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Postal Customer Local

Community Comes Together for Destin High School Groundbreaking

By Kay Phelan

APRIL 2021

VOL. 3, NO. 9

The clouds parted and cleared a path for the community to come together and celebrate the official groundbreaking of Destin High School (DHS). A sense of pride and exhilaration filled the air as future students, parents, community members, and elected officials gathered in the school's future auditorium and excitedly grabbed shovels and hardhats for photo ops.

DHS Governing Board President, Councilwoman Prebble Ramswell, and DHS Principal/Head of School, Christine Cruickshank, co-emceed the well-attended event. Guest speakers were Carolyn Ketchel, Okaloosa County Commission Chair, Destin Mayor Gary Jarvis, and Monica Autrey, Destin Water Users Operations Manager who was also representing the Destin Chamber of Commerce. Connie Lee of the local chapter of the DAR kicked off the event with the presentation of



a flag for the school.

DHS is located on the former Grace Lutheran property, located on Commons Drive next to the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village. DHS is being retrofitted as a high school and will open to 9th, 10th and 11th graders in August 2021. The Phase Two plan calls for the future construction of a new building on the campus as the school expands to its full capacity in the next couple years.

"This really is the coming together of so many dreams, not just mine, but the city council's, the community's, the students that wanted a school. And it really means so much to be able to give this back to the community and offer a school right here in our own neighborhood that's going to prepare them for college or for a career or whatever the case may be. We're just absolutely thrilled to be opening the doors of the school this August," says Prebble Ramswell, DHS Board and Destin Councilwoman/ Mayor Pro Tem.

DHS continued on page 2



Easter Reflections: Then Came Morning

By Gueary Clendenning

In our culture, we think of the day as starting in the morning and ending with night. In the Biblical culture, the opposite is true. Genesis chapter 1, verse 5 reads: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." In the Jewish calendar, the sabbath begins in the evening and ends at sunset the next day. Often, when we are sick, it seems the illness worsens in the evening and we find ourselves longing for the breaking of day. The day Christ was crucified because the Sabbath was approaching, He, being dead-they took Him from the cross and placed Him in

MORNING *continued on page 2*



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(*) Community

City of Destin Embarks on Harbor Capacity Study

By Catherine Card, Public Information Officer

The Destin City Council has authorized that the City of Destin partner with the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake a Destin Harbor Capacity Study. The City's Comprehensive Plan envisions the Harbor area to be a "festive market place" environment, to include tourist commercial and mixed use development that shall be planned and designed to encourage public access to waterfront views, foster a free flowing pedestrian-oriented environment that does not wall off access to the shoreline, promote convenient public access to the planned Harbor boardwalk, and reinforce the identity of the Harbor as a world-class fishing village that is open to the public.



The overall goal of the study is to endeavor to establish a del-

icate balance between ensuring the environmental health of the Harbor; ensuring the safety and enjoyment of all entities and parties that use and visit the Harbor; and promote the economic viability of the establishments and guests that do business on the Harbor. The Study is being undertaken under the guidance of the Harbor Capacity Study Steering Committee established by the City Council. All meetings of the Steering Committee are open to the public.

For more information about the Study or opportunities to attend the Harbor Capacity Steering Committee meetings, please contact the Office of the Community Development Director at 850-654-1119 (Option 2) or our website at www.cityofdestin.com.

DHS

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"Despite the weather, the indoor Groundbreaking Ceremony was perfect," commented Principal/Head of School, Christine Cruickshank. "As the DHS renovation proceeds full steam ahead by DAG Architects and Lord & Sons Construction, it is exhilarating to see how excited both our incoming students, and the community are about the new school. Go Sharks!"

In addition to offering advanced and state-mandated core curriculum, DHS will utilize a place-based approach to



learning that will take advantage of the local geography, industry and community. This will allow the school to offer additional curriculum opportunities through authentic, meaningful and engaging personalized learning for their students.

"So many happy students, parents and community supporters united to celebrate the groundbreaking of DHS. After many years of planning, persistence, patience and de-



velopment of strategic public/ private partnerships DHS is a reality... this highly desired and needed high school will finally open," says Myra Williams,



DHS Board. "It was a magical evening and on behalf of the Governing Board, we express our gratitude."

Though the official appli-

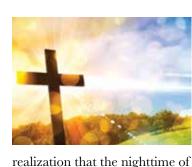
MORNING

continued from page 1

a borrowed tomb. It must have been a horrific, restless night for the disciples. Their minds were filled with fear and confusion and their hopes were shattered.

But then came the morning, recorded in Luke's Gospel: "But very early on Sunday morning the women came to the tomb. They found the stone covering the entrance had been rolled away." Two angels, appearing as men, said to them, "Why seek the living among the dead? For He is not here but is risen. "

At an early age, we are filled with dreams and hope for the future. As we grow older and the years pass by, we come to the



our life is fast approaching. It is so different for those whose focus is on God. Their lives begin in the darkness of unbelief, not knowing God. But then life comes alive with meaning and purpose as they come to believe in God's Son. Zacharias, a Jewish priest, prophesied of the coming of Christ: "Because of God's tender mercy, the light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

Jesus, the light of heaven, came to earth, lived a perfect life, fulfilling the laws of God; thus He became qualified to die in our place, receiving the judgement of God for our sins. Three days later, on Easter Sunday, He arose from the grave and said, "Because I live, you shall live also." What great news!

Whereas, people view life beginning in the morning and ending at night; Christians view life as beginning in darkness, but ending in life that lasts forever. For not only do they have hope now, but they believe in heaven where life never ends. "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever."

There is a lot of darkness in the world. Many people seem to have lost their way and are without hope. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When we come to trust and follow Christ, the darkness is lifted and we begin to experience God's love and peace. The light of His presence will guide you now and into the future!

Then came the morning. Are you experiencing it? It's yours for the asking! cation period has ended, a few seats are still open. Visit www. destinhighschool.org/admissions to apply. For additional information on registering, donating, or volunteering, please call (850) 424-1664, email info@ destinhighschool.org, or visit www.destinhighschool.org.

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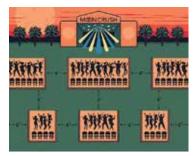


Around Town

Destin Rotary's Spring 2021 Butt Rubb is back!

Rotary volunteers rub (with a secret blend of spices), smoke, pull, shred and cook approximately 180 pork butts, and then bag them for your convenience. To purchase, order from any Destin Rotary Club member, online at destinrotary.com or through a link on the Rotary Club of Destin Facebook page. Ready for pickup Saturday, April 10, the cost is \$25 for a half butt and only \$45 for a full butt, approximately 5 lbs. (presmoked). This fundraiser benefits Food For Thought, Harvest House Destin, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), and the Boys and Girls Club of Okaloosa County.

Moon Crush Teams Up with Alaqua Animal Refuge



Local residents and community members are invited to a unique music festival, Moon Crush, April 26 - May 1 at Seascape Resort Golf Course. Moon Crush will be donating a portion of the sales from local, Music Only passes directly to the Refuge. Performers include Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit, Sheryl Crow, The Revivalists, NEEDTOBREATHE, St. Paul and the Broken Bones, Lake Street Dive, Grace Potter, Margo Price, Shovels & Rope, Vintage Trouble, The War and Treaty, Sammy Rae and the Friends and Yacht Rock Revue. Music Only passes are now being offered to Walton and Okaloosa County residents, property owners and their guests. Music Only

passes must be purchased through this special link to benefit Alaqua: www.bit.ly/ MoonCrush-Alaqua. Visit www.mooncrush.live/ to learn more and purchase Music Only passes via www.bit.ly/Moon-Crush-Alaqua.

Destin is Top 10 for Living and Boating!

Recently, Destin was chosen by Boating Magazine as one of



the Top 10 places to live and boat! Criteria considered was livability, public access, convenience and also relaxing getaways that should please anyone looking for a primary or secondary boating home. "Boaters find the bay and Intracoastal Waterway beginner-friendly; the active east Pass into the Gulf of Mexico, with its tides, currents and swells, calls for a more experienced hand," says writer Steve Griffin. To read the entire article, visit www.boatingmag. com/10-best-places-to-liveboat.

Newsweek Recognizes Ascension Sacred Heart as a Best Maternity Hospital

Ascension Sacred Heart's hospitals in Pensacola and Miramar Beach have been named to Newsweek's 2021 list of Best Maternity Care Hospitals. Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast and Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola were two of only seven hospitals in Florida named to the list. The Best Maternity Care distinction recognizes facilities that have provided exceptional care to mothers, newborns and their families, as verified by the 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Survey. Approximately 1,350 babies were born last year at the Emerald Coast hospital in South Walton County.

Mark Your Calendar for the Miss Destin Pageant, May 8



The Miss Destin Pageant will be held Saturday, May 8th at Shoreline Church in Destin. Contestants are judged on personality, communication skills and availability to fulfill the duties of Miss Destin at the 73rd Destin Fishing Rodeo as well as

serve as a community ambassador of goodwill for visitors and locals. Destin resident highschool girls between the ages of 16 and 19 vie for the title, which among other things, provides at least a \$2,000 academic scholarship! For more information, visit www.destinfishingrodeo.org

Impact100 NWF Accepting 2021 NextGen Program Applications

Impact100 is now accepting 2021 applications for the NextGen Program, open to women between the ages of 21 to 39 who may not have the financial resources to join Impact100 NWF. As ambassadors dedicated to giving and serving in Okaloosa and Walton counties, they will have full membership privileges during the whole 3-year period to attend Impact100 NWF events, join a

Continued on page 46



Landing

Boulevard

Music Hall

Trap Destin

Destin

Grand Boulevard

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Royal Palm Grille

Destin

FWB

Music Hal

Seascap

Company

Baytowne Wharf

Boulevard

Harborwalk

Music Hall

Boulevard

Door Music Hall

Grille

a Brac

Music Hall

Palms Bistro

Karaoke | 6pm | Village Door Restaurant (Baytowne)

Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Bistro

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm |

Music Bingo | 7pm | Pallet Bar and Grill

Singo Music Bingo | 5:30pm | LuLu's

Karaoke | 6pm | Enlightened Studios

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Village Door

Trivia Night | 7pm | Village Door at

Music Bingo | 7pm | World of Beer Listening Lounge – Live Music |

7:30pm | Emerald Coast Theatre

Game Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

Karaoke | 7:30pm | The Palms Bistro

Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay

Free Concert Series | 7pm | Village of

Rock'n Bingo | 7pm | FATBoys Destin Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand

Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Sunset Party | 5pm | Rhumcay

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Village Door

Little Black Dress Ladies Night | 6pm |

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

Salsa Lessons & Social | 7:45pm | Bric

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Karaoke Night | 8pm | Village Door

Latin Night | 9pm | Bric a Brac

Name That Tune | 6:30pm | Village

Farmer's Market 8am-1pm | FWB

Lawn Games in the Park | 11am |

Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand

Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm |

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Village Door

Karaoke Night | 8pm | World Of Beer

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab

Aurora's Dream Performance | 4pm |

Harborwalk Village Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm |

The community

Calis To Do In Destin! APRIL 2021

Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

Floatin' & Boatin' | 9am-5pm | Legendary Marine

Destin's Drive Thru Easter Egg Hunt | 9am | Morgan Sports Complex Miss Mermaid Pageant | 10am | The

Island Hotel Kitty Hawk Kites Festival | 10am |

Okaloosa Island Boardwalk **Lawn Games in the Park** | 11am | Grand Boulevard

Meet the Easter Bunny | 11am | LuLu's Destin

Easter Pawty | 11am-3pm | 3 Dogs & a Chick

Easter Explosion | 12pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Easter Egg Hunt | 2pm | Ocean's Church

Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt | 3pm | Destiny Worship Center

Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | Harborwalk Village

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Village Door Music Hall

Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke Night | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

HAPPY EASTER!

Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin

Easter Brunch | 9am | Rhumcay Harborwalk

Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt | 10am | The Island Hotel

Easter Brunch | 10am | Emerald Grande Easter Brunch | 10am | The Henderson Kitty Hawk Kites Festival | 10am |

Okaloosa Island Boardwalk

Easter Brunch | 11am | Mezcal Mexican Restaurant

Easter Brunch | 11am | Ocean Club Destin

Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt | 11am | The Gulf

Meet the Easter Bunny | 11am | LuLu's Destin

Easter Sunday Take Out | 790 on the Gulf

Easter Egg Hunt | 12:30pm | North Beach Social

Easter Celebration | 1pm | The Hub30a Easter Crafts & Face Paint | 2pm | The Hub30a

Visit the Easter Bunny | 2pm |

Harborwalk Village Easter Sunday Dinner Cruise | 5pm |

Sunquest Cruises **Karaoke** I 6pm I Village Door

Restaurant (Baytowne) Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Bistro

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm | Roval Palm Grille

Hydroflight Monday | 6:30pm | Baytowne Wharf

Baytowne Wharf Music Bingo | 7pm | Pallet Bar and Grill

Singo Music Bingo | 5:30pm | LuLu's

Destin

Karaoke | 6pm | Enlightened Studios FWB Boomin' Tuesday Fireworks | 6pm |

Baytowne Wharf **Trivia Night** | 6:30pm | Village Door

Music Hall Baytowne Live Music | 6:30pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Trivia Night | 7pm | Village Door at Seascape Game Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza Music Bingo | 7pm | World of Beer Karaoke | 7:30pm | The Palms Bistro

Karaoke | 7:30pm | The Palms Bistro 7 Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay

Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk Village Rock'n Bingo | 7pm | FATBoys Destin Free Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand Boulevard

Sunset Party | 5pm | Rhumcay

Harborwalk **Karaoke Night** | 6pm | Village Door

Music Hall Little Black Dress Ladies Night | 6pm |

Palms Bistro Baytowne Live Music | 6:30pm | Village

of Baytowne Wharf **Magical Thursday** | 7pml Baytowne Wharf

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand Boulevard

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille



Sunset Celebration | 5pm | Harborwalk Village

Mermaids & Pirates | 5pm | Harborwalk Village Name That Tune | 6:30pm | Village

Door Music Hall Baytowne Live Music | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Salsa Lessons & Social | 7:45pm | Bric a Brac

Karaoke Night | 8pm | Village Door Music Hall Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Latin Night | 9pm | Bric a Brac 10 Farmer's Market | 8am-1pm | FWB

Landing Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard

Women's Climbing Circle | 10am | Rock

Out Climbing Gym **Lawn Games in the Park** | 11am |

Grand Boulevard **Karaoke Nigh**t | 6pm | Village Door

Music Hall

Karaoke Night | 8pm | World Of Beer

Sandestin Wine Festival | 1pm-4pm |

Karaoke Night | 8pm | World Of Beer

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab

泉い焼き ふご 川市

Karaoke | 6pm | Village Door Restaurant (Baytowne)

Royal Palm Grille

Destin

FW/R

Music Ha

Seascap

Baytowne Wharf

Boulevard

Harborwalk

Music Hall

Palms Bistro

Boulevard

Door Music Hall

Grille

a Brac

Music Hall

Bavtowne Wharf

Karaoke | 7pm | The Palms Bistro

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm |

Music Bingo | 7pm | Pallet Bar and Grill

Singo Music Bingo | 5:30pm | LuLu's

Karaoke | 6pm | Enlightened Studios

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Village Door

Trivia Night | 7pm | Village Door at

Game Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza

Music Bingo | 7pm | World of Beer Karaoke | 7:30pm | The Palms Bistro

Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay

Free Concert Series | 7pm | Village of

Rock'n Bingo | 7pm | FATBoys Destin

Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand

Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm | Village of

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Village Door

Little Black Dress Ladies Night | 6pm |

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand

Cobia Tournament Weigh Ins | 4pm |

Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

Salsa Lessons & Social | 7:45pm | Bric

Karaoke Night | 8pm | Village Door

Latin Night | 9pm | Bric a Brac

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Name That Tune | 6:30pm | Village

Sunset Party | 5pm | Rhumcay

••• 23

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Karaoke Night | 6pm | Village Door

Village of Baytowne Wharf

Music Hall

Trap Destin

Destin Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro 11 Beach Church Service | 7:30am | Crab

Trap Destin **Karaoke** | 6pm | Village Door

Restaurant (Baytowne) **Karaoke** | 7pm | The Palms Bistro

Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5pm |

Royal Palm Grille Hydroflight Monday | 6:30pm |

Baytowne Wharf **Music Bingo** | 7pm | Pallet Bar and Grill

Personalaur Annuaciation Lunch

Responders Appreciation Lunch | 11:30am | Faith Assembly Christian Church Miramar Beach

Singo Music Bingo | 5:30pm | LuLu's Destin

Karaoke | 6pm | Enlightened Studios FWB

Boomin' Tuesday Fireworks | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf

Trivia Night | 6:30pm | Village Door Music Hall

Trivia Night | 7pm | Village Door at Seascape

Game Night | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza Music Bingo | 7pm | World of Beer Karaoke | 7:30pm | The Palms Bistro

Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm | The Bay Free Concert Series | 7pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Rock'n Bingo | 7pm | FATBoys Destin Open Mic Night | 7pm | Enlightened Studios

Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer

Lawn Games in the Park | 3pm | Grand Boulevard

Sunset Party | 5pm | Rhumcay

Harborwalk **Karaoke Night** | 6pm | Village Door

Music Hall Little Black Dress Ladies Night | 6pm | Palms Bistro

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro

Boulevard Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal Palm

Grille **Name That Tune** | 6:30pm | Village

Door Music Hall Sandestin Wine Festival | 4:30pm |

Village of Baytowne Wharf Salsa Lessons & Social | 7:45pm | Bric a Brac

Karaoke Night | 8pm | Village Door Music Hall

Dueling Pianos | 8pm | The Palms Bistro Latin Night | 9pm | Bric a Brac 17

Farmer's Market | 8am-1pm | FWB Landing Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm | Grand

Mind Body Beach | 9am | Beaches of

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Lawn Games in the Park | 11am |

Sandestin

Grand Boulevard

It's Almost Time to Celebrate the 34th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival!

Thursday, April 15th - Sunday, April 18th • Friday 5-8 p.m. & Saturday 1-4 p.m.

Grab your friends and get ready to uncork some wine and fun in the sun this month at The Sandestin Wine Festival! In its 34th year, the Sandestin Wine Festival is one of the most established and continuously running coastal wine festivals in the region as evidenced by its continued success; thousands know there's no substitute for this coveted four-day event that takes place in the charming setting of The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin.



Regarded as one of the top wine festivals in the country and known as the "Kentucky Derby of Wine Festivals," the festival offers wine aficionados a wide range of experiences!

The main events, the Grand Wine Tastings, showcase more than 500 domestic and international wines throughout the weekend. You'll enjoy the opportunity to talk to vineyard owners and wine makers about their favorite appellations in all varieties, styles and price ranges, and perhaps try something new. Treat yourself, family and friends to a gourmet experience courtesy of some of the best chefs on the Emerald Coast from your favorite local restaurants who pair delectable bite-sized appetizers with their current glass selections-the Savor South Walton experience! A new festival favorite, the Bubbly & Boozy tent, returns to the Grand Sandestin Lawn, featuring bubbles and specialty liquors. Local and regional music also set the vibe for fun days of discovery.

So, come on and join wine novices and connoisseurs to witness an event that has aged to perfection— just like a fine wine— one-of-a-kind seminars, wine dinners, grand wine tastings and popular culinary experiences. Benefitting the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Sandestin Foundation for Kids, purchase your tickets at sandestinwinefestival.com.

April Offers More Spring Fun at the Village of Baytowne Wharf!



April Wednesday Night Concert Series-Tribute Series Wednesdays, April 7 - 28,

7-9 p.m. Sit back and relax as you take

in the cool crisp air and enjoy live entertainment. This concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Concerts begin at 7 p.m. on the Events Plaza Stage each Wednesday! **April 7:** Nighttrain - The Guns & Roses Tribute Experience

April 14: Highway to Hell -ACDC & Def Leppard Tribute

April 21: Barracuda - America's Heart Tribute

April 28: Emerald Coast Blues Brothers

All concerts are FREE to attend.



Bubbly Baytowne Thursday, April 22, 5-7 p.m.

Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf for an evening full of FREE champagne and shopping during its Bubbly Baytowne. Sip and Shop through the village streets! Stop in various retail merchants as you enjoy a selection of premium champagnes. * This event is free and for 21 and up only. The village will be open to the public during this event.



Grab your tacos and sip your Tequila at the Tequila & Taco Fest! Friday, April 30 -Sunday, May 2

Friday Pre Party, 6-9 p.m. • Saturday Main Event, 1-5 p.m. • Sunday Bye Bye Brunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf is hosting this amazing three-day event this year where local restaurants and food trucks will be competing for the Best Taco on The Emerald Coast. The first-place prize is \$2,500, and you, will have a say in the People's choice Award. Sample many types of Tequilas and

Margaritas from Blancos, Resposados, Anjieos and even Mezcals while indulging on some of the area's best tacos.

Discover a variety of Tequilas and Margaritas, unlimited tacos from area restaurants and food trucks, "Best Taco" competition along with best Margarita, "People's Choice" award for the best taco, face painting for the little "Amigos," a Tortilla Tossing Contest, Chihuahua Beauty Contest, Macho Nacho Eating Contest, Best Dressed Contest and live music from Salsa Band "Meringue 4" from the Dominican Republic!

Sandestin Resort Hotels is also offering special room rates and free parking on property with shuttle service.

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to The Fisher House of The Emerald Coast, Sandestin Foundation for Kids and Boys & Girls Club. Tickets for the 8th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest are on sale now at bigticketevents.com. This is a rain or shine event and no refunds will be given.

Don't miss ALL the fun this Spring!



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A Weekend of Tequilas and Tacos Comes to The Village of Baytowne Wharf The 8th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest Is On!

As the saying goes, "If you're having a Taco Emergency, call Nine Juan Juan!" Extreme Festivals & Events and The Village of Baytowne Wharf are hosting the 8th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest April 30 - May 2, the second longest running Tequila & Taco Fest in the U.S.A. The weekend is full of savory tacos, smooth Tequilas, live music and contests...and a whole lot of FUN!

The brainchild of this event is Chef/Restaurateur and founder of Carlito's Amazing Products, Carlos Shaffran. The event has grown significantly since being founded in 2014. "Locals and guests from all over the Southeast come to celebrate this unique event right here on our Emerald Coast," says Carlos. Initially planned to be a restaurant event at one of Carlos' Restaurants, Tequila & Taco Fest quickly grew to become the second largest festival event (formerly held on the Destin Harbor), aside from The Destin Seafood Festival. Because of its popularity, the event has moved to a larger venue in Miramar Beach, "The Village of Baytowne Wharf" located at the beautiful Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort. This great new location will allow more vendors and more Tequila booths.

During the event, you will be able to taste and sample an array of unlimited fresh tacos prepared with local ingredients and sip on the finest Tequilas available today! Participating food vendors will serve mouth-watering tacos with exotic twists on beef, pork, chicken, fish and shrimp. Vegan options and traditional Latin tacos will also be available. "It's really a great place to experience some off-the-wall tacos you may have never considered," says Carlos.

And with 30 or more different Tequilas throughout the festival, can you really go wrong? You will experience specialty Tequila Margaritas and Tequila shots. "The education process of learning about different types of Tequila is phenomenal," Carlos explains. "In a Tequila, we find primary Tequila aromas, which come from the raw material (raw or cooked agave), secondary Tequila aromas, mainly fruity, from fermentation and distillation and finally, tertiary Tequila aromas, usually sweet, spicy and woody,









which come from resting Tequila in oak barrels. Higher-end Tequilas, including Azuñia which is a two-year-old Aged Black Private Reserve Añejo Tequila from 100% Agave, and Corralejo 1821 Extra Añejo Tequila, will be available in the VIP area just to name a couple of them," he says.

A weekend of festive fun begins on Friday evening, April 30th, with a "Bocadillo & Margarita" Kick-Off Party (\$50) presented by Corralejo Tequila, featuring music from "DJ Vasco" hosted at "The Village Door" who has been voted best place to dance on the Emerald Coast. Enjoy an evening of delightful small plates, assorted Tequilas and signature Margaritas from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and then the dance party goes on until 2 a.m!

Tequila & Taco Fest gates open for the main event on Saturday, May 1st, at 1 p.m. where you will sip and savor until 5 p.m. during this flavorful afternoon at The Village of Baytowne Wharf, featuring a large selection of Tequilas including award winning Tequilas from Familia Camarena, 1800 Tequila, Dos Primos, Siete Leguas and Corralejo. Also, we will have some very tasty new Tequilas that have just been introduced to the market for a variety of Margaritas, Latin beers

to sample and, of course, Tacos, Tacos and more Tacos! During the event, judges will vote for their favorite taco. Local vendors will compete for the top prize of \$2,500 for the 'Best Taco on the Emerald Coast.' And this year a People's Choice and most Exotic Taco award has been added to the event. 'Live music and DJ's will play on three stages including "DJ Vasco," and Salsa Band "Merengue 4" from the Dominic Republic. Little Amigos will delight at face painting, and all will enjoy the "Aye Chihuahua" beauty contest! You can even show off your football arm by tossing the longest tortilla. And you do not want to miss the "Macho Nacho" eating contest!

Judges Score She

Ticket pricing starts at \$30 for tacos only, \$50 for military and first responders, \$60 for general admission and \$125 for VIP. Kids 10 and under are free.

And if that is not a full day, end the day and catch one of the top Queen tribute bands in the country "Absolute Queen" will be performing at The Village Door. Tickets are \$30; doors open at 6 p.m.

The weekend concludes on Sunday, May 2nd, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with the Bye-Bye Brunch sponsored by 1800 Tequila at the award-winning "Slick Lips Seafood & Oyster Bar" (\$25) which includes one entrée from a special brunch menu and one On the Rocks Margarita or a Zesty Pao Pao Bloody Mary from Carlito's Amazing Products.

Plan a Stay & Sip weekend Staycation at one of Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort properties. Sandestin is offering special rates for the event. Book and save up to 30% when you stay two or more nights and receive discounted tickets per adult to Saturday's Main Event.

If Tacos, Tequilas and Bands are not incentive enough, a portion of the proceeds from The 8th Annual Tequila & Taco Fest benefits the Fisher House Foundation, Sandestin Foundation for Kids and Boys & Girls Club.

Carlos concludes, "It really is a big party!" This is a rain or shine event. Purchase tickets for all Tequila & Taco Fest events or for information please visit www. efestevents.com





Trends & Treasures

The community



It's officially, wonderfully Spring at CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center!

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USA TODAY listed Smallcakes as one of the "Top Ten Cupcake Places to Try" in the country! And we're just lucky to have one right here in Destin! Smallcakes at City Market not only creates award-winning cupcakes that wow judges and find their way to celebrities, it's like spring cupcake heaven on earth with flavorful frostings and a variety of new cupcake flavors for April! Many will take you to memories of childhood such as the Orange Creamsicle-a reminder of the pastel ice cream truck with its music tinkering, rolling through the neighborhood and all the kids running to get money to buy the Dreamsicle! And there's specials weekly: • Monday: \$30 dozen

• Monday: \$30 dozen cupcakes

• Tuesday: Buy 3 get 1 FREE

• Wednesday: Happy Hour 2 for \$5 (3-6 p.m.) • Wednesday: Happy

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(850) 424-3935 pureandcouture.com



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Community

The Arc of the Emerald Coast Hosts its 10th Annual **Burning Up The Beaches Car Show**

Rev your engines for Burn- and Fort Walton Beach. ing Up The Beaches, a funfilled weekend with gearheads coming in from all over the U.S. Locals and visitors will enjoy three days of events and showing off their cars on our own sugar-white beaches of Destin

Burning Up The Beaches kicks off Thursday, May 6, at 3 p.m. at The Island by Hotel RL in Fort Walton Beach. Island. New to Burning Up The Beaches this year, the group will drive in the Main Street Parade in downtown Fort Walton Beach to show off their vintage cars on Friday, May 7. The celebration will continue with various events hosted at The Island by Hotel

RL including a DJ at the pool, a beach bonfire, and live music.

Saturday, May 8, is the big show day! The Burning Up The Beaches car show will begin at 9:00 a.m. at Destin Commons. Participants will enjoy a day of cars, music and more around Destin Commons.

The Main Street Parade and the Burning Up The Beaches car show are open to the public to attend. To participate in these events, as well as the other activities during the Burning up the Beaches weekend, registration is required.

For those looking for a place to stay during Burning Up The Beaches, The Island by Hotel RL is offering special rates for registrants. Registration and information to book your stay at The Island by Hotel RL can be found at www.burningupthebeaches.com

All funds raised during Burning Up The Beaches weekend will support The Arc of the Emerald Coast's mission to provide a path from disability to capability.

Horizons was founded in 1992 and is an affiliate of The Arc of the U.S., the world's largest grassroots advocacy organization for citizens of all ages with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and their families. June 2015 Horizons of Okaloosa County changed its name to The Arc of the Emerald Coast. The Arc of the Emerald Coast provides services in Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties that work to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community.

Once checked in, the party will begin across the street with a Happy Hour at Rick's on the Immanuel Art & Music Festival and **Community Yard Sale April 17**

Visual artists of all levels will be showing and selling their artwork on the lawn at the Second Immanuel Art & Music Festival from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, 2021. A variety of musical groups and musicians will also be performing throughout the day. The community is also invited to reserve space/sell items or browse the Community-wide Yard Sale held in Immanuel's parking lot from 8-1pm on the same day. More details, Yard Sale and Artist's space registration forms can be found at iacdestin.org/special-events/immanuel-art-music or at the church. Welcome one and all to this family-friendly alcohol-free event. Free funnel cakes will be served too!



Immanuel Anglican Church is located at 250 Indian Bayou

Trail, just north of the Nancy Weidenhamer Dog Park in Destin. Call 850.837.6324 for more information.



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M Community

"Savor the Sound" Benefits Taylor Haugen Foundation Mattie Kelly Arts Center, May 1, 2021, 2 – 6 p.m

"Savor the Sound," a family friendly Saturday afternoon event at the Niceville Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) outdoor amphitheater will be held May 1 from 2 - 6 p.m. to benefit the Taylor Haugen Foundation. An annual fundraiser, the Taylor Haugen Foundation is bringing back homegrown, well known musicians headlining with an Allman Brothers tribute band, A Brothers Revival, featuring former The Allman Brothers Band's bassist, David Goldflies. Other artists in the lineup include Reed Waddle and Fais Do-Do Zvdeco Band. The venue will also host local food trucks and breweries.

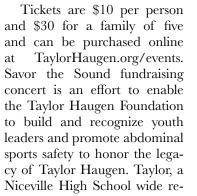
The foundation's goal is to host a family festive outdoor concert venue that provides entertainment for their community of supporters while honoring Taylor's legacy as they work to protect youth athletes from abdominal injuries. The Haugen's are proud to be from this community and want to showcase



the talented restaurants, brewers and musicians who call it home.

The Taylor Haugen Foundation's first fundraiser was a tribute concert at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center with The All-American Rejects and special guest Reed Waddle. Savor the Sound was created after many conversations about doing another concert to showcase musicians from this community who have made musical careers. The Executive Director of the Taylor Haugen Foundation, Kathy Haugen, said "It's extra special for us to have Reed perform. Reed opened for The All-American Rejects in 2009 at our very first fundraiser."





ceiver, tragically passed away in 2008 from an abdominal injury sustained in a football game. The funds raised go directly towards The Foundation's Youth Equipment for Sports Safety (YESS) program and providing scholarships for outstanding local student athletes. As of Summer 2019, The Foundation has outfitted more 5,000 student athletes with new generation

abdominal protective gear in 14 states. Over 3,000 of these students have been in the local area. Taylor Haugen Foundation has awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships in the four-county area since 2008.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, visit TaylorHaugen.org or find Taylor Haugen Foundation on Facebook and Instagram.



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The community

As a Buyer, How Do You Win in Today's Market?



BY GAIL PELTO

As of today, March 29th, the day that I'm penning this article, there are only 1147 residential properties for sale in our entire Multiple Listing Service, and that's pretty much everything in between Panama City Beach and Pensacola; last year at this time it was closer to 5000. With inventories this low, it is really tough for buyers; the supply of homes on the market is low and the demand is high, prices rise, and buyers often have to compete against one another.

So, as a buyer, how do you win with your offer when there's other offers being made on the same property? Naturally, the seller is going to accept the most attractive. Here's a few tips for making a strong offer:

Don't start low thinking there's a lot of room to negotiate: In this market, a low-ball offer will kill the deal before negotiations even start. When there are a lot of competing buyers, homes usually sell at or above the listing price. If you make an offer and there are multiple offers higher than yours, you likely will not get a counteroffer. If you have a price in mind that you are willing to pay for a home you love and you can afford the payments that go with it, it's a good idea to make your best offer first!

Less is More:

The "cleaner" your offer, the better—meaning fewer or no contingencies, the better your offer will look to the seller. If you need to get financing, lock in your rate and get a pre-approval from your lender. Better yet, if you can pay cash, that will be the most attractive. You might consider buying the property "as is" and not request repairs, or waive an appraisal con-



tingency, which could mean you will bring more money to the table at closing if it appraises lower than the sales price. Remember, contingencies are mostly in place to protect homebuyers. It is important to consult with an experienced, professional real estate agent (ME!) before agreeing to waive any protections.

Timeline. Be Flexible:

Often the timeline for closing is important to sellers. They might have already purchased their next home and want to close as quickly as possible, or they might not have figured out where their next home will be and will want to push closing to a later date or close early and lease the property back from you for a time. Making it clear that you will consider the seller's timing needs will make your offer more appealing. So, be flexible if you can.

The good news for homebuyers is that mortgage interest rates are still extremely low. So, even in this market, you can buy a whole lot more house than if interest rates were higher. Most importantly, hire a great agent to help you navigate the home buying process, because the excitement that comes with finding the perfect home can quickly disappear when you find out the home has multiple offers. A great agent will help you make your best offer, thus increasing your odds of winning! Remember to be flexible, so you can ensure the best chance at securing the house of your dreams!

Have more questions? Call me, I am here to help! Gail Pelto, 850-374-0454.

Gail Pelto is a full-time real estate agent with Keller Williams and a board member with both the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and The Rotary Club of Destin. If you have questions about real estate, call her at (850) 374-0454.



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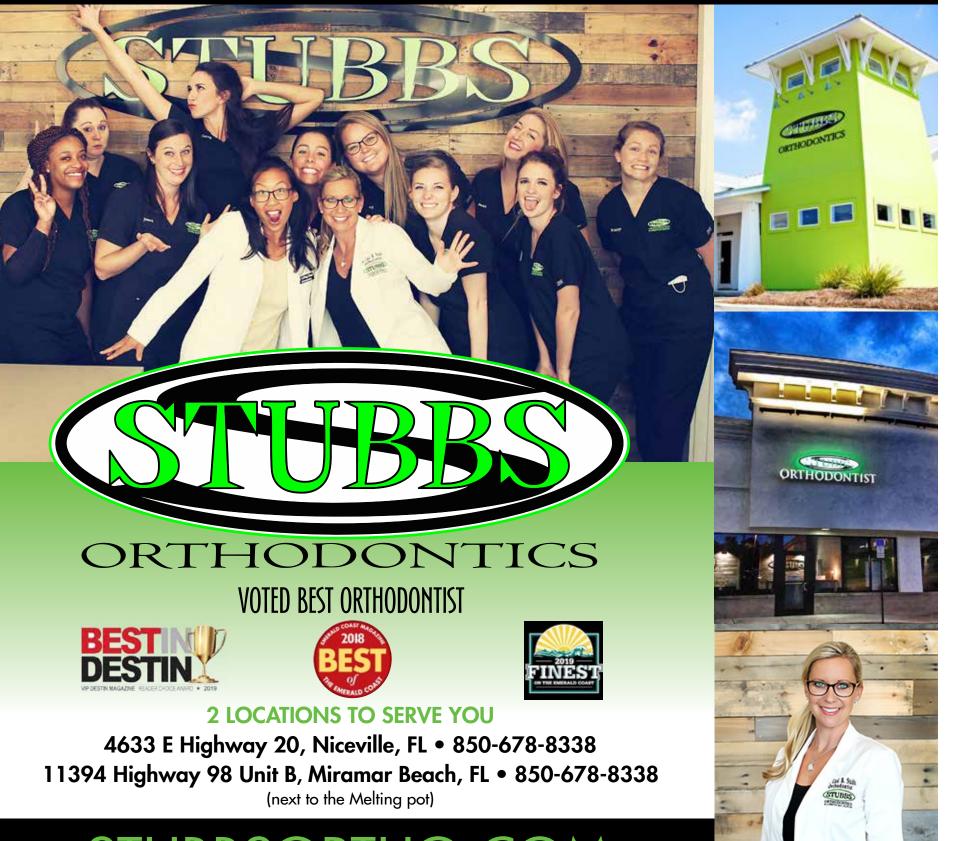
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Our daughter just completed her second phase and had her braces removed today, what a milestone!! This experience has been amazing. We love Dr. Stubbs and her staff. Always friendly and always went above and beyond for my daughter's comfort. ~ Micha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

The community

Underinsured – Don't Let It Happen to You!



By Victoria Ostrosky

Protecting your assets (and your bank account) from losses you wouldn't otherwise be able to financially afford is what insurance is about. Making sure you have the correct amount of coverage can be the difference between rebuilding your entire structure versus a partial rebuild.

Take Larry for instance. He's well known by all his friends and family as the guy who knows where to get the best deals. They call him 'let's deal Larry'. He researches and asks questions, compares and tests before he plunks down his money. From cars to espresso machines, Larry's your guy to give you the scoop on where to find the best deal. We all have a friend like Larry.

Over the years, Larry discovered something crucial about what constitutes the 'best deal,' and it's not always price. He found it's usually a combination of price and quality. As the say-



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ing goes, "You get what you pay for" and that can apply to your insurance as well. It's one thing to buy a cheap toy to entertain your toddler for a day, and it's another thing to purchase cheap insurance that leaves you out to dry when disaster comes knocking on your door all because you wanted to save a few dollars.

Calculating the correct rebuild can be tricky and as an agent we can assist you. But to get the most accurate number, we recommend you work with your builder or hire a licensed appraiser.

From Hurricane Michael to the recent wildfires in California, when all is said and done, some homeowners are discovering not only were their homes destroyed, but they were underinsured. In addition, inadequate insurance on your dwelling can also lower the coverages available to replace your personal property, loss of use and more.

There are several factors that directly contribute to being underinsured. The biggest one being your initial purchase of that dream home. You searched until you found the perfect house. You bought furniture, painted walls and hung a stunning chandelier over your brand-new dining table and chairs. And that was fine, until Hurricane Michael toppled a few trees onto your roof and the rain soaked not just your furniture, but the drywall and cabinets, and that beautiful chandelier shattered on the floor.

The adjuster came and you ended up with a check that would only rebuild two-thirds of your house. Because of the scope of the catastrophic disaster, building materials and construction labor costs rose significantly, which means the rest came out of your pocket.

The second factor that contributes to being underinsured can happen when your policy has been with the same company for a number of years. Not all policies have a built in inflation guard, so it's always best to review your dwelling and content limits at their renewal each year.

The third factor is a sneaky one. Most homeowners periodically update their homes, like installing new flooring, remodeling bathrooms and kitchens, adding rooms and square footage, but they don't always inform their agent so that the replacement cost can be recalculated and limits increased.

The bottom line when it comes to insuring your home is this: Don't skimp on the coverages; look carefully at your renewal policy and address any coverage deficiencies you might have, and always let your agent know about any upgrades and remodeling you've done to your home. We recommend an annual review of your property insurance program, because life happens and circumstances change.

Make sure you have the correct amount of coverage to rebuild back to the beautiful dream home you had before disaster struck.



Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their Video Library on www.ins-zone.com and watch an informative video "Market Value vs Replacement Cost" or call 850.424.6979. Victoria Ostrosky, author of this article is an agent/CSR with IZ.

Community

Careful What You Pray For

By COURTNEY LINDBERG, DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION, ARBORBROOK CONSULTANTS

"God, if you want me to do this, you're gonna have to do something.'

This is exactly where He wants us.

Before my time with Arborbrook, my wife and I had a small handmade

soap company. We worked the farmers markets in town and were fortunate to land some retail accounts in Seaside Rosemary and Beach. The business was growing fast, and we were very excited. We started getting calls and emails

from stores across the country and even a few international requests. We had no idea what we were doing, but had a passion for business development and startups. So, the risk of the unknown was acceptable. Or so we thought.

Soon enough, we started to feel the pull to take the business on the road. We pushed back for a while, but the feeling wouldn't go away. In fact, it got stronger. We prayed. At the time, I was driving a small sedan. There was no way we were road-tripping with all our equipment, inventory, setups and personal bags in my small sedan. I justified us refusing the call because of that, but the pull only got more intense, until I finally threw my hands in the air and told God that if He wanted us to do that, He was gonna have to give us an appropriate vehicle.

Somehow, I believed I had put God in checkmate.

The next day, less than 24 hours, my wife gets a call from her mom. "I'm buying a new car. Do you guys want the van?"

Like a teenager whose parent had just won the argument, I submitted. "Fine."

It was the experience of a lifetime. Our business continued to grow, but we didn't know from one day to the next where

along the way. So much of our decisions and planning put the focus on money, not on what the purpose of it is. The accumulation of it isn't what you've been called to. It's the tool to do what you've been called to. Go beyond the money.

Arborbrook's calling is to guide Christians towards greater stewardship. We do that through a very different style of financial planning. Our vision is to see a culture changed, to see people's relationship with money shift into a stewardship mod-

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el, recognizing who the True Owner is. If you're ready to take that first step, we challenge you to put actions to your words and make the commitment by joining our humble movement: arborbrookadvisors.com/gobeyondmoney.



we were going, how much we would sell, if anything, or where we would even sleep. The large increase of expenses due to travel quickly ate up our reserves, and then our cashflow. We'd worry, try to problem solve on our own, ultimately arriving back in the same place; seeking the One who called us there.

The adventure culminated at our arrival in Redding, Ca. Over three weeks, we began to realize that it was never about the business or the money. It was about us learning to trust in God's provision, understanding Matthew 6:25-34 at a much deeper level, specifically verse 26: "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

We work to sow, to reap and then have goals to store away in barns, all the while worrying



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Meet Our Hometown Hero Eddie Mansfield A Story of Redemption

BY DAVE WHITE

Eddie Mansfield has a story to tell!

In a recent interview with the long-time director of Path of Grace in Miramar Beach, we asked Eddie if he could sum up his life story in one sentence, what would it be? He answered unhesitatingly, "What the enemy meant for evil, God turned it for the good."

What an answer!

Born and raised in a good family in Owensboro, Kentucky, known for its thriving retail and dining district nestled on the southern banks of the Ohio River. His Mom owned a women's apparel and Gift shop and his dad was an artist and architectural designer. "I had every advantage growing up, but somehow I got on the wrong track at a young age and for many years couldn't get off."

Eddie began experimenting with alcohol and marijuana at around age 15. After being arrested for Driving under the Influence (DUI) at age 16, and again at age 17, Eddie was sent to a boarding school in Tennessee. "My parents tried everything," he says. "The boarding school, several rehabilitation centers,



psychologist's—you name it, they tried it. And they never stopped praying for me night and day."

Unfortunately, things only got worse as Eddie kept experimenting with other, and more powerful drugs. Nothing could stop his addiction. "From the age of 15 to the age of 38, I lived a life opposite of what my parents had in mind for me. I bounced from state to state, from job to job, from rehab to rehab."

In 2006, Eddie's life would be changed forever. He was arrested for possession of drugs, and it was at that moment he called out to God for help. And, as Eddie says, "Believe it or not he was there." Instead of going to prison, He was given a diversion sentence of 18 months to Haven House in Santa Rosa Beach, a faith-based rehabilitation program. "I finally realized it was God I was resisting for all those years and it was God who rescued me and gave me a second chance."

Since then, life has taken

a "complete 180" for Eddie. "My life is full of happiness, joy, love and peace now." Since 2009, Eddie has worked with Path of Grace Women's Recovery Home. Path of Grace is a women's residential recovery home dedicated to helping those struggling with addiction find recovery through faith. There are now 36 beds at Path of Grace and a new project is in the works that will help many more!

In 2012, Eddie was appointed managing director of the ministry which has now helped hundreds of women recover from their addiction, recover their lives, and in many cases, recover their families.

In 2014, Eddie fulfilled another lifetime dream of opening a shop similar to the one his parents operated in Owensboro while Eddie was growing up. He opened FAVORI Boutique in the Market Shops of Sandestin. "It has been a great success and I really love it. We carry apparel, footwear, jewelry, gifts, home decor and art." In many ways, the income from the shop allows Eddie to dedicate his full-time attention to Path of Grace.

In addition, Eddie has expanded his business by opening a second shop in Destin—KISS THE SKY boutique in the Plantation Commons near Fresh Market and Home Goods. KISS THE SKY boasts twice the floor space as FAVORI which allows for the sale of more home decor and "Coastal Chic" beach furniture.

Eddie's girlfriend, Kimberly Givens, has been a big help in managing the expansion and coordinating the buying for both stores. She is also a former graduate of Path of Grace, and also works at Path of Grace as Supervisor of Homes.

All-in-all, Eddie says there are regrets about the wrongs of the past, but, He says, "I'm sure glad I found God when I did. My relationship with Him gets better every year. I love what I do and I hope God allows me to continue for a long time."

Eddie, an overcomer and our Hometown Hero, now works to help others overcome many of the same issues in their lives.



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The Community

Vets Helping Vets & First Responders

By Marta Rose-Thorpe

For years Jimy Thorpe felt the urge to give back. A veteran, Jimy had served as a young man in the U.S. Army for eight years and had always held the highest regard for the men and women who serve our country and keep us safe. This group also includes Beach. Local musician Neal James opened the lunches with the National Anthem and play background music while Texas Roadhouse catered. The first event hosted around 40 guests and several local businesses co-sponsored. The next lunch brought in a few more guests slowly growing in attendance and giving away one HVAC unit per quarter, for a total of 12 HVAC units given away per year.

"I feel that giving back to veterans and first responders is like taking the time to help my father," says Jimy, whose father served in the U.S. Marines. "It's something that comes second nature; it's instinctive and something that's driven in me."

Join us for the next Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Faith As**sembly Christian Church** (a.k.a. The Rock & Roll Church), 306 South Geronimo Street, Miramar Beach, 32550. To register to win a HVAC unit, go to ASuperiorAC.com and scroll down to the box at the bottom, "Veterans & First Responders HVAC Giveaways."



Mr. and Mrs. Lundeen with Jimy Thorpe

first responders - the men and women who keep our communities safe. So how would he give back? In 2014, he created the tagline "Vets Helping Vets" - later elevated to "Vets Helping Vets & First Responders" and decided to start giving what he had to give: HVAC units. Jimy owns A Superior Air Condi-

tioning Company, a local business he launched in 2003.

In the beginning, Jimy and his team decided to give away eight units per year. Vets and first responders were encouraged to apply online at ASuperiorAC. com and the giveaway was open to all who have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and all first responders including EMT/ Medics, Police, Sheriffs and Fire Fighters. American Legion Post 392 in Panama City met and voted on all submissions each quarter, selecting one veteran in need and one first responder in need to be awarded the units.

In 2015, the giveaway began taking the form of a quarterly appreciation lunch at Harley-Davidson of Panama City



and sponsors, and the Vet Center and other veteran-related organizations joined in. As the word-of-mouth continued, the guest list grew. By Fall 2017, the event moved to Texas Roadhouse. Today this appreciation lunch still takes place, now maxing out the restaurant at 380+ guests.

But Jimy still wanted to reach and help more veterans and first responders. In November 2019, Pastor Dave of Faith Assembly Church in Miramar Beach (affectionately known as "The Rock & Roll Church") invited Jimy to launch a quarterly appreciation lunch there, thus reaching vets and first responders in the Walton/Okaloosa area. The appreciation lunch has taken place there ever since,





Community

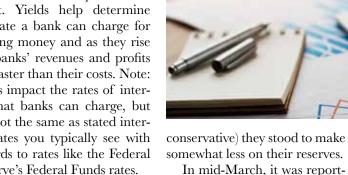


By MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL Advisor and Branch Manager

The Financial Services Sector of the stock market has been the second-best performing sector so far this year. A sector of the market consists of similar industries and those which have other things in common such as, in this case, interest rate sensitivity (there are a total of 11 sectors that make up the stock market). Yields on bonds, U.S. Treasury bonds, directly impact banks and financial services companies as well as the overall market. The yield of the 10-year U.S. Treasury note is closely watched as it has a direct impact on the overall stock market as well as the financial sector. This is because when yields rise, it is thought that banks and other financial services companies stand to increase their revenues and their profits as a result. Yields help determine the rate a bank can charge for lending money and as they rise the banks' revenues and profits rise faster than their costs. Note: yields impact the rates of interest that banks can charge, but are not the same as stated interest rates you typically see with regards to rates like the Federal Reserve's Federal Funds rates.

Rates on the 10-year Treasury note have been climbing for several months now. At this writing, the yield was at 1.74%. That is up from a low of just .57% in April of last year, nearly tripling. At the time when the rate was that low, prospects for banks were quite grim, especially since there were fears that banks and other lenders might be facing steep losses because of the substantial economic downturn brought on by the pandemic. Banks also had to move to set aside additional reserves for those potential losses. That is money the banks could not lend out. While banks could invest those reserves in things like Treasuries, (which are quite

Time to Review Investing in Banks and Financial Services





companies offer online ac-

counts, credit cards and loans.

Brokerage firms, too, are part

of this sector. Many brokerage

firms have banking subsidiaries

where uninvested cash of their

customers is held. Those sub-

sidiaries stand to make greater

earnings when yields increase.

There are also a multitude of

"fintech" companies which

stand to improve their earnings

increase in yields? A simple

explanation is expectation of

economic growth or econom-

ic rebound. That would be a

signal that demand is growing,

and that inflation is increasing.

Large institutional investors like

pension plans, endowments,

and funds tend to sell lower

vielding Treasuries as a result.

More selling than buying drives

the price of bonds and treasur-

ies down but conversely drives

main objectives: One is full em-

ployment and the other is keep-

ing inflation in check. The Fed

has most recently indicated that

it does not see inflation as a par-

ticular threat and is prepared

to keep rates close to zero until

2023. Note those are rates, not

the yields. The daily trading of

U.S. Treasury bonds determines

the yields. Some inflation is con-

sidered healthy for economic

growth. That is typically from

2-3%. Investors however appear

to be more concerned with in-

flation as supply interruptions

and price increases of various

commodities have moved pro-

ducer and consumer prices up.

Left unchecked, inflation even-

tually erodes purchasing power

which is harmful for consumers

want to make some adjustments

to your investing plans, be sure

to use your resources. Ask your

advisor or brokerage firm for

information, research, advice

If you want to learn more or

and the economy.

The Federal Reserve has two

the yield up.

What might be driving the

when yields increase.

conservative) they stood to make somewhat less on their reserves.

ed that banks had somewhat exceeded the amount they needed to have in additional loss reserves as the fears of loan losses continued to decrease as the economic picture continued to improve. That put many lending institutions in a position to free up those reserves that were into higher yielding loans and, hence, drive greater revenues and profits to the lending institutions. Shortly following that, however, the Federal Reserve made changes to some pandemic era rules put in place last year that allowed banks to exclude (from something known as their supplementary leverage ratios), the Treasury securities they held in their Federal Reserve deposits. With that no longer being the case, banks were suddenly faced with lower revenues because of those changes since they would have to increase their reserves with non-U.S. Treasuries. This is an example of the risk of investing and the impact of unexpected events, in this case, the change of a previously favorable regulation.

Nonetheless, if yields continue to rise, that would be increased potential for revenues for banks and lending institutions. So, where might an investor look if she or he wanted to add financials to their portfolio?

There are over 5,000 banks in the U.S. They range in size from the big, so called money center banks, to the much smaller community banks. In between are regional banks. There is a plethora of research available for investors to review when considering the sector. They can look at individual stocks of financials, mutual funds and exchange traded funds. Additionally, many of these may offer attractive dividend yields to their investors as well.

Also, some financial services

or input. In some situations, investors prefer to delegate that decision making to an advisor or money manager. In any case, continue to understand and know what you own and why vou own it.

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 34 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 are located in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport, 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 R7FS 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.

Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Investors should consult their investment professional prior to making an investment decision.

Sector investments are companies engaged in business related to a specific sector. They are

subject to fierce competition and their products and services may be subject to rapid obsolescence. There are additional risks associated with investing in an individual sector, including limited diversification

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Benefits of Having a Service Dog

By Elena Beplay and Rescue 22 Foundation

Service dogs can augment many different aspects of daily life for people struggling from a physical or mental disability. Here at the Rescue 22 Foundation, we provide task trained service dogs to veterans with service-connected injuries that have resulted in a diagnosis of PTS or other medical and mobility challenges free of charge. We also partner with the USF School of Public Health in order to continue research towards the efficacy of service dogs as a medical tool.

Before we dive into the story of one of our recipients, maybe you have thought about what services a dog can provide and why someone might need a service dog.

Service dogs can provide a variety of task trained jobs specific to help those with physical and emotional disabilities. Specifically, the dogs can be trained to perform tasks related to ambulatory problems, visual impairments and mental disabilities. Trained tasks could include: picking up objects for the owner, retrieving water or medications, turning on and off lights, calling a medical alert system, alerting family members, guiding the owner through daily obstacles, providing brace support for standing or sitting, providing wheelchair pulling, interrupting panic attacks or PTSD episodes, or providing consolation from chronic depression and emotional distress. Dogs can also be trained to provide different types of therapy such as deep pressure therapy and positional therapy. For centuries, man's best friend has been up for the job!

In order to perform a service, the dog must be highly trained by a reputable trainer. The dog should meet specific criteria in the area of breed, age, health and behavior. The trainer should have significant experience training reputable service dogs, and knowledgeable in dog behavior. Choosing the perfect helpful companion is not an easy task, but we strive to make it a seamless process for the veteran.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common reason for someone to have a service dog. Our foundation specifically deals with this disability the most often. PTSD can occur from any traumatic event; it is not limited



to combat alone. Symptoms are varied; however, many experience suicidal thoughts, recurring memories and nightmares, sleeplessness, a loss of interest in life or feeling numb, anger, irritation and fear. PTSD can thus impact their everyday life. Research suggests that psychiatric service dogs may be an effective complementary treatment option. It has been found that disrupting episodes of anxiety ranks is among the most important tasks a service dog can provide.

James, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, was one of our first recipients of a service dog. Although a veteran, his PTSD was not combat related. James lost his son to a very traumatic event in which James was the first on scene. Following his death, James had a difficult time functioning in society and was now alone in his home. He couldn't sleep, suffered from depression, and was prescribed a significant amount of medications. Hopeful, James reached out to our foundation and we went to work placing him with his service dog Zara.

Zara is a Belgian Malinois task trained by Coastline K9 and customized to James. She responds to panic attacks and anxiety by disrupting his distress. She senses when he is having an episode and will rush to him providing tactile stimulation by jumping on him, licking or nudging. She wakes James up when he is having nightmares and provides a companion for his daily life. After receiving Zara, James was able to ditch his sleep medication and get back to a social life.

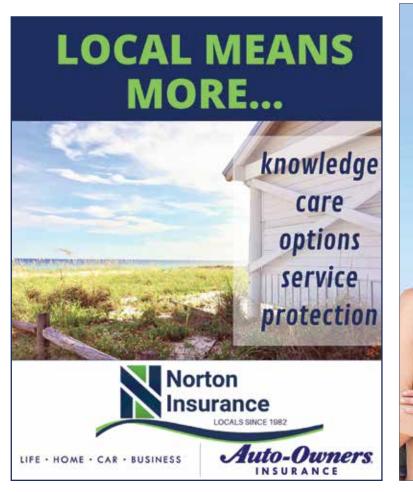
"Zara gives me a purpose again. I can leave the house, be social, and get back to a normal life. She goes everywhere with me." James says.

Zara wears a service dog vest and collar that is properly marked with "service dog" patches and "do not pet" patches visible to the public. James is an information technologist specialist at a local hospital in St. Petersburg, Fla., and he takes Zara to work with him every day. She is trained to be neutral in public settings and pay attention to James's needs. Outside of work, both James and Zara enjoy competing in numerous "GORUCK" events and kayaking. When asked about some of the difficulties of taking Zara everywhere James said, "I have flown on a plane with Zara three times with no issues from Airline staff about having a service dog. When we go to restaurants, I choose to respect others around me by sitting a good distance from other customers, but I have never had an issue taking her to restaurants."

"I recommend getting a service dog; it really makes a difference in daily life and gives me purpose. Just make sure you are getting the dog for the right reasons and continue follow up training."

James's story provides an opportunity to share insight into the daily life of living with PTSD and having a service dog. He is a testament to what our Foundation strives to provide and the strength of others experiencing similar situations. For more information, visit Rescue22Foundation.org or email Byron Beplay with Coastline K9 at byron. beplay@gmail.com.







🐲 Environment



BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES I have been in the home improvement industry for over 17 years and have heard just

Radiant Barrier, Alien Technology?

ENERGY TIPS by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

about all the sales gimmicks and cheeky techniques used by sales people to wow customers. One slightly stretched story I heard about radiant barrier is that

radiant barrier was developed by NASA from alien technology! If only radiant barrier was so glamorous. Actually, in 1925

two German businessmen filed patents on reflective surfaces for use as building insulation. This became the launching pad for reflective insulation. NASA did help to improve this technology and adopted it for the Apollo program. This metalized film was used to protect spacecraft, equipment and astronauts from the extreme heat of space. Even the student housing at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Princeton and Frank Sinatra's residence in Palm Springs have used radiant barriers to become more energy efficient. In 1996, radiant barrier was even inducted into the Space Technology Hall of

Fame—now that's pretty cool. So why use radiant barrier? When the sun's rays strike a roof heating the roofing material (shingles, tiles or roofing sheets), it causes the underside of the roof surface and the roof framing to heat up causing radiant heat to flow downwards through the roof space towards the attic floor, heating up the entire attic. When a ra-



diant barrier is installed on the rafters in the attic, much of the heat radiated from the hot roof is reflected back toward the roof allowing for a cooler attic.

Why is that important? Many of our attics will reach into the 150° F to 160° F range this summer, lately in fall too, heating up insulation, ductwork and many times our stored belongings. Anyone who has stored candles in the attic knows what I mean. This extreme heat makes our current insulation and air conditioners work harder to keep our homes cool, costing us money and comfort. Properly installed radiant barrier on the roof rafters will reflect 97% of the radiant heat reducing the attic temperature during this extreme heat by 40° to 50° degrees allowing your insulation, ductwork and HVAC systems to perform better saving you money and increasing your comfort.

One common misconception regarding radiant barrier is that the heat reflecting off the radiant barrier back to the roof has the potential to increase the roof temperature and possibly damage the roofing material voiding warranties. Performance testing by Florida Solar Energy Center showed that the increase in roof materials temperature, at the hottest time of day, was no more than 2° to 5° degrees. RIMA (Reflective Insulation Manufacturer Association) wrote a technical paper on the subject which included statements collected from large roofing manufacturers, and none said that radiant barrier would in any way affect the warranty or lessen the life of the roof.

To improve on this technology, we added a piece of high density insulation between two pieces of radiant barrier allowing our radiant barrier to help fight against not only radiant heat, but conduction and convection heat as well. My son recently did a science fair project on the performance of different types of radiant barrier. The results? Our multilayer radiant barrier out performed both silver and copper single layer radiant barriers. If you would like to learn more or see a demonstration on how radiant barriers work, contact us at 850-588-2870 or visit us at www.trusteces.com.

Chris Balzer is founder and president of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions which is a Smile Provider Company. We provide smiles to our customers after installing our 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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Environment

Roof Financing Spreads Roof Repair Costs

By Erin Bakker, Specialty Roofers Inc.

For most people, the most daunting aspect of getting a roof replaced or repaired is cost. Often, by the time someone looks into roof repair costs, it is actually time to replace all of the shingles instead of just patching them up. This leads to sticker shock. Even worse, after this has happened once, a person may become reluctant to get a failing roof fixed until the damage has progressed to a very serious level. This increases roof repair cost even more. What can you do to avoid this expensive cycle?

The best thing to do if your roof needs repair is to look into roof financing. This makes it so that you don't have to come up with thousands of dollars all at once. With the financing option, you'll find that you can indeed afford to get minor roof damage fixed before it has gotten to the point of needing a whole new roof. If you do so, you'll find that your costs are even lower, because there isn't as much work that needs to be done.

As you can see, roof financing can actually lower your costs, not just spread them out. However, if your roof is already in a condition that calls for total shingle replacement, financing will still make the job more affordable. Even if you need all new shingles, you are also still saving money over what it would cost to replace the roof deck, which is what gets damaged after shingles fail completely.

If your roof needs work, don't wait any longer. Call us at 850-974-ROOF (7663) or email info@specialtyroofers.com for a quote on your roof and to apply for roof financing. You'll love your new roof and knowing that it is once again protecting the underlying structure. We're licensed, insured and bonded in Florida and Alabama.

By Gina Weidie

Solar has evolved from a cleantech commodity to a sensible home upgrade that many friends and neighbors in our community are researching and considering. And why not? Solar can save you an average of \$26,000 on electricity costs over 20 years. What's more, U.S. solar installation cost decreased by roughly 70% during the past 10 years. In this past year alone, residents saw a 5% percent decrease in cost. So, now's a great time to go solar.

But, the question is "How do I pay for it?" The old misconception was that it actually took cash to go solar. People thought, well, solar is expensive, because I have to spend this upfront cash. That could not be further from the truth. Today, in fact, solar is the least expensive option to get energy in most of the U.S. And with low interest rates and a lot of finance programs, it's typically easy for most homeowners to get zero-down financing.

Think Solar is too Expensive?

There are two primary ways to finance your solar system today: with a low interest rate loan or a lease. Let's talk about both options.



A zero down loan means that you can choose a loan term, whether it's five years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years or 25 years. We offer all of those, and we offer them at the most competitive rates possible. Now, when you go solar with a zero-down loan, what that means is, you finance the system through your loan provider, and instead of paying a monthly bill to your utility, you simply pay a less expensive monthly payment to your loan provider. So, you get to keep the difference.

If, for some reason, a person can't get a loan, they will often choose a lease. This might be because they don't have a tax liability and can't keep the tax credit. A lease is exactly like it sounds. Every single month, you'll pay a lease payment. And you'll pay that usually over 20 years. It's that simple. Your lease payment is going to be less than what you used to pay your utility bill, which means you're saving money every single month.

We know the only way to secure a positive result for you is to learn your exact specific needs and goals. We analyze your past, present and future electric consumption. Once we know your specific needs, we tailor your solar project in every aspect, matching you with the best quality to ensure optimal results. We provide maximum savings by ensuring transparency with \$0 money down. Our unequivocal live communication line provides full support along every step of the process-before, during and after your solar system is installed.

Please feel free to call me, Gina Weidie, with your questions at (985) 317-9583. I want to assist you in any way.

ROOF REPAIRS • RE-ROOFS • NEW CONSTRUCTION COMMERCIAL • WATERPROOFING • INSPECTIONS INSURANCE CLAIMS





- Thomas Edison

Lifestyle



By CJ Lydon, Senior Living COMMUNITY ADVISOR

"WHY" should someone look at moving their loved one or themselves into a Senior Living Community? An important topic to discuss initially, is that it is o.k. to admit you need help. If you are the senior citizen trying to manage the upkeep of your home, yard, pool, doctor. visits, shopping, cooking, cleaning, paying the bills, fixing or having to schedule home repairs, etc. and it's all getting to be too much, YOU ARE NOT ALONE! Maybe you are the spouse or family member who is having to do all of the above mentioned tasks for a loved one and you still have a home, family, career and well-being of your own to manage as well.

This is why you should con-

Living Your Optimum Life! sider the best option that addresses all of the needs and worries that are causing you concern, discomfort, hardship and more. Senior Living Communities are designed to take what is getting harder off your plate so to speak, and hand those cares to specially trained professionals that will not only meet your needs, but work tirelessly to exceed your needs and bring new life to senior living!

Another why are what we call the "Six Dimensions of Wellness.'

Emotional Dimension: Studies have found that seniors with a positive outlook on life lived an average of 7.5 years longer than those who were burdened with the cares of life.

Purposeful Dimension: People with a high sense of purpose are 23% more likely to live a longer more satisfying life and are 19% less likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

Social Dimension: The health risks of prolonged isolation have both physical and cognitive negative implications and can shorten one's life span.



Intellectual Dimension: Providing continuous opportunity to stimulate the brain to learn new things as well as to recall previous learned behaviors and activities.

Physical Dimension: Engaging in as little as 20 minutes of exercise or movement like walking around tree-lined walkways and ponds can act as an anti-inflammatory.

Spiritual **Dimension:** Researchers have found that people who have mediation/ self-reflection/religious affiliations have much lower risk of diseases.

It is very important to understand that some Senior Living Communities are designed to offer a home where the senior can "age in place." This refers to their ability to properly care for their residents as their personal medical care requirements change and increase over time. This could be from not needing any assistance initially to at some point needing help with tasks such as managing their daily medications or assistance with bathing, etc. It would also include more advanced services such as assistance with all daily tasks due to cognitive decline such as with dementia or Alzheimer's. Not many people like to move. So, it is imperative especially with our senior citizens that we choose the correct community from the onset. This way they can remain in familiar surroundings and with neighbors and staff they have formed relationships with. Unfortunately there are some communities who don't want the appearance of seniors needing additional care as it doesn't align with their marketing. This is not the type

of community that will be able to care for your loved one in the long term. Continuity in care is vital!

It is never too early to inquire about why you think it might be time to talk about the transition from you or your loved one living alone or even with family into a Senior Living Community. Why do you take your vehicle to a mechanic, your pet to a Veterinarian or yourself to a Doctor? It is because we know that there are people who are trained to provide those services. Likewise, it is o.k. to acknowledge that you need help in caring for yourself or loved one or just don't want the hassle anymore of all that goes with living by yourself. Give yourself permission to seek guidance and assistance. Your entire family will benefit from you taking this important first step of saying "why" you think it's time for a Senior Living Community to become part of your extended family.

Do you have questions about why Senior Living? Contact me at (850) 543-3339.



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izes 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! The first Friday of every month the Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5pm - 7pm. Who wants a free keg? Bring a donation for the Emerald Coast Foundation to qualify for entry. And this month, Boathouse is hosting a Cobia Tournament April 23-25 benefiting Children in Crisis Emerald Coast! Get ready to Ding-A-Ling! Visit BoathouseOysterBarDestin.com/ cobia-tournament or contact Amber at 850.685.0611.

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Bric a` Brac Restaurant & Night Club

Now celebrating seven amazing years in the Destin community, colorful, eclectic fun is to be had at Bric a' Brac! They can help with your parties, promotions, birthdays, business events or really any private event! 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 well known for its tasty and colorful food selections served up in a fun, artsy atmosphere by professional and friendly staff. Locally-owned and operated since 2014 by twin brothers Rodolfo and Fernando Petit, their hands on, fun loving style, engaging cha-

risma and true passion set them apart. But it doesn't stop there. Enjoy delicious locally-approved entrées while you listen to some lively tunes, dance or sing along. There's something for everyone!

Continued next page



(850) 842-3200 | 125 Poinciana Blvd | Miramar Beach | austonson98.com



OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER Mexican Breakfast Coming Soon on Sat. & Sun. mornings!

Latin Supermarket, **Taqueria & Cantina**

SPECIALTY MEATS SOLD HERE! Great selection available daily. We will grill your meats to perfection for you for only \$1.99. We off a diverse selection of food and groceries from different Latin-America countries! Private Party Room Available.

Mi Genté 733 Harbor Blvd. • Destin (850) 842-2992

Destin Nining, Ente

SPECIALS

11pm - 4am Latin Night Fridays & Saturdays - Music and Dancing Upstairs/Downstairs. 18+ to Enter, 21+ to Drink. GUYS \$10, LADIES \$5.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday: Live Music from 6pm to 9pm

Friday: Jones & Co from 7pm to 10pm

Saturday: Live Music from

6pm to 9pm (850) 424-6369 Shoreline Village Plaza 824 Hwy 98 E, Destin

Bricabracdestin.com

Café Destin

Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples such as pancakes, waffles with Nutella, omelets, Eggs Benedicts, biscuits & gravy and more. For a lighter take, they also have a variety of Fancy Toasts (avocado, salmon and more) along with pastries and muffins. For lunch, choose from a variety of burgers, sandwiches and salads. You will love the full-service coffee shop, offering everything from hot or iced fresh, local Amavida coffee to espresso and lattés. And there's diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas. Open for breakfast and lunch 7 days a week from 7am-2pm. and has free WiFi, encouraging you to bring your laptops and

work during the day. There's also a conference room available for small groups, and the dining area can be rented for larger groups for networking, luncheons and more. If you haven't stopped in recently to check out the new menu, be sure to make breakfast or lunch plans soon! And don't forget the coffee!

(850) 424-6777

985 US-98 E. Destin cafedestin.com

Island Wing Company Grill & Bar

Voted "Best Wings" four years running, Island Wing Co. is calling your name. NOTHING is fried! Everything is baked, grilled or steamed! Come in and find your favorite beer among the 58 selections on tap or enjoy a cocktail and savor some of the tastiest food you've ever eaten. Are you ready for some sports? With Big screen TVs situated all around the bar and restaurant, Island Wing Company invites you in to watch, cheer and enjoy the 2021 seasons. Need to feed the whole family? Family meals to go with curbside delivery has you covered. Your Island awaits you... **SPECIALS**

Daily Happy hour 3-7pm and 7pm-close. Happy Monday! Kids eat free. (Free kids meal with adult entrée purchase) and Happy Hour All day long. 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. Wednesday is flatbread special day. Enjoy \$3 off their five famous flatbreads. Pairs well with \$3 house wine or ¹/₂-priced bottles.

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

islandwing.com

Landshark's Pizza

Hey Sports Fans... Hungry, Thirsty, maybe a little of both? Come in and visit Landshark's Pizza. Owners Brian and Sue Hassmann have created the locals' 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 TV's galore, plus fun and games all week long. Sports fans from all over come and watch all their favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks including College and Pro Football, Basketball and more. And there's a fully stocked bar with 95 different bourbons and 30 beers on draft!

SPECIALS

Weekly specials include music bingo on Tuesdays at 7pm; Wingsday and Bourbon Club Wednesdays! Award-winning

wings all you can eat for \$.99 cents each, and \$2 off top shelf bourbon selections!

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

Supermarket & Taqueria **Mi Gente'**

Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Mi Gente' is one of Destin's hottest dining spots for the whole family and friends to enjoy. 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 such as rich and flavorful! Quesa-Birria Tacos topped with fresh diced onion, cilantro and a squeeze of lime juice served with the broth on the side to dip your tacos! Take a walk through their amazing and Continued next page







diverse supermarket and fresh meat department where you can buy a variety of Latin America groceries to take home. Get your fresh Tamales here! Open 7 days, 9am-9pm daily.

SPECIALS

Chili Relleno Tuesdays! Menudo Domingo de Menudo Sundays!

Mark your calendar now. Cinco de Mayo Fiesta! Mariachi, FREE party favors, indoor and outdoor seating. Draft Beer 2-for-1 specials, House Margaritas on the Rocks 2-for-1 specials. And to top off the night, come and party with SONORA DIN-AMITA—live music from 11pm until 2am.

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

Tailfins Waterfront Grill

Announcing the GRAND OPENING of Tailfins' Sushi & Raw Bar with amazing Happy Hour Sushi prices including: \$5 Sake Bombs and \$7 Select Sushi Rolls! Watch the Sushi chef make it right in front of your eyes! And, with multiple levels offering stunning views of the Destin Harbor and your favorite foods and drinks, locally-owned Tailfins' Waterfront Grill delivers an incredible mix of friendly and fun atmosphere—a magical combination for watching your favorite teams and enjoying the entertainment with Live Music to kick back and enjoy. Rusty Hammerstrom performs every Wednesday & Friday. Daniel Boone is live every Thursday & Saturday. Featuring multiple levels of indoor and outdoor

dining overlooking the Destin Boardwalk, Tailfins is your go-to destination for all sports fans with Huge Big Screen TV's everywhere you look so you can watch your favorite teams all season long. Start your day off right with Tailfins breakfast every day from 9am - 11am! Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs or add a little flair to your morning with Chicken & Pancakes, a Seafood or Cajun Omelette and even a Kids Smiley Pancake! So, come on in for Sushi, breakfast or regular menu all day long!

SPECIALS

Happy Hour Sushi: \$5 Sake Bombs and \$7 Select Sushi Rolls! Scrumptious Early Bird Dinner Specials M-F from 4-6pm include Tailfins' famous Alaskan Snow Crab ~ Steamed tatoes & Corn, \$19.95. Happy Hour from 4-6pm Mon. - Fri. featuring \$15 Domestic Bottle Buckets and \$7.99 Pitchers, \$5 House Wines and Well Drinks and \$5 Long Island Iced Teas.

(850) 650-1200 On the Harbor in Destin 172 Harbor Blvd. tailfinsdestin.com

Tequila's Sports Bar & Grill EAT, DRINK, FIESTA!!

There's always a sport in season all year long! Tequila's is open and ready for you so on game day or any day, stop in. Ready to shake it up a little? And we mean literally - Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill has quickly become a local favorite. Let them serve up some of their world class, jumbo sized Margaritas, sure to set the mood to watch your favorite game. Tequila's has some of the best seats in the neighborhood. Everyone's got a favorite...find your Mexican food fave here inspired by years of tradition and authentic spices such as the Tequila's Plate, Chili Con Carne, The Three Amigos and the new MASTER PARILLADA—a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes.

SPECIALS

Celebrate Taco Tuesdays with 2-4-1 Margaritas!

Lunch specials offered daily Monday - Friday for \$8.99. Open seven 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 tequilasmiramarbeach.com

Kwench Your Thirst with Healthy Juice

Crab Clusters with New Po-

By LISA LEATH TURPIN

Looking for ways to boost your health? We all need to consume as many fruits and vegetables as possible. What you feed your body has the ability to boost your energy and metabolism, especially your immune system. Kwench, located in the Destin Winn Dixie shopping center, "juices" or "blends" fruits and vegetables freshly made to order. You can choose from their vast menu or invent your own. Drink choices include: Raw juice = the liquid juice extracted from fruits and/or vegetables yielding any skin or pulp; Blended = smoothies blending fruits and/or veggies keeping all fibrous parts together with a base of coconut, almond milk or water. "Shots" of wheatgrass or turmeric and other vitamin supplements can be added to make "power juices." Next time you want a treat, try a little healthy indulgence. Kwench has delicious and popular Acai or Pitaya bowls. Nutrient dense Acai and Pitaya fruit are pureed resembling Italian ice or sorbet. The bowls are layered with, but not limited to, this puree, fresh fruit, granola, choice of nuttype butter and honey if desired. Visit and learn all the health benefits of all the fresh choices for yourself. Owner/operator,



Diyan (pronounced Deeyon) has no problem making and mixing anything you want and can also help you decide. "I personally go

to Kwench when I feel I need a healthy boost of vegetables or when I'm limited on time," says Diyan. "Sometimes I want it juiced and sometimes I want it blended. Each has its benefits. When you blend, you get all the pulp and pieces of the veggies which increases your fiber intake. Juicing can yield more vitamins/minerals because it takes a little more product to get enough juice making it more concentrated, but lacks the healthy and essential fiber. Neither are better than the other, just depends on your preference and needs." Kwench is also a vendor for local honey and NaturBaker products. I encourage you to try Kwench or check out the website, www. kwenchdestin.com or Instagram: @kwenchdestin. This place is "Trainer Approved!"





Nestin Nining, Entertainment, Specials

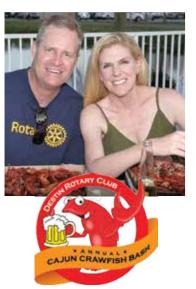
9th Annual Destin Rotary Cajun Crawfish Bash

The Annual Cajun Crawfish Bash Charity Fundraiser returns to The Towne Centre at Seascape with co-host, Mezcal Mexican Grill on Friday, May 7 from 5:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. Event proceeds benefit young families in need through Food For Thought, Harvest House, Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's community outreach initiatives and The Rotary Club of Destin Scholarship Fund.

Rotary Club of Destin President Clayton Hicks stated, "This open-air venue at The Towne Centre at Seascape provides a spacious outdoor event plaza ideal to capture the famous Louisiana expression, Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler. Destin Rotarians are totally engaged in this fundraiser to help four local charities whose initiatives are a perfect fit for the club's mission of eradicating hunger and educational outreach to empower populations serving youth, special needs and wounded soldiers in our community. In addition, this event will support the Destin Rotary Scholarship Fund."

The Rotary Club of Destin is known for serving up the best Cajun crawfish, libations and live music. Back by popular demand is Fais Do-Do Band performing their unique genre of zydeco music. Integrating a blend of R&B, soul, brass band, reggae, hip hop, ska, rock and Afro-Caribbean, attendees are guaranteed to be dancing! They can also enter an incredible raffle drawing and/or participate in a silent auction for themed packages from beach activities, bourbon baskets, concert tickets, golfing, restaurants, a grilling package including a Kamado Joe grill, and vacation stays.

This event is suitable for families of all ages and open to the public. Destin Rotary volunteers



will dish up fresh crawfish from Louisiana with the traditional potatoes, sausage and corn on the cob. For those who don't crave crawfish, there will also be grilled hamburgers, hot dogs and rotisserie chicken prepared fresh on-site.

The Rotary Club of Destin applauds its current sponsors:

AB+ Production, Acentria Insurance, Beach Community Bank, Coastal Accounting, CMA - Community Management Association, Destin Commons, Destin Flooring, Destin Life and Bay Life publications, Destin Stucco, Edward Jones, Emerald Coast Title Services, G&S Glass, Gulf Coast Shutter, Gulfshore AC, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale, Harmony Beach Vacations, Harris, Carl and Sally, Hays Companies, Institute of Diagnostic Imaging, Jones, Crawford and Sally, Keller Williams Realty - Gail Pelto, Kroeger Mainland Foundation, Lamont, Rob Liufau McCall Insurance, McGill Escrow & Title, MidSouth Bank, Newman Dailey, Porterfield, Les & Julie, Premier Property Group, Progress Bank, Rent Gear Here, Ryland/Morrow Agency, Sand Dunes Real Estate, Simple HR, Smith Iron Works and Synovus Bank. For businesses and indi-

viduals interested in becoming a sponsor, contact any Destin Rotarian or message the Rotary Club of Destin Facebook page.

Tickets are now on sale for \$30 per person for a large flat of crawfish and fixings, \$50 for All-You-Can-Eat crawfish and fixings, and \$15 for children or a non-crawfish meal; kids age three and under are free. Day of event, tickets are \$35 per person. For reserved seating, VIP tables for 10 people (including 10 regular crawfish tickets) are available for \$500. The VIP Table option also includes 10 regular crawfish meal tickets (which can be upgraded to AYCE for an additional charge).

Tickets can be purchased in advance at Newman-Dailey Resort Properties (850-837-1071), from any Destin Rotarian, the Rotary Club of Destin Facebook page or online at www. DestinRotary.com.

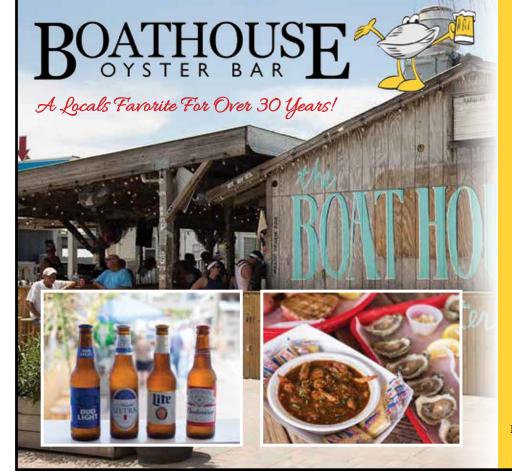
3rd Annual Mac & Cheese Festival a Huge Success

The 3rd Annual Mac & Cheese Festival held March 7 at Destin Commons was a huge success. The event raised \$45,000 and welcomed roughly 2,000

attendees throughout the day. Proceeds from the event benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence through its programs focused on academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles.

The family-friendly event featured gourmet, chef-inspired

APRIL LIVE MUSIC!



5pm Cole Jordan **Mondays:** 9pm Roshambo 5pm Kyle LaMonica **Tuesdays**: **8pm Austin Jennings** Wednesdays: 4pm Hunter & Tony 9pm Squeely Dan **Thursdays: 4pm Shane Curle** 8pm Austin Jennings **Fridays: 4pm Jason Findley 8pm Airavata Saturdays:** 12pm Kelly Byrd 8pm Gunner 12pm Kelly Byrd **Sundays: 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



twists on the South's favorite comfort food. Local restaurants brought their A-game to compete for the best mac and cheese in town. Visitors were able to sample each vendor and cast in their vote. There were three categories in total, Judge's Choice Award, People's Choice Award, and Kid's Choice Award.

Judge's Choice: Stanley's Street Treats

People's Choice: Jackacuda's Seafood and Sushi

Kid's Choice: Gulf Coast Burger Company

This event was made possible by these generous sponsors: Publix Charities, Step One Automotive, T-Mobile, SimpleHR, Stephen and Joan Carter, Specialty Roofers, Old Bay Steamer, Rock Out Climbing Gym, Coastal Kitchen Catering & Events, and Destin Commons.

🐑 Travel



By JODELL HAVERFIELD, HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

With our global eye focused on the pandemic and vaccines, it has been nothing short of fantastical to see how misinformation and downright lies have spread almost as fast as the disease. And the rules we have to follow are as chaotic as balloons escaping air and flying wildly around the room.

Travel matters now more than ever. For months we have explored our neighborhoods and nearby parks. But while we have learned to find wonder in our own backyards, we travelers still dream about what's out there just waiting for us to come visit. I will give you a few ideas of storied destinations to get you planning, because now is the time to start

Most airlines are still offering free and flexible change policies throughout 2021 so you can book a vacation now and amend an itinerary later if necessary, yet still get in on the best rates as they will be going up. Be sure to carefully read the fine print associated with your airfare. Based on a recent report from the airline booking engine Kayak, people are feeling more confident about traveling due to the recent rise in leisure travel searches.

Last month I told you about Israel, whether it is your first trip or a return trip, if it is on your list of places you want to visit, please join us Mar 1st, 2022 for a 10-day All Inclusive Classic Holy Land Tour. We arrange everything; so, all you have to do is pack! Since our trip will be just before Easter, it might be especially meaningful to see where Christ was born and resurrected. To walk where he walked. I am fascinated by the story of the siege of Masada, the great mountain fortress. There are just so many sites to see.

Many travelers to Israel say the same thing when they return home, "It will change your life."

Our groups are small with our own guides as well as first class hotels and coaches. We even include RT air from NY. See my interview with Elissa from our Israel provider ETS Tours in the link below so you can learn more about our trip. The country of Israel is fully vaccinated and ready for tourists.

If you want to travel this year, the all-inclusive Sandals and Beaches Resorts are a great and safe go to for 2021. They are exclusive properties where

all guests are tested just prior to arrival; so, they are touted as the safest place on the planet.

Did you know If you are planning on getting married even your wedding is included in your Sandals vacation? Now that's a deal and we can even get you into a Sandals Resort for a pre-trip to check it out!

We have a couple of exclusive cruise specials sailing this

year. Yes, I said 2021. Be sure to check all the details about our trips on our website, such as our 9-night Caribbean Cruise on

the Celebrity Equinox departing from Fort Lauderdale Sept 17th or our closer to home no passport required 5-night cruise on American Cruise Line from New Orleans Nov 16th.

If your plan is getting out there in 2022, then come ex-

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

Ok...Pick a Number! ANY Number... Ok...Roll the Dice!

With 3400+ of us in our local association, selecting your Real Estate Agent shouldn't just be a roll of the dice...should it? After all, you're dealing with one of your biggest investments, right? Before you make this BIG decision, ask the agent:

- Do they have a Full-Time Marketing Agency and Coach?
- Do they have a "Pro-Active" Marketing Plan of Action?
- Do they have an Iron-Clad Performance Guarantee?

• Do they have the Power of 170,000+ Agents around the world? • Do they "Pro-Actively" search daily for Buyers for their Sellers and Sellers for their buyers...there is a difference!

"I would highly recommend Gail Pelto to anyone who wants a realtor who can get things done!"

- Melanie Kercher, Crystal Beach

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Do YOU need to sell? Are YOU looking for a new Investment Property? Or maybe you want to know what's going on in today's real estate market. Let's talk! Gambling is not an option... Winning is!



Trips of a Lifetime





plore the Danube on a Viking River Cruise with us, including the Oberammergau Passion Play that was postponed in 2020. We have chartered this entire exclusive trip from Budapest to Munich May 20th.

While we love to host our clients and experience with them this amazing world we live in, we also love to help you plan your own trips and memories. Call for an in-person consultation at our Destin office or we can plan all

the details on the phone, so you don't even have to leave home.

Look for me next month when I will tell you all about how to find yourself!

Remember Memories Last Forever!



Happy Easter Everyone. ~ JoDell and staff at Have Travel Memories Vacations

Visit Facebook.com/havetravelmemories or trips.havetravelmemories.com.



The Hook



By Cali Hlavac, To Do in Destin

If you have interest in any type of fishing as a passion or a hobby, then you've probably

Off the Hook: Panhandle Fly Fishers is a Local Club for the Fly-Fishing Enthusiast

been exposed to fly fishing on some level over the years. Fly fishing has been around for decades, but has recently expanded to include more anglers than ever as fishing gained popularity over the last 12 months. Here in Destin, we've recently learned of a local club dedicated to the



The Sandman Rick Mungeam with his Bahia Honda bonefish

love of the sport, which is open to anyone with a passion for fly fishing.

"Panhandle Fly Fishers is a club organized by volunteer individuals with a passion for the sport of fly fishing and our fisheries conservation," says the current club President Cody Wells. "Our focus is on conservation, education and the promotion of fly fishing in the Florida Panhandle."

The club was founded in the late 1990s by a group of men



Lionel James, Lionstale Adventures

who split off from the Fort Walton Beach Club. What started around 10 members has now grown to around 70 members today, including several younger faces which bring new energy and life to the meetings. Members can range from very beginners, to charter Captains, to seasoned veterans – all skill levels are welcome.

The club meets to exchange information, techniques and local knowledge through monthly meetings, outings and get-togethers. They meet the first Monday of every month at 724 Legion Drive in Destin at 7 p.m. for a general membership meeting and on the 3rd Monday of every month for fly tying classes. Membership dues are \$30 for the year and business sponsorships are welcome.

Outside of the monthly meetings, they also plan group fly fishing outings both locally and internationally. They've visited locations like the Florida Keys, Mexico, and more to share their passion across both saltwater and freshwater fishing.

Conservation and outreach are huge pieces of the club. "Through our membership fundraising efforts and generous donor contributions, we are able to provide educational and conservation efforts to the Panhandle of Florida," Cody says. "Conservation efforts include supporting and participation with the Coastal Conservation Association and Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance in water quality management and shoreline restoration."

Two of their most successful and supported activities are the Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Program and Eglin's Hidden Wounds Center for our veterans. The club has also helped the Boy and Girl Scouts earn their Fly-Fishing Merit Badge and they've taught classes at Northwest Florida University.

If you or your business are interested in being involved in the Panhandle Fly Fishers Club, feel free to show up at the next meeting and introduce yourself. For additional information or if you have questions, contact the current President Cody Wells via email at cwells1234@outlook. com.



CAPTAIN'S 🐬





Area Law Enforcement Partners Receive Maritime Security Training

Area law enforcement officers from four local and state agencies braved bad weather and rough seas in March completing special maritime training. Florida's Northwest Regional Domestic Security Task Force Waterborne Response Teams came together for the class hosted by the United States Coast Guard Station Destin. The teams were composed of officers from the Okaloosa County SO, Bay County SO, Walton County SO and Florida Fish and Wildlife Division of Law Enforcement. The week-long course provided specialized tactical boat training designed to strengthen partnerships and promote mission success in the Port and Maritime Safety and Security mission.

The training, dubbed the



"Tactical Operator Course," was presented by a coalition of instructors from The USCG, FWC and the NASBLA "Boat Operations and Training" ("BOAT") program. It is a nationally accredited curriculum that allows federal, state and local officers to work seamlessly together in securing ports, waterways, critical infrastructure and high value assets in the maritime domain. It also provides officers with state-of-the art tactics and techniques needed to perform high speed interdiction and pursuit missions at sea. The United States Coast Guard has designated the training as the national standard for maritime law enforcement officers.

The rigorous training involved many hours of waterborne drills and scenario driven exercises. It not only tested the officers' capabilities, but that of their equipment while underway in the waters of Choctawhatchee Bay near Niceville.

"Marine law enforcement officials realized soon after the attacks of 9/11 that heightened maritime security was critical to the U.S. Economy and the safety of the American Public" said Brad Williams, lead instructor for the training event. "We all realize that no single agency can provide all the security needed in today's threatening climate. The takeaway from this training is the effective partnerships that are fostered across multiple agencies resulting in safer waterways." Regarding the performance of area officers on the water he added, "The business of safety and security is challenging in the maritime domain and the mission goes on, even in bad weather. The citizens of the Florida Panhandle area can be proud of their Maritime Law Enforcement Professionals. Their work was exceptional."

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OBIA

Weddings

The Current State of Destin Weddings Experts Weigh In

By RITA L. SHERWOOD

The Emerald Coast, from Destin to 30A and beyond, is well known for its turquoise, emerald green waters and picturesque white sugar sand beaches. It only makes sense that our area would be a magnet for special events and weddings. But with COVID playing such a role from the past year, it got us wondering what the current state of affairs is. So, we reached out and asked some pertinent questions to a local wedding and events planner, a wedding photographer and professional live musician and DJ.



Haley Poveda and Leighann Elliott

"At the beginning of the pandemic, we know that weddings came to a sudden halt, and many were forced to postpone and even cancel," says **Leighann Elliott** with **RaeBird Weddings &**



Events. "Now that everyone has a better grasp on how to handle hosting events safely and how to properly execute safety precautions, planning and hosting events in general has become more streamlined." She says the wedding world has changed over the past year which has made it somewhat more difficult for clients to have the wedding celebration they initially planned for. "Weddings are extremely personal and every bride is different," Leighann says. "Some want masks and hand sanitizer

BY SAVVY LEIGH PHOTO

at every table, appetizers and desserts served in individual wrappers, and six people seated per table. But we also have brides who don't want to require masks at their wedding."

And as vaccinations become more available, it seems the race to schedule a wedding is on! "People are calling to reschedule their postponed wedding and rushing to send out a new 'save the date' before their date is snatched up!" Leighann and Raebird Events partner, Haley Poveda, have even seen a lot more weekday weddings, because those are some of the only dates available for certain venues and vendors. "You heard it here first: Friday weddings are the new trend! And Haley and I are thrilled that RaeBird Events' future is not filled with Zoom weddings. We're lucky that Florida is an open state and we have very minimal restrictions."

Leighann says venues and vendors are different, too. "Talk to your venues and vendors first. Some have virtual tours on their websites, an awesome way for clients to still "see" the venue. Or, check out their Instagram sites. They might have a highlight where you can "walk through" the venue. Social Media has helped finding your perfect wedding vendors so easy and accessible. For example, brides-to-be are able to pin that perfect flower arrangement on Pinterest and share the news of their recent engagement on Instagram." Leighann says she's thankful for social media, because it helps small businesses like theirs find their way to the public eye through tagging and sharing.

Leighann and Haley launched RaeBird Events in July

2020 and says the 2021/22 calendar is already filling up. "The postponement of 2020 weddings automatically created a very full 2021 wedding calendar! Couples are booking with a frenzy and we are already receiving wedding planning inquiries for 2023!" She says some are asking if it's better to hold off and rebook for 2022-2023. Raebird Events feels it's a personal decision. "However, pushing it back will open up more availability for vendors, venues and guests,' she savs.

And couples are taking a more simplified approach or downsizing their 2021-2022 weddings with some noticeable changes such as live streaming of the ceremony; assigned seating + additional space between seating; venues offering additional servers to pass hors d'oeuvres with fewer items per tray; adding more bars and spreading out existing bars to eliminate lines; plexiglass shields by bars and food; no receiving line or grand exit; table layouts with 6 ft. between tables; plated dinners instead of buffet; increased dance floor footprints; reduced wedding guest count; and elimination of wedding party.

"We love that 'normal' weddings are coming back," Leighann says. "Although 2020 presented many challenges for the entire industry, it also proved that love will always prevail and conquer all. The couples that are determined to get married come hell or high water inspire us." Having launched a company in the middle of a pandemic, Raebird Events joins in that same determination.

Local wedding photographer Savannah Smith concurs. Having launched Savvy Leigh Photo during 2020 also, Savannah says she has definitely seen a rise in the number of weddings. "So many weddings were moved to this year since mostly everyone had to cancel or re-plan from last year. A lot of couples are playing catch up, so it seems it's as busy as ever. If they did have to postpone their wedding, they are booking more last-minute, too," she says. "But, couples that are newly engaged have started booking with me for 2022."



🔅 Weddings



Savannah Smith

She says one of the differences in prepping for a wedding photoshoot is finding out if masks are needed and other safety protocols desired. "I've also noticed people having to miss weddings, because someone in their family has been close to a COVID positive person. So, we have to stay flexible."

She's noticed some other subtle changes as well. "Some people have decided to have smaller weddings just to stay on the safe side," Savannah says. "But there are also people who have mainly outside weddings, so they can still have a great amount of people. And the venues are as beautiful as ever."

Savannah stresses that though this is such an amazing region for weddings, she highly suggests at least hiring a day planner if you aren't going to have a full-time wedding planner. "It makes the day go so much more smoothly and takes the stress off the bride and family. Then talk to your photographer and get to know them before the wedding, so they know exactly what you are wanting and can capture the very best photos!"

"I love every second of being a wedding photographer. Capturing special moments on a day people look forward to their entire lives is such an amazing thing to be a part of," Savannah says. "When a couple tells me they can relive their wedding through the photos I captured, it is the most rewarding feeling in the world!"

Chuck Lawson from **Chuck Lawson Wedding** and Event Music is a full time professional live musician and DJ with more than 30 years performance experience providing music for weddings, corporate events and private parties along the Florida Panhandle, Alabama and Mississippi Gulf Coast. Chuck says his bookings for last season were on track for the best season he had ever had. "While I am now getting inquiries and bookings for this upcoming season, it is slower, but steady. Folks are being very



cautious and many seem to be waiting until closer to time to book."

Chuck says much of the new income he would have generated this year is gone and lost forever, due to already-paid-for rescheduled events. "I am making it my mission to pick up the pieces and make a big come back for my clients who had to put off their wedding and reschedule or just booked for a new event. I, like so many of us here in the wedding business, am very tenacious, strong and determined to bring back our industry to the highest level. It will take some doing, but we are coastal folks, which means we can handle all kinds of adversity and overcome."

In regards to planning, Chuck says he is spending a little more time explaining to potential clients he is open for business and willing to adapt to concerns they might have. "Also, because many clients are booking closer to their event date, I am conducting preparations

850-974-2005

for them with a little less time to do so. In the past, my client's weddings and events would be booked six months to one year in advance. Now, I am getting bookings as soon as two weeks to two months prior. And a few are still in the 5-6 month out range," he says.

Even though Chuck has seen a smaller wedding crowd due to COVID concerns and quarantine requirements upon return home and to work, he has always practiced health-conscious behavior simply because of what he does for a living. "For example, I allow no others to use my microphone or be up on stage with me. I have also made a point of avoiding contact with anyone exhibiting illness symptoms. If I get sick, I physically cannot perform."

Chuck says there's some important elements to consider when planning your wedding: "Start planning ahead with as much time as possible. Use experienced professionals nothing will ruin a wedding or event like hiring inexperienced or "cheapo" vendors. Research and read reviews. Book your experienced professionals as soon as possible to ensure their availability. Have a realistic budget."

"When I, and many of my professional colleagues in the wedding industry, am hired to provide music for weddings and events, I make sure that I give

LisaTurpinFitness



my clients the best I can be and an experience that exceeds their expectations," Chuck emphasizes. "The events of this past year have shown the importance of being adaptable and still providing a professional quality service."

All in all, despite the many challenges we have all faced during this most unprecedented year of COVID, the state of weddings is alive and well. You can't argue that our beautiful Emerald Coast is the most breathtaking backdrop for any special event, especially weddings!

For more information about wedding planning in the future, please contact RaeBird Weddings on their Facebook page at Facebook.com/RaeBirdEvents, BY SAVVY LEIGH PHOTO

visit RaeBirdEvents.com, call (770) 296-7072 or email info@ raebirdevents.com. To contact Savannah at Savvy Leigh Photo, visit Facebook.com/ SavvyLeighPhoto, Instagram at Instagram.com/SavvyLeigh-Photo, call (205) 567-2779 or visit savvyleighphoto.com. With a Bachelor of Music degree, work in the Nashville music industry, and having performed throughout the U.S. and Europe, Chuck performs on many different instruments, usually his Caribbean Steel Drums, Guitar and through his voice. To reach him, visit Facebook.com/Chuck Lawson Wedding and Event Music, call (850) 496-7230, visit chucklawson.com or email chuck@chucklawson.com.





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Wellness

Considerations for Those Already Using Hormones



By Dr. Richard Chern, M.D.

Women often ask us to optimize their creams or sublingual hormones another physician put them on. Men ask us to get their testosterone shots dosed correctly. Unfortunately, it's not possible to get consistent therapeutic levels of hormones using these methods. Secondly, most research indicates these methods are the most dangerous and raise your risk of strokes, heart attacks, blood clots and possibly even your cancer risk. Lastly, they provide little to no health benefits.

When we discuss hormone pellet therapy a few concerns usually arise. What if the dose is wrong? BioTE has dosed well over a million patients and we are the oldest and largest hormone clinic in the region. Secondly, we don't dabble in hormones, this is our specialty. We do hormones and do them well. Because this

is our area of expertise we keep up with the latest research. We have knowledge of the latest studies many times before they are even published.

Because of our extensive knowledge and experience we are able to use your labs, symptoms, and many other factors to find a dosage that is personalized to you. We look at your levels both before and after treatment and adjust as necessary based on which symptoms have resolved and which remain.

There are two goals when optimizing hormones. The first goal is to resolve symptoms caused by low hormone levels due to natural aging. The second goal is to reduce cancer risk, promote heart health, increase bone density, reduce pain, protect the brain and overall just decrease disease and increase health. I think many patients do not consider this second goal because I will hear, well I don't have hot flashes.

So, what's so bad about creams, sublinguals and shots?

First, creams & sublinguals last about four to six hours. And as for shots you may get two or three days of feeling good before things deteriorate. That's like slamming on the breaks each time you get your car to highway speeds or stopping your exercise routine right after the warm up.

Pellets have consistent therapeutic levels for as long as six months. That means your body can actually use these hormones to really start repairing your mind and body.

Research shows any oral estrogen increases inflammatory markers, increases risk of stroke and

clots. Creams are unable to get high enough levels in the bloodstream to even get into the uterus to help protect you from cancer. And synthetic testosterone shots are well known to increase clotting factors and increase risk for stroke and heart attacks.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD and his

providers typically spend 30 to 60 minutes with new patients educating them on the benefits of hormone therapy and reviewing each lab to make patients feel 100% comfortable. They are accepting new patients. Change your life and call 850-837-1271 for an appointment and turn your life around.



Spring is **Officially Here**



comes 'spring cleaning.' And, with the weather being 'not quite there' yet, it's a great time to dive in. Along with your

normal spring cleaning, be sure to add your pantry and spices to that list. Expired, stale, 'will we even eat this' items can be discarded. It also makes cleaning the shelves and reor-

ganizing easier. And lastly, what items in your pantry can you pack up and donate to your local food bank or charity?

Here's to Spring! Kay Leaman HealthyDay HealthyLife succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com Three Years In A Row! Thank you Destin!

Dr. Richard Chern, MD 12889 Hwy 98W, Suite 107B Miramar Beach, FL 850-837-1271

thehormonerestorationcenter.com

Your Journey to Relaxation and Restoration Awaits at Destin's Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa

We have all experienced a lot of changes to our daily lives over the last year, but Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa in Destin has rejuvenating options for you.

More than just a relaxing luxury, massage reduces pain, melts away stress and can contribute to improved overall wellness. Additionally, regular skin care treatments, which can treat anti-aging and acne concerns, can contribute to improved mood and confidence. Both massage and facial services offer various opportunities for self-care, depending on your needs.

Signature services at Hand & Stone include a Swedish Massage, Classic Facial and Hot Stone Massage, all available for first-time customers to try at a low Introductory rate!

They also offer enhanced services ranging from Himalayan Salt Massage or Decompression Therapy (also known as cupping); and the anti-aging Rejuvenating Facial designed to repair and restore fatigued, sun damaged or mature skin.

Incorporating a one-hour monthly massage or facial is easy with the affordable Lifestyle Membership Program. With this unique membership, you can make self-care a habit with a one-hour massage or facial service every month. You'll also receive additional benefits such as discounted retail and gift card purchases. Is getting a service safe? Yes, the health and safety of guests and staff is a top priority. Hand & Stone has implemented comprehensive COVID-19 safety measures, including temperature checks, face masks, staff training on illness prevention, rigorous sanitation protocols and more.

"We have consulted with experts in healthcare, infectious disease, massage therapy, and esthetics to ensure we are taking the right measures to ensure safety without sacrificing your relaxation or our employee's well-being," says Nicole Dupell with Hand & Stone.

You know that massage therapy can help relieve tension in your muscles and connective tissues, increase blood flow and promote relaxation. What you may not have known, however, is that massage therapy has been found to help relieve the physical symptoms associated with depression and anxiety such as headache, insomnia and widespread muscle pain as well.

"For facial fans, how we feel about ourselves is so important to our mental health and a regular facial not only relieves tension but helps improve physical appearance – when we look better, we feel better," Nicole says. The experienced staff at Hand & Stone will help you feel at ease.

Here's what some of Hand & Stone's customers have to say: "Mary was amazing! She made sure to focus on the areas I mentioned beforehand, and she suggested a small upgrade that made a huge difference! The device that makes your muscles just feel like butter!-before then the actual hot stone massage. It made a world of difference, being that it's very hard for me and my muscles to "let go." That extra assistance made the rest of the massage that much more impactful. I signed up for a membership. The rates are top notch, as well as the services provided! I am highly satisfied and have already spread the word to my co-workers and am about to buy some gift certificates. Thank you for the great service and experience! And to more to come!" \sim Deanna F.

"The therapist was very knowledgeable of muscle groups. She gave me relaxation exercises to help stretch muscles that were extremely tight. I would go back to Casey every time. She is an amazing therapist who targeted all of my particular tight spots." —KB

"Oh! My! Goodness! I cannot express how lovely it is to have such a welcoming place to go for a massage and/or facial!!! Both Mary and Alyssa are fantastic at their respective careers and I recommend them to anyone that asks!!!"—Anonymous

Stop by for some self-care at Hand & Stone in Destin, conveniently located in the Shoppes at Paradise Isle. Or, visit www.handandstonedestin.com.



PHOTOS BY SAVVY LEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY



Wellness

How Can You Help Prevent Child Abuse?

Are you aware that approximately 1,100 cases of child sexual and physical abuse are reported annually in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, an average of three a day? Despite those big numbers, nearly 2/3 of the actual needs to help child victims go unmet due to lack of reporting to authorities.

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (EC-CAC) is recognizing National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, and a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. That is the 24/7job of the multi-disciplinary team of staff and volunteers at ECCAC centers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. ECCAC

is a part of the National Children's Advocacy Center non-profit organization. There are 950 Centers across the country, with 27 of them located in Florida. Now in its 21st year with centers in Niceville and DeFuniak Springs, ECCAC has provid-

ed more than 150,000 services at no cost to more than 15,000 children experiencing abuse, abandonment or neglect to include mental health therapy, crisis intervention, referrals to other community providers, interviews and medicals. But despite these amazing efforts, it is estimated that for every one



child ECCAC helps, there are two children out there who are not helped.

That's why ECCAC likes to partner with people and organizations in our communities to help. Combining efforts can help further reach and resourc-

For example, ECCAC and

Gracie's Good Deeds developed an alliance. For the past few years, Gracie's Good Deeds has donated wipes, cleaning supplies, clothes, snacks, drinks, Pack 'n Plays, therapy graduation decorations, gift cards, toiletry items and diapers to ECCAC in

honor of their daughter. Unfortunately, Niceville residents David and Courtney Konradt lost their almost 3-year old daughter unexpectedly in her sleep five years ago. In memory of their daughter, the Konradts established Gracie's Good Deeds and are helping others through random acts of kindness with

donations made to a number of charities in Northwest Florida.

"It's our family's way of honoring Gracie's memory and spirit," says Courtney Konradt. "We also would like to inspire and help those around us. We personally know how much a kind word or gesture can help a person through the toughest of times, and we would like to share that feeling with others."

How can you help? Volunteer, donate, attend an ECCAC event, spread the word, or tour either of their Centers. For more information, visit www. eccac.org. If you suspect abuse, report it by calling the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

Self-Care Corner: Skin

By KRISY WHITELY ANDERSON, BEVERLY HILLS DAY SPA OWNER AND ESTHETICIAN

Last month, we discussed types and benefits of massage. So, what about your skin? Do



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you remember what it feels like to have clean, smooth skin? Remember how beautiful your skin looked until all those "blackheads" popped up? Well, skip the skin care aisle — I want to tell you about the Ultimate Skin Refiner.

After only three treatments with the Ultimate Skin Refiner H2O Facial Treatment, you can minimize and deep cleanse pores, refine skin tone and texture while infusing potent antioxidants and anti-aging benefits. This is a way to safely clean your pores of dirt, debris and oil; fresh, clean, clear skin is the result.

It uses water along with nutrient filled serums and oxygen infused to cleanse and hydrate your skin in four steps to exfoliate, extract and hydrate all in one. It helps remove dead skin cells, extract all the blackheads, resurface the skin, refine fine lines and wrinkles, plump and hydrate, brighten and soften, minimize pores, promote healthy blood circula-

tion and minimize breakouts. Extractions are easy and fun with the extraction mode and ultrasonic skin scrubber. It lifts the muscle and stimulates ATP with its microcurrent (optional), and then moves trapped fluid on your face or body with lymphatic drainage.

"It has been truly amazing with the hydra skin refiner," says a happy customer. "I applaud you and such fantastic machinery; it's truly been a game changer for me!"

If you're ready to make a major change in YOUR skin health, and have it look more beautiful, simply schedule an appointment with me at Beverly Hills Day Spa for an in-depth consultation.

Cost is \$125 a treatment or 99 for a series. Call me at 850654-8544.

Visit us on the web at beverlyhillsdayspa.com.

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Spring Into a Summer Fit Midsection



By Lisa Leath Turpin, Health & Fitness Coach

Wanna be PROUD to wear your swimsuit this season? Start now and be well on your way to looking your best at the beach.

Be Consistent. First of all, you will never get anywhere if you are sporadically exercising. If a strong and toned midsection is what you're after, then keep your workouts consistent. Our bodies change when they are forced to adapt. The constant work on a muscle is needed for it to develop the strength and stamina to perform movement. This goes for any physical system in your body, i.e. muscular, neurological or cardiovascular.

Abdominal Anatomy. Abdominals are comprised of the Rectus Abdominis (the "six pack"), internal & external obliques (sides), and transverse abdominis (what pulls your belly button in). Ab muscles are highly striated, meaning they have more muscle fibers than they have nerves sending impulses to move them. Once you work a set of reps and take a break, the neurons move from the worked ab muscles to new ones. This makes them high endurance muscles, a necessity, because our bodies depend on the abs for movement and strength ALL DAY LONG. The abs aide the back erector muscles to protect the spine, especially the lower vertebrae that are not protected by the ribcage or hip girdle. If your abs are deconditioned and weak, your spine is way less protected.

What To Do. Incorporate a mixture of different ab exercises, targeting the various ab muscles to be well rounded and develop a strong core.

Plank It. The most common and basic plank is also called a front hold, hover or

abdominal bridge. It's an isometric core strength exercise that involves maintaining a position, similar to a push-up, for the maximum possible time. This can be performed on the forearms (low plank) or hands (high plank). If your wrists begin to ache at first, that's common. Most people find as they plank frequently, their wrists strengthen and get much better. There are actually several varieties that make the mighty plank even more challenging. Once you can master a basic plank, with good form, holding between 30 - 60 seconds, then it's a great idea to venture into other varieties. Working on the different plank varieties incorporates the entire body, through body weight, making it ideal for home workouts. Some common varieties are side plank, reverse plank, single leg plank, moving from elbow plank to hand plank

knee taps, plus many more. Watch your form. Protecting the spine is MOST IM-PORTANT. Shoulders should be aligned directly over your elbows or your wrists. Keep your low back from sagging. If your spine continued to the sky, it would continue from the neck and extend posteriorly from your head. So, to perfect the plank, elongate the spine from that part of your head, to your tailbone, then to your heals. Your body becomes a 2x4, a.k.a. a solid PLANK. Keep your abdominals pulled in (Transverse Abs), and thighs engaged super tight. Don't forget the legs!

for reps, "spider-man's," rocking planks, single knee and double

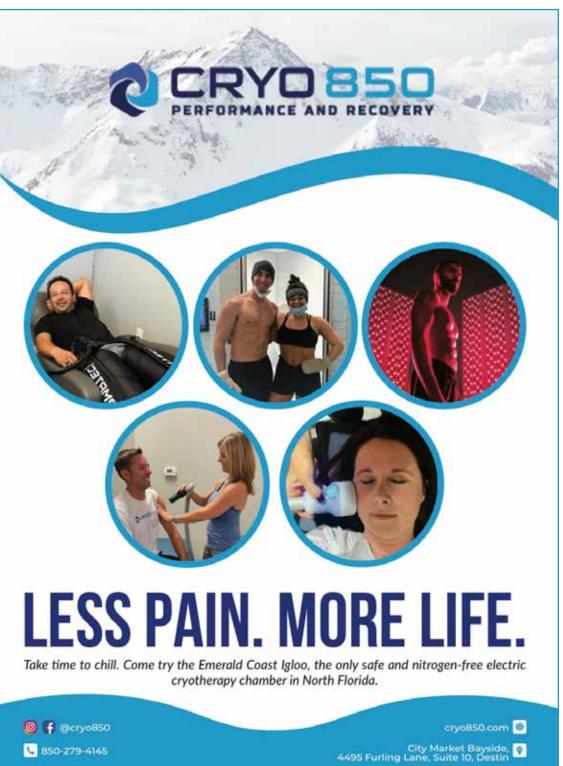
Correct The Crunch. The crunch is losing its popularity, but I strongly feel it is an essential movement. The abs are responsible for flexing the spine. We flex every day-the epitome of "functional." The issue is people aren't engaging the TRANSVERSE ABDOM-INIS. This is imperative to perfecting the crunch. Failing to pull your belly button in can result in the belly "pooch." But performed correctly, avoiding straining, focusing solely on the ab muscles, minimizing back contractions, crunches will increase strength and aesthetics.

Incorporate Balance (**Core**). Not only should you perform balance work, but create balance within your body



by keeping your repetitions EVEN on each side when doing one-sided movements. Practicing balance work is an entirely extra conversation. I'll give you some ideas and more explanation next month. Stay tuned... Remember, form is very important! If you are unsure if you're doing it correctly or how to begin core training, I'm available to help you. Text or call (850.974.2005), email (lisa. turpin@icloud.com) or visit me on Facebook @LisaTurpinFitness. "Be Active, Stay Active!"

Lisa Turpin is a degreed and certified health and fitness lifestyle coach who has devoted her life to motivating and strengthening the bodies and minds of others. With over 20 years' experience as a group exercise leader and an independent personal trainer in the Destin area, she is diverse and extensively trained in classical and modern Pilates, lifestyle management, personal training, group exercise and post-rehabilitation.



South Walton Academy is Growing Again! Adding Programs For All Ages and Abilities

South Walton Academy (SWA), a local private school and pediatric therapy center started out 4 years ago with just 26 students, and has since upgraded to a larger building, which allowed them to add over 88 students and clients.

"People often think of us as a daycare or school for special needs, but that is not the case, we have so many options for everyone," says SWA Academy Founder and President Calley Middlebrooks.

Middlebrooks, a Developmental Therapist, and mother

to three, has a son diagnosed with Autism at age 4 while one of her daughters was developing at an advanced rate. Through her experiences at work in the community and at home, Calley recognized the need for a school where children could move at their own pace and receive the therapy they need all in one place- a game-



Calley Middlebrooks and Children

changer for most families coping with ASD and other related learning disabilities.

As a private school, SWA has classes for pre-k through 12th grade, specializing in academics and child development. In addition to classroom instruction, students in need can receive Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Individual Verbal and Behavior Therapy, Tutoring and Psychological Counseling. SWA serves a range of students from gifted to those who receive specialized services. They also offer after school activities, childcare, and summer programs.

Announcing their biggest addition to date, coming fall 2021, SWA proudly announces their

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new 12,000 sq. foot gymnasium which will be open to the public. The indoor play space will be filled with equipment for all ages including items purchased with a grant from St Joe Foundation."Because of their generous donation, not only will we have a fun space for all ages, but we will also be able to open new programs and classrooms, making room for our current wait-

ing list, while adding additional programs including music, art, birthday parties, and more."

With growth comes job opportunities. The school is adding team members and now hiring. SWA is looking to add Speech Language Pathologists, Speech Language Pathology Assistants, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Physical Therapy Assistants, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and Behavioral Therapists. For a full list of job openings and to apply please visit www.southwaltonacademy.com

SWA continues to look to the community for support and will host several upcoming fundraising events. Tee Up For Autism will take place on April 10th and Color the Coast for Autism Fun Run and 5K will take place on May 8th.

South Walton Academy is raising awareness for individuals on the Autism Spectrum one swing at a time. The school is hosting their 2nd Annual 2021 Tee Up for Autism Golf Tournament on April 10, at 9 a.m. at The Links Sandestin Golf and Beach Club with registration at 8 a.m. Teams and individuals alike are in for a fun day of golf, food, entertainment, and prizes. Breakfast will be provided by Blue Mountain Baker and lunch will be provided by Back Beach BBQ with beverages by Amavida Coffee Roasters and Idyll Hounds. Proceeds will benefit South Walton Academy.

SWA's goal is to help every child be successful and with that some children need accommodations. Proceeds from the golf tournament will be used to fund the new programs and classrooms.

"As a parent, I am always looking for ways to educate others about Autism to make the world a safer place for my child and others on the Autism Spectrum," says Middlebrooks. "We can all learn from each other to help others succeed, and by doing this together we can make the world a better place, where all are included."

For more information and/ or to make a donation to support the school, please call (850) 213-4595, find SWA on Facebook, or visit their website at www.southwaltonacademy.com.



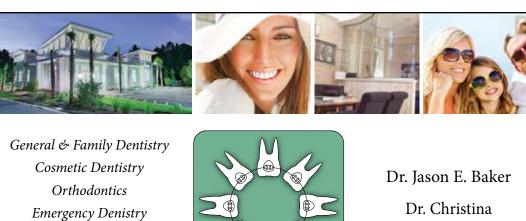


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By Ricky Harper, C12

Working from home, remote work, teleworkers or virtual teams; call it what you will, it is fast becoming the nature of today's workplace dynamics. But working from home is nothing new. I have been doing it since 1995 when the company I was working for at that time, GE Healthcare, closed all its satellite offices. Computers and the internet were getting sophisticated enough that GE saw an opportunity to save millions on facilities, and, thus, I started working from a small area I cobbled together in my garage.

Last year, the trend of remote workers shot through the roof due to Covid. And now that the country is beginning to open back up and the economy is rebounding, many business leaders are trying to decide if allowing their workers to stay at home

Pros and Cons of Working Remotely

permanently is a good idea, especially given that many of them did not see a drop in productivity. So, what is a business owner

to do? There are many distinct advantages to a remote workforce. Cost is an obvious and not inconsequential one. Here is a list of why work from home makes

sense...Reduces the need for space, whether rented or owned, space is expensive.

• Reduces utility costs and overhead.

• Less interruptions working remotely compared to the collaborative workplace.

• Flexibility in schedules.

Increases work-life balance.Some people are more cre-

ative working remotely.Remote teams enjoy greater innovation.

• Less stress due to lack of office drama, commutes, etc.

In fact, research by a collaborative group including Harvard University, Gallup, Stanford University, and Global Workplace Analytics found the following five benefits of having a work from home workforce:

• Teleworkers were on average 35-40% more productive than their office counterparts. • They had 40% less quality defects.

• They enjoyed 41% less absenteeism due to stronger engagement.

Turnover went down 12%.
Profits were up 21% due to less cost, on average, reported at \$11,000 per employee per year.

Given these advantages and this evidence, what is not to like about having a remote workforce? Well, the answer might be, plenty.

• Some workers simply need direct supervision, a lot of it.

• Working from home can dangerously feel like living at work.

• Remote workers can lose sight of the corporate vision and purpose.

• Research found that 65% of remote workers feel lonely and depressed and 78% become anxious about keeping their jobs when they do not get regular feedback.

• Decreased work-life balance.

• Remote workers are less likely to be promoted.

• Much more difficult for leaders to develop talent.

• Remote workers feel less appreciated, less engaged.

So, what is a leader to do? Based on the available evidence, and my own experience with working remotely, it seems the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. But how do you make it work?

First, your management style and process might have to change. Leading a workforce that is partially or entirely remote will require intentional effort to stay connected with your employees. Talk to them, call them regularly, plan occasional meet ups over coffee or lunch.

And when you do talk to them, spend time with the 'person' before the 'employee.' Don't jump right into business, ask about them, their family and life. You are the steward of these human beings. Pay attention to their mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Doing so is essential to prevent burnout and protect mental health.

Second, keep them engaged by giving them a sense of belonging. Working remote can disconnect your people from your purpose. So, be intentional at casting the mission, vision and purpose of the project and business.

Third, equip them with good technology and tools, and invest some time in training them how to look and act professionally in a virtual environment. There

DO YOU HAVE A

are many resources on this subject; use them. Mix up the use of your technology, too. Do a Zoom or team call and then do an audio only conference call. This prevents the routine from becoming mundane. And studies have linked innovative ideas and insights to team members that can 'walk and talk' when on a call.

Finally, trust them. Some leaders fall prey to the notion that if they cannot see their employees, they cannot trust them. People who are treated as trustworthy usually act in a trustworthy manner. Your employees can sense when you do not trust them, which leads to your sensing their concern followed by a downward spiral of mistrust between everyone. Prudent leaders ask themselves, "To what extent are my concerns rooted in an unhealthy lack of trust?" Do not let your natural tendency to mistrust others doom the remote workforce before it has a chance to prove its worth.

Working from home can and does work. But, its success is more on the shoulders of leadership than the workforce. What will you do to foster a great remote work environment for your team? For more information on C12 or for questions, email me: ricky.harper@c12group.com.



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🐞 Business

Meet our Local Pro: Patricia Lee, Owner and Creator of Destinites

By Lori Leath Smith

What is a Destinite? According to Destinites.com Owner and Destinites Facebook (locals only) group creator Patricia Lee, it's someone with a vested interest in the Destin community—residents, business or property owners and even those who work or do business here. "Those are the people who care the most about this community, because what happens here affects them personally and/or their livelihood," says Patricia.

And that's the reason she launched Destinites. "I started the group because, at the time, I couldn't find any Facebook group that was just for locals. I wanted a place where locals could meet each other, ask for recommendations, reach out for help, discuss our community or just have fun," she says.

An age 61 native of Birmingham, Patricia is a three-time cancer survivor of three different cancers as well as mother of two grown children. She was even the Life Inspiration Award Winner for the American Cancer Society. At one point (2005), she was told she would maybe live a couple more years— that was 16 years ago!

Six years ago, Patricia decided to move to Destin. "God literally drove me here not knowing anyone who lived here. I was warmly welcomed by all and have never met so many friendly people in one place," she says. "Moving to Destin was one of the best decisions I ever made and my life is truly blessed for having done so." Through the Destinites Facebook private group created 21/2 years ago for Destin and surrounding areas and the Destinites website, Patricia is blessing us!

And now, she's trying to get the word out. "Its growth has all been due to members inviting others. It has really helped bring locals together or reach out to neighbors and it's sure the



perfect place to be if you have an immediate need," she says. "One member even refers to it as her local Google."

A highly monitored, positive place, the structure for how the group is managed has allowed members and advertisers to co-exist in a balanced way. No foul language or negative comments about community, state or national leaders are allowed, no politics and no complaints about businesses nor their owners are allowed. "Our group is



not a complaint nor gossip platform—when/if that happens, it is immediately deleted and trust me, admin gets contacted as fast as striking match to gasoline."

Folks tell Patricia what a blessing it has been for them to find the group. "It fills my heart to know how many people have been helped both personally and professionally by this group. I pray over it every day. New members are added weekly, but more people need to know about us," she says. "It's been good for the community and I work really hard to keep it that way—a safe, happy drama-free place."

The criteria to join is that you must be a current local resident, business or property owner. There are almost 4,000 members, but only about 10% are out of state property owners. The rest live in or around the Destin area. "We have membership questions when people join, but also we look at their personal Facebook wall. We take every measure possible to ensure the safety and integrity of the group." Benefits of the Destinites Facebook group include:

Monday Morning Job Report—Members can let everyone know about job offers in and around our area.

Thursdays: Members can post about special happenings for the upcoming weekend, such as when and where bands/artists are performing.

Saturday Group Shopping: Locals may post any personal item they wish to sell.

Sundays: Life encouragement video is posted by Rodney Martin Waits, local real estate agent and entrepreneur.

The Destinites website includes information for new residents, updated community news and the weekly life encouragement video as well as featured sponsors. One particularly valuable feature is the Destinites Local Business Directory with more than 100 businesses in and around the Destin area participating. Upcoming additions include a tab of Local Discounts with a link to a website that offers all kinds of discounts for area rentals and activities.

To participate in the local business directory, for more information, or to read more about Patricia's story, visit Destinites.com. To join Destinites, go to the Facebook group page at www.Facebook.com/groups/ Destinites.



VISIT **MYDESTINLIFE.COM** TO READ THIS ISSUE ONLINE



Mark McCoy REALTOR® - Broker Associate, GRI Call/Text: 850-499-5316 Mark@DestinSunset.com www.Mark.DestinSearch.com

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Why Online Sales Tax is Good for Florida Businesses



By Shane Moody, President and CEO, Destin Chamber of Commerce

There has been some negativity about the Florida legislature looking to pass a bill to require online shopping retailers to charge and remit to Florida sales tax on their purchases. The tax dollars generated from the online sales tax would be used to replenish the unemployment insurance trust fund for the state of Florida. Much of the information from opponents of this action are calling this a tax break for businesses, labels the business community as "the bad guys," and/or attempts to make this a political party issue. None of these is accurate.

I'm not sure when or how the business community in this country, this state, and this community became the bad guys. These businesses create jobs. These businesses pay taxes to communities that contribute to infrastructure improvements. These businesses create dollars flowing through our community. These businesses serve locals and visitors alike. These businesses sponsor local events, little league teams and give to non-profits who improve the quality of life and quality of place of our community.

These same businesses follow state law and collect a state sales tax when customers make purchases. They remit this sales tax to the state of Florida. Why shouldn't online retailers be required to do the same?

It is inaccurate to attempt to label this a Republican initiative. This is neither a Republican nor Democrat issue; it's a business issue that affects the entire economy of the state of Florida. It creates a level playing field for brick and mortar businesses in our community. It requires the online retailers to pay to the state the same thing that resident businesses already pay. If our local businesses will continue to pay the sales tax, how can this be considered a tax break as labeled by some?

Without this legislation passing, the business community of Florida will be on the hook for a \$713 million tax increase to fill the unemployment insurance trust fund that has been depleted due to a horrible pandemic that affected every business and person in this state and community. If we can save the business community \$713 million dollars, why shouldn't we? This is money that they can reinvest in themselves and in their communities. It's good for everyone.

Florida is one of only two states that does not have an economic nexus law requiring out of state retailers to collect and remit sales tax on online purchases if they have a significant economic presence in the state. Historically, brick and mortar businesses have been at a 6 percent disadvantage in Florida compared to their online counterparts because they are required to collect sales taxes. Since the pandemic, even more retail sales have occurred online and this legislation levels the playing field for local businesses and their internet counterparts. If this helps our local businesses stay in business, how can this be a bad thing?

Finally, some say that with this legislation, "Florida companies would pay the nation's lowest unemployment taxes." Why is this a bad thing? Isn't this the kind of story to tell business and industry looking to move to Florida? Isn't this the kind of solution to help keep the cost of doing business in Florida low, making us a great state in which to do business?

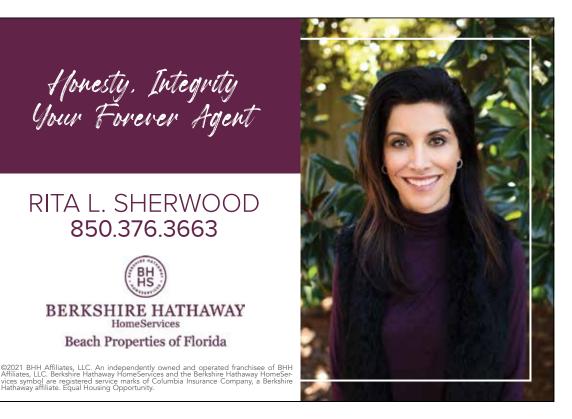
This bill is important to Florida's business community, because it places Florida main street businesses on equal footing with out-of-state businesses and remote sellers. Tax collection is streamlined for consumers by requiring remote businesses and marketplace providers to collect and remit the tax.

The Destin Chamber of Commerce has proudly partnered with the Florida Chamber of Commerce in the battle to make sure this legislation passes. We will continue to look out for and support our local business community. I want to thank those in support of this legislation and for moving forward with this important tax reform for Florida businesses. I encourage everyone to contact your lawmakers and ask for their support. And then, stop shopping online, jump in your car or on your bike and go support our local businesses! They are the good guys, and the ones who make this community and economy go!

As our mission statement says, we will continue to advocate

for business and strengthen our community.

Update: At the time of this printing, th Florida Senate passed SB 50, which offsets a looming \$713 million tax increase with revenue that has always been due, but that will finally be collected, from a sales tax on online sales. This bill by Senator Joe Gruters is not a new tax on Floridians—the bill shifts the burden to the business to collect and remit the tax instead of the consumer. This creative solution levels the playing field for main street businesses and avoids a significant tax increase on Florida's job creators.



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\$50 OFF if scheduled by April 30, 2021 (850) 688-9886 Ground Zero: An Interview

Business

By Matthew Vanderford, Claimology

Below is a conversation I had with an insured who decided to ride out the eye of Hurricane Michael...and lived to tell the tale.

How old are you? 58. How long of you lived in Florida? 45 years. What do you do for a living? Environmental Hygienist – test for mold, asbestos, things like that.

Have you ever been in a hurricane or natural disaster? Yes

If so which ones – describe those events. Hurricane Michael & tornados. I was fascinated by them. They make you feel unprepared.

What did you do to prepare? I have a Survival kit long term survival kit.

Tell me about the days before – what was the feeling like? I thought it was a small storm, maybe a Category 1 or 2 that would hit the region. Nothing major. I wasn't really focused on the storm, because I was working out of state helping other people document their



insurance claim damages. We're used to having storms pop and not make landfall.

You were in the Carolinas after Hurricane Florence working - what made you come home? My wife asked to have me home and be with the family. The storm started tracking like a direct hit where we lived.

Who was staying with you at the time? My wife, my son, his wife with two children under three years old and another family member.

When, if ever, did you think about Insurance and what would happen if you had damage? When the storm was strengthening – I went out and took a video as it was getting close. And it's only because of industry experience and working with claims that

ALARMS

HD VIDEO

I remembered to take action and document things before the storm got bad.

When did you file a claim? About two weeks later.

Tell me what you did to prepare for the claim after the event? I contacted people in the insurance industry to make sure I was documenting everything correctly – so I could make sure I got what I was owed.

Describe for me the area as a whole after the event? Almost every tree was horizontal - power lines were down.... like a bomb went off. I've never seen anything like it – the broadness of the system was huge.

What did you do while you were waiting for the insurance carrier claim rep? I was helping neighbors, working, securing my property to minimize loss and repairs issues.

What happened to your house? Ended up being a total loss – complete shell.

Where are you living now? Panama City Beach.

Will you return home – back to the same house? Well, my wife's thoughts probably not. The neighborhood is so damaged. It's changed completely. **Would you ever stay again?** Yes - but my wife wouldn't.

What would you have done differently in preparation in dealing with the insurance company? I would've taken better exterior photos.

What has your overall experience been like dealing with an insurance claim on your own, even with help? Frustration. The documents we sent kept getting "lost," they reassigned our claim three or four times to different people and the insurance company was having issues addressing the facts of the loss.

How much did you receive monetarily at the beginning of the insurance claim? \$54,000.

How much are you presently short monetarily from the claim in your estimation? Over \$200,000.

Quick facts: As of this writing, only 25% of all insurance claims for Hurricane Michael have been made and settled and TIME IS RUNNING OUT to file a claim or present a supplement to the original damages. Hurricane Michael made landfall twice-on the 7th and 10th of October 2018 respectively and insureds only have THREE YEARS to make sure they get what they deserve or miss the window for recovery completely. If you or someone you know have been affected by hurricanes Michael, Sally or Zeta, don't wait until it's too late. Contact us at Claimology to learn more about how you can protect your biggest assets, your homes and businesses and receive the correct amount of funds due under your insurance policy.

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BY SEAN DIETRICH

"Will the room please settle down before the dance begins?!" says Gary to the elderly crowd in the nursing home cafeteria. "Simmer down, please!"

Gary is an old man with a saxophone dangling from his neck. He speaks over a microphone, addressing old folks who are all wearing their dancing shoes. These residents need a little fun tonight. It's been a very long year.

"People, hush!" says Gary. Someone goes: "SSSSSSHH-HHHH!"

The murmuring stops.

"Let's do this in an orderly fashion!" says Gary. "I need two groups! I want my men dancers over HERE! I want my lady dancers over on THAT side!"

Soon, the room is reorganizing itself like the final round of a livestock auction. It's a downright mess.

"Quickly, people!" says Gary. "We haven't got all night!"

It's a good night for a dance.

There has been an 82 percent drop in COVID cases among U.S. nursing homes since the vaccine, and these people need something joyous.

Gary says, "Alright! I want healthy dancers to the front of the line. Quiet please! Orderly fashion! Healthy knees and good tickers up front! Anyone who's only upper-body dancing tonight, you're at the back of the line!"

The people in the cafeteria once again reorganize. Ladies on one side; men on the other. Even nurses and cafeteria workers are present for the fun, watching this clambake from the outskirts in case someone overdoes it.

"Okay," announces Gary. "Ladies and gentleman, it gives me great pleasure to introduce TONIGHT'S BAND!"

Everyone claps. You would never believe a nursing home could produce so much applause. But as I said, it's been a long year.

Each person within this cafeteria knows someone who has died from COVID-19. Each person bears the scars of a pandemic. Thankfully, everyone here tonight is healthy (knock on wood).

There are four musicians in tonight's community band:

Lonnie (Pacific Grove, California) playing electric bass. Lonnie can't feel his fingertips because of neuropathy, but he can still play.

Jennifer (a staff nurse, origi-

100% Made in the USA

The Dance

nally from Tampa) on upright spinet.

Thomas (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), on the drum kit, holding his sticks like Gene Krupa.

And of course Gary (Lansing, Michigan) on alto sax and vocals.

"Everyone ready?" Gary says. Then he counts off a tempo. "And a'one, and a'two, and a'one, two, three..."

The band launches into "Somewhere Beyond the Sea." People come unglued. The whole facility suddenly becomes ten shades happier.

By the the first chorus, the cafeteria dancefloor is already crowded with eight men and fourteen women.

Bashful smiles. Weathered hands clasping other weathered hands. Feet shuffling. A few women are dancing with other women since there aren't enough men to go around.

One old man wraps his arms around a woman's waist. They are barely moving. This non-aerobic dance style is what's commonly known as "Prom Dance."

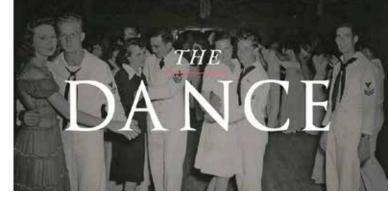
Another athletic couple is doing light twirls and they're both smiling—literally—to beat the band.

The tune ends. The band plays "When You're Smiling."

Gary is now singing like Louis Armstrong, and the heck of it is, they say Gary does an excellent imitation.

Fifty years ago Gary used to be in a band in Orlando. His group used to play this tune every night at closing time.

People are moving stiffly on the dancefloor, wobbling about as gracefully as the decades of osteoarthritis will allow. Onlookers seated in wheelchairs



are singing, clapping in all the wrong places.

The next tune is Cole Porter. "You Do Something To Me." Medium swing. This one really gets them cranked.

A few wheelchairs scuttle to the dancefloor, accompanied by enthusiastic nurses who are performing upper-body dance moves with non-mobile patients. This is already the best day of the entire year.

Gary plays saxophone solo after solo. People do foxtrot after foxtrot. Everyone is glowing.

When the party winds to a close Gary takes the microphone and makes his final speech. He gives the dancers a chance to catch their breath while he uses a serious voice.

"I'd like to dedicate this song," he begins, "to everyone who has lost someone this year." His voice breaks when he says it.

The nurses and staff bow their heads.

Gary whips up the band. The musicians begin to play "What a Wonderful World" at a ballad tempo. The whole room comes alive because everyone on planet Earth recognizes this song.

Dozens of elderly voices are soon bellowing in wrong keys, but each mouth sings the correct lyrics. Even the employees are howling along with Gary.

Because everyone here knows that Gary has had one of the hardest years among those here. His wife died from COVID last year. He's playing this number for her.

Gary brings the saxophone to his lips and begins to play, but he is interrupted. In the middle of his solo a nurse approaches the stage and asks Gary if he'd like to dance with her.

Gary turns red. "Gosh, it's been a long time, I don't think so..."

Too late.

The nurse ignores his remark. She forces Gary to discard his saxophone and join her while the band plays. Pretty soon the two of them are on the dancefloor.

The nurse rests her head upon Gary's bony shoulder while they sway in rhythm. She can hear him sniffing loudly. After a few moments, they stop dancing and simply embrace on the dancefloor. The nurse rubs Gary's back while he weeps.

And later that evening, when that nurse recounts this entire story to me in an email, I find myself doing the same thing.

Because, it really has been a long year.





🔅 Musing

What Ever Happened to Grace?



By Myrna Conrad

Since this is the month of Easter, I want to reflect on and talk about grace. I know there are various definitions of grace. Among them are: "simple elegance or refinement of movement;" "an attractively polite manner of behaving;" and "a period officially allowed for payment of a sum due." However, it is the following definition that I want to talk about - "being given something, giving someone else something, or being shown or showing someone a favor that they do not deserve." It could be paraphrased as the "unmerited favor of God." Pastor Adriane Rogers once defined grace as "God's redemption at Christ's expense."

In today's world, I am constantly hearing that people should have things because they deserve them. "I hope you get that job or that promotion because you deserve it." "You should buy that new car. You deserve it." "You should get that bigger house, because you deserve it." It has even gone to the extent of people taking things that don't belong to them, because they think they deserve them.

It seems we have become a society that leans toward entitlement rather than grace. Grace loses its meaning when we get something or think we should have something because we deserve it. What or who determines whether someone deserves something or not? Do we determine that or does someone else? Also, how do we temper the attitude of entitlement once



we embrace it? Entitlement can definitely be a dangerous road to start down. Once a person feels that they are entitled to something, then gratitude goes out the window.

However, if we start from the premise that God is the Creator and we are the created, then He is the One who determines what we deserve. I am sure that everyone would agree that none of us have lived a perfect life. So, what should a perfect Creator do about that? He decided to extend us grace through His Son, Jesus. In Romans 3:23-24 we read, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." When we realize that we are not deserving of God's favor and it is only by His grace that we are blessed with not only what we need but so much more, then, we begin to have a heart of gratitude versus entitlement. Then we truly start to understand the meaning of GRACE. The most amazing expression of grace was shown through Jesus' willingness to pay for our sins on the cross.

How do you define grace in your life? Do you feel that you have been shown grace? Are you willing to show grace to others?

Be Aware:

Be aware of your understanding and attitude concerning grace.

Think about what you have and what you think you deserve. Then ask yourself why you think you deserve it.

How do you react when someone else gets something you don't think they deserve?

Understand the slippery road of entitlement and where that can lead.

Be Intentional:

Find ways to show grace to those around you.

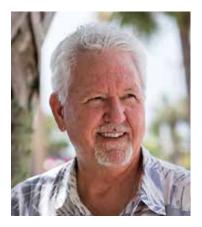
Be aware each day of how you have received grace.

Make sure you become an example and teach your children the difference between entitlements and blessings.

Let grace be a part of your daily life. Be aware and thankful that you have been shown grace and be quick to show grace to others.



A Pastor's Ponderings: Jesus is Alive



BY DAVE HOLLAND

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Luke 24:1-7 (NIV)

Where's Jesus?

Depression hung on them like a bitter aftertaste. Jesus is dead. Their feet dragged with disappointment and disillusionment. Jesus is dead. Duty called for them at the tomb to anoint His body. Jesus is dead.

Luke 24:1-12 shows us a group of dejected women dragging themselves dutifully to the rock cave supposedly housing the dead remains of Christ. Someone had to embalm Him. So these faithful women summoned the courage and ingredients to prepare Him for the grave. I'm guessing they were numb with grief, putting one foot in front of the other to do what had to be done.

Can you summon your faith when you feel lifeless? These



women did. Jesus is gone. Or far away, or whatever. Has life shattered your hope? Do you feel your future in uncertain? Are you in despair concerning your health or your finances? Those are the times when you decide who you are and what you really believe in. You are being prepared for something more.

The women discovered an empty tomb-Christ's body gone. They surely felt shock and perhaps anger. Where's Jesus? Imagine going to the mortuary to say goodbye to your dead grandfather and before the funeral, you open the casket to look at him and the casket is empty. I doubt that resurrection would be the first thing coming to mind.

Back at the tomb the women burst in and as their eyes adjust in the dark cave an abrupt light erupts. Two men clothed with lighting flash into the cave. Trust me when I tell you they didn't beam down from a spaceship. God the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and He left two angelic witnesses to explain. The heavenly creatures said in Luke 24:5, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Really? Yes, really. Just like Jesus said in Galilee, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Jesus showed us the meaning of life–overcome the worst trial, suffer the cruelest torture, reduced to the deepest hell and rise victorious over it all. Hallelujah! Where's Jesus? Above it all.

Author Brennan Manning writes, "The French Easter liturgy says, 'L'amour de Dieu est folie'--the love of God is foolishness. And Jesus says it is foolishness that is meant to bring forth joy."

Your dark places cannot keep you from the love of God. With your faults and failures buried in Christ's tomb by faith, a new life awaits you. The habits and mindsets that have kept you bound with grave clothes are no match against the power of the Holy Spirit to raise you to victory. Faith invites the Wind of God to breathe on your lifeless self and resurrect something new. Make every day a new Easter of joy.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled "Extraordinary Jesus: Ignite Your Season of Miracles." You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidvHolland54@gmail.com.



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🌸 Arts & Music

It's Almost Time for a Weekend of Crescendo!

Sinfonia Gulf Coast, our region's only fully professional symphony orchestra, will be hosting its annual fundraiser Crescendo! A Cultural and Culinary extravaganza, rescheduled for April 30-May 2, 2021.

Festivities begin on Thursday, March 25 at 11 a.m., with a Crescendo! Kick Off Lunch at Bijoux Restaurant + Spirits located at The Market Shops. Enjoy an incredible lunch prepared by award-winning chef/co-owner Jack McGuckin, sip elegant wines, indulge in delectable desserts, shop all of the must-have accessories of the season from The Jewel, door prizes and raffle items, plus much more. Tickets are \$100 per person and include lunch, wine and gratuities.

On Friday, April 30 at 6 p.m., Crescendo! weekend will begin with a series of carefully curated Vintner dinners hosted in elegant venues throughout the



Emerald Coast, which pair the talents of local and regional "celebrity" chefs with some of the country's most acclaimed vineyards for a delicious evening of food and wine. Participating wineries and chefs will be announced soon. Vintner Dinner tickets are \$295 per person and include all food, wine and gratuities.

This year's main event is themed, "Moulin {vin} Rouge" and is set for Sunday, May 2 at 11:30 a.m. at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Miramar Beach. This energy-infused event experience will celebrate the cultural and culinary arts by showcasing worldclass vintners, expert spirit purveyors, amazing auction items, and a musical performance. Enjoy reserved table seating, hors d'oeuvres, a full, seated lunch, live and silent auctions and an

all-inclusive afternoon of incredible fun.

Tickets to Crescendo! 2021 are \$150 per person and include all food, wine, reserved table seating, performance and valet parking. Tables of up to 10 guests may be reserved by calling (850) 460-8800. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. To purchase tickets, visit www.sinfoniagulfcoast.org or call (850) 460-8800.

Proceeds from Crescendo! will benefit Sinfonia and its music education programs, which include: musicians/guest artists in schools, free orchestra concerts, bus transportation for students, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra program, Arts in Medicine initiative with Sacred Heart Hospital and LINK UP concerts for third through fifth graders in partnership with Carnegie Hall.

Kevin Spencer is Magic at the MKAF Arts Guild Lunch

With the help of a little magic, the popular Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) Arts Guild Lunch titled "Hocus Focus: Spotlight on Arts Education" returns on April 14, 2021. Hosted at the new Hotel Effie from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., the Arts Guild Lunch features master magician and illusionist, Kevin Spencer. Proceeds from all MKAF events benefit the organization and its outreach and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.

"Kevin Spencer is not only a master illusionist but also a trailblazer in the field of adaptive arts education. Proceeds enable MKAF to continue to bring the magic of the arts to people of all abilities, with over 100 Arts-Reach programs planned in



2021," says Melanie Moore, Education Director, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite for \$45 per person for MKAF Members and \$55 per person for non-members. Space is limited for the highly anticipated event. Tables of 8 are \$450 and sponsor tables of



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Painting With A Twist!

What's better than Painting with a Twist? Cruising with a Twist! Yes, Cruising!

Add a splash of color to your cruise and join Painting with a Twist friends on several cruising adventures. Cruise packages are inclusive of all meals, an event T-shirt, and two painting classes instructed by your favorite local artists from Painting with a Twist. Choose from upcoming cruises including a 9-Night Caribbean Cruise on Sept. 17, 2021, a 5-Night Mississippi River Cruise on Nov. 16, 2021, a 6-Night Caribbean Cruise on Feb. 13, 2022 or a 9-Night Alaska Cruise on Oct. 10, 2022. Each cruise offers a

slightly different package, but ALL offer an amazing time to make amazing memories! To sign-up for any of these one-ofa-kind experiences, learn more at www.cruisingwithatwist.net or call 850-226-7218 for more details

Your Painting-Perfect Date Night Awaits!

Saturday Night at Painting with a Twist is the place to be.

Couples' painting parties at Painting with a Twist make it easy to enjoy a unique date with your better half. Never stuffy or routine, you can include everything you love about regular — your favorite BYOB dates



beverages and finger foods, plus the fun that comes with trying something new. You'll take home a great painting and even better memories. All the painting supplies, canvases and step-by-step instructions are included. You and your partner can choose from a variety of paintings and will create a complementary set of masterpieces-togetherfrom seasonally-inspired landscapes to decorative DIY wood board signs, funny self-portraits and more! Find a paint night theme that makes your heart skip a beat, then sign up.

Girls' Night Out Awaits!

Right when you thought you were out of girls' night out ideas - you found the most creative one yet! Save the date for a BYOW (bring your own wine)* paint party that's a toast to your girl gang. Check out the April calendar and then request an event:

As the party host, you get to pick the painting.

And, you get to paint FREE with a party of 13 or more!

Call (850) 226-7218 or text "PARTY" to our studio to request a party any day and time (subject to artist availability).

Located at 255 Miracle Strip Pkwy, Suite B-8, Fort Walton Beach, 32548, in Downtown Fort Walton Beach. Call (850) 226-7218 or visit studio205@ paintingwithatwist.com.

Check out the Calendar online at paintingwithatwist.com/ studio/fort-walton-beach/calendar.

KEVIN SPENCER

continued from previous page

10 are \$750. For more information on how to join the MKAF 26th season as a member, please visit the Foundation's website at www.MKAF.org or call (850) 650-2226.

Spencer is an Kevin award-winning performing art-

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Revival

Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing

Shania Twin

A Brother's

Deana Carter

Kara Grainger

Petty Hearts

Band of

the South

The Tams

ist who, for more than 25 years, toured the world with one of the largest and most successful theatrical illusion productions in the U.S. He left behind a trail of accolades in his wake including 2009 International Illusionist of the Year, 2015 International Magician of the Year, and sixtime recipient of Performing Arts Entertainer of the Year.

MKAF Spring Concerts!

On Thursday, April 22, 2021, the MKAF kicks off its 2021 Spring Concerts in the Village series. Gates open at 6 p.m.;

concerts begin at 7 p.m. Bring a lawn chair, picnic and wine, or purchase food and beverages onsite prepared by featured restaurants and food trucks. Purchase

tickets online at Eventbrite. MKAF members are free. Please contact MKAF at (850) 650-2226 for more info.



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Around Town

AROUND TOWN

continued from page 3

standing committee or grant review committee, and cast a vote to determine the grant finalists. They will be mentored by fellow members who are committed to improving the lives of others through service and philanthropy. There are 12 scholarships available. To apply, visit: www. impactnwf.org/nextgen_program.php by April 15, 2021.

Gov. Ron DeSantis Announces New Eligibility Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccinations

As of April 5, all individuals age 18 and older are eligible to receive the vaccine. All are encouraged to pre-register at www. myvaccine.fl.gov. Once pre-registered, you'll be contacted when the vaccine is available in your area. Floridians can also call the vaccine preregistration phone number for Okaloosa County at 850-344-0566. Vaccines are also available at 150 CVS locations, 125 Wal-Mart and Sam's Club locations, more than 70 Winn Dixie locations, soon-to-be over 600 Walgreens pharmacies, and every single one of the 730 Publix pharmacies across the state.

Local Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year and Junior Youth of the Year

This year's local Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Youth of the Year is Jamiah D., who will represent the organization in the statewide competition and as an ambassador of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald



3rd Annual Mac & Cheese Festival judges (left to right) Michael Emigh, Brooke Skalla, Shervin Rassa (BGCEC CEO), Jamiah D., Ken Sheyka, Lori Leath Smith and Ja'liyah B.

Coast. Ja'liyah B. was chosen as Junior Youth of the Year and



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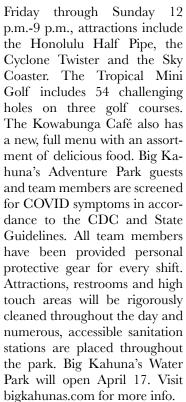
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will represent the organization as a youth ambassador and will look to participate in the Youth of the Year program as she gets older. Both Jamiah and Ja'liyah have already made significant impacts by serving as the youth judges for the 3rd Annual Mac & Cheese Festival benefiting Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

Newly Renovated Big Kahuna's Adventure Park Now Open

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Air Force's First F-15EX Arrives at Eglin AFB

The aircraft will be the first Air Force aircraft to be tested and fielded from beginning to end, through combined developmental and operational tests. The aim of integrated testing is to ensure the EX is delivered to the warfighter as soon as possible, while ensuring the aircraft meets test objectives. For more information, visit www.af.mil/news.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY ILKA COLI

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