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Meet Our Hometown Hero: **Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance**

CBA Oyster Shell Recycling Program Thrives with Help From Local Community

As an Ecology Technician for Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, one of CBA Ecology Technician Chad Perko's primary duties is to oversee CBA's oyster shell recycling program. You may ask, "Why does an ovster shell need to be recycled and what does CBA do with it?" Chad explains:

CBA ECOLOGY TECHNICIAN

Well, it's all about the bay. Our community is home to the Choctawhatchee Bay. The bay stretches 30 miles from east to west and consists of brackish waters that are home to abundant wildlife and diverse recreational opportunities, making it the lifeblood of our area's current and future ecological and economic health. Throughout the bay's history it has supported diverse habitats for humans and wildlife alike. Of all the creatures that call the Choctawhatchee Bay home, the humble oyster is perhaps the most important to the bay's health.



Oyster reefs are an important marine habitat since oysters act as Mother Nature's water filtration system. For example, one adult oyster is capable of filtering 50 gallons of water in one day, improving the water clarity and quality, which benefits the entire bay and by extension our community. So just imagine what an entire oyster

reef-- typically hosting thousands of oysters--can do for the bay's water quality! Sadly, in recent decades, as the local human population has soared, our oyster population has declined due to increased stormwater runoff and habitat alteration. Thankfully, our community is home to The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA), the non-profit,

100 percent grant and donor funded environmental organization that I work for, whose mission is to promote swimmable, fishable waterways in our community through monitoring, education, restoration and research. As part of our Restoration Program,

> **CBA** continued on page 2

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Saving **Grace:**

A New Hope for Struggling Women

By Aether Van Dyke

Nightmares are not always only in the realm of the unconscious. They are often manifested through abuse and addiction. It is overwhelmingly common for people to find themselves going from a bad situation to a worse situation when drugs and other abuses become involved. Those struggling are often left to "figure it out" by family and friends, and, many times, "figuring it out" results in deeper addiction, more abuse and sometimes suicide. Abandonment is a common theme

> SAVING GRACE continued on page 2

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SAVING GRACE

continued from page 1

for these people, and even those who are able to pull themselves out of the depths into a state of recovery are soon forgotten and left to once again "figure it out." In spite of this, there are some whose love for other people has driven them to create a better future for those struggling in addiction. Dawn Siegal is one of these people.

Dawn knows firsthand the immense effort it takes to recover from a drug addiction. She was held in the grips of addiction for many years. This gives Dawn a unique viewpoint on others who are struggling in the same arena. Her overcomer's spirit has gifted her with a passion for helping other women gain complete freedom as well. Dawn feels that one of the best ways she can do this is through opening a women's home, Saving Grace, for those who have just begun their journey into

Saving Grace Women's Home will be a place for those

who desire to develop a new life free from the devastation of any kind of addiction or abuse. Its purpose is to provide an effective and comprehensive Christian faith-based solution to life-controlling problems.

When asked where her inspiration for Saving Grace has come from, Dawn wholeheartedly believes it was her own struggles with addiction and those who helped rescue her. "I know what it did for me, and what it will do for others," she commented.

What will the women's home look like? Dawn wants to begin with a smaller program, housing between 10 and 15 women at any given time. It will be a 12-month faith-based program. Staff will live in the home as well, in hopes that the women will always feel like they have a support system around them. The women can expect to adhere to a fixed schedule, which will include time for prayer, teaching, and engaging in various creative outlets. These women will have multiple opportunities to fundraise for



both their future and the future of other women in bad situations. After the 12-month program, these women will have the chance to begin their life anew, choosing to sign up for an internship program with the women's home where they can engage in helping other women succeed with a better life as well, or venturing out on their own and creating a new life from there.

Going forward, Dawn said that she would like to see Saving Grace expand far beyond just Northwest Florida. Next steps would include a center in South Florida, then expanding into other states. When asked how far Dawn could see this going, she commented, "I would love to see it worldwide." The

amount of lives that could be changed through a worldwide program like this would be too many count.

The thing that Dawn finds most rewarding about creating the women's home is the amount of transformation that will take place in each woman's life. So many of these women have been broken and beat down since childhood, and the difference that can be made by even one person who truly loves them is enormous. There is something incredible that happens when people realize that there is another way, and that they deserve to be happy.

Saving Grace will focus primarily on women who have been abuse victims, have been recently incarcerated, and struggle with drug addiction. They are expected to begin the program with the first round of women in early 2021. Saving Grace partners with another program for men, Project Hope Restoration. Right now, the thing that is needed most is funding. They will be holding an annual banquet in con-

junction with Project Hope on Nov. 1, 2020, where they hope to raise enough funds to get everything prepared to open the home, including staffing costs.

Dawn believes that the best thing the community could do to help people in this situation is to simply become aware of it. Often, people who are not struggling with addiction and abuse have an unintentional unawareness of those who are. However, gaining that cognizance and reaching out to those who feel trapped is the first step to a changed life. There's always hope that a loved one can be well and productive, whether it's their first time or their hundredth. Change is always possible, and Saving Grace is proving it.

You can help! Visit Saving Grace at www.facebook.com/gracewomenshomeFL or call (850) 865-7939.



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CBA

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we have taken on the important mission of working to increase the Choctawhatchee Bay's oyster reef populations, improving habitat and water quality.

The CBA organizes an Oyster Shell Recycling Program in partnership with local seafood restaurants. We collect shucked oyster shells that would otherwise end up in a landfill and use them as the building blocks to construct oyster reefs and restore oyster populations. The recycled oyster shells provide oyster spat (larva) with a stable surface material where they can attach and grow. The CBA picks up oyster shells three times a week from participating restaurants. The oyster shells are then taken back

to CBA's staging area, where they stay for several months allowing the sunlight and rainwater to clean the shells. Once the shells are clean, the CBA and volunteers bag the shell in marine grade mesh bags, forming the building blocks for an oyster reef. We place the bags in the water at our permitted restoration sites around the bay. Ovster spat then settle on the oyster shell and begin to grow and reproduce. Soon, the new oyster reef becomes its own diverse ecosystem, providing a habitat for other beneficial marine life, as well.

The CBA Oyster Shell Recycling Program currently partners with Acme Oyster House, AJ's in Grayton Beach, The Back Porch, The Henderson, Johnny O'Quigley's, The Surf



PHOTOS BY SEAN MURPHY

Hut (Destin), and Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar. This year the CBA is planning to expand their reach into Okaloosa Island and Fort Walton Beach as they have

secured new funding from Impact 100 Northwest Florida to make an even bigger impact for the overall community! Find out more at basinalliamce.org.



From the Publisher: Happy Birthday, Destin Life!



Can you believe it's already

our 2nd anniversary? Thank you to our avid readers and the community who have embraced this thriving publication as your own. We join several of our partners and friends who are also celebrating milestone anniversaries at this time: Beverly Hills Day Spa—15 years; Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center-20 years; ECCO Motors-15 years; and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation-25 years!

Destin Life thanks you for being a part of the Destin Life

family, entrusting us to promote you and tell your stories. As we move into our 3rd year, we'll continue to offer you a platform—a community voice—and represent Destin's niche and partners with an opportunity to effectively promote in an affordable way, combining the best of both worlds—marketing and advertising with direct mail plus affordable rates. Our informative and fun website, MyDestin-Life.com, will continue to offer additional value: marketing and

advertising promotion with our online version of Destin Life, blog posts of feature articles and archived issues, Instagram and Facebook posts, e-newsletter distribution, sponsorships and rich editorial. And we'll continue to direct mail and distribute 12,000 copies of Destin Life to households and businesses in Destin.

If we've learned anything the past two years, it's that stories involving our communities' overcomers or generous locals, businesses and organizations working together that endure in readers' minds—all help to foster a connection to and within our dynamic community.

If you'd like to promote your business, contact me at Publisher@MyDestinLife.com or 850-660-1444. Visit www.MyDestinLife.com for stories and coupons from the current issue or download the archived issues from the past year. Connect with us: Facebook/DestinLife or Instagram @MyDestinLife.

Around Town

Miss Destin 2020!

Congratulations to Miss Destin 2020, Lauren Adams!! She was crowned by Brooke O'Keefe, Miss Destin 2019, during the annual pageant in July, presented by the Destin Fishing Rodeo organization. Lauren recently graduated from Fort Walton Beach High School and is the daughter of Billy and Christie Adams. Lauren

has lived in Destin her entire life and is currently employed at The Louisiana Lagniappe in Destin as well as Aloha Water-Sports.

Prior to being crowned, Lauren said, "...Being named Miss Destin has been a dream of mine since I was a little girl. I love this town and would be so proud to represent our community."



Other winners of the evening were:

Kaylie Sparks — 1st runner up; Khloe Johnson Silver — 2nd runner up.

Marlee Tobik won the Peyton LoCicero Humanitarian

Service Award. Anna Knowles won the Most Photogenic Award. Marlee Tobik won the Nancy Cheney Miss Congeniality Award. Fashion Show host Heidi LoCicero presented summer fashions from Dressing Room Boutique and Frill Seekers Gifts...personalized fabulous finds! Shoreline Church provided the perfect venue for the pageant and a team of folks to help.

Photo by Max Impact Photography.

2020 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday

The 2020 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday begins Friday, Aug. 7 and ends Sun., Aug.

Qualifying items will be exempt from tax, including certain school supplies selling for \$15 or less per item; clothing, footwear and certain accessories selling for \$60 or less per item; and the first \$1,000 of the sales price of personal computers and certain computer-related accessories purchased for noncommercial home or personal use. For more information and a list of qualifying items, visit revenuelaw. floridarevenue.com.

AROUND TOWN

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Serve with Those Who Serve

By Lori Leath Smith

Did you know? There are more than 55,000 active duty service members in the Northwest Florida region with over 44,000 veterans in the Destin/Fort Walton beach area alone.

Approximately 73% have deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan since the tragic events of 9-11. Roughly 41% have service-connected disabilities. Approximately every 65 minutes, a veteran commits suicide.

Further, a Blue H.E.L.P. study showed 228 officers died by suicide, while 132 officers died in the line of duty in 2019. (Blue H.E.L.P. is a non-profit organization that acknowledges the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers lost to suicide and brings awareness to police officer PTSD.) And these numbers are growing with increased service-related stress and the perception of declining public support.

These statistics are precisely why Serve Ministries, Inc. (SMI), a multi-Christian faith ministry, was established in 2018 by Michael Belton, who recognized some of the unmet needs of those who serve.

A retired 27-year Army officer who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Michael is a 100% disabled veteran. Knowing well the challenges for our veterans and law enforcement, he founded SMI to help com-



bat the effects of PTSD and suicide through community chaplains who help those who suffer from physical, psychological/emotional, social, and spiritual wounds and lead them to love and healing through Jesus Christ

Its Mission? To meet the spiritual needs and make disciples (Matt 28: 19-20) of those who serve or who have served (military, first responders, and their families) and to equip them for Godly service. "The way we make disciples is through chaplaincy," says Michael.

The military objective is to recruit, train and equip community chaplains to meet veteran needs by:

- Assigning a Veteran Chaplain to every warrior in the SOF Missions Resiliency Project;
- Lead/grow effective Veteran Support Biblical Study Groups;
- Offer chaplaincy services to veterans' organizations, vet-

erans' hospitals, and church organizations. When chaplain support for active duty service members ends at separation/retirement, SMI continues with this support.

For first responders, the objective is to train and equip chaplains for agency placement. "Our goal to assign chaplains to every first responder agency that does not have one in our community such as law enforcement, fire stations, ems, and corrections officers," he says, "and to lead and grow effective first responder Bible study support groups."

SMI will be hosting Serve Social 2020, Aug. 8 at Northwest Florida State College. The goal of the event is to:

- Promote SMI chaplaincy to the community.
- Hear from community leaders of their passion for the unmet needs of our military and first responders.
- Bring church leaders, corporate leaders, and ministry leaders together to network and become aware of the services that exist.
- Bring greater awareness of the needs of our veterans and first responders.
- Raise funds to support the growing programs that will promote healing for our veterans and first responders and, consequently our entire community.

Registration is \$75. Register

for yourself and your organizational members, and/or sponsor veterans and first responders to attend. Registrations are transferable. Several level sponsorships are available and you can donate items for the live action such as military gear, patriotic or Christian artwork, complimentary vacations, excursions, and more.

For more information on sponsorships, donations or the event, call 850-842-2780 or visit ServeMinistriesInc.com.

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Northwest Florida State College - Open for Opportunity

Northwest Florida State College personnel have been working diligently to prepare for campus re-opening and are striving toward a safe, healthy campus environment so that we can continue offering high-quality education and fulfilling our mission of improving lives on the Emerald Coast. The safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff is our TOP PRIORITY. Working closely with our local Department of Health, the Florida Department of Education and other state government agencies, the College has developed an Opening for Opportunity Plan designed to increase students' access to high quality instruction and wrap-around support services that facilitate high rates of student success.

Decisions made for the Fall 2020 term move the institution forward with safety as the top priority and present an expanded, more diverse slate of online and hybrid course offerings.

This shift toward online and hybrid classes allows the College to reduce the number of students on campus and to support social distancing among those in courses that require campus presence (critical infrastructure, science labs, etc.). Students who attend class in person will be required to follow safety protocols while on campus, which include students and faculty wearing face coverings during class meetings and while in transit on campus.

The updated schedule will include the following instructional methods:

- **Online:** NWF Online provides optimal flexibility for students to log in at any time each week to complete classwork, connect with their instructor and participate with their peers.
- Online Live: NWF Online—Live is a live-streamed class with scheduled Zoom meetings to meet with the instructor and your classmates

each week during traditional class meeting times.

- **Hybrid:** Hybrid courses have in-person class meetings with social distancing and a reduced number of students at each class meeting. Hybrid classes are supplemented with online instruction and resources so that students take half of the course in-person on campus and the other half independently. The Hybrid delivery mode combines the best of NWF's traditional classrooms with the greater flexibility of the online learning environment.
- Traditional: Select classes in clock-hour and critical infrastructure programs, as well as select science labs and other classes with required handson components that cannot be taught online will continue to be delivered in person through traditional methods. Safety protocols will be followed in accordance with the latest recommendations from health officials.



In all instructional methods, students will participate in learning activities, discussion and peerto-peer engagement. NWFSC faculty are committed to delivering high-quality instruction that expands students' opportunities for success. The Learning Commons provides library and learning resources services, free tutoring and testing complete with virtual options for connecting to resources and staff for additional support. The Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning is ready to assist students

with technology, Blackboard and accommodations support. Our Student Success Navigators are standing by to answer any questions you may have regarding your class schedule for Fall 2020.

Your future begins here at Northwest Florida State College. The fall term begins August 19 and enrollment is underway. We encourage you to visit www.nwfsc.edu or call 850-502-2895 to learn more about our programs.





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Northwest Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate and baccalaureate degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northwest Florida State College. Northwest Florida State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit www.nwfsc.edu. Materiales de la Universidad son disponibles en Española llamando a la Oficina de Admisiones de Northwest Florida State College al 850-678-5111.



HSU Educational Foundation Unveils High-Tech Institute of Innovation

Leveraging Collaboration of Students, Industry and Military

The new HSU Innovation Institute, a facility centered in the Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park, has opened to inspire innovation among both the youth and professional community.

HSU Educational Foundation founder and local tech entrepreneur Dr. Paul Hsu is acting on his 2019 commitment to make a visionary concept a reality in the development of a modern, Silicon Valley-esque setting with the \$1 million renovation of a donated building that pre-



viously hosted the early growth of several of his first businesses. "Innovation Accelerators," or partners, include Beast Code, City of Fort Walton Beach, MagAerospace Engineering, Patriot Technologies, Ray Foundation, and Step One Automotive Group. Each of these local businesses have committed to assist the HSU Innovation Institute through annual lab sponsorship, equipment, funds, resources and instructional expertise.

The HSU Innovation Institute, the only one of its kind in

the area, spans a 28,000 square foot industrial office and warehouse facility that serves as a public-private partnership space. It will host STEM training, research and development in the 15 educational labs, collaborative maker spaces, tool labs, flight operations areas, Supporting Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based classes, workshops and will also feature challenge events and expos. Each area will feature in-demand career skills training and will represent every sponsors' diverse capabilities and future growth.

The open house revealed sleek glass classrooms, open ceilings that exposed colored network cabling for computer science coding software and IT/cyber related studies, and flexible spaces designed to facilitate exploration of hands-on STEM skills training. These areas will fully support the ability to move from idea creation to software development testing, as well as prototyping and flight applications. Using emerging technologies, the space will offer opportunities to fly a drone or test other forms of robotic artificial intelligence in the SUAS (small unmanned aircraft system) Training, Demonstration, and Competition Flying Lab. This unique, specially-equipped

indoor lab is used for applying aeronautical concepts in a safe, well equipped environment. A particular draw, the central FieldWerx Makerspace area will support the ability to engineer and prototype projects using tools and the latest equipment, such as CNC machining, robotics, construction, 3-D Printing, welding and automotive technologies.

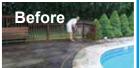
In working closely with the Air Force, specifically AFSOC 1SOW at Hurlburt Field and AFRL Munitions Directorate at Eglin Air Force Base, the HSU Foundation wants to leverage the development of the Field-Werx makerspace in a manner that will bring together industry and military in a more flexible and creative space, while also inspiring the next generation to explore the job skills that will be so important in the coming years. This partnership will help empower war fighters through training and collaboration to solve challenges, as well as encouraging development of new competitive capabilities and technologies.

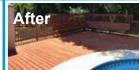
To learn more about the HSU Educational Foundation and its programs, visit https://hsu-foundation.org.

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Farmer's Market | 9AM | Grand Boulevard

Garbo Championship | 11am | Boathouse Oyster Bar

Beach Church | 7:30AM | The Crab Trap

Sunday Cinema | 8PM | Baytowne Wharf

Youth Firearms Training | 9AM | Emerald Coast Indoor Range Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

Hydroflight Monday | 6:30PM | Baytowne Wharf

Cirque De Harborwalk | 6pm | Harborwalk Village Music Bingo | 7PM | World of

Trivia Night | 7PM | Village Door Seascape



Boomin' Tuesday | 7:15PM | Village of Baytowne Wharf

National Oyster Day | 11am | Boathouse Oyster Bar Wednesday Night Free

Concert Series | 7PM | Baytowne Wharf

Okaloosa Boardwalk Fireworks | 9PM | Boardwalk on Okaloosa

•••• 6 •••••

All-American Thursday Night | 6:30PM | HarborWalk Village Magical Thursday | 7PM | Village of Baytowne Wharf Karaoke | 7PM | Village Door Seascape

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Fireworks | 9PM | HarborWalk Village

Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Latin Night | 10PM – 4AM | Bric a Brac

Emerald Coast Poker Run 8AM | Online Event

Farmer's Market | 9AM | Grand Boulevard

Rocks the Dock | 7PM | Harborwalk Village Karaoke | 8PM | World of Beer

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Beach Church | 7:30AM | The Crab Trap • 10 ••••••

Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille •••••• 11 ••••••

Trivia Night | 7PM | Village Door

Wednesday Night Free Concert Series 7PM | **Baytowne Wharf**

Okaloosa Boardwalk Fireworks | 9PM | Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

•••••• 13 Karaoke | 7PM | Village Door Seascape

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Fireworks | 9PM | HarborWalk Village • • • • • • • • • 14 • • • • • • • • •

Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Latin Night | 10PM – 4AM | Bric a Brac

••••• 15 •••••• Farmer's Market | 9AM | Grand **Boulevard**

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro Karaoke | 8PM | World of Beer

•••••• 16 ••••• Beach Church | 7:30AM | The Crab Trap

•• 17 •••••• Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

••••• 18 ••••• Trivia Night | 7PM | Village Door Seascape

Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7PM | **Baytowne Wharf**

Okaloosa Boardwalk Fireworks 19PM | Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

20 Concerts in the Village | 7PM | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation **Karaoke** | 7PM | Village Door Seascape

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Fireworks | 9PM | HarborWalk Village 21

Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Latin Night | 10PM – 4AM | Bric



Farmer's Market | 9AM | Grand Boulevard **Dueling Piano Bars** | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Karaoke | 8PM | World of Beer

Beach Church | 7:30AM | The Crab Trap

• • • • • • • • 24 • • • • • • • • Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

25 Trivia Night | 7PM | Village Door

•••••• 26 ••••• Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7PM | **Baytowne Wharf**

Okaloosa Boardwalk Fireworks 19PM | Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island

Karaoke | 7PM | Village Door Seascape

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Ristro

Fireworks | 9PM | HarborWalk Village

28 Free Beach Bonfire | 6PM | Royal Palm Grille

Dueling Piano Bars | 8PM | Palms Bistro

Latin Night | 10PM – 4AM | Bric 20

Farmer's Market | 9AM | Grand Boulevard

Slacker Olympics | 10am | Boathouse Oyster Bar **Dueling Piano Bars** | 8PM |

Palms Bistro Karaoke | 8PM | World of Beer

. 30 **Beach Church** | 7:30AM | The Crab Trap



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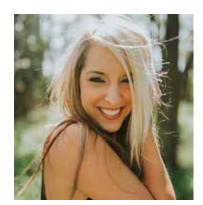






Off the Hook

Off the HookShark Week



By Cali Hlavac, To Do In Destin

It's August and that means it's time for everyone's favorite: Shark Week! This year, Shark Week runs August 9 to 16 and with that comes Discovery Channel entertainment, restaurant specials, and more. Sharks are an integral part of our eco-system. So, let's learn a little more about a few of the popular

species around our area.

Probably the most noticeable is the Spinner Shark. They are one of the most fun to catch and can be easily recognized by their ability to jump out of the water while spinning in circles. They are large and slender, with a pointed snout, black marked fins, gray skin and a white belly.

Next up is a Blacktip Shark, which can grow up to eight feet long and have black markings on the tips of their fins. They can be found in warm coastal waters around the world and frequent bays, estuaries, coral reefs and shallow waters off beaches and river mouths — all the places to encounter people. However, Blackips are typically non-aggressive towards people unless provoked or threatened.

Mako Sharks can also be found in our Emerald Coast waters and are known to be the fastest sharks on Earth – reaching speeds of up to 20 m.p.h. Their body is cylindrical, and females usually grow to be bigger and stronger than males, between 10-12 feet long. Interestingly enough, 92% of a Mako's diet is Bluefish, and it will consume 3% of its body weight every single day.







Bull Sharks also reside in our area and are known to be one of the most aggressive. They are opportunistic predators that can eat almost anything they find, and often hunt alone. Bull Sharks get their name from their short, blunt snout and their tendency to head-butt their prey before eating it. They are often found hanging around shallow, heavily populated areas in tropical climates. And while they may be aggressive, humans typically are not on the menu.

We've also had some Hammerhead sharks make appearances in our area. While they typically reside in deep waters offshore, they will migrate in the summer months in search of cooler water. They are easily recognized by their hammer shaped head and are usually gray-brown or olive green in color. Most hammerhead sharks are fairly small and are considered harmless to humans.

Off the Hook

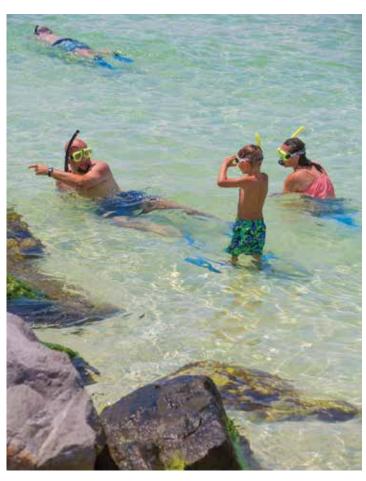


Fishing for sharks has become popular in recent years. Typically, it's a long fight, one that really tests your strength against the shark's strength. You can take a Shark Fishing Charter with a captain, or you can catch them yourself off the beaches. A good variety of the sharks in our area are protected, making them catch and release only – but perfect for the trophy angler.

Now that you're an expert on sharks, I'll leave you with one more fun fact: Many of the scenes in Jaws II were filmed right here in our own backyard of Destin to Navarre Beach, from August to December of 1977. It was the highest grossing sequel in history, until Rocky II was released. Out of all the movies filmed in Destin, Jaws 2 sticks in the mind of locals, as many were allowed to function as extras in the beach and town scenes. Even though the movie was filmed over 40 years ago, a lot

of the shot locations are still up and running.

Not only did this classic horror flick place Destin on the map, but it began a long-lasting trend of celebrity visits! From celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, to rumors of the late Michael Jackson, and numerous country music artists, the rich and famous have been frequenting our little strip of paradise for decades.



Did you know there are snorkel reefs just off of Okaloosa Island? If you want to learn more about where to dive and fish artificial reefs, visit portal.myokaloosa.





Trends & Treasures

Mask Up In Style! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds



Life can be interesting and we now know that laughter is the best medicine! Once the pandemic hit, Frill Seekers' design team swung into action to create unique, custom and creative face masks for adults and children. Their custom, locally made masks have quickly become a hit, because they make a statement! And they're guaranteed to bring a smile to everyone you encounter. Fits most adult, teen and children's faces. Co-owner Peyton LoCicero said, "Frill Seekers personalizes items all day, every day. So, we custom-created masks with some of our fun foam cup sayings. We are also selling large quantity logo masks to companies across the Gulf Southrestaurants, banks, school districts and sports teams, in a variety of colors and styles, and a variety of prices from disposable to long-wear options and in antimicrobial fabric."

Some of the most locally popular? The Beach Is My Happy Place; Bride 2020; Coastal Distancing; Caffeine, Quarantine, Cocktails, Repeat; and Yes, I'm Smiling! Bulk orders get special pricing on 24 custom masks or more with your logo, wedding icon, event name, favorite saying, etc. Visit Frill Seekers' entire mask section, which features a variety of medical grade, everyday and disposable options by clicking PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS at FrillSeekers-Gifts.com or call the shop.

(850) 460-2700 frillseekersgifts.com

Anniversaries, Birthdays, Weddings—or Doggies? Smallcakes: A Cupcakery

Life is better with sprinkles on top (or on the nose)! Not to be left out, even our furry friends love to be pampered with scrumptious pet treats, and yes,



with all the sprinkles from Smallcakes! August is here, ushering in a new wave of "ALL" cakes, in ALL flavors and varietiescupcakes, cookie cakes, "mini" or "mighty" cakes, brownies, cupcakes-in-a-jar, birthday and wedding cake heaven on earth! How awesome is a cake with gold macarons on top? Or a tropical dream - pineapple cake topped with orange-mango buttercream, rolled in toasted coconut — the perfect summer flavor for a limited time only! Or how about a cute little rainbow cake? Choose from an array of flavorful frostings and a variety of cupcake flavors! Get some for yourself or give a gift of sweets! Make your celebrations personal with custom edible logos and images to go on these tempting treats, baked fresh, with up to 18 flavors to choose from. As seen on the Food Network and Cupcake Wars, "ALL" cakes are perfect for birthdays, school events, grandmothers and grandfathers, moms and dads, anniversaries, celebrations, office or family reunions! Call ahead for pre-orders or curbside pickup!

(850) 460-7487 www.smallcakes.net

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build muscle or get fit, we've got you covered. Healthy Coast strives to make great nutrition accessible and exciting. Eating clean doesn't have to be boring and bland; they've created healthy versions of your favorite dishes for you to enjoy. You'll love these tasty, healthy, nutritious meals. We can't wait for you to discover clean eating the Healthy Coast Meals way... Healthy food never tasted so good!

www.healthycoastmeals.com 850-496-6470

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The Dressing Room exists to provide every fashionista with quality fashion at a reasonable price. Owner Abbie understands how you want to put your best foot forward, and strives to improve your confidence and self-image by providing you with the tools necessary to make the right first impressions—and the best fashion statements of the upcoming season—weekend outfits, fun and flirty jumpsuits, boyfriend jeans, rompers and more. Abbie has collected the perfect ensembles, in style, and just right for all body types, comfort and preferences. Looking good on a Zoom call or out social distancing is important. As the expert, she listens to you and works to help you show off your best self-digitally or in person! Pick up super cute pieces that embrace the current trends, mix and match, add a brilliant shot of color or sheen along with sassiness and personal style; pump up your basics with a little flare, and you'll always look your best whether working, playing or dancing! Shop online, too!

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If you have to wear a mask, you might as well mask up in style, right? Made with bunches of love in Destin. Custom options available, too!

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Personal Auto Ridesharing and Food Delivery:

Are You Covered?



By Victoria Ostrosky

San Francisco was an amazing city! The cool, moist fog that rolled in from the Bay during the night was soon burned off by the sun, and the winding and hilly streets had been a welcome change from Rebecca's normal day in her small town back in the Florida Panhandle.

As a 10-year local of San Francisco, her friend Laura had encouraged Rebecca to utilize Uber during her stay, and it was quite the new experience. The driver who picked her up was prompt and friendly, and his car was clean. Rebecca, being a curious person, asked James, her Uber driver, how ride-sharing worked.

"Well," answered James,

"Uber had to run a background check on me, and my car had to meet certain requirements too. And then I had to get insurance."

Rebecca kept thinking about how interesting it all was and wondered now, three years later, if her auto policy would cover her if she decided to be an Uber driver or provide food delivery during COVID-19. There were many opportunities to make some extra money right now.

So, she called her friend and agent, Audrey.

"Hey, Audrey, I have a question for you," said Rebecca.

Audrey smiled, knowing that whenever Rebecca called it was going to be an interesting conversation. "OK, shoot! What's on your mind today?"

"You know all about Uber, right? And what about food delivery like Grubhub, DoorDash and GoPuff?" Rebecca asked.

"Yes, I do," answered Audrey.
"And I bet you're wondering whether your auto policy would cover you, right?"

"Ha, ha! You know me pretty well, don't you?" laughed Rebecca.

Audrey explained that there were basically two types of insurance policies needed for



ride-sharing such as Uber or Lyft. When you come on board with Uber, one of the requirements is that you obtain insurance with them with high liability limits and high deductibles. But that policy only covers you while you have a paying passenger in your car.

You will also need a ride-sharing endorsement on your personal auto policy for those times that you don't have a paying passenger in your car. On a similar subject, when it comes to food and medicine delivery, some auto carriers are currently making allowances during the pandemic, extending or modifying policy terms to give coverage for temporary delivery use.

This may affect your premium, but the key is to let your agent know so you have the correct risk reflected on your policy in the event of a claim.

When it comes to your personal auto policy, we recommend carrying Bodily Injury limits of no less than 100/300, since this is your asset protector, with matching Uninsured/ Underinsured Motorist limits, stacked. PIP (Personal Injury Protection) is mandated by Florida statute. Medical Payments are optional but recommended as well since it covers not just you, but passengers in your car. If you want physical damage coverage on your vehicle, you'll need Comprehensive and Collision. Carriers offer other options such as rental, road-side assistance, diminishing deductibles and credits to lower your premium.

Audrey ended the conversation with some sage advice. She mentioned that sometimes people try to 'skate' on insurance and might think they don't have to tell their personal auto insurance agent that they are now ride-sharing or delivering food or medicine. Not informing their agent, and not having the correct coverage can result in a denied claim, or worse.

"It's always best to play by the rules when it comes to insurance," cautioned Audrey.



Insurance Zone, owned by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their Video Library on www.ins-zone.com and watch several informative videos including Auto Insurance Made Easy,' or call 850.424.6979. Victoria Ostrosky, author of this article, is a Personal Lines and Life Agent/CSR with IZ.









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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Mícha K.

Please Vote:

ORTHODONTIST





By Matthew Vanderford Imagine walking into your home after being gone for the

So, What the Heck is a Public Adjuster Anyway?

weekend. You pull up to the house, get out of the car, open the door and hhmmm...something doesn't feel right. Something doesn't smell right. You turn on the light to find water all over your floors. There's water here. There's water there. There's water almost everywhere!

That scenario you just read

is what happened to a property owner in Niceville. A blockage in the line of the air conditioning unit caused water to overflow the pan and spread into two thirds of the house. When the owner came home, she called a plumber to fix the issue. When the plumber arrived, he identified the problem, but couldn't make the repair properly. The plumber then began to help this age 70 widow and called an HVAC company for her to fix her problem. He then recommended she get the water $% \left(-\frac{1}{2}\right) =-\frac{1}{2}\left(-\frac{1}{2}$ out as quickly as possible before her house got full of mold. And this is where I first became introduced to the claim that changed the projection of my life.

Prior to this claim, I had worked in the insurance claims industry for a number of years as an insurance company restoration preferred vendor contractor. The company I worked for was hired by insurance companies to fix damaged property. It was through these services and relationships with the insurance companies where I first learned the basics of what really goes on when insurance claims are filed. It was through these relationships and services that



I became exposed to the insurance mindset—to how insurance companies perceive loss. To how they manage risk. It was through the restoration process and relationships that I got to see some nuts and bolts of the mechanics of how the insurance companies operated. And it was this water damage in Niceville, this insurance claim, this part of life's drama that propelled me to become a public adjuster.

So, what the heck is a public adjuster anyway? That's a great question, because most people I speak to have no idea what a public adjuster is. Here's a summarized version of the legal description found in the Florida Statutes (626.854): " A "public adjuster" is any person, except a duly licensed attorney at law, who acts on behalf of, or aids an insured or third-party claimant in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage covered by an insurance contract."

So, what the heck is a public

adjuster anyway? I thought we just asked that question!?!

In simple terms, a public adjuster is someone who's allowed to help an insured or claimant settle the value of loss as covered under an insurance policy contract. A public adjuster is the only person outside of a licensed attorney that can legally help someone file and settle insurance claims. A public adjuster is someone who has been afforded the ability to help the community in receiving fair and ethical treatment in the insurance claim filing process. To give people a voice. To bring balance to the force. Oh, wait...that's another movie.

In our reality, a public adjuster is someone who's able to stand with—and for—an insured or claimant to help them navigate the loss process. And this is what brings us back to Niceville, to the beginning of this story. Because something other than nice was going down in Niceville. And something other than nice needed to change there, too.

And that something was about to go down. A little, old lady was about to make a stand.

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For over a decade, Matthew Vanderford has worked in the Construction, Restoration and Insurance Industries as an Insurance Company Preferred Vendor, Insurance Industry Continuing Education Instructor, Public Adjuster/ Policy Holder Advocate and Licensed Contractor. He's proud to call Destin his home, with his wife Candice and four children: Matthew, Blake, Jordan and Scarlett.

Have Questions about Property Damage or Insurance Policies?

Call Us: (850) 684-4794

You could have it answered in one our columns.





Temple Beth Shalom Gets a New Rabbi!

After more than 30 years, Temple Beth Shalom in Ft. Walton Beach has a full time "Our community has been led by lay leaders and student rabbis for three decades," says Kandyce Silver. She and her husband, Dr. Mitch Silver, came into contact with so many Jewish people in the community who could not imagine participating in the synagogue, because there was not a "real rabbi" leading the congregation. But recently, committee was formed to conduct a search. These members signed up to help make the dream a reality!

Rabbi M. Robert Delcau (Rabbi D) though born in New Rochelle, N.Y., grew up outside Nashville. Along his path, he attended Tennessee State University and completed a degree in civil engineering. Working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, his career path led him to pursue a graduate degree in hydraulic river engineering at Colorado State University. At CSU, Rabbi Delcau became heavily involved

in Hillel of Colorado, the Jewish organization on campus. It was this time that reconnected him with Judaism from an adult perspective. It reignited his childhood interest in becoming a rabbi. Rabbi Delcau was ordained from HUC-JIR in Cincinnati in 2008.

Rabbi Delcau's passion is teaching Judaism to all ages and believes in providing spiritual sustenance for Jew and non-Jew alike. He says he is focused on engaging congregants in dialogue about classical Jewish text, modern Jewish thought and meaningful prayer. An accomplished spiritual service leader, Rabbi Delcau uses his love of music and guitar to foster a spiritual and energetic connection with the members of Temple Beth Shalom and the greater Emerald Coast.

Rabbi D is often noted for sharing his main sermon regarding life from a Jewish perspective. "Our goal and obligation as Jews is simple to understand. It is to make the world a better place." As such, Rabbi Delcau is committed to



engaging in social action work here on the Emerald Coast. Before even setting foot in the Ft. Walton Beach area, the United Way as him to serve on the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funding committee for Okaloosa County. "I was honored to be a part of this hands-on work that truly makes a difference right here in our area," stated Rabbi Delcau.

The rabbi is also a committed advocate for the State of Israel. As such, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) recognized him as part of the first Rabbinical Advocacy mission in the history of the lobbying organization in the summer of 2014. He flew to Israel with a small team of rabbis to discuss up-close issues regarding the U.S.-Israel relationship. He seeks to be

a part of the greater peace process in the Middle East and has also engaged in efforts such as lobbying public officials in Washington, D.C. to prevent nuclear weaponry in the region.

Before coming to Ft. Walton Beach, Rabbi Delcau spent several years in Washington State where he merged his spiritual connection to the outdoors with his passion for sharing Judaism both in the Cascade mountains as a rabbi/ski instructor and serving as the rabbi of Congregation Beth Hatikvah in Bremerton, Wa. on the Olympic Peninsula.

Prior to that period, he served as the Senior Rabbi of Temple Judea of Bucks County in Doylestown. Finally, Rabbi Delcau was an Assistant Rabbi and then an Associate Rabbi at Temple Emanuel of Denver, Colo., where he was an active member of the Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council and sat on the board of trustees of both Hillel of Colorado and the Jewish National Fund.

Rabbi Delcau says he looks forward to connecting his

Judaic interests with his love of the outdoors here on the Emerald Coast. Of course, he will continue his passions for skiing and hiking. Yet, we might find him sharing prayer on the beach, on the golf course, or on a dive boat as well. "God has a plan. I am simply along for the ride," he says.

"We and the local Jewish community are very excited and grateful for this 'new burst of energy and connection' and look forward to years of growth and enjoyment," says Kandyce. Rabbi Delcau and his daughters, Shira and Maya, are also very excited to be a part of and share this vision with the Jewish community of the Emerald Coast. "This is such a blessing for our community," says Kandyce. "Our son will be the first Bar Mitzvah this fall under the guidance of Rabbi

For more information contact Temple Beth Shalom, 227 Beal Parkway N.W. at Nature's Trail Court N.W. in Ft. Walton Beach, at 850-862-6086 or visit shalom-at-tbsfwb.com.



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BY MAURICE STOUSE, BRANCH MANAGER AND FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Today many Americans are having their faith and confidence in their health and wealth challenged as never before. While the pandemic continues to bring unexpected events into our lives, it is also seen as important that we stay informed and utilize helpful hints when it comes to our wealth along with the focus on our health.

What are some things you should know right now? The recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security - CARES - Act of 2020, a fiscal stimulus bill of over \$2 trillion dollars has several provisions many Americans might want to be aware of.

Cash or liquidity needs:

Staying Financially Informed through the Pandemic

Do you have adequate access to cash for short term needs, unexpected financial needs, or emergencies? Most experts suggest a minimum of six months of expenses to be stored away and readily available. What if you don't have that or don't want to exhaust it? Investment firms might offer securities-based lines of credit (SBLOC) against stocks that you own. Or, you might qualify for penalty free distributions from your retirement accounts. There are also new provisions available to increase the amount that can be borrowed from a qualified retirement plan. Retirement savers can also pause or reduce their current contributions to their retirement plans. Lastly, Home Equity Lines of Credit (HELOC) might give you access to equity in your home.

Required Minimum Distributions for Retirees: With stock market volatility throughout this year, Americans who normally have Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from their retirement plans can

waive those for 2020. The benefit is that if they are facing losses to their retirement portfolios they are not having to sell in to that. Many people don't want to exhaust principal that perhaps could or is recovering and have it work to produce needed income or returns in the future. Also, RMDs used to be required at age 70.5. That was pushed to 72 (for those born on or after July 1, 1949) as a result of the Secure Act, which was passed in 2019

Tax Loss Harvesting: Many investors have looked at their portfolios mid year and examined those to see if they have losses (in taxable vs retirement accounts) that they could "realize" through selling those positions. Those losses might be able to be used to offset gains not only this year but in future years as well. Many consider this a form of tax efficient investing as potentially reduces taxes that would be owed and hence a better overall return on an investment. And, dependent upon circumstances, losses on financial investments like stocks or bonds can also be applied against other types of gains, like real estate for example.

Roth Conversions: As was explored last month, many investors might have the opportunity to convert existing IRA assets (including Rollover IRA assets) in to a ROTH IRA and hence have those assets grow tax free (with the restrictions that apply with certain time limits). Retirees who waive their RMD for 2020 might want to consider converting that amount to a ROTH IRA.

Update your plans: Many consider now to be a good time to revisit financial and estate plans. It is a good opportunity to review portfolios for rebalancing or if risk tolerance has changed. Estate planning – particularly a review of how assets are titled might be timely as well. When leaving assets to their heirs, investors would want to ensure they have beneficiaries or perhaps trusts and wills in place.

Charitable Giving: The CARES Act has given some added flexibility to charitable giving and might give donors a deduction (\$300 in cash as an

example) even if they do not itemize. Also, retirees might be able to give their RMDs up to \$100,000 to charity and not have that dollar amount excluded from their taxable income. This is a reminder for that rule which was already in place.

Staying informed and making changes and updates as needed are steps Americans can take today during these unusual times. Do your own research and contact a financial, tax or estate planning advisor to assist you as needed.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James and he resides in Grayton Beach. He has been in financial services for over 33 years. His main office is located at First Florida Bank, a division of the First, A National Banking Association, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32541. Branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City, Pensacola, Tallahassee, and Moultrie, GA. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice. stouse@raymondjames.com.Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC, and are not insured by bank insurance, the FDIC or any other government agency, are not deposits or obligations of the bank, are not guaranteed by the bank, and are subject to risks, including the possible loss of principal. Investment Advisory Services are offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc. The First Wealth Management First Florida Bank, and The First, A National Banking Association are not registered broker/dealers and are independent of Raymond James Financial Services. Views expressed are the current opinion of the author, not necessarily those of RJFS or Raymond James, and are subject to change without notice. Information provided is general in nature and is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision and is not a recommendation or a solicitation to buy or sell any security. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

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Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

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Amy Parrish

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By Gail Pelto

Yep—record low interest rates! Are you ready to take advantage of them? Here's a few things to ponder, because there are a bunch of "maybes" on how these historically low interest rates might work for you:

- maybe you've accumulated some debt that you'd like to pay off:
- maybe you have some major repairs you'd like to make;
- maybe you'd like to create wealth and buy an investment property;

Holy Cow, Batman! Interest Rates are LOW!

- maybe you'd like to lower your current monthly mortgage payment;
- maybe you're renting and you want to be a homeowner (you really should consider getting a home loan and pay your own mortgage rather than somebody else's);
- maybe you'd like a vacation home;
- or, maybe you'd like a financial cushion, just in case something comes up in the future.

Where do you start; who do you call? There are plenty of places to get a mortgage loan and the two most common are mortgage companies and banks—and both would love to lend you money. So, which one should you call? I say, "CALL BOTH!"

You may already have a relationship with a bank, which might make it easier for you to reach out to your local banker.

When you work with a bank, the bank is the lender and they set their own rates. They might also offer special benefits or discounts to their existing customers. As of the day I'm writing this (July 22, 2020) Nellie Schlachter, with Synovus says, "Our bank is currently paying up to \$2000 towards HELOC (home equity line of credit) closing costs," and here's the cool thing about getting a HELOC: the money's approved to give to you, it will be there when you need it and you PAY NOTHING unless you borrow from it! What a cushion,

Mortgage Lenders often offer a larger variety of loan options, because they shop around, and they may be more forgiving of borrowers with damaged credit. Mortgage Lenders may also be more willing to negotiate on terms and, typically, they have a faster loan closing. Bonnie Manthey with Inlanta



Mortgage, says, "When interest rates are this low, buyers can afford a lot more house than they can when interest rates go up by even just one point."

The best fit for you will depend on your particular home-buying scenario, as well as your finances and goals. So, do your homework and shop around. The important thing here is WE HAVE RECORD LOW INTEREST RATES! Let that work for you. Are you ready to take advantage of these rates and buy that investment property or you first home? I can help!

Gail Pelto is a full-time real estate professional and new agent mentor with Keller Williams. She is also a board member with the Rotary Club of Destin as well as the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and is the current president of the Destin Chapter of Master Networks. For information about real estate or If you are a local business professional and would like to learn more about Master Networks, please call her at 850.374.0454 or email to gail.pelto@kw.com. On Facebook, Destin Agent Gail -Emerald Coast Realtor and Master Networks, Destin Chapter.

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By Chris Balzar, ECES

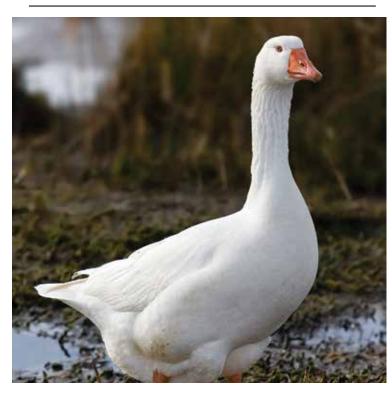
Do you remember the childhood game Duck Duck Goose? Do you know Duct Duct Goose? Of course not, it's made up. Ductwork is a system or network of ducts which bring cool air to the different rooms and living areas of our homes. When an HVAC company installs the air ducts in a home, the contractors are working with separate pieces. While the workers strive to connect each piece as tightly and securely as possible, leaks and gaps in the ducts might still occur. This can happen in new homes and older homes. When these gaps and holes occur, the conditioned air we pay for and our HVAC system which worked so hard to produce, leaks out into our attics. A typical home can experience close to 20% of conditioned air loss from leaking ducts. If the leaks are big enough, even more loss can occur costing you money and comfort.

Another problem we come across is when there is work done in the attic. Maybe you had a security system installed or needed cable run into a room which wasn't wired. Many of these things need a technician to go in the attic, navigate in a

Duct Duct Goose?

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



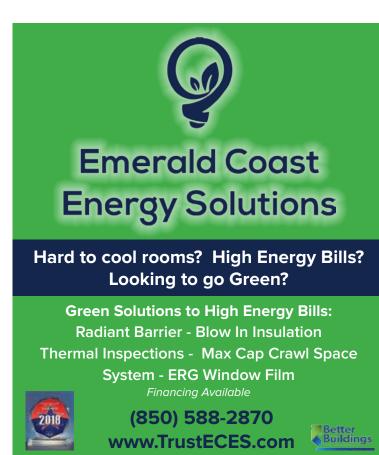
hot, hard-to-walk-around, dark area while performing these services. Ductwork tends to run in the same places these wires need to run and sometimes ductwork is used as railing or support by the technician so they don't end up putting their foot through the ceiling. Putting pressure on ductwork can cause holes and cracked seams. These are less common, but do happen and, unfortunately, are unseen be-

cause they happen in the attic.

More common is that over time, our seams, connectors, tape and vent boxes fail due to the harsh environment they are in. Failing tape is most often. The duct tape, which was used, becomes brittle and can no longer keep a tight seal. Good news is that repairing these leaks is a simple one. Inspection of ductwork and boxes can easily detect these leaks. Foil tape and

mastic (which is a type of paste applied to seams which foil tape can't seal) is used to reseal these leaks keeping the conditioned air flowing for years to come. We tend to forget how important these systems really are and how important it is to maintain them. It is always a great idea to schedule an inspection and improve the efficiency on one of our largest investments—our homes.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions which is a Smile Provider Company. It provides smiles to customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com and BEAT THE HEAT!



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By Scott Miller

There's no place like the South: we embrace this time of year like nowhere else. We love our college football (we hope and pray...) and the whole world knows it. So, let's ease on into August and enjoy the last official month of summer in our little slice of paradise. There are so many awesome, amazing and exciting days lined up for us to enjoy, one day at a time. As we've been saying all summer long, take our lead and follow us to some of the best eateries, music venues, and football watching meccas this great land has to offer (again, we hope and pray...). And we'll keep our eyes and ears open for the first day of the 2020 College Football season to begin!

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Boathouse Oyster Bar has been one of Destin's favorite best kept secrets, but the word is out! Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's Gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked just the way you like 'em! Come on by and enjoy the best food in town in a fun and friendly atmosphere.

First Friday of every month we host Locals on the Harbor from 5pm - 7pm. Who wants a Free keg? Bring a donation for the Emerald Coast Foundation to qualify for entry.

Our Slacker Event Series benefits Road Dogg Rescue. We just completed our Slacker 0.5K which raised over \$4000 for the rescue. We have animals on site during the event. Participants are asked to bring dog or cat food as a donation. The next upcoming one will be Slacker Olympics on August 29, more information is available on our website: www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com/events.

(850) 837-3645 288 Harbor Blvd., Destin boathouseoysterbardestin.com

Bric a` Brac Restaurant & Night Club

Voted "Best Crab Cakes in Destin" five years in a row, Bric a` Brac is the true definition of something for everyone—a family friendly, kid friendly, American-style restaurant. Bric a` Brac is well known for its super tasty food selections served up in a fun, artsy atmosphere by a truly professional and friendly staff. Locally-owned and operated since 2014 by twin brothers Rodolfo and Fernando Petit, their hands on, fun loving style, engaging charisma and true passion set

them apart. But it doesn't stop there. Want great food coupled with great fun? Enjoy delicious entrées while you listen to some lively tunes. There is truly something for everyone at Bric a` Brac in Destin.

(850) 424-6369 Shoreline Village Plaza 824 Hwy 98 E, Destin Bricabracdestin.com

Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer

Brotula's specializes in fresh, locally sourced seafood, produce, and a wide array of steamed and boiled shellfish platters that are integrated into a fun and rustic, yet sophisticated southern fish house

Our chef inspired menu will display a wide variety of flavors, with focuses on New South culinary preparations of traditional coastal offerings from around the country. Come and join us for a one-of-a-kind dining experience!

Open for lunch Monday through Saturday from 12 noon until 3pm. Open for dinner seven



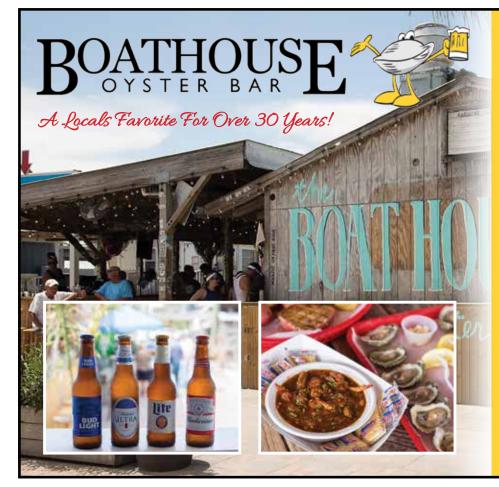
days a week from 3pm until close. Happy Hour Specials 7 days a week from 2pm until 6pm. Sunday Brunch from 10am until 2pm with amazing specials sure to satisfy the whole family.

(850) 460-8900 210D Harbor Blvd., Destin brotulas.com

Island Wing Company Grill & Bar

Voted Best Wings four years running, Island Wing Co. is calling your name. Come in and find your favorite beer among the 58 selections on tap or enjoy a cocktail and savor some of the tastiest

Continued next page



AUGUST LIVE MUSIC!

Mondays: 5pm Cole Jordan

9pm Roshambo
Tuesdays: 5pm Kyle LaMonica

8pm Austin Jennings

Wednesdays: 9pm Squeely Dan
Thursdays: 7pm Austin Jennings
Fridays: 4pm Jason Findley

8pm Dead in Connecticut

Saturdays: 12pm Kelly Byrd

8pm Gunner

Sundays: 12pm Kelly Byrd 4pm Jason Findley

4pm Jason Findley 8pm Squeely Dan

Open Daily from 11 am-2 am Lunch Specials M-F for \$9.99 Slacker Sunday Oyster Brunch 11 am

288 Harbor Blvd, Destin (850) 837-3645

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BoathouseOysterBar www.boathouseoysterbardestin.com

Destin 1

food you've ever eaten. Need to feed the whole family? Family meals to go with curbside delivery has you covered. Daily specials and happy hour 3-7pm and 7pm-close will keep you coming back again and again. Happy Monday! Kids eat free. (Free kids meal with adult entree purchase) and Happy Hour All day long. At IWC, TWOsday was made for TACOS! Enjoy two tacos with reggae rice for \$8.95 Choose from Jah'mon Jerk, Maui Wowwie Mahi, Buffalo Chicken and Baja Fish. Which one is Your favorite? Wednesday is flatbread special day. Enjoy \$3 off our five famous flatbreads. Pairs well with \$3 house wine or $\frac{1}{2}$ priced bottles. Your Island awaits you...

(850) 837-2999 981 U.S. Hwy. 98, Destin islandwing.com

La Famiglia Restaurant

It didn't take much for Pino Tozzi to decide to sell his successful businesses in Rome, Italy, uproot his young family and emigrate to America—just a vacation to Destin in 2005. The rest is history... La Famiglia has earned a reputation for serving some of the finest homemade

Italian dishes on the Emerald Coast, including Veal Parmesan, homemade pastas and raviolis, and antipasto. Not to be missed, La Famiglia is a local favorite for authentic, brick oven Italian pizza, topped with a variety of traditional and specialty ingredients. A big appetite? Try the hand-stretched, 2 ft. pizza on for size! Simply a great place to take the family out for a genuine, Italian pizza experience and memory-making.

(850) 279.4527 16055 Emerald Coast Pkwy., Ste. 114, Destin lafamigliadestin.com

Landshark's Pizza

Are you ready for some Football? Hungry, thirsty, maybe a little of both? Come in and visit Landshark's Pizza. Owners Brian and Sue Hassmann have created the local's favorite pizza, buffalo wings and sports pub and bar that serves great pizza AND awesome wings plus many other scrumptious eats for folks of all ages. There's plenty of seating for everyone and TVs galore, plus fun and games all week long. Weekly specials and fun include Music Bingo on Tuesdays

at 7pm; \$.69 cent Wing Wednesdays; Sports fans from all over come and watch all their favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks including College & Pro Football. And there's a fully stocked bar with 95 different bourbons and 30 beers on draft!

(850) 424-6743 300 Harbor Blvd., Destin landsharkspizza.com

Supermarket & Taqueria Mi Gente'

Grand Opening! Now open for lunch and dinner. Latin Supermarket, Restaurant and Cantina, Taqueria Mi Gente'. Destin has a new dining hotspot to enjoy. One visit there and you'll surely know why. With fresh ingredients and homemade recipes, this fun and festive restaurant will instantly capture your heart. Serving up huge portions, you can choose from an incredible select menu offering a diverse selection of delicious food from different Latin-America countries. Taqueria Mi Gente' is a treat you just have to experience for yourself. Enjoy a drink from the cantina, try a few tasty options on the menu and when your belly is



full, take a walk through their amazing and diverse supermarket where you can buy a variety of Latin America groceries to take home. Open 7 days a week Supermarket & Taqueria Mi Gente' will welcome you back again and again.

(850) 842-2992 733 Harbor Blvd., Destin

The Melting Pot

Fondue is back and more popular than ever in our beautiful haven. The Melting Pot is the original fondue restaurant where you can enjoy several fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées, salads and unforgettable desserts. But it's more than just a restaurant; it's a unique destination offering a dining experience unlike any other. This magical fondue restaurant is perfect for the everyday occasion, from a night out with friends or a romantic dinner with your special someone to a promotion celebration with colleagues. Of course what's delicious food without a selection of wines and craft beers to really make it great? No matter what the occasion or how many courses you choose to partake in, The Melting Pot provides an unforgettable, interactive dining experience that turns moments into memories. Owned and operated by Lucinda Hollis and her fiance, Auburn Bridge, this restaurant is the one place that encourages you "to play with your food." So, if you haven't already, be sure to "dip in."

(850) 269-2227 11394 U.S. Hwy 98, Miramar Beach meltingpot.com/destin-fl/

Tailfins Alehouse & Oyster Bar

With stunning views of the Destin Harbor and your favorite foods and drinks, Tailfins' Entertainment Complex delivers an incredible mix of friendly and fun





ining & Entertainment

atmosphere along with breathtaking views. A magical combination for watching your favorite teams and enjoying the entertainment with Live Music seven days a week. Tailfins offers three levels of indoor and outdoor dining overlooking the Destin Boardwalk so come back again and again to experience all they have to offer. There are Huge Big Screen TV's everywhere you look so you can watch your favorite teams all season long. Be sure to try all of the Scrumptious Early Bird Specials M-F from 4 -7 p.m. including Tailfins' famous

Alaskan Snow Crab ~ Steamed Crab Clusters with New Potatoes & Corn, \$19.95. And if that's not already enough to bring you by, Tailfins offers a Double Happy Hour from 4 to 7 p.m. and again from 10 p.m. to closing from Mon. through Fri. with \$15 Domestic Bottle Buckets and \$7.99 Pitchers, House Wines and Well Drinks. We'll see you there.

(850) 650-1200 On the Harbor in Destin tailfinsdestin.com **Tequila's Sports Bar & Grill**

Ready to shake it up a little? And we mean literally - Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill has quickly become a local favorite. Stop in today and let them serve up some of their world class, Jumbo sized Margaritas sure to set the mood to watch your favorite game. Tequilas has some of the best seats

in the neighborhood.

Come in and enjoy a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes, lunch specials offered daily Monday through Friday for \$8.99. EAT, DRINK, FIESTA!! Open 7 days a week for lunch, dinner or call ahead to place your take out and to-go orders.

(850) 279.6402 11225 U.S. 98 W., Miramar Beach restaurantji.com/fl/destin/tequilas-/









Food For Thought Celebrates Multi-Year Partnership With St. Joe Community Foundation

Food For Thought Outreach and St. Joe Community Foundation are excited to announce their multi-year partnership with Food For Thought receiving a \$105,000 grant over the next three years to support their efforts in fighting food insecurity and childhood hunger.

Food For Thought's mission is to remove the negative impacts of hunger, and to empower children to get the most out of their education and development by providing them weekly access to

healthy, easy to prepare meals through their many programs. The contribution will provide \$35,000 per year for Back-to-School and Holiday food programs at Food For Thought.

During 2019-2020 school year before the COVID-19 "Stay at Home" Order, Food For Thought was providing weekly backpacks of food to over 3.300 students across Okaloosa and Walton counties. When the global pandemic hit and schools closed their doors, Food For





Restaurant & Pizzeria





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New Location: Island Palms Plaza 16055 Emerald Coast Parkway Suite 114, Destin (next to Walmart) 850-279-4527

Thought shifted immediately into curbside services and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

"We are expecting at least a 25% increase in enrollment this school year which will be over 4,000 students. Food insecurity and unemployment continues to affect our community and our services will help bridge that gap for families," says Tiffanie Nelson, Founder & CEO of Food For Thought Outreach. "We are so grateful to have generous partners like the St. Joe Community Foundation. Their multi-year commitment helps to ensure our services can continue and the food insecure children who need us the most, will be able to count on us for support."

Since March, families have been receiving curbside food dis-

tributions, each vehicle receiving 30 to 50 full size food items, often including twenty-five pound boxes of fresh produce generously provided by City Produce, in order to prepare full meals for the entire family. Food For Thought is currently serving 500-600 families a month while staff and volunteers are strictly adhering to safety guidelines including wearing face masks, social distancing, increased sanitizing and cleaning procedures in the pantries, and less than 10 volunteers working together at any one time.

"The St. Joe Community Foundation is very proud to support Food For Thought's mission; in times like this, we are grateful to see them step up to meet the overwhelming needs in the community," adds April Wilkes, Executive Director of St. Joe Community Foundation.

This shift in programming means 60,000 food items are needed per month in addition to replacing \$120,000 in donation losses from postponed or cancelled events and fundraisers from March into September.

The community can join in the giving by supporting Food For Thought's Stock the Pantry: Virtual Team Fundraiser. The annual Stock the Pantry Food Drive has been revamped to be a virtual team-based fundraiser this year. Instead of collecting food items, FFT will have a virtual fundraiser, where each team will contribute to raise money towards the goal of \$150,000 which is equivalent to 300,000 food items.

This fundraiser runs virtually from July 14 through Aug. 22, and will enable Food For Thought to be able to continue to provide food to families and students, as the need is ongoing and growing. Please reach out to: support@fftfl.org for more information or to register your

If you or someone you know is in need, get information about food distribution the following ways: Facebook @ FoodForThoughtOutreach, support@fftfl.org or 850-714-1960.









By Jodell Haverfield, Luxury Travel Consultant ACC

When I was a young mother of four children, ages 6 months to 8 years, I decided that while

Brief History of the U.S. Rail Passenger

and business practices, it also linked the nation by carrying people. The relative speed of a train as well as its ability to travel regardless of the weather made rail travel extremely attractive to travelers. By the time of the Civil War, 30,000 miles of track had been laid.

In 1869, the first transcontinental railroad was completed where tracks of the Union Pacific met those of the Central Pacific at Promontory, Utah. One train from the east and one

replace well-worn cars that had been in service transporting soldiers during the war. This reflected the hopeful outlook for the future of rail passenger travel again. However, the railroad failed to capture the post war boom in travel as they actually decided to discourage passenger travel in favor of the more lucrative freight business. Airline advertising doubled during the first seven years of the 1950s compared to a one quarter drop for railroad travel. By 1970, air-

as you satisfy your bucket list in comfort.

The good news is most post Covid 19 travel of any sort now offers maximum travel with confidence policies and flexible cancellations without fees. I hope I have sparked your interest in perhaps taking a train trip one day. Next month, I am going to tell you about a very special anniversary.

Visit JoDell at www.havetravelmemories.com.



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POST-WAR VACATION

We that the year

If the manufacture of the control of the con

my husband was away on active duty, I would take my little family on a train trip from Montana to the Oregon Coast. Other than the fact that I lost my balance and broke my tailbone on the arm of my seat shortly after departing the station, the trip was great! The Oregon Coast was absolutely breathtaking, as was my pain. Yet I still have fond memories of this so far, once in a lifetime experience. That was 40 years ago, and I recently realized it was the beginning of our family adventures. Years later, as I explore and plan train trips for my clients, I often reflect on my train trip. I know as a travel advisor for nearly 30 of the 40 years since my trip that trains have evolved to a level of superior excellence and service to give rail travelers a truly exceptional experience. This month I thought I would share with you a little about the history of the

The railroad not only revolutionized the transport of goods

passenger railroad.

from the west ran each week, sufficiently meeting the travel demands of the time. The 1880s brought 70,000 additional miles of track linking increasing numbers of towns and cities. Rail travel even tripled between 1896 and 1916, and the peak in terms of numbers was 1920 with trains carrying 1.2 billion passengers.

By 1929 train travel had decreased by 18% due to an increase in automobile ownership. Railroad travel dropped even more during the Depression, but gained back ground after the 1934 debut of the Burlington Chicago, and Quincy's streamlined, diesel-powered Zepher and the Union Pacific's gasoline-powered M-10,000. Then World War II broke out in Europe in 1939 and the public was encouraged to delay personal travel unless absolutely

Soon after the end of the war in 1945, thousands of new passenger cars were ordered to lines carried 73% of passenger travel and railroads carried only 7.2%.

Then a national rail passenger system popped up known as Amtrak in 1971. However, passenger ridership was still not maintained. The government-run agency did not appear to be the answer for revitalizing the leisure passenger train industry. But by the end of the 20th century, the research and development of high speed trains is providing the incentive for further expansion of passenger train service.

Today, there is no end to the luxurious rail vacations to choose from with more than 690 cities and 51 countries. You can choose your own adventure as you travel through Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, Canada, Venice, Dublin, Berlin, Scenic Switzerland or Lake Como on the Bernina Express. Luxurious passenger trains with glass top domes for endless views and exceptional service await you

Want to know the Value of YOUR home here on the Emerald Coast? Find out! Go to: www.DestinAgentGail.com

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- Melanie Kercher, Crystal Beach

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Freedom with American Eagle Fence

By Scott Miller, Local Homeowner

Freedom—ahhh, sweet freedom. As Americans we are blessed to enjoy freedom in many ways.

These days there is certainly a lot of discussion on this topic and many points of view. Especially right now having just celebrated the 4th of July and being smack dab in the throws of a presidential election year. Yes, indeed there is much talk and discussion happening on this subject. But this article is a little different than you may be expecting. This is from a point of view that you might not have considered. This point of view is from our four-legged family.

Many homeowners are also pet owners. I know, you might be saying, "Where is this going?"

Well, I just wanted to take a lighter approach today to the topic of freedom; what better way than from the eyes of our happy, go lucky, never had a bad



day, tail wagging, unconditional loving four-legged family members.

When we bought our new house and made it our new home, we were happier than a camel on hump day. It had everything we ever wanted: room to grow, awesome neighbors, close to the beach, on and on. Except one thing. We did not have a fence around our yard. With a couple of little grand babies and a couple dogs, we had really gotten used to having a fenced in yard.

And, so did our precious pets, Bella and Nina. They used

to love being able run free and play in the yard every day. So, after we moved into our new home, quite frankly it was back to walks on a leash for our doggies. The frolicking and running through the yard took a pause.

Something just had to be done. Enter the amazing people from American Eagle Fence who saved the day. Blake Gasaway, Niceville resident and owner of American Eagle Fence, along with his team of awesome and amazing employees, helped us fix the problem and installed a beautiful black aluminum fence around our backyard. And now Bella and Nina have their freedom back. Not to mention the piece of mind we now enjoy again whenever the grand babies are playing outside. They're not outside alone, of course, but even when we are just a few feet away, it's amazing how they just naturally find a way to run off and play hide and seek. So, the security of knowing they can only go so far is a blessing for sure.

When we say the word "outside?" Bella and Nina instantly get excited. They hurry to the back door, tails wagging, eyes shining, jumping for joy just waiting for someone to open that door and let the freedom flow. Our dogs bring us so much joy, the least we could do was give them back the joy and freedom they deserve.

So, take my advice, call Blake and his team soon and let them help you transform your home sweet home to a home, fun, safe and secure home. There are so many reasons a beautiful new fence makes life even better at your home. It sure has for us.

American Eagle Fence is locally owned and operated—experienced, insured and professional. Give them a call, I promise you'll be glad you did!

(850) 502-8360 www.americaneaglefence.com 68 John Sims Pkwy. E., Niceville

PAWS Hires New Executive Director

Tracey Williams is the new Executive Director of the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). Tracey has led local nonprofits and community organizations for the past 20 years. She was Executive Director of Embrace Florida Kids and Fresh Start for Children & Families;

Community Development and Human Resource Manager for The Arc of the Emerald Coast; President/CEO of the Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce; Executive Director of the Navarre Area Board of Realtors, and co-founded the Navarre Press. She also served 13 years in the U.S. Air Force.

"PAWS is ecstatic to be bringing someone on board with her leadership background," said PAWS Board President Michelle Curry. "Events of 2020 have given the board a chance to re-evaluate our strategic direction," Curry added. "With the growing population of the county, demands for animal

services have also grown."

Tracey's focus is on increasing awareness and community support for PAWS. "Regardless of the industry, my success has been running the business aspects of nonprofits. While I can and certainly will learn the animal control aspects of the job, I am impressed with



the board's foresight to hire both an Executive Director and Animal Operations Director. The responsibilities and plans for growth are just too much for a singular position."

Her first experience with PAWS was nearly 30 years ago, when she volunteered while stationed at Hurlburt Field. "I was taking a college course that required community service, and the PAWs facility was just outside the base gate" Williams said. "Those volunteer experiences propelled me into a career of working with vulnerable populations: people with disabilities, kids in foster care, homeless children and families, and now animals.





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Education



By Daniel Jones

The Olympics have been held every four years since 1896 with three exceptions: World War I, World War II and Covid-19. 2020 has been a year of great sacrifices; we have sacrificed sociality, entertainment and business in order to fight off an invading foe. But what can we learn from former years of great depravations?

During World War II, Great Britain's mainland allies fell in rapid succession during 1939 and 1940, putting enormous pressure on them to capitulate to the Germans. English troops

Back to School

the evacuated continent at Dunkirk in June 1940 and didn't set another foot back in France until D-Day, four years later. During the four intervening years they were under near constant threat of invasion. new enemies and air raids. Hitler's plan for invasion relied on air superiority and submission, but he was never to obtain either.

Winston Churchill's famous "We Will Fight Them" speech reflected the resilience of his entire nation, who had already implemented Operation Pied Piper, an effort to relocate



nearly one million children from cities and coastlines most at risk. Traveling by train and boat, children were sent to safer places, rural areas and across the seas to Canada, South Africa and Australia.

For 57 straight nights in 1940, bombs burst on the streets of London in a period known simply The as Blitz. Over 30,000 were killed (nearly 25% of those were children) and over 80 000 wounded, with millions of buildings damaged or destroyed. Some the children casualties were from those who bravely volunteered during the raids as messengers or fire-

watchers. By the time these children returned back home, some were speaking in different accents, some hadn't seen their parents in years, some were sent over the ocean and never came home, some no longer wanted to go home (I'm sure some of you parents are not surprised by that), and some went away and were still killed by the war.

One in five schools were damaged by bombings and two thousand were requisitioned for the war effort. Across the country they held class outside in large groups (last century's distance learning) if they could find a teacher, and read books if they were lucky enough to have some. In short, these kids were incredibly resilient, patient, and brave.

NPR reported in April 2020 that "4 in 10 U.S. teens say they haven't done online learning since schools closed" and only two thirds are keeping in regular touch with their schools. Somewhat like the Blitz, Florida was in lockdown for about 60 days as well. Coronavirus flew overhead, dropping hotspots all around us. Our kids have been evacuated from their schools, though they didn't have to travel nearly as far. The effects on them have been warlike and, in many cases, their lives have been more disrupted than their parents' lives.

Even though the battle against Coronavirus is ongoing, we must emerge from the rubble, clean up the streets, return to life, and face the fight head-on. It was valor that won the Great War and it will win this one. Our kids have been patient and I believe they will be brave if given the opportunity.

Daniel Jones is Commercial Lines Account Manager, Surety Bonds, with Norton Insurance of Florida. You can reach him at Daniel@nortoninsurance.com.

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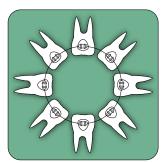








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Wellness

Reconsidering the Meaning of FDA Approved?



By Dr. Richard Chern, M.D.

Thinking FDA approved means safe and non-FDA approved means unsafe is absolutely untrue? Did you know that over 20% of medications prescribed in the United States are non-FDA approved. So, if your doctor does not support a treatment for the simple reason that "it is non-FDA approved," they either have little understanding of the treatment or little understanding of the FDA approval process.

Last week a physician told me hormones were unsafe because they are non-FDA approved. It's upsetting to know that some physician's still don't understand the FDA approval process and don't realize they likely write non-FDA approved prescriptions every day.

Here are few non-FDA prescriptions that you may recognize and some you will probably not. Many of these non-FDA approved prescriptions are considered the standard-of-care in medicine: Gabapentin for nerve pain, high dose amoxicillin for ear infections, antidepressant use longer than 12 weeks, birth control pills for irregular periods, acne, or endometriosis, Se-

roquel for insomnia, Diflucan in pregnancy, Bactrim for sinus infections, Clomid for male infertility, Mag Sulfate for preterm labor and preeclampsia, Cytotec to induce labor, steroids for premature babies lungs, and Botox was not approved for use in the forehead until 2017.

You may not recognize all of these drugs, but every physician should. They should also recognize that these are commonly prescribed even though they are non-FDA approved.

Getting FDA approval costs about 20 million dollars. Once approved, drug companies need to make that money back and more. There is no incentive to get FDA approval for a drug that is already generic or already available to physicians to prescribe for some other use.

Waiting for FDA approval also causes countless deaths. Beta-blockers help prevent heart attacks but weren't approved for almost 15 years after trials showed benefit. It's believed thousands of people died needlessly because of the delay in FDA approval. Additionally, hundreds of FDA approved drugs have been pulled from the market because it was later discovered they could be harmful or even cause death. Zantac is only the latest on that

So, if your doctor tells you to avoid treatment because it is not FDA approved, you should ask them if every medication they prescribe is FDA approved. I am confident they have no idea.

The hormones I prescribe are 100% natural and 100%bio-identical. That means these are the same hormones your body has been making for the last 30, 40, 50 years or more. The decrease in these hormones is likely the cause in much of our aging and disease. Doesn't it make sense that replacing them will stop or reverse this process? Millions of patients across the

United States receive our hormones and these patients see an increase in bone density, decreases in cholesterol, decreases in blood pressure, improvement in mood, sex drive, skin, hair and an overall improvement in health and vitality.

Dr. Richard Chern has been providing hormone therapy for more than 20 years and specializes in bio-identical hormones and thyroid optimization. Call 850-837-1271 today for an appointment.

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Blood Plasma Donations Needed

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital encourages those who have recovered from a confirmed case of COVID-19 to consider donating blood plasma for convalescent plasma therapy in critically ill patients. Such plasma is currently in short supply. People who recover from coronavirus infection may develop antibodies to the virus that remain in the plasma portion of their blood. In convalescent plasma therapy, the

plasma that contains the antibodies is transfused into a person still fighting the virus and can provide a boost to the patient's immune system and potentially help them recover. OneBlood is managing donations locally. Information about the treatment and the donation process can be found in the FAQs section of the One-Blood website at https://www. oneblood.org/lp/covid-19-convalescent-plasma.stml.





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Is it Safe to Work Out at the Gym?

A growing body of evidence is suggesting that working out at your health club carries no more risk than any other indoor facility that you might be visiting. The most recent evidence comes from a random, two-week study that began on May 22, studying five different gyms in Oslo, Norway with 3764 study participants ages 18 to 64-years-old with no underlying health condi-

tions. During the study, 80% of the participants used the gyms once, with 38% visiting over six times. Half of the study group were also told to keep away from the gym, for the purpose of comparison. Sticking to social distancing rules (one meter for 'floor exercise' and two meters for high-intensity classes), the study participants also used hand sanitizer regularly and had

lockers available. After the two weeks, the participants took an antibody test on June 8th.

The results of the study displayed an interesting result — of the 3764 participants, only one person caught coronavirus, but was part of the group that had not attended the gym. Conversely, over the study period, 207 people had contracted coronavirus in Oslo.

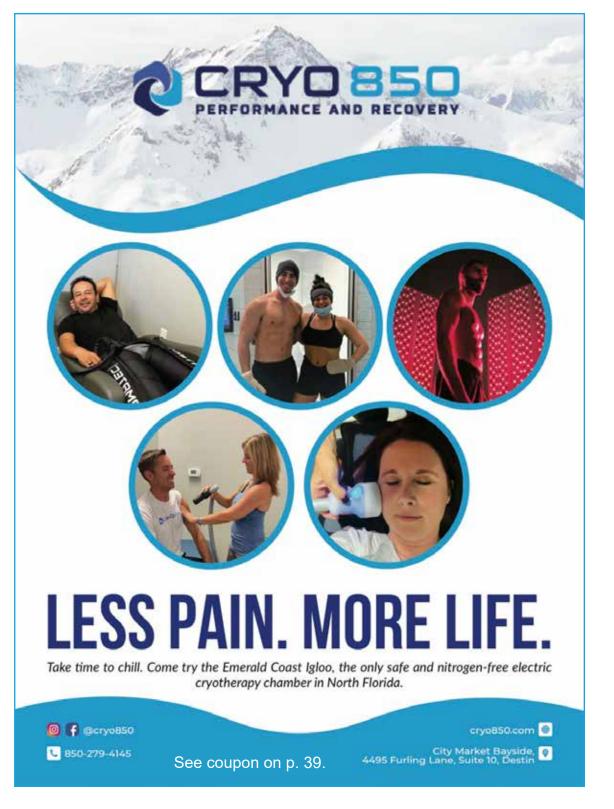
"This shows us that low-prevalence environments are safe for gyms and probably just about everything else. It is very unlikely you will get infected," explained Dr. Gordon Guyatt, a professor of medicine at McMaster University to the New York Times. "You can't stay locked down



forever. We are never going to be completely free of this thing. And in a low-prevalence environment, the risk is low wherever you go — gyms or grocery stores or even restaurants." For more information, contact Nora or Jason Clements at Bluewater Fitness, 850.279.6767 or info@bluewaterfitness.net. www.bluewaterfitness.net







Wellness



By Stephenie Craig

There's no way around it. 2020 has been a difficult year. Anxiety is a consistent companion. Even previously fun things like planning a vacation now require intentional thought and consideration. News, social media, conversations with friends, and every day decisions invite stress. We are walking through unprecedented circumstances with a lack of clear, reliable information for wise decision making resulting in uncertainty, insecurity, fear, and emotional exhaustion. The layers of pandemic, election year, financial strain, racial tension/reform, decisions about schooling, along with normal stressors have layered to the point of overwhelm.

Unfortunately, when overwhelmed, scared and insecure, humans often find a false sense of comfort and certainty in blaming, shaming, judging and de-

Climbing Out of the 2020 Quicksand

humanizing those with different views. We begin seeing strangers, friends and family with different beliefs as "other" or "less." We unintentionally lose sight of grace and kindness while sliding into a sea of self-righteousness, judgement and hate. And despite popular belief, research tells us that shaming others creates more shame and bad behavior, not transformative change.

So, how do you keep moving forward in positivity and purpose in the midst of the current cultural quicksand?

7 Ways to Keep a Positive, **Purposeful Mindset in 2020**

Get curious about your anxiety. What are the sources of anxiety? Are there certain activities, relationships, thought patterns that are creating or feeding anxiety? Consider whether you might need some additional life boundaries that could reduce anxiety (ie. limits on news, social media consumption, relationships).

Sort what you can control from what you can't. Examples of things you can't control: the pandemic, election year, anyone else's behavior, others wearing masks. Examples of things you can control: your daily health practices, your right to vote, how you treat your neigh-



bor, your exposure to news coverage, your choices about masks and schooling. Focus on using your self-control and determination for what you can control and try letting go of what you can't control.

Practice gratitude. Even in difficult times, there are good things happening. Find 5 things each day that bring you joy and acknowledge aloud your thankfulness for them.

Watch for shame. Are you shaming yourself for failures or your difficulty navigating the complexities of 2020? Are you telling yourself something is wrong with you, because you don't feel your feet on solid ground at the moment? We are

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all struggling. No one has this figured out. When you create a shameful internal dialogue with yourself, you are more likely to shame others. Are you shaming others who hold different opinions/beliefs either in person or on social media? Remember, shaming and dehumanizing others compounds problems instead of alleviating them.

Cultivate grace and kindness. When possible, give yourself and others the benefit of the doubt. Assume the best of others' intentions and allow space for others to think and make decisions different from you. When you or others mess up, try offering compassion, grace, and kindness recognizing that we are all muddling through many complicated circumstances and decisions. Encourage others rather than tearing down.

Humanize others. Remember that every person is a beloved human with a story, history, heart, and reasons for their behavior. You aren't required to agree with everyone, but treating others with dignity and respect for their humanity promotes a world where both you and others experience a sense of being loved and valued.

Step into meaningful action. While some things in life currently feel like they are happening to you. You have the daily opportunity to continue to take meaningful action in your life. Do you want to get more active? Take a walk today. Do you need more social connection? Call an old friend. Do you want to pursue social justice? Educate yourself and join a like-minded activist group.

As we all continue to stumble and learn our way through 2020, remember that we must each take the internal journey of reflection and healing in order to make the outward journey toward health, positivity and purpose in our relationships with others and the world around us. If you find yourself wanting additional coaching and counseling support along your journey, connect with us at Journeybravely.



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By Kay Leaman, Health Architect

Last month we talked about the Microbiome system, what it is and the largest of these systems, the gut.

There are numerous signs that our gut is 'not what it should be' from frequent colds, fatigue, headaches or Asthma to obesity, blood sugar issues, thyroid issues or Rheumatoid Arthritis and the list goes on.

Most of us have heard 'We are what we eat.' But, the truth is, 'We are what we digest, absorb and assimilate.' There are three main reasons why we eat:

- Enjoyment
- Nourishment
- Quench hunger

Healthy Day - Healthy Life Our Immune System: Part 2

However, did you know the very foods we choose to eat are changing the expression of our DNA? And this supersedes the first three. (Nutrigenomics is the relationship between nutrients, foods and how gene expression patterns are modified.)

So, what can we do to strengthen our immune system?

Obtain quality uninter- rupted sleep. Sleep allows your body—including parts of your immune system—to rest, repair and refresh. Check out a study in the Archives of Internal Medicine that showed a link between adequate sleep and immune function.

Practice eating more slowly. Thoroughly chewing your food can help promote improved digestion and absorption of nutrients and can reduce digestive discomfort.

Stay hydrated. This one seems to be the most difficult for many of us but drinking 60-80 oz. of clean water every day is what the cells need to perform



their thousands of daily func-

Eat more fresh, whole foods and begin to decrease the number of processed foods you have in your pantry.

Take a quality probiotic. Consumer Labs tested 15 brands of probiotics. Out of these 13 of them failed (the bacteria wasn't even alive.)

Get moderate exercise, which is great for many things. One study says 'it seems to exert a protective effect.' A 30-minute walk every day can have multiple benefits.

Reduce stress. The daily stresses of life, added up, is enough to throw our lives out of whack. Stress impacts our sleep, weight and overall wellbeing.

It can also wreak havoc on our immune function. To reduce stress, we can get a massage, take a walk (2 for 1), meditate/practice deep breathing, socialize and laugh. (Laughter really might be the best medicine.)

Lastly, I recommend choosing a couple of habits you want to

improve and work on those until they become routine. Then add a couple more. Improving our immune system (and our health) isn't a sprint; it's a process that takes intention and time.

If you have a question, email me at succeed@healthydayheal-thylife.com.



Kimberly P. Hood, MD DPC GYN

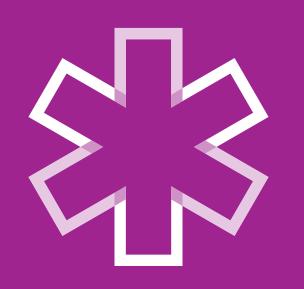
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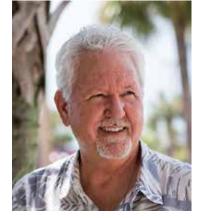
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Musing



By Pastor Dave Holland

My wife loves her clunky, old-fashioned radio. It has a round dial that tunes in various stations. To listen to a program without static, you hold the antennae with your left hand and stand on one foot while dangling your arm in the air as if you were an antennae extension. Then, slowly turn the knob with your right hand until you reach a station with clarity.

Listening to God's Word is of-

A Pastor's Ponderings: Dial-in to God's Voice

ten like that old radio. You need to dial your heart in with sensitivity to hear God's voice speaking to your innermost being.

Even sickness and devils attend to God's voice as Luke 4:38-39 (NIV), shows us, "Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So, he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her."

In our passage we find Jesus arriving at the home of Peter's feverish mother. Christ stands over her and utters the Word of healing, and her fever flees. What kind of person does that? A man who cares deeply.

Christ is our healer, as well as our Savior. Jesus heals Peter's mother simply by the power of His Word.

Jesus verbally "rebuked the fever," it obeyed and left. What



do you say when you speak to a fever? He talked to an inanimate object, and it heeded His voice. This event is similar to when He spoke the Word at creation, and out of the darkness light erupted. We are witnessing the same Lord who created the cosmos exercising His authority to help people personally. Jesus speaks and things happen. His Word to us today has power!

Cultivating the inner awareness of God's Word and Spirit is central to the Christian life. Living in obedience to the voice of Jesus gives you authority, clarity and significance. Do you want to hear God's voice and feel his healing touch? Commit yourself to read your Bible. Pause and listen, linger there for seven minutes of silence. Let God's Word dwell in you richly.

Imagine what Jesus could do in your life by the authority of His Word! Whom would Christ heal? What would He rebuke? What would the Lord command to go? Negativity, hidden addiction, fear, doubt, lust, murmuring, pride-all commanded to go by the authority of God's Word!

Tune out all the noise and listen. Turn off your mind, your thoughts, and plan to sit before God. He's wired you to hear His

voice. He will speak words you cannot imagine. Listen to the song of the ages and see the glory of God. Taste and see that the Lord is good. He created you to know his voice-you just have to turn your dial to his station.

Dave Holland pastored churches for more than 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke called "Every Day Jesus: Experience the Jesus Who Ignites Your Soul." You can get a copy of his book from his website, Dave-Holland.org, or by contacting him at davidvholland54@gmail.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach in churches and conferences or to serve as an inter-



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By Sean Dietrich

It's late. And I wasn't going to write this, but I have to. Not only for me, but for the good of our children, and our children's children. No matter how hard it is to address. I'm talking, of course, about the highly controversial issue of homemade ice cream.

Ice cream wasn't always under scrutiny like it is today. It used to be okay to eat ice cream. But then, suddenly it wasn't okay, and lots of companies started coming out with healthy frozen yogurt.

A few years later, news reports claimed frozen yogurt was just as bad as ice cream. So they came out with "sugar-free" frozen yogurt, made with "aspartame." And the world as we knew it fell apart.

Aspartame is actually a lot of fun to say. It seems like a dirty word, but isn't. You can use it in social settings and it's acceptable.

EXAMPLE: "Have you seen traffic today? It's a real pain in the aspartame."

So Americans were eating sugar-free yogurt sludge by the gallon, hoping to live to be one hundred, and doing step aerobics. Life was all right again.

Companies started going bonkers and making bizarre frozen yogurt flavors like Blackberry-Garbanzo Bean, and Coffee-Bubble Gum, and Toenail.

Then, reports came out with new information claiming aspartame was deadly.

One report stated: "Aspartame turns your bodily fluids into formaldehyde, side effects include: Numbness, tingling, and profound interest in Jazzercise."

All of a sudden, journalists were telling mankind to stay away from anything that even remotely looked like sugar-free frozen yogurt, and for mankind to eat quinoa instead.

Which is probably why a few months ago, I found two fifty-pound bags of red quinoa in our pantry. It wasn't long before we were eating what looked like chicken feed for every meal until sometimes—especially if we sat in one place for too long—grade-A eggs would start appearing beneath our haunches.

But mankind can only go so long without ice cream. So one night, my wife announced that we were having a frozen surprise for dessert. But it wasn't the real thing

"What's this?" I asked.

"It's frozen coconut milk."

I took a lick. It was sweet, but not in a good way. It tasted like whatever I had just licked was a food related to the Sheetrock family.

Homemade

"Why does it taste funny?" I asked.

"It's called stevia. It's a plantbased sweetener."

"Stevia?"

She showed me the bottle. When she unscrewed the child-proof lid, white dust filled the air and got into my nasal passages and mouth.

Ever since that day, I have had this persistent taste in my throat that reminds me of the flavored It was all I needed to hear. I agreed to go peacefully. They put me in a little buttless gown and Doctor Bob placed me in the front seat of a miniature Plymouth Belvedere with pedals.

I pedaled myself to the operating room, laughing with Doctor Bob. Just a couple of guys on our way to major surgery, that's what we were.

When I reached the operating room, something was wrong. I

nineteenth letter of the alphabet. They held me down, placed a rubber mask over my face, and

drugged me with scented laughing gas.

And that's what stevia tastes

And that's what stevia tastes like.

So I don't want stevia, or quinoa, or frozen yogurt, or laboratory rats, or Plymouth Belvederes. I want America to go back to a time when ice cream was good, and good people ate it.

I would also like for people to get along. And for dogs to get adopted. And for good music to make its way into the ears of children. For this virus to hurry up and disappear.

And for lonely people to find love. For porches to be built on the fronts of houses instead of the backs. For neighbors to wave at each other.

And most of all, I hope the man who wrote me a hateful email this morning knows that I don't hold it against him. Because everyone has a bad day. I get it. Especially during times like these. Sometimes, people just need to let off steam.

But if anyone were to ask me, which they didn't, I think this world needs more homemade ice cream.

And less aspartame.



laughing gas Doctor Bob used when I had a tonsillectomy in first grade.

Speaking of Doctor Bob, do you know how that old man convinced me to agree to a tonsillectomy?

Doctor Bob said: "Sean, the best part about getting your tonsils out is that you get to eat ICE CREAM ALL DAY LONG."

A boy will do almost anything for ice cream.

saw four men dressed like butchers, wearing masks, holding sharp instruments.

So I turned my Plymouth around and I got my little aspartame out of there.

But Doctor Bob caught me. By then, I was kicking and screaming for my mother. I was making promises to never play with Granny's cigarette lighter again, or try to paint the cat, or use the word beginning with the





Musing



By Myrna Conrad

There seems to be so much anger and hatred in our world right now and so little forgiveness and love. It's not as if this struggle to forgive is a new issue for any of us. When someone hurts us or someone we love, our first and most natural response is to take offense. However, today it seems that anger and offense have been taken to a whole new level. In fact, some of the people jumping on the offended bandwagon weren't even a part of the offense. We see it acted out in the destruction going on in some of our major cities today.

It is hard to forgive, because we might feel that the person does not deserve our forgiveness, especially if they haven't even

What Ever Happened to: Forgiveness?

asked for forgiveness. However, forgiveness is vitally important for our mental and physical health. The one that gets hurt the most is the person who lets unforgiveness fester in his or her heart. Perhaps forgiveness seems impossible, because we don't understand what it really means to forgive. Let's look at what forgiveness is and what it is not.

What Forgiveness Is:

Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling. We don't have to feel forgiveness to choose to forgive.

Forgiveness is more for the person who is harboring anger and bitterness than it is for the person they are forgiving.

Forgiveness is life giving, while unforgiveness keeps your heart bound in bitterness and anger and can even affect your physical health.

Forgiveness opens your heart toward others.

Forgiveness gives you back the power and peace that was taken by event that hurt you.

What Forgiveness Is Not:

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring that you have been hurt



and mistreated. It means acknowledging it and then being willing to let it go.

Forgiveness does not mean you have to have a relationship with the one you are forgiving. However, it will open your heart for relationship with others.

Forgiveness is not a "one and done" thing. The thoughts of what someone has done will pop up in your mind again and you have to choose to not let it linger and take root in your mind and heart. You have to continue to choose forgiveness.

There are so many destructive consequences of holding on to offense, yet so many benefits in choosing to forgive. While there seems to be so much power in anger, bitterness and revenge, these are really only chains that keep us imprisoned. The real power

and freedom comes in choosing to forgive.

I held on to unforgiveness for a long time because of something that happened to me as a child. I know firsthand how destructive it can be. It was when I truly realized how offensive my sins are to God and what He was willing to do so that I could be forgiven and have a relationship with Him that I had to choose forgiveness. I didn't feel forgiveness, especially at first, but I chose to forgive. It changed my life and my relationships. Life is too short and too beautiful to let anger, bitterness and unforgiveness take root in your heart.

Do you want to develop a heart of forgiveness instead of hurt and anger? Here are a few strategies:

Be Aware:

Be aware of when something offends you. Think about why it offended you and what you need to do to restore relationship or let it go.

Be aware of how your unforgiveness is affecting you and those around you. Be aware of your own imperfections.

Be aware of how much you are cared for by God and by others

Think about how you feel when someone refuses to forgive you.

Be aware of what you are teaching others when you are unwilling to forgive.

Be Intentional:

Choose to let go of offenses quickly.

Choose to forgive others as well as yourself.

Demonstrate forgiveness to your loved ones. People are always watching how you react and respond.

Look for things that you can learn from whatever happened to offend you.

Make sure you have not offended someone else and if you have always be willing to ask for forgiveness.

Thank God every day for forgiving you.

Forgiveness will not only change your heart, it will change your life.





Startup Okaloosa Virtual Incubator

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (EDC) has created a new, on-line resource tailored to assist aspiring entrepreneurs, startups and small business owners. Dubbed Startup Okaloosa, the virtual incubator can now be found at www.startupokaloosa.com.

Structured as an information portal, the site links to traditional and non-traditional

funding partners, key advisory organizations, real estate options (including local coworking spaces) and educational resources. It also includes curated news articles featuring timely information deemed relevant to entrepreneurs and small business owners, as well as announcements of local networking and educational events.



"With 66% of our businesses having between one and four employees, entrepreneurs and small business owners are truly the backbone of our local economy. We felt it important – especially in light of the economic downturn we've experienced as a result of COVID-19 – to develop a resource to aid individuals

who are either beginning, or restarting, their entrepreneurial journey," said Nathan Sparks, EDC Executive Director.

"We intend for Startup Okaloosa to be a community resource, not just another EDC program. To that end, the site will feature relevant content from our partners," said Katie Sharon, EDC FY 2020 Chair.

His Ways are Not Our Ways

By David Saviola, Arborbrook

There once was a wealthy landowner who went out at daybreak to hire all the laborers he could find to work in his vineyard. After agreeing to pay them the standard day's wage, he put them to work. Then at nine o'clock, as he was passing through the town square, he found others standing around without work. He told them, "Come and work for me in my vineyard and I'll pay you a fair wage." So off they went to join the others. He did the same thing at noon and again

at three o'clock, making the same arrangement as he did with the others.

Hoping to finish his harvest that day, he went to the town square again at five o'clock and found more who were idle. So, he said to them, "Why have you been here all day without work?"

"Because no one hired us,' they answered. So, he said to them, "Then go and join my crew and work in my vineyard."

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard went to his foreman and said, "Call in all the laborers, line them up, and pay them the same wages, starting with the most recent ones I hired and finishing with the ones who worked all day." When those hired late in the day came to be paid, they were given a full day's wage. And when those who had been hired first came to be paid, they were convinced that they would receive more. But everyone was paid the standard wage. When they realized what had happened, they were offended and complained to the landowner, saying, "You're treating us unfairly! They've only worked for one hour while we've slaved and sweated all day under the scorching sun. You've made them equal to us!" The landowner replied, "Friends, I'm not being unfair—I'm doing exactly what I said. Didn't you agree to work for the standard wage? If I want to give those who only worked for an hour equal pay, what does that matter to you? Don't I have the right to do what I want with what is mine? Why should my generosity make you jealous of them?"

This story should give all of us pause. I know one of the first times I read this, it stopped me in my tracks, and I had to immediately re-read it very slowly. I had a range of thoughts running through my head about this wealthy landowner: What a cheat! He's a manipulator! Man, what an incredibly generous business owner! Holy cow, this guy is a major community influencer!!

The truth is, this powerful account is recorded in the Bible's

Book of Matthew, Chapter 20, and is preceded by some very important words from Jesus. He said, "This will help you understand the way heaven's kingdom operates ..."

There's a common prayer that almost all of us know or have heard in our lifetime: The Lord's

Prayer. In one section, those words, which many of us have reiterated a thousand times say, "...on earth as it is in heaven." If that's really true, then we should be operating like this wealthy landowner, willing to take action with the resources God has given us in ways that sometimes just don't make sense to the world.

At the conclusion of this story, Jesus makes another strong statement: "Now you can understand what I meant when I said that the first will end up last and the last will end up being first. Everyone is invited, but few are the chosen." You're invited to be one of the few.



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Hire that Intern: You Won't Regret It

By Meredith Freeman, Intern, Frances Roy Agency

Interns can sometimes get a bad rap. Some show up to get their college credit and leave; others seem to never leave the break room. But with the right fit, interns can really be the best. I supposed I'm a little biased...I am one.

With all the uncertainty involving the coronavirus, some businesses made difficult, but understandable, decisions to postpone summer internship programs. I am fortunate enough to belong to the small group of those who were able to continue this valuable learning experience. From the day I stepped into the Frances Roy Agency, I felt essential - not expendable. Real learning and real challenges happen here every day. Shantelle Dedicke and the whole team have embraced me as one of their own, knowing full well that my role might not be an extended one.

The life of an intern is exciting and challenging if you allow it to be so. Yes, there are days when you "just" compile a list of national holidays. But what if that list is the launching pad for a host of social media ideas for clients over the next year? Yes, it can be challenging to enter into a well-established team dynamic and feel connected,

knowing you might leave again in a few short months. But what if you don't leave? And what if that's the magic of it — soaking up all you can from incredible people and knowing they will forever have a role in your professional and personal development? Knowing my impact



at this agency could extend beyond my time of employment there gives me an extra sense of purpose and excitement every day

My favorite part about being an intern is occupying a role where I can both take in and share knowledge freely. Most

of my day, I am actively learning from the rest of the team. There are just a few short months to pick up as much practical wisdom and expertise as possible from people who have been at this longer than I have. But at the same time, there's an equal opportunity to share my unique experiences with them. Most of them haven't been immersed in the college/ academic atmosphere for several years. So, I have an opportunity to share

what I know about how students are transitioning to our profession and what we really need from employers. (It's not all serious stuff...there's definitely some TikTok, enneagram, and pop culture tutorials happening, too.)

Internships could look very different in the near future. Some organizations are switching to fully online operations; others are still reeling from the economic fallout of the coronavirus. While these changes could certainly affect the form of an internship, they don't have to affect the core experience. The greatest internships have some commonalities:

Creativity: Many interns walk into your office with a syllabus that says "Complete 200 hours at your place of work and write a final paper about your experience." Boring! The best way to break interns out of the

academic mold is to show them the dynamic atmosphere of the professional world. Even if your intern's job description is more simplistic, find ways to make the position more than punching the clock.

Connection: Make your intern(s) feel "part of the team." Not just on the first day when they get a free notebook, but when they get invited to team outings. When they feel heard at meetings. When they get to tell you about their personal goals and ask questions about your life experiences. Your interns will value your expertise even more when they understand how much you care about them.

Challenge: "They never should have trusted me with this...but look how great it turned out." In previous internships and in my current position, my most rewarding experiences came from completing assignments I thought I had no business even attempting. Chances are, you know more about the capabilities of your intern(s) than they do. Call out that ability and challenge them to achieve outside their comfort zone.

If you're an employer, make sure these traits make up the essence of your internship program. If you're a potential intern, don't settle for anything less. You won't regret it.

Also, keep in mind...National Intern Day is July 23 this year. Just saying.

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ECCO Motors Celebrates 15 Years!

By RITA SHERWOOD

"This is definitely a milestone to celebrate and I'm very proud of our entire team!" says owner Scott Lightsey.

This locally-grown business started as a small golf cart service and repair shop in Fort Walton Beach. Before long, the business moved to Mountain Dr. in Destin to get closer to its customer base. After only two years, it became apparent that the demand for the services that Ecco Motors offered were greater than the 2,000 sq. ft. building could physically handle. So, in 2007, Ecco Motors transitioned into a 12,000 square foot building in Miramar Beach, while later acquiring an additional 10,000 sq. ft. building in Destin that is dedicated to their dry storage program.

By 2018, as all aspects of the business continued to grow, the need for additional space could not be ignored yet again, and Ecco Motors transitioned its sales team to a 8,000 sq. ft. sales center building on Hwy. 98 in Destin across from Regatta Bay.

Currently operating in three locations, Ecco Motors offers sales, service, parts, custom builds, dry storage, LSV rentals, field service maintenance and maintenance programs and has 18 dedicated staff members.

Scott's business philosophy is simple: "Hire good people, take care of our customers in a professional and courteous manner and the business will take care of itself." He goes on to say, "I believe that being customer focused and true to your word are strong contributors to the overall success of Ecco Motors. We ensure that in all aspects of the company, we put our customers' satisfaction first. An added benefit of this is that, over the years, many customers have turned into great friends."

And what prompted Scott to get into the golf cart business?

He'd tell you about the first electric car he and his friends built back in 1997. His friend had an electric car back then, and he wanted one, too. Little did he know that after everything was built from a mere fiberglass shell, that it actually would go 110 miles per hour! But no fuel

tank, no turn signals, no taillights? How could this be? Who knew? Therein lies his love for electric cars. So much, in fact, that they would drive it from Manhattan, N.Y. to Washington D.C., to educate and show it off to kids along the way.

With more than 30 years of automotive service experience of Japanese cars in Tallahassee, Scott was pretty burnt-out by 2002. But by 2004, the memory of building his first electric car ignited his passion for Ecco Motors, and soon became a golf cart repair center, and then expanded into sales and service.

A small business mentality has served Scott well for the last



15 years. He tells the story of an older couple who bought their first golf cart from him 10 years ago, and had come in recently to trade it in for a new golf cart. He talks about how fun it is when multiple family members come in and buy different golf carts from him. He enjoys getting to know his customers and maintaining those relationships for years to come. Whether it's sales, service, customization or storage of that golf cart, Ecco Motors does it all. Scott says one of the best service components that he offers to his customer base is the pickup, cleaning, maintaining and storing of their golf carts that Ecco Motors then

delivers when those customers return to town.

Scott talks about the differences between driving a golf cart vs. a car. He says instead of being trapped in a closed environment with passengers in a car, it's much more fun to be in an open environment driving a golf cart where

you're sharing that experience with others around you. He alludes to a study that revealed that in a traffic situation, the open style cockpit of the golf cart coupled with the speed of only going 25 mph, actually became a calming device which made people slow down, and ultimately, made them more relaxed.

And what does the future

hold? "Technology will probably continue to get better," he says, "which means longer batteries and faster speeds."

And what's the new trend? "How about the electric bikes that are all the rage in Europe? You should see all the people at the trade shows gravitate toward them," Scott says. Ecco Motors has these. With wider tires that would work well even on the beach, and the capability to go 25 mph, these bikes are on the cutting edge. What's the down side? Well if you run out of battery, you have to ride it back. That's not so bad, after all, it's just like riding a bike!

Ecco Motors sales center is located at 36058 Emerald Coast Parkway, Destin, across from Regatta Bay, and can be reached at (850) 837-2600.





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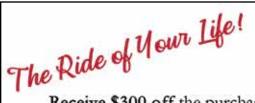
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— Jason Lindblad, Owner & Artist, JLeon Gallery Studio

J.Leon Gallery Studio, the area's newest fine art destination, welcomes you to its recently opened studio and gallery in Miramar Beach. J.Leon supports and promotes its artists while making highend art attainable for everyone. The gallery features seven artists and a fully equipped ceramic



studio for both classes and open studio time for advanced artists. Owner and artist, Jason Lindblad, welcomes all guests to the gallery to experience the journey of creativity. Megan Patterson, Studio Director and Ceramics Instructor, brings a unique talent to J.Leon Gallery Studio. As a ceramicist, Megan instructs both Beginner Wheel Throwing Classes and Beginner Hand Building Classes. Each guest is encouraged to unleash their creativity and enjoy the process of creating something new.

J.Leon Gallery Studio is open from Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and closed on Mondays. For additional information, class and workshop signup, and to view upcoming events visit jleongallery. com, follow the gallery on Facebook and Instagram or call 850.842.3051.



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Concerts in the Village — August!

The Florida Travel Guide named the Concerts in the Village as one of the "Top Ten Things to Do" in Northwest Florida. Enjoy a night under the stars at the most beautiful outdoor music venue on the Emerald Coast. Bring a bottle of wine, your favorite craft beer, some delicious snacks and a blanket or chair. Food and drinks are available for purchase as well.

Joining the MKAF gets you in FREE! Want to become a MKAF member? Learn more here: mkaf.org/membership/

M80's

August 20th at 6 p.m. – Gates Open at 7 p.m.

General Admission \$15 per adult, FREE to MKAF members and kids under 12. (Can be purchased at the door.)

The 80's are everyone's favorite era of music! Artists like Michael Jackson, Journey, The Go-Go's, Bon Jovi, Prince, and Cheap Trick made up the soundtrack for that generation, and set the standards for generations to follow. Formed in 2007, The M-80s are a Birmingham, Ala.-based band of experienced, professional entertainers that take you back to the best music from the



1980s. Every song is an instantly recognizable hit, and you'll know every word.

TOBYMAC: An Evening Under the Stars with Special Guest Ryan Stevenson

This is a LIVE concert experience! August 29th; Gates open at 6 p.m. Show begins at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite. Must be prepared to show ticket to be scanned upon entry. Lawn chairs or blankets are welcome. Please observe local social distancing guidelines for the health and well-being of all fans. Show is held RAIN OR SHINE.

*The concert is subject to change following any changes to the recommended safety and health guidelines. The concert is a separate performance not being held in conjunction with the MKAF concert series.



Mitch Malloy:

Rocking His Way from Nashville to Northwest Florida... and Beyond



By WILL ESTELL

If there's one primary similarity that seems to exist between creative types and those drawn to the coastal lifestyle, it's perhaps the immense freedom brought on by doing what you want and doing it where you want to be. Finding a way to do either is a monumental accomplishment within itself. However, building a life that includes both following your passion, and living in paradise is, for many, literally the stuff dreams are made of.

One such newly minted Destin resident is veteran singer/writer/producer, and Great White frontman, Mitch Malloy. I recently sat down with Mitch to gain a little more insight on the long-time rocker turned local.

Tell me a little about your musical journey and how it began.

I was born in Dickinson, North Dakota, where I began singing in school plays and church, at about six years old. I was the youngest of six children, and just immediately had a passion for music. I began playing guitar at about twelve, went to music school in Seattle, and then hit the road to Nashville to chase the dream.

You've had quite the diverse musical career, having done everything from your early solo albums that charted multiple Top 20 Hits, to being offered the lead singer gig with Van Halen when Sammy Hagar

left, to building a name in Nashville as a talented music producer. What's your favorite part of the business and why?

I really like most aspects equally. I love to perform live. I love to write, and I really like that magic of taking something from raw vocals and music to a completed song and then album. That's what producing is really about, and what drew me to working alongside so many talented artists when I was in Nashville at my

studio. I get chills just thinking about that part, the magic, that moment when it all comes together.

How did the current position as Great White's lead singer come to be, and what's that like after years of solo projects?

I had a friend who knew some guys in the band, and one day he and I were talking and he just mentioned, "Hey, I think Great White could really use you, they're looking for a new singer." It just all worked out. It's been great, and it also allows me to pursue my solo projects, like the new single about to drop, that we recently shot the video for at various locations around Destin.

I know you've lived in Destin full time for just over a year now. How did that come to be, and what led you to these beautiful beaches?

It's a funny story. Some years ago, I was on a tour with Eddie Money, and the guys in management told me I had



a weekend off, and asked if I wanted to stay in Alabama with them after the last concert that week. I was like, "No way, why would I want to stay in Alabama for the weekend? I want to fly home." I'm really a homebody. So, I get off the plane the night before the show, take a shuttle to the hotel and don't really know where I am. The next morning, I wake in the room, pull back the curtains and see this beautiful white sand and emerald water. I didn't even know sand looked like that anywhere. I told them I'd changed my mind and wanted to stay the weekend [laughing]. Then I met my wife, Faith, and she had been coming to the Florida Gulf for years since she was a kid. We just started coming often, and one day about two years ago, we just decided it was time to get out of Nashville and live in a place we really love. We couldn't be happier, I don't ever want to

What's your favorite aspect about living where we do and being part of the coastal culture and lifestyle?

You know, it's beautiful and the area's great, but it's also like you and I have talked about. The people are just so friendly, and real and accommodating. Everyone seems so nice here. It's like a melting pot of happy people.

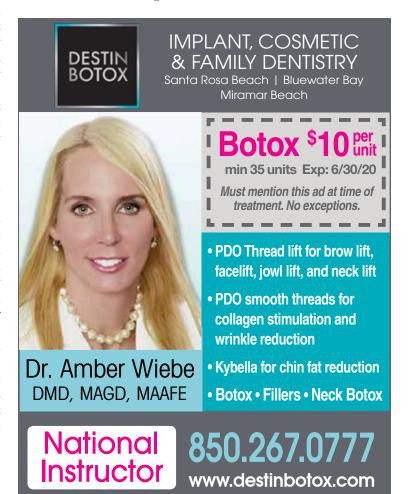
Any parting words for our readers?

Come out and see a show! I really want to play more shows along the Gulf Coast, like my recent Club L.A. acoustic

show in Destin, along with

doing our larger Great White shows around the country.

Will Estell is a multi-published writer turned editor with over 150 published articles, and over 20 years in publishing. He's been instrumental in bringing nine magazine titles from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor and publisher on others. Originally from the backwoods of North Mississippi, then rural Alabama, he now makes his home in Destin where he serves as Editor-In-Chief of The 30A Company's nationally sold Beach Happy magazine. When he's not working, he enjoys spending time with his three children, watching live music, creating, and spending time on the sand and water with friends.







Around Town

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 3

ECCAC Announces 2020/2021 Board of Directors



Major Audie Rowell

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (EC-CAC) has a new 2020/2021 board of directors and officers: The Walton County Sheriff Office's (WCSO) Major Audie Rowell is President; Janet Parker is Vice President; and Alan Wood is Treasurer. Other members include immediate past president Bill Fletcher, along with Tammy Pierce, Eric Aden, Todd Bierbaum, Shaun Eubanks, Velia Lala, Renee Pellegrino, Artie Rodriguez, Tom Saffel, Michael Thompson, Annie Stutts and Demetrius Fuller-Music & Artistic Director of Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

In addition, Chelsea Fox was recently promoted to EC-CAC Development Manager and Jasie Landeros has joined the Prevention Department as Outreach Program Manager. Prior to her promotion, Chelsea handled and coordinated many of ECCAC's events and volunteers. Now, in addition to overseeing the non-profit organization's Young Ambassador board, she will also direct the development, identification, research, cultivation, management and solicitation of major gift prospects and donors, oversee fundraising events and manage ECCAC's marketing program. As the Outreach Program Manager, Landeros and her team are actively involved in area schools teaching programs to help educate children with information and strategies to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, digital dangers, and all types of abuse. In addition to providing children and teenagers with these resources, ECCAC also works with adults to provide mandated reporter training, smart device training, Drug Endangered Children training, and Darkness to Light training. In ECCAC's 20-year history, over 15,000 children have received more than 170,000 services at no cost. Visit www.eccac.org or call 850-833-9237. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

FPRA NWFL Coast Chapter Votes in 2020-21 Board

Congratulations to new Northwest Florida Coast Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) Board: President- Shaye Smith; President-Elect- Jenni Brunson; Immediate Past President-Stephanie Pettis, APR, CPRC; Secretary- Denise Song; VP of Finance- Lori Smith; Partnerships Chair- Bob Pinard; VP of Professional Development-Chelsea Fox; Professional Development Chair- Maggie White; Northwest Florida Communications Summit Chair- Bobby Parker; VP of Communications- Corey Dobridnia; Digital Media Chair- Cali Hlavac; Design Chair- Danica Phillips; VP of Student Services- Whitney Lee; VP of Membership- Jenni Brunson; VP of Accreditation-Stephanie Pettis, APR, CPRC; VP of Events- Kelly Curry; and VP of Image Awards- Hillaree Durso.

Destin Library to Offer Curbside Service

The Destin Library is currently closed to the public, but is offering curbside service Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Staff will be available via phone to answer questions, provide assistance, and check out materials for curbside pickup. As an added feature, parents can request a "grab bag" of materials for children and teens to continue to participate in the library's Summer Reading Club. Patrons can request materials online at the library's website or by phone at 850-837-8572.

Free Face Masks at the Destin Library

In coordination with the Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative, and the Okaloosa County Health Department, the Destin Library is giving away free face masks.

The masks are 100% cotton with polyester elastic and are machine washable and dryable. One pack of five masks per family are available during the library's operating hours. Masks are also available at all other Okaloosa County Libraries. Call 850-837-8572 for more information.

Want to Become a Community Leader?

The Destin Chamber is now taking applications for Destin Forward, a community education and leadership program. Destin Forward offers and indepth learning experience of our community. Up to 25 business professionals will be accepted into the program which begins in late August and ends with graduation in May. The program is designed to provide a hands-on learning experience into the issues facing the Destin community on a day-to-day basis. Participants will learn from experts in many different fields, including the environment, boat safety, tourism promotion and government affairs. For more information and application, visit DestinChamber.com.



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