerald Coast Pkwy., Destin

Next to the Destin Walmart

CBD • Delta 8 • Kratom • E-Cig • Walking Humidors

Hookah • Pipe • Vape • Cigarette • Tobacco • Novelty Items

850.837.0237

DestinSmokeShop@gmail.com



10% Off Purchase

w/Coupon (Excluding cigarettes)



ROOF PRO
Roofing Specialists

Most Awarded
Roofing Contractor

State Licensed • License # CCC133693

Shingle - Metal - Tile Roof Replacement Experts

FREE Estimates within 24 Hrs.



Scan this QR Code
for a 5% Discount!



(850) 332-3330 | Roofproroofing.com | f roofproroofing



Serving ALL of Walton County...ONE STUMP AT A TIME!

850-803-2205

www.StumpGrindingBySteve.com

f @StumpGrindSteve

A Pastor’s Ponderings: All the Ways You Can



BY REV. PETE HYDE

It was a long, hot, humid day. We spent the day wandering the streets of Savannah, Georgia, taking in the sights and the history. We were the typical tourists. With a map in hand, we made our way from square to square, shop to shop, trolley stop to trolley stop, restaurant to restaurant. The moments we spent resting or eating were infused with the joy of people watching (I believe there is no better sport). We made our way back to an old downtown hotel for a late afternoon break. After a couple of hours, we headed out to grab a bite to eat and enjoy one final walk along the riverfront. On our way back to the hotel for the night, the sound of a saxophone could be heard in the distance. Kay asked where

the music was coming from. The music got louder as we approached the small square in front of our hotel.

The old, live oak trees formed a canopy blocking out most of the evening sky. The Spanish moss moved gently in the light breeze of the evening. The mid-day heat had broken, and it was comfortable here in the shade. The street musician played some favorites as well as some original tunes. He even took requests and played them if he knew them. People from all sorts of backgrounds strolled through the square. Some stopped to listen, and some just moved on barely noticing an evening blessing. Kay and I took a place on a park bench to enjoy music and the atmosphere.

A look to the center of the square brings your eyes to a bronze statue of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church. The hotel where we were staying was built on the site of Wesley’s first parsonage in the New World when he made his first church planting trip to the Americas in the 1730s. He stood there, Bible in hand, as if teaching to anyone who would listen to his message of salvation and right living. He and his brother Charles (a prolific hymn writer) co-pastored a church in Savannah for a time.

Wesley, an Anglican priest, failed in the first attempt to bring his church to America due the mistrust of anything British during this time in American



history. He would return after the Revolutionary War and successfully bring a message of grace and Good News to this new land. He would struggle against the institution of his church. He could not understand why they would put so many restrictions on him when he was trying to accomplish the mission of spreading Christ’s message to all those who would hear it. He finally had to leave the Anglican church and start a new church called the Methodists. If Wesley were alive today, he would lament the fact that his

new church has become the very church he broke away from long ago. But alas that is the evolution of institutions unless they are intentional about their mission.

There he stood, memorialized in bronze, in the middle of a public square still beckoning people to hear his message, no, God’s message. Here he stood, still calling people to give their lives to the Lord and to spend their lives serving the Lord. With Bible in hand, hands outstretched to

any person or crowd that would gather, he was still stating his case and asking those who wandered by to hear and listen, much like the saxophone player in the background. Wesley’s message and impact continue, even though he lived more than

200 years ago.

I found myself doing a little reflecting on my journey of faith and ministry that carried me through many years as a Methodist pastor with some of the same frustrations as Wesley had with his home church, the Anglican church. The age-old ministry and church mission question came to mind. How do we as Christians make a lasting impact on individual lives and the community and world in which we live? It is not about whether we are remembered with a statue, a plaque, or a building with our name on it or our picture in the hallway. It is about whether or not someone saw Jesus in us. Wow! What a burden! What a mission for each of us and our churches! But how, O Lord?

Here is one of my favorite Wesley sayings. I have it on a plaque in my office: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, for as long as you ever can.”

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



Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the
communities of Sandestin,
Miramar Beach (32550),
Emerald Bay (32541)

P.O. Box 1424
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

Editor & Publisher
Dave White
dave@southwalton.life

Art Director
Kim Harper

Advertising Department
850-399-0228
sales@southwalton.life

SoWal Life assumes no financial liability for errors or omissions in printed advertising and reserves the right to reject/edit advertising or editorial submissions.

© Copyright 2026 SoWal Life





LISA Y. SHORTS PITELL
ATTORNEY AT LAW

- Wills, Trusts, Estate Planning
- Corporation, LLCs, Business Law
- Taxation law & Tax returns
- Contracts
- Guardianship, Probate & Estate Administration

1402 Cat Mar Rd., Suite B, Niceville, Florida 32578
850.897.0045 | LYP@LYP-LAW.COM

The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask us to send you free written information about our qualifications and experience.



**Ear, Nose, Throat, Allergies
Hearing
Facial Plastic Issues**
From newborns to the elderly

Stop suffering from painful sinus issues.
Services offered by Emerald ENT are comprehensive and unique to this area.



We are thrilled to announce our second location in Panama City Beach.
12909 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, FL 32407

Accepting New Appointments!
(850) 797-6191 | Emerald-ENT.com
141 Mack Bayou Loop, Suite 102, Santa Rosa Beach
12909 Panama City Beach Pkwy., Panama City Beach, FL 32407



From Kobe to 30A: Extraordinary Evenings Ahead at Old Florida Fish House

This August and September, Old Florida Fish House is bringing a remarkable collection of culinary and cultural experiences to the shores of 30a's Eastern Lake. The season's highlights include an exceedingly rare Kobe beef presentation featuring a visiting Japanese cattle farmer, followed in September by two distinctive evenings with former police officer and nationally recognized media personality Brandon Tatum.



A Rare Taste of Japan

On **August 27** at 6 p.m., Old Florida Fish House will present an exclusive **Usunaga Kobe Beef Dinner Experience** built around the importation of an entire A5 Kobe beef carcass from Japan.

The whole-animal presentation is believed by the restaurant to be unique in the Southeast and possibly throughout the U.S. Rather than showcasing only a familiar premium cut, the dinner will give chefs the opportunity to explore the animal

through a thoughtfully composed, 10-course menu.

The evening will also introduce diners to the people and traditions behind the beef. Special guest Yoshiki Usunaga, owner and farmer of Usunaga Ranch in Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, will travel to Florida to present the beef and tell the story of his farm. Throughout the dinner, he will share insights into the care, lineage and exacting standards involved in producing authentic Kobe beef.

"Having the farmer travel

from Japan makes this much more than a dinner," the Old Florida Fish House team says. "It is an opportunity to connect our guests with the origin of the product, the traditions behind it and the person who raised it."

Although "Wagyu" and "Kobe" are sometimes used interchangeably, the terms are not synonymous. Wagyu refers to four native Japanese cattle breeds. Authentic Kobe beef must come from Tajima-line Japanese Black cattle born, raised and processed in Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, and it must satisfy very strict standards for quality, marbling, weight and traceability.

A5 is Japan's highest combined yield and quality designation. The "A" refers to the amount of usable meat produced by the carcass, while the "5" represents the highest quality score. Its intricate marbling creates the tenderness, richness



and distinctive texture that have made Japanese Wagyu one of the world's most celebrated culinary treasures.



Old Florida Fish House is an officially registered Kobe beef destination and is billed as the only Kobe-certified restaurant in the Florida Panhandle. Its whole-carass import offers guests a rare opportunity to experience cuts and preparations that go far beyond the customary steakhouse presentation.

The August 27 dinner will feature 10 chef-curated courses

Two Evenings with The Officer Tatum

The momentum continues September 16 and 17 when Brandon Tatum brings two special events to Old Florida Fish House.

Tatum is a nationally recognized digital media personality, former police officer and SWAT operator, author, speaker and entrepreneur. He has developed one of the country's most prominent independent conservative media brands, attracting more than 8.6 million followers and subscribers and generating billions of views across YouTube and social media.

On **September 16, The Officer Tatum Bourbon Tasting and Dinner Experience** will combine conversation, cuisine and a curated bourbon tasting. In addition to his work in media, Tatum is the founder or owner of several businesses, including Verdict Bourbon, Blackline Security Operations, Shinerly Life and Pure Choice Apparel.

September 17 will feature **An Evening with The Officer Tatum**. Drawing on his experience in law enforcement, business and media, Tatum will offer his perspective on politics, culture, faith, freedom and everyday life. Known for blending direct analysis with humor and common sense, he encourages audiences to question prevailing narratives, think independently and live with courage and purpose.

Reservations for the August 27 Usunaga Kobe Beef Dinner Experience may be made at floridafishhouse.com. Visit the website for tickets, times and additional details for September's Officer Tatum events and the complete seasonal calendar.

REGISTER A COOK TEAM OR PURCHASE TASTER TICKETS VISIT EGGSONTHEBEACH.COM NOVEMBER 7 • 10AM-1PM

Presented by **BAY BREEZE PATIO**  **CREATING OUTDOOR DREAMS**

LIVE MUSIC

GREAT PRIZES

12TH ANNUAL NOV. 7, 2026

Bay Breeze Patio EGGS ON THE BEACH

SEASCAPE

GOLF, BEACH & TENNIS RESORT

PROCEEDS BENEFIT

MIRAMAR BEACH, FLORIDA

Did they even consider bamboo straws?

Theo is a little turtle on a big mission...

Theo the Turtle is here to save the threatened sea turtles. Help support the cause—a portion of every Theo purchase goes directly to charity.

Plushies • Backpacks • Bamboo Straws • Keychains
Coloring Books • Children's Books • Hats • Pillows and More

Shop www.theotheturtle.com

Emerald Coast Theatre Company Announces Fall 2026 Education Classes



BY NATHANAEL FISHER

Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC) is gearing up for another season of exceptional educational theatre programming with its **Fall 2026 Youth and Adult Education Classes, running Aug. 8 through Nov. 22.** This semester's lineup spans nearly every age and interest, from five-year-olds taking their first bow in Mini Players to seasoned performers refining their craft in Teen Company and adults finding (or rediscovering) their love of the stage in Senior Drama Club. With classes at ECTC's Grand Boulevard campus, its second space on Grand Boulevard (formerly Orvis), the Florida Chautauqua Theatre in DeFuniak Springs, and the Riverwalk Community Clubhouse in Freeport, ECTC continues to expand its reach across the Emerald Coast. Payment plans and scholarships are available for families who need them, and registration is open!

This fall also marks an exciting chapter for ECTC's education program, with two new directors stepping into leadership roles: **Adam Day Howard**, MFA, as education director and **Mallory McGill** as education and outreach coordinator. Together, they bring decades of combined experience in professional theatre, music direction and arts education to a program that already reaches hundreds of students each year.

Mallory McGill was raised in Destin and is thrilled to give back to her hometown community as she shares the transformative power of theatre with the next generation. Before joining ECTC, McGill taught theatre at Destin High School, where her students consistently earned Superior ratings and Critics' Choice Awards at the Florida

District and State Thespian Festivals, and where she was honored with the school's prestigious Golden Shark Teacher Award for her dedication to students and the broader school community.

McGill's résumé extends well beyond the Panhandle. She spent more than 15 years teaching and actor coaching in Los Angeles at Lesly Kahn & Co, one of the nation's premier acting studios. She trained hundreds of actors ranging in age from 6 to 65, and many of her students have gone on to appear on HBO, ABC, NBC, Disney, Nickelodeon and in national Broadway tours. As a working actress, director, filmmaker and writer, her own credits include *The Lincoln Lawyer*, *Stupid Questions*, *The Suite Life: On Deck*, *90210*, *General Hospital*, and stage productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Misalliance*. She later discovered a passion for writing original stories, and her most recent screenplay was recognized by the Austin Film Festival and Reboot Studios. McGill holds a Bachelor of Science from Vanderbilt University, where she studied Acting/Directing, Communication Studies and Human & Organizational Development. She believes the best rehearsal rooms are built on curiosity, kindness, collaboration and the courage to take creative risks, a philosophy that shapes everything from ECTC's youngest Mini Players classes to its competitive troupes.

Adam Day Howard steps into the role of education director following a distinguished career in higher education and profes-

sional musical theatre. Most recently, he served as Lecturer of Musical Theatre at Youngstown State University's Dana School of Music and University Theatre, where he taught vocal pedagogy, acting for musical theatre, music direction and playwriting, and directed all mainstage musicals. He also directed the univer-

Continued on next page





JUNE 3-6, 2027
1 BEACH ★ 4 DAYS ★ 24 ARTISTS

Endless Memories.

JUST ANNOUNCED

FRIDAY 6.04

LUKE BRYAN

SATURDAY 6.05

JASON ALDEAN

+ MORE ARTISTS COMING SOON!

TICKETS, HOTEL PACKAGES
AND PAYMENT PLANS AVAILABLE

GULFCOASTJAM.COM

SAVE
ON YOUR
TICKETS NOW



SCAN QR CODE,
ENTER LM27
AT CHECKOUT,
& SAVE!

USE CODE LM27 AT CHECKOUT

OCTOBER 16 AND 17

THE 18TH ANNUAL BAYTOWNE WHARF

BEER FEST

NEW BEERS • GREAT FOOD • LIVE MUSIC



Arts & Music

ECTC
continued from previous page

sity’s Voices of YSU University Chorus from 2022 to 2024 and created YSU’s minor in Musical Theatre Music Direction in 2024. Before Youngstown State, Howard held faculty positions at Texas Tech University, Centre College, the Institute of the Arts Barcelona and Kent State University, teaching musical theatre performance, vocal studio, act-

ing and the history and literature of musical theatre. Howard’s creative work spans regional theatre, Off-Broadway and international festivals. He produced and music directed Here There Be Dragons at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2024, having previously music directed its Off-Broadway run at Players Theatre in Manhattan in 2022. As a composer and writer, he created several original Texas pantomimes for Stages Repertory Theatre in Houston, including “Hansel and Gretel -or- Out of the Woods and Into the Fire.” His original music for Tennessee Williams’ Kirche, Kuche, Kinder was reviewed in The New York Times. Howard holds a Doctor of Education from Ohio University (expected 2026), a Master of Performance with Honors from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and a BA in Theatre Studies from Kent State University. He is the only Amer-



ECTC

emerald coast theatre company

FALL EDUCATION CLASSES

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

AUGUST – NOVEMBER

EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG/YOUTHCLASSES

Trolls JR.

LEGALLY BLONDE JR.

SOUTH WALTON FLORIDA

GRAND BOULEVARD TOWN CENTER

JERRY & ALICE ZICH

STJOE Community Foundation

IG Howard Group

Tickets or info, call 850.684.0323 or visit EmeraldCoastTheatre.org
560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200 | Miramar Beach, FL 32550

Studio 237 Music Lessons

Piano • Voice • Guitar • Bass • Drums
Ukulele • Song Writing and Shofar

Call Today for your appointment 850-231-3199

237 Dawson Rd, Santa Rosa Beach

Visit www.Studio237Music.com

ican certified in the Vocal Process Methodology developed by Gillyanne Kayes, and he holds memberships in Actors Equity Association (UK), the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and the Dramatists Guild. The **ECTC Education fall lineup** begins with Mini Players for kindergarten through first grade, where students explore songs, dance and basic theatrical vocabulary through a Trolls-themed class, culminating in a showcase on Nov. 4. Young dancers can also join First Steps Ballet/Tap, taught by Emily Bainbridge, or the Ballet/Jazz Combo, taught by Chelsea Rager. Little Players (grades 2-3) step up to a full production class experience with Trolls JR, while Big Players in grades 4-5 take on more complex choreography in their own Trolls JR production with technique class options like Group Vocal Techniques and Broadway Dance Styles. Teens have no shortage of options this fall, from Legally Blonde JR for grades 6-12, complete with an Aug. 7 audition workshop and November performances, to specialized Masterclasses in Acting for Musical Theatre, Playwriting and Acting and Improv, all taught by Howard and McGill. Dancers can pursue Broadway Dance Styles or the monthly Leaps, Turns & Tricks Skills Lab, and competitive performers have two tracks: the JTF Performance Troupe

(grades 2-12), which travels to the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta in January, and the Junior Thespian Competition Troupe (grades 6-8), which competes regionally in October and at the state level in February. Students in grades 9-12 can also join Teen Company Fall, a semester-long training program that culminates in a One Act performance at the Florida Theatre Conference in November and includes mentorship toward collegiate auditions, scholarship opportunities and portfolio building. ECTC’s reach extends beyond its home campus through satellite classes at the Florida Chautauqua Theatre in DeFuniak Springs and the Riverwalk Community Clubhouse in Freeport, where K-12 students can participate in Trolls JR. The Homeschool program offers Voice and Movement, Acting and Improv, and a hands-on Sewing and Costume Design course for students ages 9 to 18, while adults can join Beginner/Intermediate Tap, Intermediate/Advanced Tap or the Senior Drama Club for performers 55 and up. **Registration details, scholarships and payment plans** are available through ECTC’s website, and families with questions about specific classes are encouraged to reach out to education@emeraldcoasttheatre.org or call 850-684-0323. See you at the theatre!

VISIT

SOUTHWALTON.LIFE

Trading Screen Time for Stage Time: How Music Lessons Re-Wire the Digital Brain

As another school year begins, families focus on schedules, homework, sports, and after-school activities. One of the greatest challenges facing parents today extends far beyond academics which is “helping children stay engaged in a world dominated by screens”. Smartphones, tablets, social media, streaming entertainment, and online gaming have become constant companions for many young people. While technology certainly offers valuable educational tools, excessive screen time can gradually replace face-to-face interaction, creative thinking, patience, and meaningful human connection.

Private music lessons offer a refreshing alternative.

Unlike the fast-paced rewards of digital entertainment, learning an instrument or developing one’s voice requires focus, perseverance, and consistent practice. These experiences strengthen attention spans, improve memory, and encourage problem-solving skills that extend well beyond the music studio. Every lesson becomes an opportunity for a student to build confidence one accomplishment at a time.

One of the biggest differences between online gaming and music education is the “quality of human interaction”. Many children spend hours connecting with friends and strangers via headsets. Although online games can involve teamwork, the relationships often remain anonymous and temporary. In contrast, private lessons create genuine mentorship between teacher and student. A teacher celebrates successes, provides encouragement through challenges, and guides each student according to their individual learning style and goals.

This personal connection helps children develop trust, communication skills, accountability, and self-confidence which are qualities that cannot be downloaded through an app.

Music also provides opportunities to step into the real world through recitals, performances, and community events. Standing before an audience teaches courage, preparation, and resilience. They experience the satisfaction of sharing something beautiful



with family, friends, and neighbors while becoming part of a supportive musical community.

These experiences replace isolation with belonging.

Scientific research continues to reveal that learning music simultaneously stimulates multiple regions of the brain. Reading music, listening carefully, coordinating hand movements, maintaining rhythm, and expressing emotion all work together to strengthen the brain’s pathways. Rather than providing the instant gratification common with digital entertainment, music develops the brain through sustained concentration and repetition. In many ways, private lessons help “rewire” the digital brain by restoring the ability to: focus deeply, think creatively, and remain engaged with challenging tasks. A student learns to complete projects by becoming a “Finisher.”

Back-to-school season is the perfect time for parents to establish routines that encourage lifelong success. Just as homework, sports practices, and healthy meals become regular habits, weekly private music lessons can become a consistent part of family life. The structure of scheduled lessons teaches responsibility while giving students a creative outlet that balances out the demands of school and technology.

The goal is not to eliminate screens entirely but to create healthy balance. Every hour spent preparing for a recital, mastering a favorite song, or working alongside a dedicated teacher is an investment in skills that will last a lifetime.

This school year, consider trading a little screen time for stage time. The confidence, friendship, discipline, creativity, and joy that grow through private music lessons will remain and continue to enrich a child’s life, long after the latest game or device has been forgotten. These

are sometimes called “Life Lessons” by music teachers.

Studio Opens on Monday, August 3rd

Since 2011, Studio 237 Music Lessons has been teaching

students of all ages 6 and up. Our staff of teachers are ready to help you discover, develop, and advance your musical skills on piano, voice, guitar (electric, acoustic, bass), ukulele, drums and even on shofar! The Studio

opens on Monday, August 3rd and students may begin lessons ASAP. Call Ray or Lisa Cyr at 850.231.3199, visit our website at www.Studio237Music.com, schedule a visit of our studio and/or to meet a teacher.



ENTERTAIN. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

20 SINFONIA
GULF COAST

YEARS DEMETRIUS FULLER
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

YOUR SYMPHONY EXPERIENCE ... REDEFINED

SINFONIA INITIATIVES



Link Up IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
CARNEGIE HALL

Sinfonietta Strings & Intermediate Strings

Sinfonia Youth Orchestra

Musicians in Schools

Guest Artists in Schools

Live orchestra performances for students

Ensembles in Residence in the schools
in partnership with Florida State University

Educational outreach remains at the forefront of Sinfonia’s mission. Since it was established in 2007, Sinfonia Gulf Coast has introduced music to more than 220,000 children in Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay Counties.

Donate today to help Sinfonia bring music, education, and the arts to our schools.

SinfoniaGulfCoast.org | 850.460.8800



YOUR SUPPORT
IS INSTRUMENTAL
TO OUR SUCCESS

Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.

SEASON PRESENTING EDUCATION SPONSORS



ROBERT M. FERGUSON
MEMORIAL FUND FOR
MUSIC EDUCATION



 Arts & Music

Midnight Mixtape Brings the Soundtrack of a Generation to a Venue Near You

BY WILL ESTELL

If you've ever found yourself smiling from ear to ear when the opening notes of a favorite anthem blast through the speakers, you're definitely not alone. That feeling of instant nostalgia is exactly what Northwest Florida's hottest new band on the block, Midnight Mixtape, has built its reputation on — delivering energetic performances that transport audiences back to some of music's most memorable eras.

Midnight Mixtape has quickly become one of the area's most entertaining live acts, combining exceptional local musicianship, polished vocals and an electric stage presence that transforms every performance into a sing-along. Rather than simply covering familiar songs, this band recreates the feel, emotion, excitement and energy that made these tracks part of the soundtrack of our youth and young adulthood. These guys and girls aren't simply performing songs — they're playing memories.

For its most recent experiment in music history, the band has shifted to "Y2K Rewind: The Ultimate Early 2000s Live Experience," featuring an impressive collection of hits spanning rock, pop, alternative and

dance music from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Think Avril Lavigne, Blink-182, Concrete Blonde, Britney, Evanescence and many more artists whose music defined an entire generation. Whether you grew up burning cheap CDs for friends or loading your first iPod with these bangers, Midnight Mixtape delivers the sounds and shows that instantly reconnect us with those unforgettable moments.

As band co-founder Dan Collins told me, "The concept behind our Midnight Mixtape shows is essentially to pick an era and build an entire show around it. A Midnight Mixtape show isn't simply an array of cover songs; it's an event." Collins added, "We play different themes and learn full new sets for each new theme. Keeping the performance more organic and unplugged, with acoustic guitars, simple hand percussion, the addition of violin playing many of the lead guitar parts, along with keys and multipart harmonies gives the shows a more intimate and up-close vibe."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN MURPHY

Collins says he and his fellow band members believe this concept is why, to date, all of their limited-run shows have sold out at every venue where they have performed across Northwest Florida.

Dan Collins, whose lead vocals and guitar anchor each performance with confidence and charisma, has become well known throughout Northwest Florida as the frontman and founder of Black Eyed Blonde, as well as for producing unique live entertainment events that go beyond the typical cover band performance. He also built his reputation during his time playing with Naked Gunmen and Miss Demeanor.



Sharing center stage is Dan's equally talented wife, Becca (also of Black Eyed Blonde), whose dynamic lead vocals add both power and versatility to the band's sound. Her ability to move effortlessly between emotional ballads and high-energy rock anthems gives Midnight

Mixtape an impressive vocal range that keeps audiences engaged from the first song to the final encore.

The ensemble also includes Sarah Mangum on vocals and keys, adding rich harmonies and melodic depth. Jess Murphy (formerly of Continuum), with her always impressive violin arrangements, gives familiar favorites an unexpected twist, adding a sound and a brand of showmanship that any band would envy. Stacy Clearman delivers strong vocals and percussion that enhance the band's layered sound and infectious rhythm. Together, Midnight Mixtape creates a polished production that feels much larger than that of just another local band.

I believe what really separates Midnight Mixtape from many other bands across our coastal communities is the way they invite the audience into the performance. A Mixtape concert becomes an interactive celebration. It's like a show that you also get to be part of — because it is your show, your memories and your music.

Midnight Mixtape will perform live at Distillery 98 in

Continued on next page



- ✓ Receive one season pass to Concerts in the Village.
- ✓ Enjoy early admission access to Concerts in the Village.
- ✓ Receive discounts on Festival of the Arts merchandise.
- ✓ Receive membership rates on select MKAF events.

**BECOME A MEMBER
- JOIN TODAY!**

MKAF.org





BY DON CARTER,
SECURE VISION

Every HOA board faces the same challenge: delivering high-quality services while remaining a responsible steward of community finances.

Internet service is often one of the largest technology expenses within a community, yet it is also one of the most visible services residents use every day. The question is no longer whether communities should invest in connectivity. The ques-

Reducing Internet Costs Without Sacrificing Performance

tion is how to maximize value while maintaining exceptional service.

Many communities still operate with a fragmented approach, where individual residents select their own providers and infrastructure evolves over time without a long-term strategy. While this may appear flexible, it often creates inconsistent experiences, duplicate infrastructure, and higher overall costs.

A community-wide approach can deliver significant advantages.

By planning connectivity at the property level, boards can often achieve:

- Reduced infrastructure duplication
- Better long-term scalability
- Improved negotiating leverage with providers

The goal should not be finding the lowest-cost internet option. The goal should be finding the best value.

A properly designed network can often deliver better performance while reducing operational complexity. Modern managed Wi-Fi solutions, enterprise-grade equipment, and centralized network management allow communities to support increasing bandwidth demands while maintaining reliability.

This becomes especially im-

portant in resort and coastal markets where occupancy can fluctuate dramatically throughout the year. Networks must be designed to perform during peak demand periods while remaining cost-effective during quieter months.

Boards that take a proactive approach to connectivity planning often discover opportunities to improve resident satisfaction while gaining better control over long-term costs.

Like any critical infrastruc-

ture investment, internet service delivers the greatest value when it is approached strategically rather than reactively.

The communities seeing the best results today are not necessarily spending more. They are simply planning smarter.

Secure Vision works with associations throughout Gulf Shores to design, implement, and support connectivity solutions built for modern demand.

MIDNIGHT

continued from previous page

Santa Rosa Beach on Friday, Aug. 28, 2026, presenting “The

Ultimate Early 2000s Live Music Experience.” This two-hour show promises to be a nonstop celebration of the music that defined the Y2K era.

At press time, a limited number of VIP and general admission tickets were available. However, given the band’s recent enthusiastic crowds, I definitely recommend purchasing tickets soon. You can also follow the band online for more details, dates and performance videos.

Will Estell is a writer, editor, and media entrepreneur with over 750 published articles in a wide array of regional and national publications. Estell is the chief creative officer of Estell Hussey Media and has been instrumental in bringing 12 new startup magazine brands to market over his 25-plus-year media career. He currently consults for publishing companies locally and nationally, as well as maintaining a career in coastal real estate and development. Originally from the backwoods of Booneville, Miss., Will is a father of three, who along with his wife, WEAR ABC 3 anchor, Laura Hussey Estell, now calls Destin and Navarre Beach home.



IS YOUR NET WORKING?

JOIN OUR GROUP. GROW YOUR NETWORK. GROW YOUR BUSINESS.

Where Emerald Coast professionals connect and refer business.



Building relationships. Growing businesses. Strengthening our community.

 THURSDAYS 8:30 A.M.

 DESTIN METHODIST CHURCH

 MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP: \$25

Visitors Welcome! (580) 260-7453 info@emeraldcoastnetworking.com EmeraldCoastNetworking.com

Vote for Your Favorite Business in the 2027 Perfect in Walton County Awards

Vote online at perfectin-waltoncounty.com between Aug. 31 and Sept. 18, 2026. Only one voting form per email address will be accepted during this time. Remember, every vote counts and can make the difference!

Winners will receive year-long recognition through Walton County Tourism’s print and digital marketing efforts. To see a complete list of last year’s winners, visit waltoncountytourism.com/perfect-walton-county-awards.

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



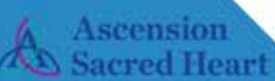
HOST SPONSOR: **Hilton** SANDestin BEACH GOLF RESORT & SPA

OCTOBER 26

8AM-5PM

- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- WOMEN IN BUSINESS

SCAN TO REGISTER OR VISIT WWW.WALTONAREACHAMBER.COM



THE NEXT BIG THING CONFERENCE

BIG UNREASONABLE

STEP 1-BUD-BIG

STEP 2-BUT-BIG

SOWAL LIFE'S BUSINESS SERVICES DIRECTORY

Attorneys / Lawyers

PITELL LAW FIRM, P.L.
Corporate, business & taxation law,
estate & trust services. Niceville.
(850) 897-0045 | lyp@lyp-law.com

Attractions & Adventures

DESTIN PRIVATE TIKI
Crab Island Express Rides and more.
850-424-1119 | www.DestinTiki.com

Computer Sales & Service

MINH'S COMPUTER
Full service computer sales & service.
(850) 376-3412

Golf Cart Sales & Service

ECCO MOTORS
Gold cart sales and service.
147 Professional Place, Miramar Beach
(850) 837-2600 | eccomotors.com

ELECTRIC CART CO.

Street legal electric and gas golf carts.
5426 US Hwy, 98 W, Santa Rosa Beach
(850) 622 2000
Sales@ElectricCartCompany.com
www.ElectricCartCompany.com

Health Care

HORMONE RESTORATION CTR
Feel young again!
850-837-1271

JOURNEY BRAVELY
STEPHENIE CRAIG, LCSW
Therapist & coach.
stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com
918-221-9987 | www.journeybravely.com

TORTOISE CLINIC
Integrative health clinic.
2441 U.S. Hwy 98, Santa Rosa Beach
TortoiseClinic.com | 850.267.5611

KAYA LIFE CANNABIS CLINICIANS
thekayalife.com | 850-213-1215

BLUEWATER PLASTIC SURGERY
Santa Rosa Beach
(850) 530-6064
bluewaterplasticsurgery.com

EMERALD ENT
Ear, nose, throat, allergies, hearing,
facial plastic issues.
Miramar Beach
(850) 797-6191 | Emerald-ENT.com

Home Services & Repairs

A SUPERIOR MECHANICAL
Air conditioning, indoor air quality,
plumbing, electrical, water filtration
systems.
(850) 258-3225

SS GRANITE AND TILE
Santa Rosa Beach | 850-267-0599

EMERALD COAST ENERGY
SOLUTIONS, LLC
Green energy solutions.
850-588-2870 | www.trusteces.com

BEACHSIDE SLIDING GLASS DOOR
MAINTENANCE, LLC
BeachsideSlide.com
850-98-SLIDE (850-987-5433)

SECUREVISION
Fiber internet, TV, and phone services
for HOAs, COAs, short-term rentals, and
multifamily properties.
251-216-9434 | sales@secvis.com
www.secvis.com

STUMP GRINDING BY STEVE
No job too big or too small!
850-803-2205

ROOFPRO ROOFING
850-332-3330 | Roofprorooing.com

SPARKLES CLEANING SVC.
850.517.5581
www.sparklescleaningflorida.com

Insurance Services

ABORA INSURANCE
11275 U.S. Hwy. 98 #7 | Miramar Beach
850-424-6979 | www.GetAbora.com

Music Instruction

STUDIO 237 SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Musical instruction for all ages.
Santa Rosa Beach
Call 850-231-3199
www.studio237music.com

Pools & Spas

TAMTECH POOLS & SPA
185 N. Holiday Rd., Miramar Beach
850-650-3747 | tamtechpools.net

BRIGHT BLUE POOLS
Commercial & residential pool
remodeling.
850.496.2025 | BrightBluePools.com

30A HOT TUBS
(850) 830-0003 | 30AHOTTUBS.COM
33 Private Court, Miramar Beach

EMERALD COAST POOLS
Custom designed pools & spas,
renovation.
850.880.6657 | emeraldcoastpool.com
danielemeraldcoastpools@gmail.com
17661 U.S. Highway 331 South,
Freeport

Real Estate

JOHN MARTIN GROUP
850-714-3731
johnmartin30a.com

Shopping

MCCASKILL & COMPANY
Finest watches and jewelry.
13390 Hwy 98 W, Destin,
McCaskillandCompany.com

MOUNTAIN HIGH OUTFITTERS
Top-Quality Outdoor Apparel and Gear.
Silver Sands Premium Outlets

PATH OF GRACE THRIFT STORES
10962 U.S. Hwy. 98 W, Miramar Beach
850-654-8500 Call for Pickup

DESTIN SMOKE SHOP
Next to the Destin Walmart
850.837.0237
DestinSmokeShop@gmail.com

CLAY 30A
Garden center, pottery, blessings.
4808 E County Hwy. 30A, SRB
(850) 231-2150 | Clay30A.com

Retirement Planning

WATERSOUND FOUNTAINS
Refined, resort-style retirement.
65 Origins Parkway, Inlet Beach
WatersoundFountains.com
850-601-3174

Website Design

DESIGNWORKS
Graphic Design Studio
850-376-6255
kim.designworks@gmail.com

LIMITED TIME OFFER
FOR THE NEW YEAR



14' X 28' POOLS
RETANGULAR
OR FREEFROM

\$49,500

Includes pump,
filter, tab chlorinator
6" x 6" tile, 1' ft cool
deck coping, LED light,
original Pebbletec
plaster, autofill,
permits, inspections,
and mainenance
equipment.

tamtech Pool & Spa

Florida Licensed Residential and Commercial Pool Builder License #RP-252555412

185 North Holiday Rd, Miramar Beach

850-650-3747 • tamtechpools.net

Help Wanted!



FAMILY OF LOCAL PAPERS

Life Media is Growing!

We're looking for bright, driven, relationship-minded sales pros to join Life Media, the fastest-growing media group on the Emerald Coast.

What You'll Bring:

•A positive, outgoing personality

•Strong communication skills

•Desire to grow with a dynamic company

What We Offer:

•Established publications with built-in audiences

•Digital Advertising Solutions

•Opportunity to shape your own success

Call Scott Miller at (850) 688-9886

Email Scott@LifeMediaGrp.com

Offer expires 9/30/26
(850) 830-0003 | 30AHOTTUBS.COM
33 Private Court, Miramar Beach



JOHN MARTIN GROUP

SOUTH WALTON
REAL ESTATE



John Martin

John Martin Group is Your
Trusted, Professional
Hometown Real Estate Advisor

Listed and **Not Selling?**
Call John to **Get it SOLD.**



Alden Lagasse



Andrew Dungan

Bringing you EXP Realty's
Cutting-Edge Technology
and **Global Reach**

Scan or Contact Us for a
Free **Home Evaluation**



“ **WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING**

“John Martin is hands down THE BEST realtor that I have experienced! If you are looking to buy or sell a property on 30A...he is your guy! John was able to educate my wife and I on all of the areas throughout 30A. But more importantly he possesses the rare quality that you will not find in many sales agents... HE LISTENS!” - Client

850.714.3731
john@johnmartin30a.com

johnmartin30a.com