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# DESTIN Life

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## Where Can You Show Love this Christmas?

By VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Christmas 2021 is upon us. As the past couple of years have been a challenge for us all, for non-profits, it has been especially difficult. Though some events have returned, others have still been put on hold and raising funds required to continue their much-needed work has not been possible.

Each organization listed below specializes in one main thing – children. Providing them a safe place to live, a bed to sleep on, healthcare, career opportunities and much more. Any of these wonderful charities could use your support if you are able.

I love this quote from Bob Goff's book *Live in Grace, Walk in Love*: "We knew the way to show Jesus to people was to love the way He loved. When He went away, He said He was leaving His Spirit with us so we could become like Him and act like Him. It means we can love people who are excluded and alone



during the holidays." Where are you going to show love this Christmas?

**[Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center](#)**  
**[Eccac.org](#)**

This place of safety provides services to children who

have been abused, neglected or assaulted. They work in Okaloosa and Walton Counties giving help to the most vulnerable. They provide on-site interviews and medical evaluations, while working closely with law enforcement and the courts.

**[A Bed 4 Me](#)**  
**[Abed4me.org](#)**

This organization provides beds and bedding for children in Okaloosa County at no cost to families. They believe

**SHOW LOVE**  
*continued on page 2*



## When God Called Saint Nick

By DAVID HOLLAND

We couldn't sleep on Christmas Eve, so we snickered and played the guessing game. We taunted one another with our imagined gifts to open on Christmas morning. "Guess what I'm getting for Christmas," we giggled. We made so much noise that Mom eventually came up to our room. We pretended to be asleep, but she called our bluff.

"I know you're awake, so quit trying to fool me. I have a Christmas Eve story to tell, so lie still and listen."

**SAINT NICK**  
*continued on page 2*



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**Community**

**SHOW LOVE**

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each child needs their own place to sleep so they can get the rest they need and feel safe. They provide beds and bedding for those who are displaced victims of domestic abuse or who are struggling financially.

**Children in Crisis**  
**Childrenin Crisisfl.org**

This non-profit serves children in Walton, Okaloosa, Es-

cambia and Santa Rosa Counties. They provide homes for abused, neglected and abandoned children, doing their best to keep brothers and sisters together. They have different donation levels depending on how involved you want to be.

**Children's Volunteer Health Network**  
**Cvhnkids.org**

Children's Volunteer Health Network serves the needs of children in Walton and Okaloosa

sa Counties by providing much needed vision, dental and mental health services.

**Shelter House of Northwest Florida**  
**Shelterhousenwfl.org**

Shelter House is a center for victims of domestic and sexual violence where their assistance is always free and confidential. They offer a variety of services, among them a 24-hour hotline, support groups and legal advocacy.

**AMI Kids**  
**Amikids.org**

AMI Kids has been making a difference in at risk children's lives since 1969. They have many programs available, and their goal is for every child to reach their full potential.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast**  
**Emeraldcoastbgc.org**

This organization is geared for school aged children five to eighteen. They offer a variety of

programs and now include virtual activities like bingo and Pictionary and yoga depending on the age group. They also have mentor programs for those who desire to make a difference in a specific child's life on an on-going basis.

*This Christmas, as you purchase gifts for your family and friends, remember the children who, through no fault of their own, are in need, and choose a charity and donate. It's always a win/win.*

**SAINT NICK**

*continued from page 1*

Gabriel, the Arch Angel, announced before heaven's throne, "Your Majesty, the children are restless."

"What? My children?" mused the Ancient Glorious Wonder.

The nine-foot angel whined, "The children of the realm stir impatiently waiting for something more."

"Why, I gave them everything they could need. Mothers to nurture and fathers to challenge them and grandparents to lavish My love upon them. What more



could they want?"

"Perhaps the dark stain still shadows their hearts, Father," said the Son as He entered the eternal throne room. "Greed

and selfishness lurk in their imaginations."

"Aye, it shades their minds from comprehending the gift of My great love for them." The foundations of heaven shook as the Father stood to make a pronouncement. Raising the scepter of His power, He thundered the pronouncement, "I propose gifts for all the children of the realm, gifts to delight and gifts to make merry the hearts of children everywhere. Call Saint Nick to create a plan to carry out my decree." With the thunderclap of His scepter upon the sea of glass before His throne, the decree went forth.

Millions of heavenly creatures flapped their wings and bowed their heads before the wondrous wisdom of the Ancient Father. But how could Saint Nick possibly carry out the royal decree?

Paradise resumed its singing, and Cherubim blew the horns of holiness day and night. Soon,

the halls of heaven rattled with the joy-filled cry of Saint Nick, "Ho, Ho, Ho! Gather round seraphim and angels galore, for I have a plan to carry the Father's love to the ends of the earth. An abundance of life evermore for all who believe and receive fullness of life. Father will write peace and joy in the sky and etch it in human hearts. We need food in abundance, beautiful wrappings, and lights to brighten the celebrations."

The Holy One's laughter reverberated through all creation, "I knew Saint Nick would invent a plan to fill my children's hearts with joy."

Saint Nick bowed before the Ancient of Days, "Yes, Great Father, but there is a price."

He decreed with nostrils flaring and hair flying, interrupting Saint Nick, "No price is too much for My children, no extravagance too generous for My love."

"But what is the price?" the angels cried.

Saint Nick's shoulders shook, and he heaved with sobs of travail. "Father, Your children long for fame and money. They desire to be given whatever they can imagine. The dark stain holds them as slaves and blinds them to the gift of Your love. They fight and argue while lusting for more, evermore."

Not a wing fluttered. Breathless angels hung still as heaven waxed silent. Finally, the an-

gels whispered, "So what is the price?"

All heaven wept, "Who is worthy to pay the price? Who can heal the blindness that blocks the vision of God's love?"

"The children need to see, the children need to see, the children need to see," chanted the seraphim.

*Continued on page 43*



*From the Destin Life family to yours...  
We wish you a very, Merry Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!*

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# Help Feed Young Minds with Food for Thought

BY HEATHER BENNETT

In addition to providing meals and snacks for the 3,400 food insecure children in their backpack program, Food for Thought has been gearing up for the holidays. They recently delivered 700 turkeys and 33,000 food items over five service locations to reach more than 3,000 children across Okaloosa and Walton Counties for Thanksgiving.

If you are unfamiliar with their work, Food for Thought is a nonprofit organization which

families still struggling to make ends meet.

Covid has also had a two-fold effect on Food for Thought. In addition to seeing a 40% increase in the cost of food from distributors and brokers, they experienced a decline in volunteers. "Prior to Covid we saw about 250 individual volunteers a week to help us provide our services, and right now we are struggling to get to 100," stated Tiffanie.

Despite the setbacks, Food for Thought is committed, and

to our holiday services," stated Tiffanie. "We spread out through the community to make those pick ups easy for the families and we have a variety of times, and we communicate directly with the families."

When asked what Food for Thought needs most, Tiffanie

said that volunteers and donors are both important, because one doesn't work without the other. "We need donors to help support our work, and we need volunteers to help us distribute. They are both extremely valuable to us."

If you are interested in help-

ing Food for Thought, keep in mind that it only costs \$5 to fill a backpack to support a child for a week; one to two hours a month of your time spent volunteering can really make a difference. For more information on how you can get involved, please visit the website, [ftfl.org](http://ftfl.org).



provides meals and snacks to children who are dependent on free or reduced school meals, bridging meal gaps that might occur on the weekends or during holidays, so kids can focus less on where they are going to get their next meal and more on their schoolwork. They literally provide food for thought.

Due to the economic impact of Covid, Food for Thought has seen an increase in demand. "Last year we saw a 38% increase in our pick-ups for the holidays, and this year we are planning on a 10% increase over that," said Tiffanie Nelson, founder of Food for Thought. In 2020, most people were struggling with unemployment or reduced hours; this year inflation has had an effect on the cost of groceries, gas and general cost of living, leaving some

is meeting their weekly deliveries. They are grateful for the volunteers they currently have, and regardless of how social media looks, they are still in need of more volunteers to make the drops easier. "There aren't enough hands and feet on our team of five to provide all these services to over 3,000 kids a week," said Tiffanie, referring to the 34 school drops they make across Okaloosa and Walton counties.

In addition to these services, they are getting prepared for another holiday drop for Christmas break, providing snacks and meals for children during their two-weeks off of school, a time when food insecurity may be high. A child can miss around 20 meals over Christmas break. "Children who are already enrolled in our services get access

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**Community**

# Cali's To Do In Destin! DECEMBER 2021

..... **Every Day** .....

**Baytowne On Ice** | All Month Long | Baytowne Wharf  
**Coastal White Christmas Holiday Lights** | All Month @ 6pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Karaoke Night** | 6pm-9pm | Lucille's Kitchen  
 ..... **3** .....

**Holiday Sip n Stroll** | 5pm | J.Leon Gallery  
**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Locals on the Harbor** | 5pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Ice Skating Extravaganza** | 6pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Holiday Ugly Sweater Bar Crawl** | 6:30pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Karaoke Night** | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk  
**Saliva in Concert** | 8pm | Lucille's Music Hall  
 ..... **4** .....

**Breakfast With Santa** | 8am | Aegean Shalimar  
**Chess Club** | 9am | Enlightened Studios  
**The Salty Market** | 9am | 211 Main Street Destin  
**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 10am | Destin Commons  
**Pups, Paddles, and Pints** | 11am | BOTE Grayton Beach  
**Prohibition Brunch** | 11am | World Of Beer  
**Beachy Little Christmas** | 12pm | The Island Hotel  
**Stock The Jeep** | 12pm | Austons on 98  
**Fish Fry** | 1pm | Destin Fishing Museum  
**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Holiday on the Harbor, Santa Paws** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Photos With Elf On The Shelf** | 2pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Grimp Grudge Grouch Photos** | 2pm | The Crab Trap Okaloosa Island  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Ugly Sweater Pub Crawl** | 6:30pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Karaoke** | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin  
 ..... **5** .....

**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 11am | Destin Commons

**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Photos With Santa** | 2pm | Corcoran Reverie Destin  
 ..... **6** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Fort Walton Beach Christmas Parade** | 5:30pm | FWB First United Methodist  
**Photos With Santa** | 5pm | North Beach Social  
 ..... **7** .....

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | FatBoys Destin  
**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer  
**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza  
 ..... **8** .....

**Bonfire on the Beach** | 6pm | The Bay  
**Sunsets & Sangria** | 6pm | The Henderson  
**Open Mic Night** | 6pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Holiday Concert Series + Visits with Santa** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
 ..... **9** .....

**Holiday on the Harbor** | 5pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Open Poetry Night** | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuire's Destin  
 ..... **10** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 5pm | Destin Commons  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Ice Skating Extravaganza** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf  
**Karaoke Night** | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk  
 ..... **11** .....

**Breakfast with Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande  
**Ugly Sweater 5K Run/Walk** | 8am | Niceville High School  
**Chess Club** | 9am | Enlightened Studios  
**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Women's Climbing Circle** | 9am | Rock Out Climbing  
**Christmas Zoobilee** | 10am | Gulf Breeze Zoo  
**Toys For Tacos** | 10am | Peppers FWB  
**Olde Holiday Market** | 11am | Harborwalk Village  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 10am | Destin Commons  
**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Billy Claus and the LuLu Belles** | 1pm | LuLu's Destin

**Photos With Elf On The Shelf** | 2pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Tuba Christmas** | 5pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Karaoke** | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin  
**Drag Night** | 9pm | Enlightened Studios  
 ..... **12** .....

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



**Breakfast with Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 11am | Destin Commons  
**Olde Holiday Market** | 12pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Dock The Halls** | 2pm | Boathouse Oyster Bar  
**Boat Parade** | 6pm | Harborwalk Village  
 ..... **13** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Holiday Mocktail Workshop** | 5:30pm | GraytRoom  
 ..... **14** .....

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | FatBoys Destin  
**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer  
**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza  
 ..... **15** .....

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Sunsets & Sangria** | 6pm | The Henderson  
**Open Mic Night** | 6pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Bonfire on the Beach** | 6pm | The Bay  
**Holiday Concert Series + Visits with Santa** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf  
**Stand Up Comedy** | 8:30pm | Lucille's Music hall  
 ..... **16** .....

**Santa Photos + Frank Sinatra Tribute** | 5pm | La Famiglia Ristorante  
**Wine Walk About** | 5pm | Gulf Place  
**Mingle & Jingle Fundraiser** | 6pm | Sunset Bay Cafe

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuire's Destin  
 ..... **17** .....

**Santa Photos + Frank Sinatra Tribute** | 5pm | La Famiglia Ristorante  
**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 5pm | Destin Commons  
**Nutcracker Showcase** | 6pm | Studio6Twenty5  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Adult Paint & Sip** | 6pm | The Palms Bistro  
**Karaoke Night** | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk  
 ..... **18** .....

**Breakfast with Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande  
**Breakfast with Santa** | 8am | The Henderson  
**The Salty Market** | 9am | 211 Main Street Destin  
**Chess Club** | 9am | Enlightened Studios  
**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 10am | Destin Commons  
**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Holiday on the Harbor, Sounds of the Season** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Photos With Elf On The Shelf** | 2pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Santa Photos + Frank Sinatra Tribute** | 5pm | La Famiglia Ristorante  
**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Karaoke** | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin  
**Drag Night** | 9pm | Enlightened Studios  
 ..... **19** .....

**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin  
**Breakfast with Santa** | 8am | Emerald Grande  
**Jolly Jubilee** | 11am | Destin Commons  
**Artisan Market** | 11am | Destin Commons  
**Holiday on the Harbor + Visits with Santa** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Holiday on the Harbor, Sounds of the Season** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Santa's Send Off** | 1pm | Harborwalk Village  
**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
 ..... **20** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
 ..... **21** .....

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | FatBoys Destin

**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer  
**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza  
 ..... **22** .....

**12 Nights of Lights** | 6pm, 7pm, 8pm | Baytowne Wharf  
**Sunsets & Sangria** | 6pm | The Henderson  
**Open Mic Night** | 6pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Bonfire on the Beach** | 6pm | The Bay  
 ..... **23** .....

**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuire's Destin  
 ..... **24** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
**Karaoke Night** | 7pm | Harry T's Harborwalk  
 ..... **25** .....

**Christmas Day Brunch** | 10am | The Henderson  
 ..... **26** .....

**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin  
 ..... **27** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille  
 ..... **28** .....

**Music Bingo** | 6pm | FatBoys Destin  
**Trivia** | 7pm | World of Beer  
**Rock'n Bingo Night** | 7pm | Landsharks Pizza  
 ..... **29** .....

**Sunsets & Sangria** | 6pm | The Henderson  
**Open Mic Night** | 6pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Bonfire on the Beach** | 6pm | The Bay  
 ..... **30** .....

**Open Poetry Night** | 7:30pm | Enlightened Studios  
**Ladies Night** | 10pm | McGuire's Destin  
 ..... **31** .....

**Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** | 5pm | Grand Boulevard  
**New Year's Eve Party** | 7pm | Harborwalk Village  
**New Year's Eve Celebration** | 7:30pm | Lucille's Music Hall  
**Mardi Gras NYE Ball** | 8:30pm | Village Door Baytowne  
**SunQuest Cruises' NYE Cruise** | 8pm | Solaris Yacht  
**Baytowne Countdown** | 6pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf  
 ..... **Jan. 1** .....

**Farmer's Market** | 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard  
**Karaoke** | 8pm | World Of Beer Destin  
 ..... **2** .....

**Beach Church Service** | 7:30am | Crab Trap Destin  
 ..... **3** .....

**Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night** | 5pm | Royal Palm Grille



## EVENTS • LIVE MUSIC • FOOD

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# A Destin Holiday!

Here's a few of our favorite area holiday events sure to bring joy and comfort this season!

**Jolly Jubilee 2021** is happening now through Sun., Dec. 19. Join Destin Commons for a series of holiday happenings, including Christmas carolers and live performances, now through Christmas with the 50' Christmas tree as a back-drop. Visit [destincommons.com](http://destincommons.com) or Facebook for dates and times.



Make a free reservation online to see Santa at **Bass Pro Shop's Santa Wonderland** now - Dec. 24. Visit [basspro.com/santa](http://basspro.com/santa) to reserve your spot. There's also free games, crafts and a free professional photo with Santa. Destin Commons, 1-800-BASSPRO.

The **Festival of Trees at Grand Boulevard** at Sandestin runs through Christmas Day. Get photos with Elf On The Shelf in Grand Park at the Festival of Trees display every Sat. through Dec. 18 from 2-4 p.m.

**Emerald Coast Theatre Company presents Miracle on 34th Street: A Live Musical Radio Play** on the mainstage from Dec. 9 - 19: Thurs. - Sat. at 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2:30 p.m.; Sun. Dec. 19 at 2:30 & 7:30 p.m. Tickets: [emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org).

Join **Sinfonia's Holiday Pops** Fri., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. at Village Church of Destin for a festive holiday concert featuring singer/actor of the stage and screen Nicholas Rodriguez. Tickets \$29.50 - \$55.00 at [sinfoniagulfcoast.org](http://sinfoniagulfcoast.org).

**2021 Destin City Christmas Parade** is Sat., Dec. 11, 10 a.m. The 37th annual "Jingle Bell Rock" Christmas Parade will begin at the Downtown Destin Shopping Center near Old Time Pottery and travel west down Harbor Blvd. (Hwy. 98) to Stahlman Ave. Watch from the north side of U.S. 98.

You can visit **Santa at The Village of Baytowne Wharf** during the **Tuba Christmas** event on Sat., Dec. 11 and Wednesday nights through Dec. 15 in the Village. See page 7 or visit [baytownewharf.com](http://baytownewharf.com) for additional Baytowne Wharf December events.

### HarborWalk Village 2021 Holiday Events:

Visits with Santa - weekends until Dec. 19

Olde Holiday Market - Sat. Dec. 11, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sun., Dec. 12, Noon-8 p.m.

Destin Boat Parade - Dec. 12, 6-6:30 p.m.

Sounds of the Season - Dec. 18

Breakfast with Santa - Dec. 11, 12, 18, 19 - 8 a.m.-noon

**The Holiday on the Harbor Lighted Boat Parade** is Sun., Dec. 12, 6 p.m.

The 35th Annual Destin Boat Parade at the Destin Harbor will be followed by a Fireworks Finale and Fire Spinning! The parade can be viewed from docks, businesses and restaurants from Grand Harbor Condominiums to HarborWalk Village. Register your boat at the Destin History & Fishing Museum, 108 Stahlman Ave. (850) 837-6611.

**Mingle and Jingle**, Thursday, Dec. 16 at Sunset Bay Cafe from 6-9 p.m. Music, Heavy Hors D'oeuvres, Champagne Toast, Cash Bar, Silent Auction and more await you. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../mingle-jingle-holiday...>



**Wreaths Across America** ceremony, where wreaths are placed at every veteran's grave in the Destin Memorial cemetery, will be held Dec. 18 at 1 p.m. If you have a veteran you'd like to have recognized, contact

Commander Ziegler at (850) 837-3818 or [corlene\\_z@yahoo.com](mailto:corlene_z@yahoo.com).

Ring in the **New Year on the Destin Harbor at HarborWalk Village!** Enjoy an early performance by Flash Flood at 7 p.m. on the main stage and an 8 p.m. fireworks

show! Then Atlanta's hottest party band, the A-Town A-List, hits the stage at 9 p.m. performing covers of all your favorite songs. The night will end with midnight fireworks and Ball Drop!

The Village of Baytowne Wharf's New Year's celebra-

tion—**Baytowne Countdown**, happens Fri., Dec. 31, 6 p.m.-1 a.m.—Fireworks at 8 p.m. & midnight. From 6-8 p.m.—face painting, kids' activities and LIVE music 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. 21 & over after 10 p.m.

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Community

# Every Day is a Chance to Change a Child's Future

## A Year of Foodie Festivals to Benefit the Kids!

An increasing number of children are at home with no adult care or supervision. Yet, young people need to know that someone cares about them. Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast (BGCEC) offer that and more. Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence all in a safe place to learn, grow and have fun.

Our local BGCEC has taken members from the Clubhouse to the White House; from the game room to the corporate boardroom; from the high school football field to the NFL; from a band room to Carnegie Hall. And from the streets to guidance, friendship and a place to belong.

Boys & Girls Clubs Emerald Coast offers programs that are addressing today's most pressing youth issues. "Our programs teach young people the skills they need to succeed in life, while providing a safe place for

hundreds of Northwest Florida children to go after school and during the summer," says C.E.O. Shervin Rassa.

Local area programs basically focus on three priorities: Academic Success where members are provided with tools to graduate from high school with a plan for their future; Good Character and Citizenship through a variety of programs such as Keystone Club, Torch Club, Youth of the Year, Youth for Unity and Netsmartz; and Healthy Lifestyles where members learn to adopt and maintain positive behaviors about life, nutrition and self.

In order to support all of its valuable programs, BGCEC hosts several events throughout the year. After three years spent building the widely popular Mac & Cheese Festival in Destin, the BGCEC focused on expanding the concept with two new festivals this year—an Epic Bakery Competition in Defuniak Springs and BrunchFest in Pensacola. With recent events



PHOTO: FRANCIS ROY AGENCY

successfully completed, the BGCEC is gearing up to make 2022 an "ultimate" celebration of food, friends, and family.

The community adds to BGCEC produced foodie festivals by embracing the organization as a charity beneficiary for Shrimp & Grits Festival, Burgers, Bourbon & Beer Festival, and Half Shells on the Harbor. The BGCEC is invested in these productions as a driven and organized volunteer force, partnering with event coordinators to bolster the ranks of triumphant events. To say the BGCEC is a hardworking non-profit organization is an understatement.

Led by C.E.O. Shervin Rassa, the BGCEC is responsible for supporting local club mem-

bers and a large and talented staff. "What better way to celebrate and support our club kids than a series of festivals focusing on family and foodie favorites? We are excited about the expansion of Mac & Cheese as well as bringing new and fun events to both Pensacola and Defuniak Springs!" says Shervin.

Shervin has dedicated his career to youth development. He joined the Boys & Girls Club Movement 20 years ago as an area director in Tampa, relocating to the Emerald Coast organization in 2012. He now oversees eight clubs across three counties, serving 3,200 children from Pensacola to DeFuniak Springs.

The team has big plans for 2022, starting with the 4th An-

nual Mac & Cheese Festival on March 6, 2022, at the Destin Commons. The dates for Epic Bakery Festival and BrunchFest will be announced in early 2022. Attendees and sponsors will want to keep a look-out for the "ultimate" ways to enjoy, celebrate and engage, and the best way to stay informed is through the BGCEC Facebook page.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast was born

in 1968 as the Boys Club of the Playground Area with 15 Members. When economic conditions threatened the organization in 1988, local businessmen recognized the Club's value and potential and ensured it survived. More than 1,200 kids are registered during the school year, and more than 1,300 enjoyed the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast last summer.

BGCEC is a registered IRS 501(c)3 charity and receives funding from contributions, special events, grants, and major donors such as Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation and United Way agencies in Escambia, Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

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# Holiday Magic All Season Long! Baytowne Countdown Ushers in 2022!

**T**winkling lights, skating on ice, magical tunes and streets filled with sparkle, tinsel, holly and jolly beckon your inner child to “believe” in the magic of the holidays all over again. Kids know it and we know it, too! The wonder of Santa and the holiday season jingles in our hearts and in the joyful Village of Baytowne Wharf!

**Wednesday Night Holiday Concerts Holiday Edition + Visits with Santa** usher you into the holiday spirit! Listen to some of your favorite holiday classics from 6-8 p.m. during the holiday edition of Baytowne Wharf’s Wednesday Night Concert Series. Each concert features a festive choreographed light show and fun,

memorable visits with Santa. No cost to attend!

**December 8** | 6pm: Gateway Singers of Gateway Academy | 6:30pm: Fort Walton Beach High School

**December 15** | Matt McCarty Band

Lighting up the holiday nights are **12 Nights of Lights!** Enjoy a festive, choreographed light show every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday in December leading up to Christmas on the Events Plaza Lawn! This sparkling event will also be featured during the special holiday edition of the Wednesday Night Concert Series. No cost to attend, watch three dazzling shows on The Village tree at 6 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m.

Don’t miss **Elf Movie and**



**Skate Night** Friday, Dec. 10th at 6 p.m. at the Village of Baytowne Wharf. FREE to attend, Elf hats will be given to the first 50 skaters at Baytowne On Ice



starting at 4 p.m. Then join for a special showing of Elf the movie at 6pm on a LED HD Video Wall in the Events Plaza.

Becoming one of Baytowne’s traditions, a **Tuba Christmas**, Sat., Dec. 11th from 5-7 p.m. will have you smiling. FREE to attend, enjoy some of your favorite holiday classics and visits with Santa!

After a full season of holiday magic, ring in the **New Year at Baytowne Countdown**—The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s end-of-the-year celebration! It’s an evening to remember with two breathtaking fireworks displays at 8 p.m. and midnight. Enjoy fun for kids and kids at heart with face painting, kids’ activities and LIVE music on the Baytowne LIVE stage. Finish off the family friendly evening with our first fireworks display at 8pm. The fun doesn’t stop there! Dance the night away with LIVE music from I Love This Band from 7 p.m. un-

til 1 a.m. featured on the Events Plaza Stage! With sets that range from the classics to rock and everything in between, I Love This Band will take you on a virtual ride through time and a stroll down memory lane that will leave you feeling nostalgic and craving for more. End the night with a spectacular midnight fireworks show. There is no better place to ring in 2022!

\*21 and over after 10 p.m. 20 and under must be accompanied by a legal guardian after 10 p.m.

**Baytowne on Ice** continues as a favorite holiday tradition! The Ice rink is open through February 6. Hours vary daily. \$13 for 90-minute skate; \$3 skate rentals. Rent the rink for private functions. Call 850-428-2736 or visit baytownewharf.com.

All holiday events are **NO COST** to attend!







## Holiday Trends & Treasures



### Plug in for the Holidays at CRYO850!

#### CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center

What's the #1 gift this year? A stronger, healthier, happier body! Put CRYO850 on your wish list this holiday season or show someone you love how much they mean to you with a gift of health and self-care.

•Everyone wants to look good for holiday photos! The Pagani Collagen Enhancement Facial (\$175) brings dormant collagen and to the skin's surface to increase elasticity and tighten aging skin for an instant Cinderella effect. Pagani Cryo Facials (\$75) help maintain an ongoing healthy, youthful glow!

•For the health-conscious individual on your list, we suggest a Pagani Detox Treatment (\$375) to break up subcutaneous alpha brown fat to detoxify the body and enhance definition.

•The CRYO850 Wellness Circuit is a great gift for general wellness, pain management, skin care and weight loss. The circuit includes our Infrared Sauna, Red Light Therapy, Whole Body Cryotherapy, Spot Treatment Cryo, Vibration Plates and Compression. Enjoyed via a Day Pass (\$99), Week Pass (\$199) or Two-Week Pass (\$249) or a three-month Student Season Pass (\$333)

Trying to lose weight? Change your body in 15 minutes every other day with the new Sculpt Pod. Membership options start as low as \$99 a month with military discounts of 10%, spousal discounts of 20% and students always get 30% off! Find us on line at [www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com) and follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

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[www.cryo850.com](http://www.cryo850.com)

### Sparkle, Radiate and Shine Through the Holidays

#### Pure & Couture Salon

With all the shopping and planning, taking a little time out to stay rejuvenated goes a long way in getting things done! Pure & Couture owner Adrienne



Bracket and her talented team of experts will make sure you're at your best throughout December and ready for the new year! Farrin, Pure & Couture's newest esthetician, will make sure you feel your best with skin care, make up and waxing. Farrin is offering 50% off of her facial services and 20% off waxing menu this month! Purchase Gift Cards to give all the holiday vibes in addition to hair care flair — a bit of color, styling, extensions, makeup, a pampering facial or even a therapeutic massage and anyone on your list can experience a mighty makeover. Stuff your stockings with Pure & Couture's travel bars, candles and essential styling products all with custom gift wrapping! Adrienne's talented team of professionals hold certifications in oncology, pregnancy, sports and medical massage, with a mission to provide quality care, resolve specific conditions and assist in improving quality of life for men and women of all ages. To book, call (850) 424.3935 or [www.pureandcouture.com](http://www.pureandcouture.com). Offering curbside pick-ups and online ordering, too!

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### Keepsakes for a Memorable Holiday with One-of-a-Kind Customized Gifts!

#### Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds



Looking for a great couples' gift or corporate gift idea? What better way to say thank you to your best friends and/or top clients for their continued support and business than with a beautiful, personalized, hand-crafted gift from Frill Seekers Gifts in Destin. Frill Seekers wooden charcuterie boards are manufactured out of premium wood, are food safe and are made in

the USA. Add the couple's last name, favorite beach, team or your company logo, branding or text for added personalization (discounted pricing on bulk orders, too). "Our charcuterie boards make amazing housewarming gifts and brides absolutely love getting a board with their new name or monogram on it," says Heidi LoCicero, founder. You can even pair the board with a nice bottle of wine, meats and cheeses, nuts or candies for the perfect present. Add their name or a company logo (if you are a realtor or sales representative, for example). Or have Frill Seekers engrave a family recipe on the board. "Clients can bring in a recipe card with their favorite recipe in the person's own handwriting and we can replicate that on the board," says Heidi. Personalized presents make a lasting impression and quickly become keepsakes. Shop Frill Seekers wooden board collection, which has a variety of board sizes, shapes and styles now online at [FrillSeekersGifts.com](http://FrillSeekersGifts.com) or visit the shop located in City Market Bayside in Destin.

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pieces? Available in fine jewelry stores, nationwide and internationally, even on luxury cruise lines, Renee's designs are popular with celebrities, featured in runway shows. Gift her the experience of working directly with Renee on a perfect custom piece this holiday season. Work exclusively with Renee by booking a private appointment to custom create your own combo with leathers, stones and pearls in all colors and sizes for the new year. Booking your event and design consultations. Nominated for Best in Destin, AT Bijoux de Mer, a one-on-one exquisite jewelry experience is waiting!

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### 'Tis the Season for Mighty Cakes, Mini Cakes, Cookie Cakes!

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### Meet the Top Realtor Brian Locicero, REALTOR®



Award-winning. Record-breaking. Knowledgeable. In fact, there are few people that know the Destin-30a-Seaside real estate market as well as REALTOR® Brian K. LoCicero. As a local, he has an exceptional perspective on the community and its development. Brian is a longtime resident and well-respected member of the community who will assure that all your real estate needs are met. He specializes in selling, listing and marketing unique properties, in addition to finding key locations for new or expanding businesses desiring to bring their brand to the Destin-30A area. Brian is known locally as the "go to" person to handle real estate transactions for individuals, businesses and lending institutions. He has his finger on the pulse of the market and can quickly analyze your needs to identify areas that best fit your lifestyle. As an elite Luxury real estate consultant with Keller Williams Luxury Division, Brian has continued raising the bar of excellence in the Destin-30A luxury home market. He has a well-established network to help connect buyers and sellers quickly and effectively.

Brian owes his remarkable success to his real estate acumen and detailed knowledge of the Emerald Coast area markets; his aggressive advertising and marketing campaigns on behalf of his clients and the great team of professionals he has assembled to help clients through every step of their real estate transaction.

When you're ready to buy or sell property along Florida's Gulf Coast from Pensacola to Perdido Key, Navarre Beach to Destin, or Sandestin to Alys Beach, contact Brian at (850) 739-3800 or visit his website at [BeOnTheCoast.com](http://BeOnTheCoast.com).





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**Community**

# Harbor Pump Back in Business

By CATHERINE CARD,  
CITY OF DESTIN PIO

The City of Destin recently had its Harbor Pump completely rebuilt, an arduous process that has taken over six months. Parts original to the former pump configuration include the

pump housing and one drive short shaft with the remainder being brand new. The pump's re-installation began November 18th with the arrival of a crane and support staff from Gilbert Pump (Fort Walton Beach). With the subsequent reinstallation

of the primary components and restoration of power, the pump should be back in full operation by Thanksgiving. City Staff is also awaiting the arrival and installation of a Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) for the system. In its former configuration,



ration, the Harbor Pump was either off or on. The VFD will allow staff to tune the motor's rotations per minute to optimize output whilst minimizing the effects of cavitation and/or air entrainment which can damage any pump over time. Once online, the City will operate the pump using the regular summer schedule for a few weeks and will then begin operations on a reduced off-season schedule.

Additionally, city staff recently performed a dive to inspect and clean the Harbor Pump's intake structure located in the Gulf of Mexico. Staff removed biological growth (primarily plant) from the intake grates.

What is the Purpose of the Harbor Pump?

The Harbor in Destin, home of Florida's largest commercial fishing fleet, is a functionally closed 240-acre waterbody with water-quality issues that include nitrogen and phosphorous loading. Nutrients like these, com-

monly found in fertilizers along with warmer water temperatures, can lead to algal blooms, reduced dissolved oxygen levels, fish kills, cloudy water and odor complaints if allowed to accumulate over time. To combat the effects of urbanization and the water quality issues it can create, the pump system, in operation since 1992, brings low-nutrient water into the Harbor to flush out pollutants and raise the dissolved oxygen levels for fish and other aquatic life.

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## City of Destin Receives Two Dewatering Pumps

After Hurricane Sally, City Staff approached State Representative Patt Maney's office with a request for assistance in purchasing pumping equipment to support our Emergency Management Response efforts. Rep. Maney's office followed through and submitted an appropriations request to the State of Florida which was granted. Originally, the grant award requested that the City provide a 50% match, but when the

grant award was received, the State's Department of Emergency Management provided the City with almost \$100,000 in funding to purchase pumping equipment with no match requirement.

City staff is proud to announce that we received our two new 6" Thompson dewatering pumps along with hoses and related equipment. These pumps are a much-appreciated addition to our Emergency Management toolbox.





# Impact100 Awards \$418,000 to Local Nonprofits

The votes are in and four local non-profit groups in Okaloosa and Walton Counties will receive \$104,500 each from Impact100 of Northwest Florida, Inc., an organization designed to financially support nonprofit organizations in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

Grant recipients were selected from the following five categories: Arts & Culture; Education; Environment, Recreation and Preservation; Family; and Health and Wellness. Since its conception in 2012, Impact100 NWF has now awarded 3.6 million dollars to nonprofits in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

For **Education**, it's United for a Good Cause for Hope Squad's Peer-to-Peer Prevention Expansion. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among kids 10-18. There were 36 youth suicides ages 10-24 between Okaloosa and Walton Counties in 2015-2019. The goal of United for a Good Cause is to save our kids by having a Hope Squad Peer-to-Peer Suicide Prevention Program in every school in our region from Escambia to

Walton Counties. Grant dollars will support more than 51,000 students in both Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

For **Environment, Recreation & Preservation**, the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) will receive funds for new Clinic Medical Equipment. PAWS' goal is to reopen the only low-cost animal clinic in Okaloosa/Walton counties, to provide diagnostics and surgery for injured animals and reduce the unwanted and unhealthy animal populations. To do this they need equipment. Funds will quickly restore on-site medical access for abused/abandoned shelter animals (7k+ annually) and serve the public need for locally accessible and affordable vet care, thereby reducing pet populations (domestic and feral) through more than 30k annual spay/neuter surgeries. The clinic has a 20-year history (\$200k annual profit) using old equipment and a semi-retired vet. New and additional equipment will allow vets to perform at 6x rate and offer more clinic services.

For the **Family** category, Fresh Start for Children and Families won the grant award for its Sell More = Help More ~ Fresh Start Takes Aim at More Capacity program. Fresh Start is a housing/education program for families with children who are homeless. Their clients come from all walks of life, face many problems including abuse, divorce, generational poverty and more. This project is to purchase a box truck with lift, which would increase their capacity. The program provides a furnished apartment, food pantry, weekly life skills classes, one-on-one budgeting and goal meetings. The Repeat Street thrift store is a revenue source covering more than 50% of the program's bills, furnishing apartments, and with only two employees and volunteers. A dependable truck will save money on repairs, increase funds with less trips to unload, less pickups missed and appear more professional. Families who graduate from the program leave self-sufficient with savings.

For the **Health and Wellness** category, Sharing and



Caring of Okaloosa County will use the funds for Building Expansion. The organization desperately needs a facility expansion and renovation. Since 1990, it has operated its food pantry in a small 1,485 sq. ft. building using a tiny pantry of just 409 sq. ft. This year, they finally saved enough to purchase this building. Their 960 sq. ft. expansion will extend their rectangular building by 30 ft. It will more than double the pantry for food storage and cooling equipment, add a prescription interviewer room, increase the reception lobby by 75%, make the entrance, walkways and client restroom more functional and handicap compliant. The organization's mission is to improve the health and

independence of clients by providing nutritious food, personal care items and medicine vouchers. Additionally, partnerships with Shelter House, Fresh Start and other agencies to synergize the local transformational movement will be expanded, thereby doubling the number of clients supported to all demographics.

For additional information about Impact100 NWF or to join the organization, please visit [www.impactnwf.org](http://www.impactnwf.org). The website provides an overview of Impact100 NWF and features our grant recipients from 2012 to 2020 highlighting the successful community outreach and the services provided to Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

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Community

## 'Twas a Few Weeks Before Christmas... in the Real Estate Market



BY GAIL PELTO  
*(a twist on Twas the Night Before Christmas by Clement Clarke Moore)*

"'Twas a few weeks before Christmas along the Emerald Coast, Home Buyers and Sellers were busy making toasts. Offers had been made, negotiated by all. Everyone happy, no closing was stalled!

It's been a great year in real estate...interest rates are still low! Able to buy more when the market is like this, you know! Sellers are happy, too, properties are selling fast. If you like it, make an offer, 'cause it's not going to last!

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If you think it's time to invest, buy or sell,  
Speak with a good realtor, someone who'll treat you really well!  
In fact, if you're really contemplating a sale,  
Remember you can call me, just ask for Gail!

And for reading my column, thank you ALL for a great year!  
Hope I've helped in some way, dispel some of your fears.  
Home buying and selling have a lot of pieces and parts,  
Reading Destin Life info is definitely a good start!

And now 2022 is nearly in sight!  
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!



## Around Town

### Harvest Wine & Food Festival Raises Over \$100,000 For Local Children!

Imagine casually strolling through WaterColor's picturesque property soaking up filtered sunlight emanating through the trees, experiencing a crisp, warm Gulf breeze while sipping on the most delicious wine and tasting coastal culinary cuisine while live music resonates.

This year's Harvest Wine and Food Festival was one of those Chamber of Commerce afternoons when you have to pinch yourself as a reminder it's reality. And the event raised more than \$100,000 for local children.

The wine festival, presented by the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation which supports 16 local children's charities, was back this year for four days of epicurean excellence. Held in November, the sold-out event featured high-end wines from around the world and the best culinary selections from throughout the southeast. It also included wine dinners and



the return of the famous Grand Tasting. Wines were paired with seafood, barbecue and other delectable delights. Craft beer and spirits were also prominent for those who prefer it.

A virtual auction featuring rare wines, unique items, and experiential trips was active throughout the festival weekend. Proceeds benefit DCWAF and its mission to connect wine enthusiasts to raise money benefiting children in need in Northwest Florida. Since its inception in 2005, DCWAF has donated more than \$25 million to its 15 partner charities, impacting the lives of more than 100,000 children in the local community.

*Continued on page 40*



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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.





Community

# Your Ultimate Local *Holiday* Gift Guide

By RITA L. SHERWOOD

It's that time of year again, time to spend with family, time to enjoy the Christmas season, time for all of the parties, and don't forget, time to shop for everyone on your Christmas list. Whether you're local or want to

shop like a local, why not give back to our many small businesses right here in Destin? The following is a gift guide that is sure to please even the fussiest on your list:

**Gifts \$25 and under:**

**Holi Indian, AJ's, Fatboys, Austons, Tailfins, Landshark's Pizza, Tequila's, Island Wing Co., Boat-house, Mr. & Mrs. Scotches, Bric à Brac, Taiwan Ice Cream & Poke, Oasis**, \$25 gift certificate for lunch or dinner.

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**Gifts \$50 and under:**

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**Timberview Helicopters Destin Harbor Helicopter Tour** \$59 per person for 10 miles of unforgettable views of the Destin Harbor and jetties of East Pass, call (850) 774-0991, or [Destinhelicopters.com](http://Destinhelicopters.com).

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ited washes and free vacuums, [Ottoscarwash.com](http://Ottoscarwash.com).

**Destin's Founding Father: The Untold Story of Leonard Destin** book for \$33, available at the Destin History and Fishing Museum at 108 Stahlman Ave., Destin. Also, be sure to check out their cute starfish ornaments!

**Gifts \$75 and under:**



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**Gifts under \$100:**

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off Hwy. 98 in Destin. Call (850) 460-2700 or visit [facebook.com/FrillSeekersGifts](http://facebook.com/FrillSeekersGifts) [frillseekersgifts.com](http://frillseekersgifts.com).

**Village Door Destin New Year's Eve Party Tickets** \$40 each or \$80 per couple, includes Free drinks from 8:30-9:30 p.m., Blinky beads, & Champagne Toast at midnight. Enjoy your favorite party music and host Corey Mack this NYE!! Call (850) 502-4590, or [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com).

**Ron Adams Las Vegas Elvis Tribute**, NYE-Village Door at Lucille's Music Hall at Seascapes from 7:30 p.m.-12 a.m. Buffet tickets available, band starts at 9 p.m. Tickets \$49.99-\$99.99 at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com).

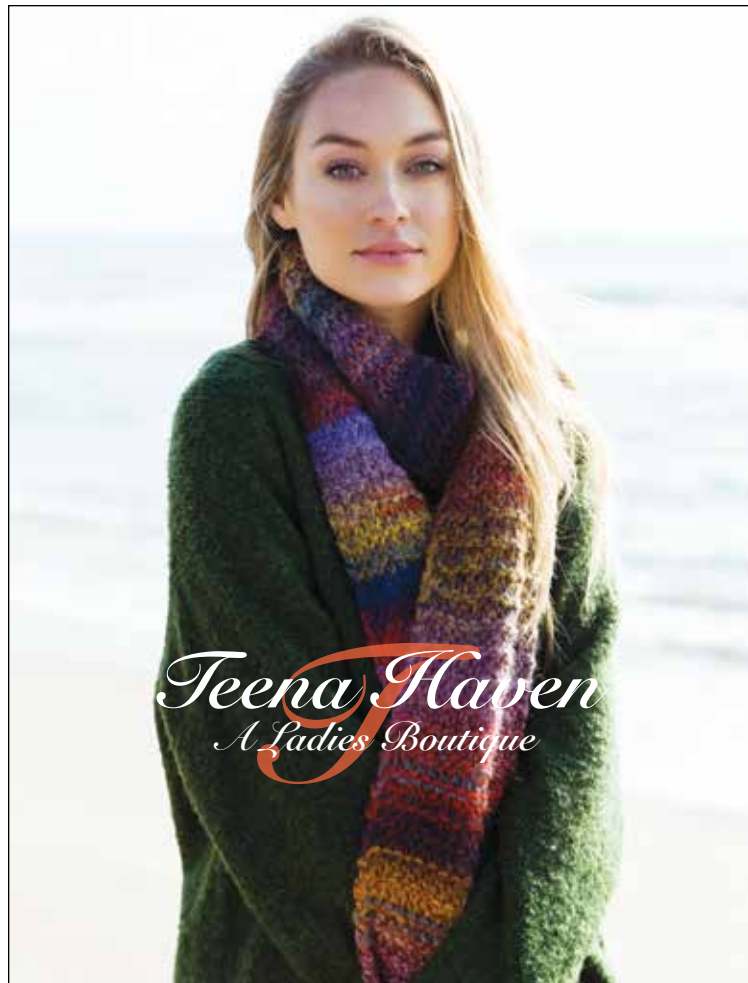
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*Continued on page 16*



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# FWBHS Students Lead by Giving Christmas Connection Has Lasting Impact

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

A Hometown Hero comes in many forms, even young students! Each year this season, leadership students from Fort Walton Beach High School (FWBHS) become “heroes” for many parents in our community who have no way to provide a joyful Christmas for their children.

The Leadership Program is a student-led cooperation which heads several annual projects ranging from community publicity, to natural disaster relief, mentoring children, community outreach, feeding the homeless and even appealing to the state legislature for new resolutions. Their acts have been recognized by district, state and national organizations as well as government institutions. The primary goal of the Leadership Program is to challenge 9-12 grade students in both their academic and personal lives along with teaching them the importance of giving back to the commu-

nity. Roughly 300 students generate as much as \$30,000 each year overall to plug back into the community.

While FWBHS Leadership student’s projects are vast, they are best known for their Christmas Connection project. The project’s goal is to provide a Christmas or holiday celebration to less fortunate families in Okaloosa County. Families are selected on recommendations and applications from local elementary, middle and high school guidance counselors.

Last year, through sponsorships and monetary donations attained from local businesses and individuals, this county-wide public service provided more than 47 families and 165 children with a comprehensive Christmas. To break it down, that’s meals for up to 14 days including breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as decorations, wrapped gifts valued at \$100 for each child, and when needed, support for the families with



lodging, utility bills and additional expenses.

Each leadership student is involved in the planning, fundraising, purchasing and delivering meals and gifts for each family.

Most of the leadership students say the fun really happens this month where they begin to meet and get to know the families in which they’ve been assigned. “Through the “meet-and-greets” with the families,” says Bella Larabee, one of the Christmas Connection program leaders, “we gain information on the children’s toys and clothes preferences, and the needs of their parents.” They then plan how to ensure the family is lifted of many of their worries by Dec. 25th. Groups of five to six students help one to four families at a time. Overall, the most needed item is food. “Over the past two months, we’ve been collecting bags upon bags of non-perishable food items and will purchase, with the donation dollars, milk, eggs, butter and hams and turkeys for the families’ Christmas dinner and the weeks ahead,” says Bella. “Then comes the shop ‘till we drop day, where we buy hundreds of dollars’ worth of gifts and toys for

our assigned family’s children.” Toys are brought to FWBHS and wrapped, assembled and made ready to be delivered usually on the 20th.

You can join these amazing hometown heroes by making a monetary donation; \$100 provides a holiday package for one child. You can send a check to Fort Walton Beach High School with “Christmas Connection” written in the memo section. Students are taking donations through the new year and can provide a tax receipt by request.

“Tears of joy pour from both the eyes of the giver and of the receiver throughout this experience,” says former leadership student and FWBHS alumna, Savannah Smith. “These Leadership students truly make an impact on the lives of these children and parents.” But could it be that the very lives they’re impacting have a long-lasting reverse effect? “I believe,” says Savannah, “my life has never been the same.”

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Community

# Simplifying Medicare Advantage Choices



BY GREG DURETTE

This is the time of year when you should review your Medicare options and make important decisions about your coverage for 2022.

Right now, we are in the Annual Election Period (AEP) for all Medicare beneficiaries. It is often referred to as the Annual Open Enrollment Period. This annual event runs from October

15th through December 7th.

Because this period allows ALL Medicare eligible folks to make switches and changes, it is the most heavily advertised time of the year...not like I have to tell you that! Folks on Original Medicare (Parts A&B), Supplements (MediGap), Stand Alone Prescription Plans (Part D) and Advantage Plans have a chance to pretty much do anything they want with their coverage mix. The hard part comes with sorting it all out.

One of the things I often say to Medicare beneficiaries during this time of year is to make sure you don't get so overwhelmed by all the information out there that you run out of time to take action. It can sometimes become "paralysis by analysis" syndrome. Remember, the AEP ends on December 7th!

Figuring out which coverage options are best for you can be confusing at any age, but understanding healthcare options for those 65 and older can be even more difficult.

I suggest considering these three things when shopping for Medicare Advantage/Supplement plans:

**Choice:** When it comes to Medicare, one size does not fit all — what works for your neighbor may not work for you. Take the time to learn and understand the benefits and costs of each plan, so you can feel confident in your decision and your health care coverage.

**Care:** Care starts with a strong relationship with your primary care provider. If your plan has a network, make sure you're comfortable with the doctors and hospitals in that

network. Check to see if your plan will coordinate your care with the rest of your providers—in and out of State.

**Experience:** Medicare can be complex and confusing. It's important to find a seasoned agent that works for you and supports you throughout your health care journey with plan benefits and resources that can help you live more and worry less.

Since Medicare Advantage Plans are offered by private companies, one excellent feature is they have more freedom and motivation to include extra benefits like; vision, hearing, gym memberships, dental, over-the-counter pharmacy items and more.

However, it is important to note that, not only do Medicare plans vary by state, they vary

right down to each individual county in each state.

Your sibling in North Dakota is not going to have the same insurance company options you would in your Florida county.

This is why it is vitally important to work with a local agent that knows the area and understands benefit landscape as it applies to you. A famous actor or retired athlete on TV touting a toll-free number from who knows where will likely not.

*Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for more than 38 years and can be reached at his office at (850) 842-2400 or his mobile at (978) 509-2941.*

## GIFT GUIDE

*continued from page 14*

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## Medicare questions?

Greg Durette  
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LEARN MORE





# The Gift of a Sound Personal Insurance Portfolio?



BY JOE CAPERS,  
INSURANCE ZONE

In a recent edition we focused on the details of a sound Business Insurance Program. Similar parallels can be established for your equally important Personal Insurance Program. Personal lines insurance is designed to offer protection for individuals and families rather than organizations and businesses. The most common types of personal insurance are property and casualty insurance which includes homeowners, condo, renters and auto insurance. The rates of insurance vary depending on geographic locations and the level of risk that an individual may have.

In our state of Florida, some types of personal lines insurance are required while others are strongly recommended. All Florida residences must have auto insurance which covers drivers while commuting to work, running errands and for other personal reasons and while used in business pursuits. On the other hand, homeowners, condo unit owners and renters insurance protect against damage to residences and personal assets.

Ultimately, insurance is about safeguarding one's family from life's uncertainties – and life does indeed have uncertain and unexpected events. Personal insurance adds that extra layer of protection that can give you peace of mind in today's world.

Below is a sampling of personal insurance coverage that are recommended for you and your family:

**Homeowners & Homes Under Renovation or Construction** – Protects your home the way it protects you by choosing the proper coverage that meets your needs.

**Condo Unit Owners** –

Your condo association may have insurance, but your individual unit has its own coverage needs. Condo insurance protects your dwelling elements, personal property and liability.

**Renters Insurance** – Can be structured to cover more than just your personal property, and personal liability is just one example.

**Rental Property or Landlord Insurance** – Protects your property investment for you as a rental property owner.

**Auto Insurance** – Protection that gives peace of mind when on the road.

**Flood Insurance** – Homeowners does not cover flooding so flood insurance will protect against floods associated with hurricanes, tropical storms, heavy rains and other conditions that impact our area.

**Boat and Yacht Insurance** – Know that you, your guests and vessel are protected so you can enjoy your time on the water.

**Umbrella** – This high limit coverage goes above your personal and auto liability policies to protect you from unexpected and catastrophic events.

**Jewelry and Collections** – For those special items and valuables that your homeowners coverage will have severe limitations.

**Motorcycle and RV In-**



**urance** – Provides liability protection for you and your machine.

**Home Office Liability** – As more individuals are now working from home, make sure you have protection for this often-overlooked exposure.

**Life Insurance** – Whether term or permanent, life insurance can provide income, final expenses, transfer an inheritance and business continuation.

**Pet Insurance** – You know I would not leave off this vital protection to cover the health for our precious animals.

There are many choices in the marketplace when it comes to your personal insurance program – especially automobile and homeowner coverage. We recommend you work with an agent and agency that will take the time to get to know you, your family, and your insurance needs. One that can search the marketplace for the correct combination of coverage and

price to meet the insurance requirements of you and your family.

You've worked hard to attain your assets and this is a great time of the year. Let a personal lines specialist provide you with the gift of a Personal Insurance Program that will protect you with sound insurance products.



*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](http://www.ins-zone.com) and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo and Umbrella Liability', or call 850.424.6979.*

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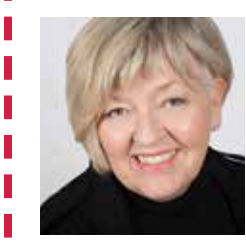


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**Community**

# Okaloosa County Unveils Women Veterans Monuments

This past Veteran's Day, November 11, Okaloosa County unveiled Women Veterans Monuments, honoring women who have served and made significant contributions in the U.S. Military throughout history. The life-size, bronze monuments are arranged along a picturesque trail of the 17.5-acre Veterans' Park on Okaloosa Island and have been sculpted in honor of women who sacrificed for our country as true patriots. Each represents a woman veteran who made a significant military contribution during one of many major conflicts throughout U.S. history, from the Revolutionary War to the War in Afghanistan.

Home to native wildlife and vegetation, the park is situated on the Choctawhatchee Bay coastline and pays homage to the military, which has played an integral role in forming our community. Second only to Washington, D.C., Florida is home to one of the largest populations of women veterans in the nation.

Honorees chosen by the Women Veterans Monument Advisory Committee and approved by the Board include the following:

**Margaret Corbin** - Revolutionary War, Army

**Cathay Williams** - Civil War, Army

**Lenah Higbee** - World War I, Navy

**Jacqueline Cochran** - World War II, Air Force Reserves

**Jonita Ruth Bonham** - Bovée, Korean War, Army Air Corps / Air Force

**Sharon Ann Lane** - Vietnam War, US Army Nurse Corps Reserve

**Leigh Ann Hester** - Persian Gulf War, Army National Guard

**Naseema** - War in Afghanistan, US Air Force

Like the men and women in uniform—past and present—the honored women veterans “kept their promise to bear any burden and endure any hardship for the cause of freedom,” said



Air Force Colonel Allison Black, 24th SOW Vice Commander, Hurlbert Field, speaking during the Veterans Day ceremony. “The nation will be proud and residents along with guests will embrace the detail, quality and effort that has gone into honoring women who have given such dedication to our country,” said Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman Carolyn Ketchel.

When you visit, you arrive at a dedication plaza where a path encircles a flying U.S. flag, a POW-MIA flag, Florida and county flags. Military and Coast

Guard flags fly from poles on the perimeter. The first statue you encounter is representative of Revolutionary War hero Margaret Corbin. In November of 1776, while defending Fort Mifflin in New York, her husband, a soldier in the Continental Army, was killed by a Hessian musket ball. With no time to grieve, she continued loading and firing a canon by herself.

The journey continues along the trail where visitors experience the seven additional women memorialized by statues chosen by the Women's Veteran Memorial Advisory Committee, approved by the Board of County Commissioners and crafted by Sculptor Jon Hair, who hopes visitors will feel a connection with each of the heroes through his sculptures. The Memorial Park includes a dedication plaza, ADA sidewalks, parking, landscape with

irrigation and the eight statues, funded entirely from Okaloosa County Tourism Development.

A Living Shoreline, funded by a RESTORE grant, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and matching funds from Tourism Development, will be constructed to protect 2,200 linear feet of shoreline by reducing the impact of wave energy and providing an oyster habitat, a seagrass recruitment area and a salt marsh shelf. There is a boardwalk planned along with an education component.

“Every one of us has a story,” said Col. Black. “And while we walk on the trail outside and remember these specific eight brave and selfless women, many more stories will come to light, and those stories will become inspiration for the next generation as they find their way in the world.” 1,400 women serve on active duty currently at Eglin Air Force Base in every role. Learn more about the honorees at [myokaloosa.com/bcc/women-veterans-memorial](http://myokaloosa.com/bcc/women-veterans-memorial).

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# Decorating Tips for Ringing in 2022!



and you'll only need a few glitz and glam items to create a WOW factor. Below are a few simple and easy decorating ideas to get your party started. (Note: I receive no financial benefit by referencing or your purchasing of these items.)

December has finally arrived and the bounty of colorful lights, lawn décor, door wreaths and holiday parties are in full swing. Since most of you have probably completed your decorating for the many holidays that are observed in the month of December (Did you know there are 14 holidays that are celebrated around the world in December?), let's discuss decorating and planning for New Year's Eve!

Whether you're planning on hosting a big New Year's Eve Party or celebrating with a few friends, your evening deserves a bit of glitz, glam and a lot of laughter! Unlike the stress of preparing a Thanksgiving meal or finding the perfect gift for everyone on your list, Ringing in the New Year should be a fun evening with minimal stress.

Decorating for New Year's Eve helps to set the festive mood

**Starburst Sphere Lights** – You can hang these dimmable, waterproof fairly starburst lights inside or outside for a fun sparkly firework effect. Source: Amazon – PxBNIUYA Brand.

**New Year's Eve Party Hats** – Its' okay to be a kid once and a while! These black and gold foil party hats add a lot of fun to your party and photos! Create a fun little table scape with them. Source: Papersource.com – Item 10014559.

**Gold Tinsel Fringe Garland** – This garland adds glitz and glam in seconds! You can drape it anywhere for an instant party! Source: merimeri.com – Sku: 199083.

**2022 Happy New Year Decorations Kit** – Create a fun picture wall with Black and Gold signs, Paper Fans, 2022 Foil Balloons, Banner, Foil Curtain and Balloons. Source: Amazon – NAIWOXI Brand.

**Black, Gold and Silver Party Horns** – Make a little



noise at midnight with these fun black, gold and silver noisemakers. Source: Party City.

**Cocktail Napkins, Plates, Cups, Utensils and Straws** – Classic and fun black with gold foil polka dots! Serves 50 and disposable (no dishes to wash). Source: Amazon – Decorlife Brand.

**Disco Ball Tumblers** – Your guests will love sipping their beverages from these mirrored disco ball cups and they make a great party favor too. Source: Etsy.com

**Gold Glitter Champagne Toasting Flutes** – Elegant classic design that can be reused



or tossed. Source: Amazon – Oojami Brand

**Board Games, Music and Dick Clark's Rocking NYE Countdown with Ryan Seacrest** – All of these items can help liven the party. You know your guests; pick what's fun for everyone!

Use some or all of the above-mentioned party decorations and remember to decorate your outdoor area for those party-goers that will want a bit of fresh air during the night. Keep your food prep simple with room temperature finger foods and have warming trays



for a few hot items. Set up a bar area so everyone can enjoy their beverage of choice and remember to have lots of ice and water. Serve desserts later in the evening and offer coffee-cups-to-go for the drive home. Source: Amazon – Afubaka Brand

Happy New Year to YOU and yours! Cheers to good health, prosperity and, most of all, lots of love and laughter in 2022!

For questions, contact Kim Schneider, Coastal Design by Kim, (850) 904-6622, kim@coastaldesignbykim.com.

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# Buying a Car During the Current Diminished Inventory Market



BY WILL ESTELL

By this point, most everyone who drives, or keeps up with current economic and supply chain trends, is well aware that the current automobile market in our country (and most others) is facing a problem we haven't seen to this degree in our lifetimes.

In a nutshell, the current lack of new and used vehicle inventory is partly due to supply chain issues first affected by the pandemic, and later catapulted into more problems with a fire in a major supplier facility in China, leading to a worldwide shortage of microchips used in the new car manufacturing process.

This new car shortage is, by association, also responsible for the diminished number of used cars on the market, since dealers depend on new car trade-ins for much of their used inventory,

that then flows down the chain to supply the major auto auction houses, local wholesale dealers, and the smaller non-dealer pre-owned car lots. Meaning right now, the demand for new and used cars is far outweighing the availability. Thus, making it harder to find the particular new or used vehicle you may be looking for, and increasingly difficult to get a good deal on the pre-owned automobiles you do find to purchase.

So, what do you do if you find yourself in need—or want—of a vehicle during these tumultuous times?

We all know that anytime supply for anything is less than the demand for the same tangible product—be it real estate, automobiles, building supplies or high-end watches—the result is usually a temporary adjustment—repeat after me, “inflation”—in the said commodity. Read that again, “temporary.” Meaning that if we pay too much for something just because there is less of that something in a current market, we often still paid too much! That's basic economics, but it's surprising how many people get caught up thinking they have to have something and let their emo-



tions talk them into paying too much for it.

In the case of used cars especially, we are seeing a number of vehicles selling at retail establishments for a good percentage

over what the true retail value for that same vehicle is. Remember, this shortage is real, and the supply of vehicles available may not catch up with normal auto purchasing demand for up to

another two years (once the chip shortage is overcome and new manufacturing resumes to a normal pace), however (the BIG “HOWEVER”) this doesn't mean it's smart to pay over the retail book value for any car or truck you are considering buying.

If you are paying over the NADA (National Auto Dealer's Association) or KBB (Kelly Blue Book) retail value for the vehicle, you are simply paying too much. And, that will come back to haunt buyers who do this. As the vehicle you purchase is only worth what the books say it is worth when it comes time to sell or trade it in later on. And that time will come. You can do a simple internet search to find those values for any car you are thinking about buying, keeping in mind that dealers still want to sell cars, perhaps needing to more now than ever. So, push for that best deal or walk away.

So far, the “real” values of the used (or new) vehicles on the market hasn't changed much at all in the real world, even though some dealers are asking more, and some consumers seem willing to pay more than the book values. This means some people (a lot of people) are likely to find themselves way upside down when they try to sell or trade that car or truck they paid thousands over value for, just to get it. Remember, like most consumer goods, the majority of cars and trucks (other than particular collectible, rare, and antique ones) are depreciating assets. So, unlike the home or condo you buy that generally will continue to go up in value, the car you buy—even at fair market price—will almost always go down in value from the day you buy it. That's why it's so important to buy it right in the first place.

One way to buy smart is to really educate yourself on the real value of any vehicle you are considering. Just because lot A is selling their vehicle \$2,000 less than lot B doesn't mean either one is a good deal. Use the NADA and KBB book values and make it a rule not to pay over the retail book value, no matter what the dealership or



*Where there's a Wilson, there's a Way!*



2 Racetrack Rd NE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547  
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[www.wilsonautogroup.com](http://www.wilsonautogroup.com)

*Continued on next page*





### BUYING A CAR

*continued from previous page*

seller may tell you about supply and demand, or current values. If you pay too much today, you will most definitely owe way too much tomorrow.

The good news is that reputable dealers know this supply issue will even out in time, and they also know that the book value is the real value. Make it

a point to do business with those dealers and sellers only. In fact, being sort of auto aficionado myself, having owned over 35 various cars, trucks and SUV's over the years, my hard rule when purchasing anything (Yes, even in this current market.) is to never pay one dollar over the NADA clean trade-in book value for anything. Whether on a car lot or from an individual, I stick to that rule. This way I al-

ways know that I can drive most of those cars for even a year or less, keep the mileage at or below the national average, and still be able to trade or sell the vehicle for what I owe on it or more. The good news is, I have even been able to do this twice (for my pre-owned BMW and my fiancée's Mercedes) in the past few months, even during the current automobile market. So, just know you can do

it; it just might take a little more shopping around and tougher negotiating skills to make this happen.

*Will Estell is a writer and magazine editor, with hundreds of published articles in various publications, as well as numerous additional online articles in an array of genres. He's been instrumental in founding 11 magazine titles from concept to fruition, both for other publishing com-*

*panies and his own partnerships. He actively partakes in freelance media projects for an array of local, regional, and national publications, such as this one. Will is a father of three who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his fiancée, ABC news anchor, Laura Hussey. When he isn't writing, creating or consulting, he enjoys attending live musical events, hanging out with friends and playing with cars...real ones.*

## 'Tis The Season For Safe *Holiday* Travel

Millions of Floridians and visitors are expected to travel on Florida's roadways over the next two months. So, FLHSMV launched its Safe Holiday Travel campaign.

FLHSMV will be educating Floridians and visitors this month on all aspects of safe driving. The multi-phased safety messaging begins with a focus on having a road-ready vehicle. Tires are a vehicle's first line of defense on the road, so it's critical to check your tires before hitting the road. In 2020, there

were 3,069 tire-related crashes in Florida, resulting in 184 serious bodily injuries and 61 fatalities.

"Safety is always in season, and what better gift to give your loved ones this holiday season than your safe arrival," said FLHSMV Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes. "Florida continues to be a top holiday destination for visitors and residents, making our roads some of the busiest during the upcoming months.

In 2020, during the months

of November and December, there were 1,052 crashes involving alcohol, drugs, or a combination of both in Florida, and 5,442 DUI citations issued across the state. Under Florida law, DUI is one offense, proved by impairment of normal faculties by any substance or unlawful blood alcohol or breath alcohol level of .08 or above.

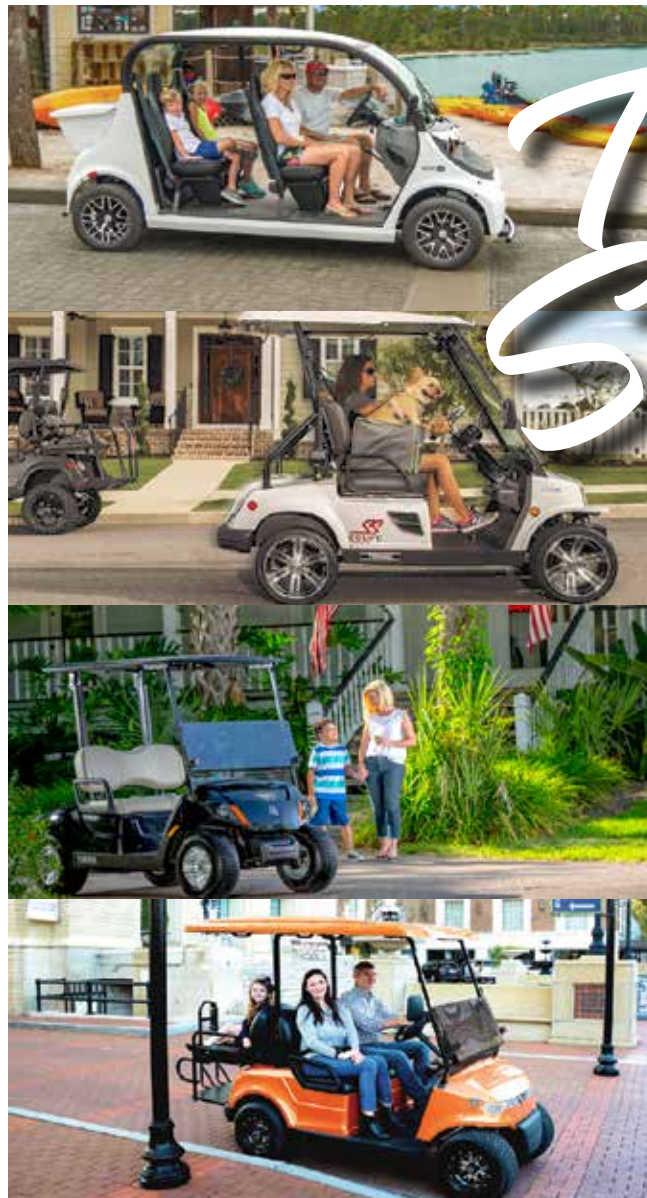
"The holiday season is a time to visit with friends and family, near and far. It is also one of the busiest times of the year to travel," said Florida Department of

Transportation Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. "On average, motor vehicle crashes occur in much higher numbers than normal at this time of year. Remember to prioritize safety by never driving impaired, wearing your seatbelt, and planning your route to ensure safe speeds on the roads. Together, we can ensure all of Florida's travelers have a happy and safe holiday season."

The Florida Police Chiefs Association also reminds you that Florida law enforcement offi-

cers will be on the roadways to ensure your safety. "We ask that our residents and visitors be vigilant on the roadways and highways which are busier than ever during this time of year."

No matter what season, as you celebrate, FLHSMV has got you covered with helpful tips to keep you safe on the road. Additional information including a road trip checklist and safety tips and resources visit [flhsmv.gov](http://flhsmv.gov).



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Travel

# Christmas on a Cruise?



By JODELL HAVERFIELD,  
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

Whether you need a break from all the holiday overkill or

you're just contemplating a new family tradition for Christmas, a cruise might be just what you need. One family said they had visions of waking up Christmas morning only to face a sea of tears and disappointed faces, but instead found their Christmas cruise experience to be their family's favorite Christmas.

My husband and I have been on several cruises during the Christmas season and even taken some of our grandchildren on a holiday cruise. Christmas is a wonderful time to get together with friends and family, many of whom you might not have seen for a while. This of-



ten comes with added stress and lengthy travel. Imagine spending Christmas together where there is plenty of room for everyone, you don't have to cook, and you never run out of food or drinks. Even the entertain-

ment is all taken care of. No one ever says I'm board and if you want to slip off and take a nap you can. You can party until late and be in your bed just minutes later with no morning mess to clean up. Yep, that just about sums up a Christmas cruise.

Another perk of Christmas cruising is being able to experience Christmas traditions celebrated in the various ports we have visited—tasting their food, listening to Christmas carols sung in different languages and seeing their traditions come to life.

It's well known that cruise ships are always decked out in their finest and that goes for Christmas décor as well. From

baby Jesus lying in a manger to Santa's workshop to winter wonderland or even winter with palm trees, a cruise ship's Christmas décor rarely disappoints.

Rather than tell you, I thought I would just show you a few of my favorite holiday cruise memories. We will be in UT again this year for Christmas with our grandchildren and then starting the new year off on a Southern Caribbean Cruise! I will be sharing on my podcasts.

We at Have Travel Memories Vacations wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

Until next year.

*Love JoDell.*



*Book Your Next Memory Today.....*

**Here for You... And All of Your Travel Needs!**

**JoDell Haverfield**, Owner and CEO of Have Travel Memories Vacations, with over 25 years as a Travel Advisor, Accredited Cruise Councillor hosting cruises since 2002. Specializing in the Cruise and River Cruise industry. Call or email me today and let your adventures begin...



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# 2021 Football Guide

## Football. Food. Fun. Fans. Let the Games Begin...



## Destin's Best Places to Watch Your Favorite Teams!



BY SCOTT MILLER

All I want for Christmas is a Super Bowl Win, a Super Bowl Win, a Super Bowl Win...

Trust me y'all you don't want to hear me singing this song—writing it is much easier on your ears.

Can you believe it's December already? College Football Conference Championship games and playoffs are here. College Bowl games are just a couple weeks away and the regular season home stretch is now underway in the NFL.

The football fan Trifecta has begun!

And the cherry on top in December? Santa Claus is coming to town and saving the very best for last. We'll soon be celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Can I get an Amen! We can all count our blessings to live and love here in Destin.

As always, December closes out the year in spectacular fashion, and our favorite football teams are in position to do the same! For some it means being a champion, for others it means being a spoiler and for all, my fellow football fans, fanatics and diehards, it means another month of incredible games are waiting for us to watch, to cheer and to enjoy with family, friends and those whom we love the most.

Wondering where to go to watch and cheer on your team? We've done the homework for you. So, read on then go out and try them all. Here in Destin, there's never a bad seat in the house.

### AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

Home of the World Famous Jumbotron. Football Season is in full swing and you don't want to miss out on experiencing the 2021 season AJ's style. AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar is featuring the best games all season long on the one and only Jumbotron, right here on the Harbor in Destin. Be sure to enjoy an adult beverage or two with AJ's branded vodka or savor the flavor of local beers brewed exclusively for AJ's by Props Craft Brewery. Serving up delicious daily specials and entertaining live music all week long, it's Football, Football, Football. AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar is where you want to be.

(850) 837-1913

116 Harbor Blvd., Destin  
ajsgdestin.com



neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail! Football fans, Austin's is ready for you. There are big screen TV's all around, so not a bad seat in the house. Enjoy Football Specials including \$5 Pints, \$16 Buckets and more. Austin's on 98, of Nashville roots, also features its very own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce!" And don't miss the endless Mimosa and Bloody Mary Brunch featuring amazing chicken and waffles every Saturday and Sunday from 11am

### Austons on 98

Offering a raw bar, happy hour and live music, Austons is home of the 102-foot bar including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little

- 3pm with live music every Friday and Saturday from 7-10pm.

Check out more specials, beer selections and a full menu at [austonson98.com](http://austonson98.com).

(850) 842-3200

125 Poinciana Blvd.,  
Miramar Beach  
[Austonson98.com](http://Austonson98.com)

### FATBOYS - Destin

Are you craving a delicious burger or some tasty wings and an ice cold beer? Maybe all of the above? But the game is on and you won't miss even a single play. FATBOYS has you covered. Fully staffed and ready to serve you, the obvious choice is easy to see and that's just how they want it. Yes, indeed y'all, Game Day and FATBOYS go hand in hand. So, hustle on down to some of the best, most delicious gameday football watching food the world has ever known. Be sure to enjoy a tall glass of FATBOYS Lager, too, a true joy to your taste buds that will perfectly compliment anything on the menu. Oh, and

bring the crew with you, too. There's always a great seat waiting just for you! Their newest location in Miramar Beach is now open so stop by and say hello. Visit Fatboys' Facebook page for exciting updates. They hope to see you soon. Tell them Destin Life sent you!

(850)842-3190

104 Harbor Blvd. Destin

(850)842-2807

10859 Emerald Coast Pkwy.

Miramar Beach

[Ilovefatboys.com](http://Ilovefatboys.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 football? With Big screen TVs situated all

*Continued on next page*



*Holi Restaurants (A Flavor of Joy) serve a unique combination of Indian Cuisine and Indian heritage!*

**Look for our food truck:  
Holi on Wheels**

**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
for updates and food truck locations**



#### FORT WALTON BEACH

Holi Indian Cuisine  
280 Eglin Pkwy NE  
Fort Walton Beach  
**(850) 362-6077**

#### MIRAMAR BEACH

Holi Indian Kitchen  
10859 Emerald Coast Pkwy  
Miramar Beach  
**(850) 353-2630**

#### PANAMA CITY

Holi Indian Grill  
3102 W 23rd St.  
Panama City  
**(850) 215-3030**



*Have you visited Fatboys...where we build the juiciest burgers and fry up the tastiest wings you've ever had?*

**We start with fresh never frozen 100% premium beef for our burgers, add only the freshest ingredients, and build it just the way you like.**

**Check out our menu at [ilovefatboys.com](http://ilovefatboys.com)**

**104 HARBOR BLVD., DESTIN, FL  
(850)842-3190**

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Miramar Beach Next to Holi**

**Follow us on Social Media**



**DESTIN'S BEST**

*continued from previous page*

around the bar and restaurant, Island Wing Company invites you in to watch and cheer the 2021 football season. Need to feed the whole family? Family meals to go with curbside delivery has you covered. Your Island awaits you...

(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, because College and Pro Football is back and the 2021 season is underway. With a fully stocked

bar serving up 95 different bourbons and 30 beers on draft, it's no secret why the locals love Landshark's Pizza Company.  
(850) 424-6743  
300 Harbor Blvd., Destin  
landsharkspizza.com

**Tailfins Waterfront Grill**

Start your day off right with Tailfins Breakfast every day from 8am-11am, 7 days a week! 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! Be sure

to order up a round of Mimosas and Bloody Marys, a perfect way to start your day...

Watch Tailfins' world famous Sushi chef create right in front of your eyes! If you haven't tried the Sushi yet, you're missing out...absolutely the best in town! Featuring multiple levels of indoor and outdoor dining overlooking the Destin Boardwalk and Harbor, Tailfins is your go-to destination. Football Season is going strong and with huge BIG screen TV's everywhere you look, and I mean everywhere, you can watch your favorite teams all season long. Kick back and enjoy some of your absolute favorite food and drinks including Sushi Rolls and Sake Bombs, Scrumptious Early Bird Dinner Specials M-F from 4-6pm. Happy Hour from 4-6pm Mon. - Fri. featuring \$17 Domestic Bottle Buckets and \$7.99 Pitchers, \$5 House Wines and Well Drinks and \$5 Long Island Iced Teas. Rusty Hammerstrom performs every Monday, Wednesday & Friday. Daniel Boone is live every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

**DAILY CRUISES**

Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure.

Departures 7 Days a Week aboard "Always Workin," Tailfins' Brand New 45 foot long cruiser.

Enjoy the Destin Harbor & Crab Island like never before; Choose between The World Famous 4-Hour Tour, Sunset Cruise or Thursday night's Spectacular Fireworks Cruise.

Book online at tailfinsislandadventure.com  
(850) 650-1200

*On the Harbor in Destin,  
172 Harbor Blvd.  
tailfinsdestin.com*



**Boathouse Oyster Bar**

Destin's best kept secret—it's where the locals go with live music every night! Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's Gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked just the way you like 'em! 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.

Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times.

Music schedule subject to change. Follow on FaceBook for updates! Enjoy...

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

*Continued on next page*

## RAW BAR!

**Sunday - Thursday**  
11 AM - 9 PM

**Friday & Saturday**  
11 AM - 10 PM

## LIVE MUSIC!

**Friday and Saturday**  
7-10 pm

## HAPPY HOUR!

**3-6 pm Daily**

Home of the 102 ft. bar including 32 beers on draft!

Specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England style clam chowder and jumbo shrimp cocktail!

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

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# Tamales for the Holidays

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**DESTIN'S BEST**

*continued from previous page*

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

We've got just two words for you Amigo. FOOTBALL SEASON! Tequila's knows what

that means here in Destin and is ready for you on Game Day or any day. 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, jum-

bo 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 Te-

quila's Plate, Chili Con Carne, The Three Amigos and the new MASTER PARRILLADA—a unique fusion of sports bar food and delightful Mexican dishes.

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

**College Football Game Day Schedule**

**Friday, Dec. 3**

Oregon (10-2) vs Utah (9-3) 7pm, ABC  
Western Kentucky (8-4) vs UTSA (11-1) 6pm, CBSS

**Saturday, Dec. 4**

Baylor (10-2) vs Oklahoma St. (11-1) 11am, ABC  
Kent St. (7-5) vs Northern Illinois (8-4) 11am, ESPN

Utah St. (9-3) vs SDSU (11-1) 2pm, FOX  
Appalachian St. (10-2) vs Louisiana (11-1) 2:30pm, ESPN

Georgia (12-0) vs Alabama (11-1) 3pm, CBS  
Houston (11-1) vs Cincinnati (12-0) 3pm, ABC  
Pittsburgh (10-2) vs Wake Forest (10-2) 7pm, ABC

Michigan (11-1) vs Iowa (10-2) 7pm, FOX  
USC (4-7) vs California (4-7) 10pm, FS1

**Saturday, Dec. 11**

Army (8-3) vs Navy (3-8) 12pm, CBS

**Friday, Dec. 17**

**Bahamas Bowl**

Toledo (7-5) vs Middle Tenn. St. (6-6) 11am, ESPN

**Pro Football Schedule**

**WEEK 13**

**Thursday, Dec. 2**

Dallas Cowboys at New Orleans Saints, 7:20 p.m. (FOX/NFLN/AMAZON)

**Sunday, December 5**

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Atlanta Falcons, Noon (FOX)

Arizona Cardinals at Chicago Bears, Noon (FOX)

Los Angeles Chargers at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon (FOX)

Minnesota Vikings at Detroit Lions, Noon (CBS)

Indianapolis Colts at Houston Texans, Noon (CBS)

Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs, Noon (CBS)

New York Giants at Miami Dolphins, Noon (FOX)

Philadelphia Eagles at New York Jets, Noon (CBS)

Washington Football Team at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m. (FOX)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Los Angeles Rams, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Baltimore Ravens at Pittsburgh Steelers, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

San Francisco 49ers at Seattle Seahawks, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

**Monday, Dec. 6**

New England Patriots at Buffalo Bills, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEEK 14**

**Thursday, Dec. 9**

Pittsburgh Steelers at Minnesota Vikings, 7:20 p.m. (FOX/NFLN/AMAZON)

**Sunday, Dec. 12**

Atlanta Falcons at Carolina Panthers, Noon (FOX)

San Francisco 49ers at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon (CBS)

Baltimore Ravens at Cleveland Browns, Noon (CBS)

Seattle Seahawks at Houston Texans, Noon (FOX)

Las Vegas Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs, Noon (CBS)

New Orleans Saints at New York Jets, Noon (FOX)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Tennessee Titans, Noon (CBS)

Dallas Cowboys at Washington Football Team, Noon (FOX)

Detroit Lions at Denver Broncos, 3:05 p.m. (FOX)

New York Giants at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (FOX)

Buffalo Bills at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Chicago Bears at Green Bay Packers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

**Monday, Dec. 13, 2021**

Los Angeles Rams at Arizona Cardinals, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEEK 15**

**Thursday, Dec. 16**

Kansas City Chiefs at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:20 p.m. (FOX/NFLN/AMAZON)

**Saturday, Dec. 18**

TBD, 4:30p, NFLN

TBD, 8:15p, NFLN

**Saturday/Sunday TBD**

Carolina Panthers at Buffalo Bills, TBD

Las Vegas Raiders at Cleveland Browns, TBD

New England Patriots at Indianapolis Colts, TBD

New York Jets at Miami Dolphins, TBD

Washington Football Team at Philadelphia Eagles, TBD

**Sunday, Dec. 19**

Green Bay Packers at Baltimore Ravens, Noon (FOX)

Arizona Cardinals at Detroit Lions, Noon (FOX)

Houston Texans at Jacksonville Jaguars, Noon (CBS)

Dallas Cowboys at New York Giants, Noon (FOX)

Tennessee Titans at Pittsburgh Steelers, Noon (CBS)

Cincinnati Bengals at Denver Broncos, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at San Francisco 49ers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Seattle Seahawks at Los Angeles Rams, 3:25 p.m. (FOX)

New Orleans Saints at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

**Monday, Dec. 20**

Minnesota Vikings at Chicago Bears, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEEK 16**

**Thursday, Dec. 23**

San Francisco 49ers at Tennessee Titans, 7:20 p.m. (NFLN)

**Saturday, Dec. 25**

Cleveland Browns at Green Bay Packers, 3:30 p.m., (FOX/NFLN/AMAZON)

Indianapolis Colts at Arizona Cardinals, 7:15 p.m. (NFLN)

**Sunday, Dec. 26**

Detroit Lions at Atlanta Falcons, Noon (FOX)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Carolina Panthers, Noon (FOX)

Baltimore Ravens at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon (CBS)

Los Angeles Chargers at Houston Texans, Noon (CBS)

Los Angeles Rams at Minnesota Vikings, Noon (FOX)

Buffalo Bills at New England Patriots, Noon (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at New York Jets, Noon (CBS)

New York Giants at Philadelphia Eagles, Noon (FOX)

Chicago Bears at Seattle Seahawks, 3:05 p.m. (FOX)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Kansas City Chiefs, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Denver Broncos at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Washington Football Team at Dallas Cowboys, 7:20p.m. (NBC)

**Monday, Dec. 27**

Miami Dolphins at New Orleans Saints, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEEK 17**

**Sunday, Jan. 2**

Atlanta Falcons at Buffalo Bills, Noon (FOX)

New York Giants at Chicago Bears, Noon (CBS)

Kansas City Chiefs at Cincinnati Bengals, Noon (CBS)

Arizona Cardinals at Dallas Cowboys, Noon (FOX)

LA Raiders at Indianapolis Colts, Noon (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at New England Patriots, Noon (CBS)

Carolina Panthers at New Orleans Saints, Noon (FOX)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at New York Jets, Noon (FOX)

Miami Dolphins at Tennessee Titans, Noon (CBS)

Philadelphia Eagles at Washington Football Team, Noon (FOX)

Denver Broncos at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Houston Texans at San Francisco 49ers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Rams at Baltimore Ravens, 3:25 p.m. (FOX)

Detroit Lions at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m. (FOX)

Minnesota Vikings at Green Bay Packers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

**Monday, Jan. 3**

Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEEK 18**

**Saturday, Jan. 8**

TBD, 3:30 p.m., ESPN/ABC

TBD, 7:15 p.m., ESPN/ABC

**Sunday, Jan. 9**

New Orleans Saints at Atlanta Falcons, Noon (FOX)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Baltimore Ravens, Noon (CBS)

New York Jets at Buffalo Bills, Noon (CBS)

Cincinnati Bengals at Cleveland Browns, Noon (CBS)

Green Bay Packers at Detroit Lions, Noon (FOX)

Tennessee Titans at Houston Texans, Noon (CBS)

Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars, Noon (CBS)

New England Patriots at Miami Dolphins, Noon (CBS)

Chicago Bears at Minnesota Vikings, Noon (FOX)

Washington Football Team at New York Giants, Noon (FOX)

Dallas Cowboys at Philadelphia Eagles, Noon (FOX)

Carolina Panthers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon (FOX)

Seattle Seahawks at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m. (FOX)

Kansas City Chiefs at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

San Francisco 49ers at Los Angeles Rams, 3:25 p.m. (FOX)

Los Angeles Chargers at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

TBD, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

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# Destin Commons Announces Destin's First Food Hall

Destin Commons will be launching Destin's first food hall, offering a culinary and entertainment gathering place for locals and visitors, as well as a unique opportunity for the region's up-and-coming and veteran chefs.



City Food Hall will showcase more than 10 specialty restaurant concepts offering food and drinks from around the globe,

an expansive indoor/outdoor bar, and two state-of-the-art Topgolf full swing simulators with a variety of multi-sport games, several HDTVs and comfortable lounge seating.

City Food Hall at Destin Commons will be located in a 14,000 square-foot space next to Foot Locker.

City Food Hall is the brainchild of founders Peter Rounce and Kenzie Motai, who met while launching St. Roch Market (now MIA Market) at Miami Design District. With a focus on creativity, service and true hospitality, the duo successfully planned, developed and operated five additional food halls in cities from Chicago to New Orleans to Houston and more. Now, their new City Food Hall brand adds compelling entertainment and event programming to the mix.

Throughout the country, emerging and established chefs are using food halls to springboard their culinary concepts by introducing them in a low-risk environment. Food hall vendors aren't required to incur the typical build-out and start-up costs associated with a stand-alone brick and mortar restaurant, which includes construction, fixtures and furniture.

Food halls are a trend that is here to stay. Just 11 years ago, the Wall Street Journal reported there were only 25 food halls across the U.S. By 2016 there were more than 100 and now that number has grown into the several hundred.

Kenzie said the food hall concept enables his team to "bring new culinary talent to the Destin table," and they have begun discussions with area chefs specializing in Mexican, Japanese, Mediterranean and other cuisines. Guests will be able to order from their phone via the City Food Hall website and execute all transactions digitally.

"We are excited to create an environment that will appeal to Destin's discerning palate. Our platform is as equally suited for a family night as it is a first date, and we look forward to delivering memorable experiences to the community," said Peter, the company's CEO.

In addition, the two Topgolf Swing Suites will be a popular choice for Destin's thriving golf community. Perfect for novices and aspiring pros, the suites include a massive screen and several fun, multi-sport games. The Full Swing golf simulator technology is the same simulator used by PGA Tour pros Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth and Jason Day for off-course practice.

"Golf enthusiasts can develop their swing and challenge their friends, all while enjoying a cocktail, craft beer and delicious food," Peter said. "And they can catch the game on one of our HDTVs. We believe City Food Hall will become one of Destin's top culinary and nightlife destinations."

For more information, visit [cityfoodhall.com](http://cityfoodhall.com) or email [info@cityfoodhall.com](mailto:info@cityfoodhall.com).

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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 charisma 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!

11pm – 4am Latin Night Fridays & Saturdays – Music and Dancing upstairs/downstairs. 18+ to enter, 21+ to drink. GUYS \$10, LADIES \$5.

Thursday: Live Music from 6pm to 9pm

Friday: Jones & Co from 7pm to 10pm

Saturday: Live Music from 6pm to 9pm

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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 lattes. 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

## Mi Gente' Supermarket & Taqueria

Open for breakfast every Saturday & Sunday and lunch and dinner 7 days a week, 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 dishes 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 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. Chili Relleno Tuesdays! Menudo Domingo de Menudo Sundays!

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## Taiwan Ice Cream & Poke

Taiwan Ice Cream & Poke is the only place in Destin to serve Hawaiian poke! There's also Taiwanese shaved ice and boba tea. Poke is a Hawaiian dish usually served with raw fish and can be made to order with cooked chicken, beef and shrimp, too. A variety of sauces,



from spicy mayo to eel to sweet chili, accompany. Additional toppings can include pineapple, cilantro, carrots, cucumber, sweet corn, tomato, lettuce, edamame, green onion, red onion or crab meat. Then finally add a bit of crunch with sesame seed,

fried onion or fried garlic.

Taiwan shaved ice is mixed with condensed milk and syrup then topped off with a choice of four toppings such as strawberries, pineapple, peaches, chocolate pieces, fruity pebbles, sprinkles, gummy bears, marshmallows and popping boba.

The boba tea comes in four flavors: strawberry, mango, Thai and Taro.

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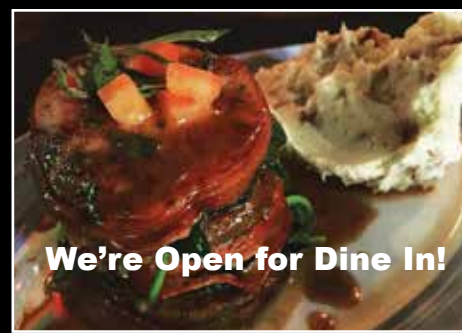


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## Your Oasis Awaits!

BY LORI SMITH, PUBLISHER

Who would have thought our area's only fully plant-based, hidden gem nestled off the road next to a quiet neighborhood in Santa Rosa Beach would be bursting at the seams with flavor (and a chill atmosphere with a calm vibe to get lost in)!

Not your ordinary fare, the new Oasis restaurant aims to highlight the delicious diversity and abundance of plants with menu items that include overstuffed sandwiches, cheesy buffalo spinach dip, loaded burgers and a Chocolate Espresso Martini for dessert. Here, you're not missing a thing with this new kind of dining experience crafted with gourmet, plant-based comfort food.

We couldn't wait to bite into our lunch which did not disappoint. I had to ask if the Moroccan Spiced Burger was really plant-based as you can't tell. Owner Amy Sievers says it's a blend of their own compilation of spices, lentils and other fare that give it the consistency and amazing flavor! Well, it passed my taste bud test!

The breakfast burger is also a BIG hit with locals. It's a perfectly seasoned, plant-based burger topped with an egg patty, leaf lettuce, tomato, avocado and served with home fried po-

tatoes. A dinner specialty is shepherd's pie with garlic butter toast and roasted Brussels sprouts. And don't forget the Burnt Chocolate Cream for dessert! With a daily rotating menu, other recommended items include Berry Spinach and Mixed Greens Goat Cheese, Buffalo Tender Wrap, Fried Oyster Mushroom Gyro or Kefta Kabob Gyro (personal favorite), Mediterranean Bowl, eggplant lasagna, lentil meatless loaf and Trumpet Scallops Over Angel Hair Pasta—some familiar 100% vegan dishes; some not. For an appetizer, the Eggplant Fries looked really great at the table next to us! We will be trying those next time for sure!

Amy, also a photographer and artist, says the Oasis is a place for the entire family—vegan, lactose intolerant, nut intolerant, etc. There's an item on the menu for each member to be able to eat and enjoy a meal together. "I wanted to create a space of connection where vegans AND non-vegans could have a food experience to remember," says Amy on Facebook.



The team behind this inventive, vegan innovation—Chef Amy and Chef Divaldo—has quickly won over the stomachs of locals and visitors, as it has expanded from its initial business, Destin Fresh which many locals are familiar with, Amy decided to take a leap of faith with the new restaurant. The timing was right. "When I started this venture, I had no idea how amazing it would be. I saw a need, I had an idea and I ran with it. Long days and nights, over my head at times, stressed,

excited and dedicated, we grew the idea," says Amy on Facebook.

"The idea was made real." The long-awaited Oasis Santa Rosa Beach is now open for lunch (11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) and dinner (4:40-10 p.m.). "I started this adventure with no real plan. I needed a kitchen and found myself building a restaurant. Over my head and out of my league would be an understatement for sure," says Amy. I jumped in and let my ideas take over and run wild as day by day I added to and built out my Oasis."


Get away from your ordinary at the outside smoothie bar. Do lunch at the outside café and pool deck. Sip on amazing Oasis craft drink list at the Elixir Bar or feast at the fabulous Sunday brunch from 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. There's also a pizza bar and inside reservation only dining.

"Oasis is a place to stay, chill and relax. "We saw a need, had

a vision, and then made it real. We wanted a place for us and others. A place where people could eat and enjoy food without fear of harming our bodies or animals," says Amy. "Here's to clean eating, delicious eating and safe eating—so grateful for these healing foods and this opportunity."

"The Oasis is a place to connect thought planned events, yoga, pool, lounge, evening dining, breakfast, lunch, smoothies, etc. And no TVs! It's a stay-all-day or grab-a-bite-and-go place—a unique way to dine and unwind," Amy passionately elaborates. "I just want to make people feel good!"

Located off the busy path of Hwys. 98 and 30a on 306 Bald Eagle Dr., it's time to find your way to the Oasis! Visit theOasisSRB.com or @theOasisSRB on Facebook. Call (850) 401-9149. Open Tuesday To Friday-Lunch: 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Dinner 5 to 10 p.m.; Saturday 5-10 p.m.; Sunday Brunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m.




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# Deck the Bows! 35th Annual Boat Parade to Light Up the Destin Harbor!

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

Each year for the past 35 years, Destin boat owners have made the holidays a little bit bigger and brighter by adorning their vessels, large and small, with as many lights and decorations as possible; then cruising in, all in a gleaming row, through the historic Destin Harbor ensuring we're all in the holiday spirit.

Participating boats light up the night on the Harbor where the brightest, most creative ones win and a few lucky seafarers gain bragging rights to the most decked out boat between Pensacola and Panama City. The same vessels that command Destin's waters on warmer days take on blinking lights, animated characters and other holiday fare for this December Destin tradition that pleases thousands of fans watching from the Harbor's docks, businesses and boardwalk.

Sponsored by the Destin Fishing and History Museum and Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville, excited bystanders gather to watch boats of all shapes and sizes—glittering, bright powerboats, party boats, pontoon boats, sail boats and yachts—parade by as costumed revelers join in the mix. Faithful crews decorate, dress in theme costumes and entertain using all things that assault the senses from a visual and sound standpoint. "It's just as much about the boat community as watchers and bystanders gather in the many restaurants and docks along the Destin Harbor," says Mary Ann Windes, Destin Fishing Fleet, Party Boat Destin Princess and Party Boat Destiny. "It's a good excuse to go boating in the winter and celebrate the holidays. You'll see elaborate light displays choreographed to Christmas music while other boats sport famous passengers like Santa and the Grinch. All are clearly enjoying their moment in the parade," she says.

Museum Executive Director Kathy Marler Blue says there can be as many as 30 boats competing in the eight boat categories. Cited by Coastal Living as one of the Best Holiday Boat Parades in America, the first boat parade was started in



ued the boat parade. Proceeds benefit the Destin History and Fishing Museum.

This year's Holiday on the Harbor Boat Parade begins at 6 p.m., Sunday Dec.12. Boats

will start lining up in the Harbor from 5 – 5:30 p.m. then will make their way from the east side of the Destin Harbor (near Boshamps restaurant) to the west side (Harborwalk Village/

Emerald Grande) ending near the Destin Bridge and East Pass area. You can view the boat parade anywhere from Boshamps

*Continued on page 32*



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**Off the Hook**

# Manatees are in Motion!

This is the time of year for migrating Manatees! So, slow down and look out for them. As water temperatures cool, manatees naturally migrate to warmer waters, generally warmer than 68 degrees to survive the winter. So, in the fall they travel to Florida springs, power plant discharges and other warm-water sites.

Manatees can be difficult to see, especially when you travel in a boat on the water. You may see a swirl on the surface caused

by the manatee when it dives; see an animal's back, snout, tail or flipper break the surface of the water; or you may only hear the manatee when it surfaces to breathe. In all of these instances, keeping your distance and passive observation are the best ways to view manatees. Boat slow and look out below to allow them to swim safely.

While manatees are large, they can be difficult to see in the water. The West Indian manatee

is an imperiled species and is protected by state and federal law. Please avoid harassing or disturbing manatees whenever you discover that manatees are in the water near you. Harassment is defined as any activity that alters the animal's natural behavior. By altering the manatee's natural behavior, you may create the likelihood of danger that is bad for the animal and against the law.

That's why it is important to



follow guidelines and follow all manatee protection zones; look

out while boating; wear polarized glasses and always give them space. Manatee protection zones are marked by waterway signs and maps of manatee protection zones are available online at [MyFWC.com/Manatee](http://MyFWC.com/Manatee) by clicking on "Data and Maps." Disturbing manatees at warm-water sites can cause them to swim out of those protected areas and into potentially life-threatening cold water.

During the colder months, Slow down in certain areas to prevent manatees from being injured or killed by motorboats or personal watercrafts. Boat strikes continue to be a major threat to Florida manatees.

### Being Near Manatees

Look, but don't touch manatees. Also, don't feed manatees or give them water. If manatees become accustomed to being around people, they can alter their behavior in the wild, perhaps causing them to lose their natural fear of boats and humans, which can make them more susceptible to harm.

Do not pursue or chase a manatee if you see one while you are swimming, snorkeling, diving, paddling or operating a boat.

Never poke, prod or stab a manatee with your hands, feet or any object.

If a manatee avoids you, do not chase the animal for a closer view.

Give manatees space to move. Avoid isolating or singling out an individual manatee from its group and do not separate a cow and her calf.

Keep hands and objects to yourself. Don't attempt to snag, hook, hold, grab, pinch, hit or ride a manatee.

Avoid excessive noise and splashing if a manatee appears nearby. The manatee may be resting and may surface without

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*Continued on next page*





# The Florida Black Bear Receives a New Home

Northwest Florida boasts the second largest bear population in the state. But, due to a high level of development in the region, the black bear population is being pushed out of their homes at alarming rates, which increases bear sightings and injuries to bears.

Alaqua Animal Refuge wanted to help solve the challenge. When local philanthropists Raven and Ryan Jumonville learned of Alaqua's plans, they wanted to know how they could get involved. And they did with a special gift to Alaqua Animal Refuge to build a bear sanctuary. Their gift, a 2008 Cruisers Yachts 460 Express yacht, will be sold with proceeds going towards building a portion of a new sanctuary to house unreleasable Florida Black Bears and educate the public about their plight.

The bear sanctuary will be located at Alaqua's new 100-acre home in Freeport and will include educational aspects that will teach our community and others how to live with them safely. "When wild animals are rehabilitated and deemed unreleasable by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), their fate is often euthanasia. There are not enough sanctuaries to help all of the animals in need, especially for larger native species like bears," says Alaqua Founder Laurie Hood.



"We want to be able to give these animals a place to live out their lives and become ambassadors for their species."

"The more our community and visitors know about them, the safer it will be for humans and bears alike," iterates Hood. "It was a dream come true to receive such a generous gift earmarked for a project that will be one of the first of its kind in the state. We look forward to teaching our community what a treasure these animals are and help some of the ones in need at the same time."

Alaqua Wildlife Director Shelby Proie adds, "As our native fauna continue to get displaced and in turn have more unavoidable interactions with humans, we are grateful to have the space to facilitate such a large project for this charismatic megafauna. Black bears are such an integral part of North Florida's ecosystem and not only do

we want to offer them a second chance of life through developing a wildlife rehabilitation center that meets their needs, but we will be able to go beyond that and have a space where they can live out their lives in an expansive natural environment if they are deemed non-releasable.

The Jumonville family has been loyal donors to Alaqua for a number of years, gifting one million dollars towards the Refuge's capital campaign to help build the new Welcome Center and Adoption Building at its new facility. The donation of the yacht to help with the bear sanctuary was the idea of their daughter, Jayden. "I like animals more than I like boats," said Jayden.

Galati Yachts in Destin is assisting with the sale of the vessel, and they are also including monthly dockage and electric at their facility. For a private showing and additional information, call Galati Yachts at 850-998-3011.

## MANATEES

*continued from previous page*

being aware of your presence. Noise and activity may startle the animal awake, which may put it in harm's way if it is frightened and leaves the area.

If the site you visit allows in-water activities near manatees,

use snorkel gear and float at the surface of the water to passively observe manatees. The sound of bubbles from SCUBA gear or other devices may cause manatees to leave the area.

Physically handling a distressed or stranded manatee might cause more harm. Instead, report injured, distressed, sick

or dead manatees to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) or dialing #FWC or \*FWC on a cellphone so trained responders can assist.

Additional resources for boaters, educators and other interested members of the public are available at [MyFWC.com/Manatee](http://MyFWC.com/Manatee).

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**Wellness**

# Are You Getting Your Best Sleep?



By DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

As we age, it seems like it's more difficult to get a good night's sleep. For some of us, it's harder to fall asleep and others have difficulty staying asleep. Then there are those who have difficulty with both falling asleep and staying asleep. A lack of sleep leads to daytime sleepiness, an inability to concentrate, emotional instability, poor decision making and a decrease in mood. A lack of sleep

is also associated with increases in disease such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, heart disease, depression and more. It's easy to see how important a good night's sleep is.

It should not be a surprise that the main reason sleep problems occur as we age is from dysfunction in our hormones. After age 40, the amount of sleep problems that occur from a lack of hormones increases rapidly. Progesterone plays a



major role in the ability to fall asleep at night. By dosing progesterone correctly, we are able to eliminate those hours of staring at the ceiling waiting to fall asleep. And with the proper use of testosterone and estrogen, we are able to get your sleep cycles to continue not only through the night, but also well into the morning. You can say goodbye to those mornings of waking up at 3 a.m. staring at the ceiling trying to decide if you should start your day or fight that losing battle to get a few more hours of sleep.

Most people think of hormones as only affecting libido or sexual function. In my mind, these are the least important reasons to consider hormone optimization. Improving sleep, waking refreshed and ready for the day, reducing your risk of disease and death, reducing your risk of multiple different cancers, improving your mood and increasing your overall feel-

ing of well-being are far more important.

As always, keep in mind that what is considered "normal" or "reference range" is not the same as optimal. A quick example of this is your Vitamin D level. A level of 30-100 is considered normal, but levels below 40 are associated with a 40% increase in cancer and levels below 50 are associated with a 6x increase in breast cancer. Are you going to be happy with a level of 35? Does your doctor know what the optimal ranges are of hormones that they rarely, if ever, even order? If you have to ask your doctor to order the lab, do you think they are going to know how to interpret the result? Come see us and get your labs done. Let the experts evaluate your levels.

*Dr. Richard Chern, MD specializes in hormone optimization in both women and men. He travels throughout the U.S. teaching doctors how to properly optimize hormones in men and women, including providers here in Northwest Florida. Dr. Chern along with nurse practitioner Sue Griffin ARNP are both currently accepting new patients. Call (850) 830-3012 today to make an appointment. It will be a life changing event.*



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## BOAT PARADE

*continued from page 29*

Seafood and Oyster House (approximate starting point) along the Boardwalk to Harborwalk Village where it ends as well as the Destin Bridge and Norriego Point. Many restaurants in between and along the Destin Harbor have a nice view of the boats including Tailfins from the 2nd and 3rd floor, AJ's from the upstairs area, Margaritaville from the 2nd and 3rd floors, the Boathouse, both levels of Harry T's and Brotula's outside seating.

Celebrity judges will be stationed at Harry T's in Harborwalk Village. Judges rate each boat on its originality, lights, appearance and special effects.

There are awards in 10 categories. Additional awards include best overall boat entry City of Destin award for the boat that best showcases the Harbor heritage.

Visit [destinhistoryandfishingmuseum.org](http://destinhistoryandfishingmuseum.org) for more infor-

mation. Special thanks to Land, Air, Sea Productions, the Destin Coast Guard Station, City of Destin, Destin Fire Control District, HarborWalk Village Staff, the team from HarborWalk Village and judges for helping to make the parade a wonderful Destin holiday tradition.

Immediately following the parade is a Fireworks show over the Destin Harbor. Live entertainment is from noon to 7 p.m. on the Main Stage at Harborwalk Village, with Santa at noon, the Ballet Conservatory at 2 p.m., Santa at 3 p.m., the Emerald Coast Community Band at 4 p.m. and The Village Brass Band from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information on Harborwalk's holiday festivities, visit [Facebook.com/HarborWalkVillageDestin](https://www.facebook.com/HarborWalkVillageDestin).

To register your boat, (\$25 per boat), call 850.837.6611 or email [kathydestinhistory@gmail.com](mailto:kathydestinhistory@gmail.com) or stop by the Destin History and Fishing Museum, 108 Stahlman Ave., Tues. - Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.





# The Risks of Sanitizing



By KAY LEAMAN,  
HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

While looking at the overuse of antibiotics, I came across some information that bares our attention.

Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections and have been successful in treating these illnesses. However, because antibiotics are not bacteria specific, they kill the good bacteria along with the bad.

Most of us know that we need to maintain a healthy gut microbiome in order to keep

our immune system strong. (The majority of our immune system is located in the gut.) Put the two together and you have a gut void of bacteria after using antibiotics which makes our bodies more susceptible to bacteria and viruses to attack.

Enter anti-bacterial soaps, hand sanitizers, sprays, etc. These products are also not bacteria specific and kill the good and the bad, thereby weakening our body's defenses. But unlike antibiotics, there are additional dangers.

The FDA warns that symptoms such as headaches, nausea and dizziness can occur after applying alcohol-based sanitizers to the skin. Vapors can be inhaled and the alcohol is absorbed into the skin. Repeated use can result in skin becoming dry, flaky and sensitive to touch. Dry skin actually increases our chances of picking up germs.

Some sanitizers contain Triclasan which is intended to kill bacteria and has been used in



products from toothpaste to body wash (Seriously!). High exposures can disrupt natural hormone cycles and even impact fertility. Triclasan has been banned from several types of products.

The CDC notes the risks in children. Younger children (under 12) are more susceptible to adverse effects, because their livers lack the adult amounts of

glycogen. Between these products being scented and kids being kids, their tendency is to sniff and/or put their hand in their mouths.

Doctors warn about the risks well: Eczema, skin irritation, formulations that affect fertility, resistance to antibiotics, hormone problems, immune system issues, impact on body development, contracting a skin disorder and alcohol poisoning.

Lastly, disinfecting or sanitizing counters and cutting boards land in this category. These products don't dissipate and can end up on your hands and in your food.

Washing our hands with soap and water, cleaning counters with a clean cloth (you can use water with a touch of vinegar), and focusing on keeping our immune system healthy is a great routine for health.

Christmas is approaching

which means emotions from stress to joy to sadness and everything in between can manifest. Being grateful and finding something good about every person we come in contact with can do wonders for our health. Share a smile wherever you go and enjoy some days in sweats and slippers.

Keep your eyes out for the January issue. I'll be hosting a Reset Challenge in January to kick those sugar cravings acquired over the holidays plus more education and tips. If there is a topic you'd like to know about, email me at [succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com](mailto:succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com)

Have a blessed, joy filled Christmas season filled with laughter and love. To your health and pumpkin pie!

[succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com](mailto:succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com)

## Self-Care Corner: Brighter for the Holidays to Give or Get!



By KRISY WHITELEY ANDERSON

The gift of brighter, cleaner, glowing holiday skin with the new Ultimate Skin Refiner!

After only three treatments of the Ultimate Skin Refiner H2O Facial Treatment, pores are minimized and deeply cleansed, skin tone and texture are refined while potent antioxidants and anti-aging benefits are infused!

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kles, plump and hydrate, brighten and soften, minimize pores, promote healthy blood circulation and minimize breakouts.

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sions for \$594.

Purchase a gift certificate for these or any other services or schedule an appointment. Call Krisy at Beverly Hills Day Spa at (850) 654-8544. Visit [beverlyhillsdayspa.com](http://beverlyhillsdayspa.com).

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## Wellness

## Go Lightly, Enjoy Greatly



BY LISA LEATH TURPIN, BS.  
FITNESS & WELLNESS COACH

By now, most of us have heard a lot about the destruction overindulging can do to our bodies, both visibly and silently. So, why do we keep allowing ourselves to do it? Does the magnitude of fun make it worth it? On that note, does it have to be all or nothing? The answer is NO. I think it's more fun to feel light and comfortable, instead of lethargic, achy and bloated.

Remember these few suggestions during Christmas and New Years that, I think, will help you enjoy the holidays much more:

**Portion size is so important!** Your body can only process only so much at a time. If it can't process the amount of calories you consume, it will have no choice but to store them. Sugars process fast, while

fats and protein process slowly. You will absorb and burn sugars almost immediately, which will raise your blood sugar, and leave your fat cells vulnerable to suck up the excess calories—predominantly from fats. (Note: Fats are the highest calories at 9 cal/gm vs 4 cal/gm for sugars and proteins). Therefore, if you eat sugary, fatty foods, you're most likely going to max out how much you can burn at that one meal—and the rest will be stored! If this cycle happens over and over again for several meals, you will gain weight like lightning. Plus, your liver and other organs have to work harder also. It's really hard on your body. How much muscle you have, your energy level, your choice and quantity of foods, are the pieces of the puzzle we have control over. Genetics plays a part, but we don't have control over that.

There are ways to boost your ability to become a more efficient calorie burning machine. If processing your food intake is the issue, but you still want to partake in all the goodies, you still can. Just keep your portions smaller, spread them out throughout the day. Give your body enough time to “catch up” with the amounts you put in. The higher the calories, the smaller the portion should be.

Fats should be very small portions/amounts, but simple sugars should be monitored the most because of the ability to spike blood sugar and insulin which paralyzes the barrier of the fat cells leaving them unprotected. Plus, there's other detrimental issues for your brain, heart, immune system and energy system.

Exercise requires your body to use energy to move and perform. Anything you can do to get yourself moving will help use those extra calories your body can't burn on its own. During the holidays, while party hopping, commit to walking either before or after. Walking after a meal is incredibly beneficial to keeping blood sugar balanced and utilizing some calories before they get stored. If you choose to exercise before you eat, a workout that's intense, like interval training, will be most beneficial because research shows we continue to burn calories for many hours after we stop exercising, conducive to the level of intensity.

**Keep your muscle tone.** Use it or lose it! Having and keeping muscle will raise your resting metabolism which will burn more calories at rest. Even daily activities such as shopping, cooking, playing with the kids

are beneficial anytime—just move. The more muscle you have the more calories you burn.

Go ahead and enjoy everything that is presented to you this holiday season. Be smart; don't overthink it; focus on your family, friends and all that Christmas is about. It's a beautiful time of year and we are all blessed to live in one of the most beautiful areas in the world.

*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 more than 30 years' experience as a group exercise leader and an independent personal trainer (20 years in the Destin area), she is diverse and extensively trained in classical and modern Pilates, lifestyle management, personal training, group exercise and post-rehabilitation.*



### A Harvest of Hope All Month at the Destin Library

The Destin Library continues its yearly tradition of collecting donations for the Harvest House food pantry December 1st through January 7th. Bring your non-perishable food items or personal hygiene products to the library to fill our donation box, then write your name on an ornament to decorate our special Harvest of Hope Christmas tree. The Harvest House accepts any non-expired, non-perishable food item like canned meats, canned soups and vegetables, peanut butter and jelly, cereal, pasta, powdered milk, and drink mixes. They also welcome donations of toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrushes, soap, and other hygiene items. For more information: 850-837-8572 or [library@cityofdestin.com](mailto:library@cityofdestin.com).



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# Journey Bravely: How Are You Doing, Really?



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG,  
JOURNEY BRAVELY

How's your stress level? How are your relationships? How are your physical and mental health? Are your current coping strategies moving you closer or further away from a sense of peace and direction? Often, we skip these questions and move straight to goals/resolutions at the beginning of each year. What if this year, you slow down and take a soul inventory now? What would it look like to reflect over the last several months of caring for yourself and ask "what's working" and "what's not working?"

One of the beautiful things about being human is your ability to change and adapt based on new information. Once you reflect and understand what's working and what changes are needed to be in a healthier, more balanced space, you can begin taking steps to better care for yourself. Change initially causes discomfort, but you are capable of change even when it's hard.

So, how are you supposed to figure out what needs to change and what you're supposed to do about it?

## 5 Self-Assessment Questions for Mapping Better Self-Care:

**How are you tending to your energy level?** Maybe you're exhausted, lacking sleep, noticing in your face/body that you're pushing too hard. Take 10 minutes to reflect and write your observations about your energy level. Note activities you're doing that create positive energy you'd like to continue or increase. Note energy draining activities that you'd like to let go. Try sorting these activities into categories of "must keep" (be careful that you aren't putting everything into this category) and "could let go." Write one shift you could make to improve tending to your energy level.

**How are you tending to your spirit?** Maybe you've prioritized other important things over taking care of yourself spiritually. Maybe past emotional baggage makes it hard to prioritize spiritual practices. Engaging spiritually often results in increased connection, hope, and joy in life. Take 10 minutes to reflect and write about past spiritual activities that have helped you. Reflect on how you felt when you engaged those activities. Reflect on why you stopped doing those activities. Write one shift you could make to improve tending to your spirit.

**How are you tending to your physical body?** If you will listen, your body will provide you with valuable information about your well-being. Maybe you've been putting off going to the doctor. Maybe you're avoiding moving your body. Maybe your relationship with food has

become unbalanced in some way. Maybe you're using substances to self-medicate and your body is paying the price. Take 10 minutes to reflect and write about physical practices that create balance for you. Reflect on the barriers you have to engaging in these practices regularly. Write one shift you'd like to make to tend better to your physical body.

**How are you tending to your emotions?** Your mood and management of emotions can make or break your daily life experience. Allowing space for emotion and having effective strategies to cope and calm when emotions get large can completely revolutionize your emotional landscape. Take 10 minutes to reflect on which feelings create the most discomfort for you. Note unhealthy coping skills you currently use to suppress or avoid feelings (drinking, shopping, eating, raging, avoiding). Note healthy ways you've coped and calmed in the past that have worked for you without causing extra problems in your life (walk, talk to friend, art, deep breathing, podcast, ocean). Write one coping shift you'd like to make to tend better to your emotions.

**How are you tending to your relationships?** Maybe



you find yourself being defensive, not listening well, or pushing away those you love. Take 10 minutes to reflect on how you are experiencing and showing up in your most important relationships. Note relationships that feel unhealthy and why. Note relationships that feel pos-

itive/supportive and why. Note your behavior patterns that are causing problems in your relationships. Write one shift you'd like to make to tend better to your relationships.

Making changes to prioritize caring for yourself can feel challenging. Try remembering that you must take care of yourself consistently to show up well in your family, work and community life. All aspects of your life suffer when you are at the bottom of your life "to do" list. As you reflect and plan your shifts, remember you can find us at [journeybravely.com](http://journeybravely.com) for support along your journey.



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## Fort Walton Beach Medical Center Has a New CEO

HCA Healthcare has appointed Zach McCluskey as its new Chief Executive Officer of Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, effective December 6. In his new role, Zach will oversee the growing 267-bed hospital which has served the Okaloosa, Walton and Santa Rosa counties for more than 45 years.

Zach assumes leadership from Mitch Mongell, a 25-year veteran of HCA Healthcare,

after Mitch announced his retirement earlier in the year. A native of Richmond, Va., Zach has more than 15 years of healthcare leadership experience within the HCA Healthcare system, following a career in critical care nursing. He most recently served as Chief Executive Officer of HCA Healthcare's Johnston-Willis Hospital, a 292-bed facility and campus of CJW Medical Center in Richmond.





Environment



BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

This holiday season is unlike any other, to cap off a year unlike any other. Throughout this

# Helpful *Holiday* Energy Saving Tips

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



season, and as we move into a new (and hopefully better) year, we wish you moments of peace amid the difficulties, connections with family and friends, even if they can't be in person, the warmth of memories from holi-

days past and wonderful glimpses of the joy that still lives under the surface.

We would also like to share a few holiday energy savings tips to help brighten your nights and lower your energy bills.

**Switch to LED lights when decorating.** LED lights use 80 to 90% less energy than incandescent lights. If you aren't sure if you have incandescent lighting or not, you can tell if you have incandescent lights when it is warm or hot to the touch. We recommend using a digital thermometer to test to avoid injury. It is estimated that four strands of LED lights will save \$30 this month compared to four strands of the traditional lighting. It is also a good idea to use timers to reduce the amount of time holiday lighting stays on, plus one less thing worry about.

**When cooking the holiday feast, don't forget about the smaller appliances.** Crockpots and microwaves use less energy and give off less heat than ovens and stoves. Also consider co-cooking. If one dish needs to bake at 400° and the other at 350°, consider sharing the baking time and set your oven at 375° and bake both dishes.

**Electronics are always a popular gift. You can get those electronics and save energy.** When choosing electronics: TV's, computers, gam-

ing consoles, etc., always look for Energy Star qualified electronics. These qualified electronics use less energy and save energy. Rechargeable batteries and LED lighting might not be on top of anyone's list, but they make great stocking stuffers and save energy. Also, consider using smart power strips and turn off the electronics completely. Many electronics, even when powered off, still use energy. I call them energy vampires.

**If you plan to leave this holiday season, think about automating your home.** Put exterior and interior lighting on timers to avoid being on all day and night. Add a thermostat which you can control via Wi-Fi and your smart phone, in the event we get a cold streak or heat wave during the time you are away, you can control your home's temperature. Also, remember to unplug those energy vampire electronics which use energy even when turned off.

**When shopping for groceries, buying local foods and goods** not only supports our community, but saves energy by reducing transportation-related energy costs.

It is always a good idea to give your home an energy checkup

by a professional. They can pinpoint your biggest energy loss areas and provide suggestions and solutions to become more energy efficient.

We wish you and your loved ones a happy, safe and energy-efficient holiday season!

Chris Balzer is founder and president of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions, a smile-provider company. ECES provides smiles to its customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com). Save energy and "Beat the Heat."

*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 and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com) and Beat the Heat.*

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BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Thanksgiving week brought encouraging news (according to the Wall Street Journal) that supply chain logjams might be loosening. The administration, in trying to give some relief to gas prices, was set to make releases from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). Bill Gates' TerraPower (according to CNBC) is planning to build a nuclear plant in a Wyoming coal town. According to the Nuclear Energy Institute, nuclear energy's avoidance of CO2 emissions in 2019 was the equivalent of removing 100 million cars from the road. We are beginning to think that nuclear is re-emerging as a source of clean alternative energy for electricity and that investors should take note.

The first of perhaps two infrastructure bills has been passed and signed by the president. Inflation is running at its highest reported levels in over 30 years. The Federal Reserve is prepared to start scaling back its asset purchases which might slow the growth of the money supply. We think that means that mortgage rates might begin a (very slow) ascent. That could impact home builders and suppliers as well.

The labor shortage continues. We understand this has been fueled by early retirements, women leaving the workforce to care for children, the elderly and those that have chosen to step out of the workforce temporarily. The labor participation rate is at a record low of 61.6% of the eligible working population. It was at about 67% at the beginning of the century. The implication for investors is that companies will be accelerating their demand for innovations from artificial intelligence and automation. While productivity in the American workplace remains high it will be challenged as the cost of labor is going up at an increasing rate. Low revenue industries, such as hospitality and restaurants, will

need to look at ways to maintain their productivity. We took note recently while dining at a fast-food establishment, that the ordering and paying process was all automated. It was fast and efficient, and our food was delivered swiftly by a smiling kitchen worker. The sign of more things like this to come. We think investors should consider those tech firms that are leaders in AI and automation.

Might AI and automation have an impact on carbon sequestration efforts? According to The Economist, while deforestation has generally decreased across the globe (with exceptions in a few key areas of the world that have been relied upon as carbon sinks such as the Brazilian rain forest), the rate of reforestation has decreased as well. The use of nuclear energy to power AI might help companies and countries satisfy their energy demands – and at the same time address climate issues as nuclear burns cleaner than carbon. Investors might consider utility stocks that have nuclear as part of their energy production mix.

The President has re-nominated current Fed chairman Jerome Powell as well as nominated Lael Brainard as Vice Chair. The belief in the media is that these two leaders have a track record favoring an expanding money supply despite the current Fed concerns about inflation. We think investors should therefore look at what that might mean: 1) Higher yields in the bond market (typically that is favorable for banks) 2) greater focus on materials, commodities, and 3) all kinds of real estate.

An additional word about banks. They are increasingly looking for ways to participate in the cryptocurrency markets. They are doing this by either creating whole departments to accommodate their clients for investing and/or utilizing crypto as a means for transactions.

Electric vehicles (EV's) continue to grow investor interest. More companies, in addition to established manufacturers, are getting into the business and initiating public offerings. Our concern is that many of these have low to no revenues or low to no production and their valuations

are quite high. We think back to the dot.com era in the early 2000s and are left wondering if this time things are once again not different. We encourage our clients to recognize the opportunity that EVs bring but to exercise caution with those companies that have recently gone public. We also appreciate that although EVs are growing, there will still be considerable demand for gasoline in the world. We also wonder, can green energy grow fast enough to keep up with increasing demand? Nonetheless, we think investors should also be on the lookout for stocks of firms that are engaged in the extraction and production of those materials needed for batteries to run those EVs. Investors should also watch the legislation that might increase the tax credit for EVs.

While all of this is going on, today's retirees and many investors report they want and/or need income/yield. Add to that, the real rate of return is declining as inflation is increasing. Traditionally, CDs, bonds, and perhaps pensions or annuities would have provided for that. Increasingly, people are turning to dividend paying stocks. Take note, that does however increase the risk to the investor. We suggest that clients looking at stocks for dividends examine three areas: 1) Dividend aristocrat stocks. What makes a stock a dividend aristocrat? Our understanding is that it must be in the S&P 500 and have increased its dividend for the past 25 years. 2) Real Estate Income Trusts. There are a variety of REITs, and many invest in apartment communities, warehouses, data (cloud) centers, cell towers, shopping malls and housing developments. Investors can scrutinize for income as well as growth potential. 3) Enhanced dividend and income strategies through mutual funds, ETFs or Separately Managed Accounts (SMAs) that invest in dividend stocks, but also earn premium income from options. Each has its own risks and potential benefits, and investors should scrutinize those carefully.

Finally, and always, at The First Wealth Management, we encourage our clients to 1) concentrate to accumulate and then

diversify to preserve 2) to monitor and make changes to their strategies over time vs overnight 3) consider the impacts that taxes can have on their savings and investments.

*The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of the First, A National Banking Association, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32541, with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8124.*

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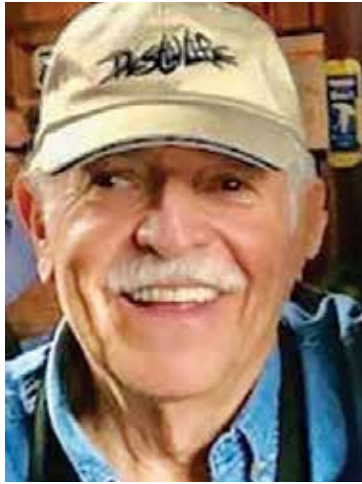


Business

# A2Z Specialty Advertising Inc. Continues to Remember and Celebrate the Life of Local Legend, Gabby Bruce

BY DONNA MONTALVO, A2Z

This is the 7th award we are giving out. Each month we include a story from someone who has worked alongside Gabby, so you can see the kind of impact he had and continues to have in our community! "Gabby was one of our radio broadcasting brothers and a familiar voice of several commercials in our area for many years," says Diamond Dan, News Talk 1260/WFTW, Morning Show Host. "He was the epitome of a community-involved citizen, from the MC of the Mullet Festival for decades to a welcoming smile and handshake at various Chambers of Commerce events. He supported local charities; Gabby was



1944-2020

everywhere and never met a stranger." The awards we are giving

out are based on nominations through our commercials on Cumulus Radio. The organizations can be big or small who make an impact by their generosity and personifies Gabby's giving back to our community.

We are honored to announce the next winner of the "Gabby Bruce You Make a Difference" award. The award goes to The Boathouse Oyster Bar in Destin. The award was presented by Debbie Bruce, President of A2Z, on November 10th to the owner, Missy and Amber, the Marketing Coordinator. The Boathouse gives back to the community in many ways. Some of the events they hold are Locals on the Harbor benefiting the Emerald Coast Foundation and Children in Crisis. In November they had their



Slacker event with a Food Drive and Angel Tree which benefits Road Dogg Rescue and Food for Thought.

The Boathouse Oyster Bar is

one of Destin's best kept secrets for over 30 years. Let's not keep it a secret anymore!

Congratulations to the Boathouse Oyster Bar!!



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## Okaloosa County Selected for New Commercial Bakery and \$4.5M Distribution Center

Purple Square Management, a Tampa-based management company that operates over 205 franchise locations in nine states – including 95 Dunkin'/Baskin Robbins stores throughout Florida and Alabama – has selected Okaloosa County for a new, state-of-the-art commercial bakery and distribution facility. The 24,500 sq. ft. facility will be developed on a four-acre parcel located within the Okaloosa Industrial Air Park – land that was previously certified as "shovel ready" through Gulf Power's Florida First Sites program.



Sixty new jobs are expected to be created as the company scales up to full production. In recognition of the economic benefits associated with the project, the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners previously approved an Economic

Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption award for the company and discounted the purchase price for the Adora Teal Way parcel.

"With 30 stores and two currently under construction in the Florida panhandle, we know the area quite well. The decision to build our manufacturing facility in Okaloosa County represents a new chapter for us, and we look forward to employing local

Continued on next page

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# Unexpected Gifts

BY COURTNEY LINDBERG,  
ARBORBROOK FINANCIAL  
WELLNESS

We are in a very unique time right now, perhaps “such a time.”

In our own business personal lives and, as we know well, some of yours too, we continue to face great challenges. To make the challenges even greater, we find ourselves distracted by what seems an ever-changing legal and regulatory landscape. How can we climb the mountain when the very ground beneath our feet seems to shake, to the point where it is enough just to keep standing (let alone respond to the great changes in the labor market, supply chains, mandates, etc.)?

What now lies before us, whether we have sought it or



not, is change. Much change. And I am reminded that when we have faced times of transition ourselves, or with our clients, the first place we consistently find ourselves being led is to Vision, to Purpose.

If we know our Heavenly Father, and who we are in Him, and certainly I hope that for all of us, then we know our iden-

tities in Him never change. We are always going to be His children, but our purposes may change from time to time. To put it another way, the fact that we love someone might never change. It is a constant. But the way in which we express that love will change from

season to season or from day to day, for that matter.

Transition is nothing new though. The seasons continue to change and we have now entered ours, of generosity and celebration, of a long-awaited change. For thousands of years the Hebrews awaited their rescuer, many expecting this hero to come on horseback, leading

a vast army, to overcome their oppressors by force. What came instead was a vulnerable, naked child.

How could something so small and so weak deliver us, save us? And for those wise men who knew what was happening, who witnessed the birth of the Savior, how many years did they have to wait - after his birth - to see him do what he was born for?

What do we do in the face of change when we don't know what exactly that change will be? What do we do as we wait for it?

Our encouragement to you is to seek the One who designed

you, created you for such purposes and for such a time as this. If change is upon you, it is not a surprise to Him and He has the strategies and vision for you to overcome. Let us remember that our value, our peace and our joy are rooted in our identities, created by our Heavenly Father, way more than they are about our purposes.

God cares more about the dreamer, than He does the dream.

We serve for His honor and we will serve you if we can. Merry Christmas from our families to yours. Godspeed to the New Year upon us and may God bless us all.

## BAKERY

*continued from previous page*

people who share our commitment to delivering high quality products in the safest and most cost-efficient manner possible,”

stated Vik Patel, president and CEO, Purple Square Management.

Purple Square Management has initiated the 12-week facility design process and anticipates that facility construction will

begin in Spring 2022. Those interested in employment opportunities should monitor the Careers section of the Purple Square Management website at [www.purplesquaremgmt.com/careers](http://www.purplesquaremgmt.com/careers).

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Business

# Meet Local Pro: Matthew Vanderford

Meet Local Pro Matthew Vanderford, a Public Adjuster, whose roots began in Valparaiso. Both of Matthew's grandparents retired from military careers locally and his parents met at Lincoln Park in Valparaiso. But when his father joined the military, Matthew's family finally landed in New Jersey.

As a teenager (age 15), Mathew would travel back to our area to work in the summer for the Valparaiso parks department. He says he mowed Highway 85 and all city-maintained grounds with a push mower which, he believes, made him immune to the heat and left a desire to return to the beauty of

the Emerald Coast.

While waiting for a medical clearance to join the Marines, Matthew met his now wife, Candice, while working at a car wash in Pennsylvania, but after some time, the waiver wasn't granted, and a different life path emerged.

Fast forward 16 years, being tired of the cold and snow and wanting to move back to his early beginnings, the family picked up and moved to Destin from the Greater Philadelphia area. Matthew says he's had many "careers" that brought him to where he is now (sales, marketing, labor, construction, restoration and insurance), but for the past 10 years, he's been



involved in the restoration and insurance industry, starting off from cleaning and repairing properties affected by broken pipes, flooding, fires, tornados and hurricanes and everything in between. Over the years he

became aware of how people were being treated unfairly by their insurance companies and wanted to help. So, he became a licensed insurance continuing education instructor and now holds licenses as a Public Insurance Adjuster in multiple states including California, the Carolinas, Florida, Mississippi and Pennsylvania helping to negotiate and settle insurance claims.

"My philosophy," says Matthew, "is finding balance and creating harmony. It's kind of odd, but in an industry like insurance, when tempers can flare and emotions can run high, anger, fighting and name calling never work." And he should know by experience; he's worked on cases in the field after several natural disasters such as

Superstorm Sandy, Hurricanes Irene, Hermine, Matthew, Harvey, Irma, Nate and Michael, and the Thomas and Carr Fires in California. He continues to publicly speak to groups on hurricane and disaster planning.

Outside of an attorney, Public Insurance Adjusters are the only property loss professionals who, on behalf of policyholders, can effectively negotiate and settle 1st and 3rd party insurance claims from floods, fires, hurricanes and all other perils covered in an insurance policy agreement; even losses to business income can be evaluated and settled, too.

For questions, you can contact Matthew at 267-237-6241 or via email at [claims@insuranceclaims911.com](mailto:claims@insuranceclaims911.com).



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### AROUND TOWN

*continued from page 12*

#### Bloody Mary Festival Raises \$30,000 for Habitat for Humanity-Walton County

The annual Bloody Mary Festival, held in October and powered by Step One Automotive Group, raised \$30,000 for Habitat for Humanity - Walton County, a record-breaking amount for the festival. The sold-out event welcomed more than 1,000 guests and featured unlimited tastes of the Emerald Coast's most creative and inventive Bloody Marys made with Distillery 98's local Dune Laker vodka served by 17 of the finest

restaurants, bars, and catering companies in Northwest Florida.

Guests voted for the coveted People's Choice Awards for the "Best Bloody Mary in South Walton."

- 1st Place People's Choice Award – The Beach House**
- 2nd Place People's Choice Award – Cannery Lane Cantina**
- 3rd Place People's Choice Award – Camille's at Crystal Beach**

A panel of select food critics and local celebrities also judged each Bloody Mary:

- Judge's Choice Award – Signature Catering of 30A**

All awards were custom made by local artist, Maxine Orange.

#### 100 Men Who Care Presents First Award to C.A.L.M. House of Niceville

100 Men Who Care, a nationwide network of people interested in supporting non-profit groups in their local communities through giving circles, has launched on the Emerald Coast.

100 Men Who Care – Emerald Coast's mission is to help fund charities and non-profit organizations operating in and impacting our Okaloosa and Walton County communities

*Continued on page 46*

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

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# Loved One



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Hi. This is your late loved one speaking. I don't have long, so listen up because I have a lot I want to tell you.

First off, I get it.

Ever since I left this world you have missed me, and I know you're bracing for the holidays without me. No matter what anyone says, this year's festivities are going to be really tough.

In fact, let's be honest, this festive season will probably suck pondwater. But then, Thanksgiving and Christmas are tough holidays for a lot of people. You're not alone.

See, the misconception about the holidays is that they are one big party. That's what every song on the radio claims. Each television commercial you see shows happy families clad in gaudy Old Navy sweaters, carving up poultry, smiling their perfect Hollywood teeth at the camera. But that's not exactly reality.

In reality, fifty-eight percent of Americans admit to feeling severely depressed and anxious

during November and December. In reality many folks will cry throughout the "most wonderful time of the year."

Well, guess what? Nobody is crying up here in heaven. This place is unreal. There is, literally, too much beauty to take in. Way too much.

For starters—get this—time doesn't even exist anymore. Which I'm still getting used to.

Right now, for all I know, the calendar year down on Earth could be 1728, 4045, 1991, or 12 BC. It really wouldn't matter up here. This is a realm where there is no ticking clock, no schedule. Up here there is only this present moment. This. Here. Now. That's all there has ever been. And there is real comfort in this.

I know this all seems hard to grasp, but if you were here you'd get it.

Also, for the first time I'm pain free. I feel like a teenager again in my body. You probably don't realize how long I've lived with pain because I never talked about it, I kept my problems to myself because I was your loved one, and you needed me to be brave.

But pain is a devious thing. It creeps up on even the strongest person, little by little, bit by bit. Until pretty soon, pain becomes a central feature of life.

Sometimes my pain would get so bad it was all I thought about. No, I'm not saying that my life was miserable—far from it. I loved being on earth. It's

just that simply waking up each morning was getting exhausting.

But, you know what? Not anymore. In this new place, I am wholly and thoroughly happy.

But enough about me. I don't have room to describe all the terrific things I'm experiencing, and you don't need to hear them. Right now, you're grieving, and what you need is a hug.

Which is why I'm writing to you. This is my hug to you. Because you've lost sight of me. And in fact, you've lost sight of several important things lately.

Death has a way of blinding us. It reorganizes the way you think, it changes you. You will never be the same after you lose someone. It messes with your inner physiology. It reorganizes you're neurons.

But then, there's one teensy little thing you're forgetting:

I'm still around.

Yes, you read that correctly, I'm right here with you. No, you can't see me. No, you can't reach out and hold me. But did you know that one of the things I'm allowed to do as a heavenly being is hang out with you?

It's true. I'm never far away. I'm in the room with you now, along with a big cloud of ancestors, saints, and witnesses. I'm shooting the breeze alongside you, watching you live your life, watching you raise your kids, watching your private moments of sorrow.

Here, in this new realm, I am in the perfect position to help you learn things. Which is



what I vow to spend the rest of your earthly life doing, teaching you little lessons, lending you a hand when you least expect it, and desperately trying to make you smile. Actually, I've already been doing this stuff, you just don't realize it.

What, you don't believe me?

Well, wake up, pal. You know that tingle you get in your spine whenever you think of me? That's me.

You know how, just yesterday, you had a beautiful memory when you were driving and it made you cry so hard that it actually felt good and you began to laugh through tears? Also me.

You know how sometimes when you're all alone, preoccu-

pled with something else, suddenly you get this faint feeling that someone is standing in the room with you? Hello? Me.

You're not alone on this earth. You never were. You never will be. So during this holiday season, when cheerful families are getting together and making merry, and taking shots of eggnog, I'm going to be clinging to your shoulder, helping you muddle through somehow.

I'll be making your spinal column tingle a lot, and I'll be sending plenty of signs. Each of these signs—every single one—is code for "I love you." So start paying attention to these hints.

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Musing

# Whatever Happened To Holy?



BY MYRNA CONRAD

Webster's definition of Holy is "exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness; divine. God's Word uses Holy exclusively in relation to God or something pertaining to God. Even Webster's definition as "one perfect in goodness and righteousness" can only be descriptive of God.

Holy has been used as an intensifying word in relation to expletives since the 1880s (such as holy smoke, holy mackerel, holy cow, holy #\*!@^). Today, Holy has become an adverb attached to any number of other words, many of which are some form of defecation, used in exclamations of surprise or dismay. It is beyond my understanding why people would choose to attach "Holy" to a word that is anything but holy. One explanation

I found on [www.english.stackexchange.com](http://www.english.stackexchange.com) is, "As expressions lose their shock value, they need to be intensified to maintain their value as curses. Therefore, the adjective 'Holy' is added to intensify the 'wrongness' of the curse." Really? That makes no sense to me.

The increased use of this word adjacent to a curse word or even another word that is not associated with being Holy is disturbing. I hear so many people using this verbiage today, and I'm not sure they even realize what they are saying. Rather, it has become a part of their vocabulary, because they hear others saying it.

This is the perfect month to think about Holy and what it means to us. On the 25th of this month, many will celebrate Christmas. I know that not everyone celebrates Christmas as the birth of Christ. However, for those who do, Christmas represents one of the Holiest events since the creation of the world. Jesus, being completely righteous, all powerful, creator, all knowing, existing outside the framework of time, chose to enter time on this small planet earth in order to live and die as a completely righteous man, so that our relationship with a Holy God could be restored. This is so amazing and only something



a Holy God could do.

The word "Holy" should be reserved for God and God alone. When spoken, it should cause us to stop and think of all that God was willing to do for us. It should fill our heart with wonder and awe!

Words are a gift to be used as our means of communication. Words have the ability to build up or kill and destroy, to communicate hope and encouragement or evil and anger. Words can express love or hatred. They can be woven into stories, expressed in songs. They can make people

laugh or cry. Words have power! So, we're wise to think before we speak and consider the words we use, what they mean and how they will be received; they bring life or death!

Take some time this holiday season to think about the word "Holy" and what it means to you. We hear so much today about people misusing words. Consider the word "Holy" and, think about reserving its use for God and God alone.

**Be Aware:**

Be aware of the words you

use and the correct meaning of those words.

Realize the power of words and use them in a way that brings life not destruction.

Be aware of the current lingo and don't let it become a part of your vocabulary just because everyone else is using it.

**Be Intentional:**

Fill your mind with words that encourage and lift you or others up as a person.

Talk to your children about the words they are hearing and words they are using. Encourage them to understand the meaning of words and the consequences of using wrong words that can negatively affect others.

Use this season of Christmas to think about what the word "Holy" really means.

*"And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" ~ Isaiah 6:3 ESV*

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# Gifts



BY RICK MOORE

Buying presents for others is easier when you know what they like to collect. When someone asks me what they can buy for my mom, I let them know she collects teapots, which makes selecting a gift for her simple. My dad used to collect rare and expensive coins. My father-in-law collected fishing lures. My younger sister owns a large selection of rare baseball cards.

My brother-in-law frequents yard sales and flea markets looking for decorative cigar boxes. My wife has assembled a number of antique plates through the years. My children used to collect Beanie Babies. I tried collecting stamps for awhile, but my collection seems to have been lost during one of our many moves.

Some people have enough wealth to collect rare automobiles, famous pieces of art, and precious jewels. Yet, there are collectables more precious than diamonds and more costly than gold. The great news is absolutely anyone can collect these gifts I am referring to. What is in this collection of gifts? Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. People who begin collecting these gift items discover they enjoy it so much they always want more.

You might be thinking only God can give a person such priceless gifts. But what about gifts you can give? If you are uncertain what you can give to others this Christmas, here is a list of suggestions for your consideration:

- To your enemy:**  
give forgiveness
- To an opponent:**  
give tolerance
- To a friend:**  
give your heart
- To a customer :**  
give service
- To all men:**  
give charity
- To every child:**  
give a good example
- To yourself:**  
give respect

As a child I traded baseball cards with other kids in my neighborhood. Trading was fun.

Sometimes I would have two identical cards while my neighbor needed one of mine. What did we do? They gave me a card I didn't have and I gave them a card they didn't have. It is funny how we forget to trade when we get older. I give you a smile, you give me a smile. I let you out in traffic, you let me out in traffic. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yet, we forget that letting someone out in traffic may make them happier than any gift card they will ever receive.

If you are still planning your Christmas gift list, here is some advice from John Wesley from many years ago:

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

There is one last collection to consider. Take time to collect your thoughts. Reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Yes, 2020 and 2021 have been tough years. It was also a very tough year in which a little baby was born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph had to travel a hundred miles the old fashion way just to pay taxes. Then she gave birth to her first child in a stinky barn. It is true that wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But those gifts can not compare to the greatest gift of all, which was, and will always be, the "Gift" that was wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Merry Christmas!

*Rick Moore is Pastor of Communications at Destiny Worship Center.*



## SAINT NICK

continued from page 2

Just then, the object of the Father's love for eon upon eon stepped up to heaven's heights. His hair was white like wool and His face shining like the sun, His garments shone like burnished brass and His voice like the sound of many waters—the Son, the Apple of the Father's eye, said, "I will pay the price, I will go to Bethlehem to be the baby born to die. Then the children will see the ultimate gift and they will want no more."

Slowly, the Son dropped the robe of His power and shed the scepter of His authority. He laid down His glory and left heaven silent.

Whispers and whirring of angel armies set all heaven abuzz with the cry, "What could this mean?"

The Father rose from His throne. "Gabriel, it's time. Blow



the trumpet. Angels form into choirs. Guardians of light burn a pathway to the City of David—a baby is born this night to fulfill my promises."

Launching into action, all heaven jumped at the Father's commands. Then sleigh bells and reindeer hoofs split the skies.

"Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas!" shouted Saint Nick with glee. "The light of the world has come. The Son of the Most-

High God is born in a manger. The Gift of all gifts blesses all children everywhere. May the Son heal blind eyes and cleanse the dark stain with His own blood. Children everywhere rejoice, the Lamb of God who

takes away the sins of the world has come!"

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Mom finished her story and said, "Sleep now little children. Dream as I dream. I dream of the Son given to you, the Son who can drive dark stains from hearts. Sleep now. Dream of what you can give on Christmas morning, for it is in the giving that genuine joy will flood your heart. Giving what matters most is the price of Christmas. God gave us the life of His Son with all His love. Now we must give to one another with all our love."



*Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring here in Destin. He has released his Christmas devotional, "Christmas Jesus," with three new fables added for fun. 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 DavidHolland54@gmail.com.*




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 Music

## Destin Local, Emily Bass

# Making Music from Nashville to Los Angeles and Beyond

By WILL ESTELL

If you're a Destinite and a fan of live music and the creative types that bring it to life, then you've probably heard of Destin local Emily Bass. If you haven't, here's your introduction.

My fiancé and I, along with friends, first saw Emily live at AJ's in Destin this past summer. Being music lovers who routinely see three or more live performances most weeks, I'd say our group is pretty hard to impress—even when it comes to all the talented performers in the area. That said, everyone in our group was astounded by Emily's performance and the way she had such control over her vocals, while also playing guitar and interacting with the large crowd of tourists she was entertaining.

If it's not enough to be able to hold the attention of a group of seasoned music lovers—some in our group well-versed local band members themselves—while entertaining an outdoor crowd of tourists and locals, this talented 18-year-old was doing it all while performing original material she had written and composed. Did I mention again, she's only 18?

Let me give a little personal

glimpse into how good I think this young lady's songwriting and presentation skills are by saying that after a few decades in media, having interviewed everyone from Sara Evans, Amy Grant, Kenny Chesney and Darius Rucker to FGL, Alan Jackson and the iconic Jimmy Buffett, I don't take just any music related story assignment. But when I've heard someone perform like Emily Bass does, and I believe that person has a good shot at making it, I am just as honored to do those feature stories as I am the big magazine cover stories with the uber well-known artists—and Emily is most definitely one of those people.

Appearing on both seasons 17 and 18 of *The Voice*, Emily certainly knows a thing or two about the competitive environment of the music business, and just how much tenacity, determination, and work it takes to get to that level. When you

hear her perform, you will immediately know that too.

Emily was born in Houston, Tex., and raised in the nearby rural town of Magnolia. She began performing at roughly age 10, mostly in church and for family and friends. When I asked Emily about her aspirations and when she first knew music was going to be her path,



she told me, "I just always knew this is what I wanted to do, and I never considered giving up to get where I want to be."

During her freshman year of high school, she decided to leave public school life and be homeschooled, so she could spend more time honing her musical skills, and putting in the work she knew it would take in order to pursue her career as a singer/songwriter in today's competitive musical environment.

She also decided to audition for *The Voice*. She didn't make the cut, but she says she gained valuable knowledge as to why she didn't, and just what it would take to rise above the rest and shine the brightest at that level.

When I asked Emily what it was like to perform in front of such well known judges as the show's Blake Shelton, Gwen Stefani, Kelly Clarkson, Katy Perry, Nick Jonas and John Legend, she told me, "It was nerve wrecking and stressful in some ways, but also easier than I thought in others. I think that level of input and feedback I gained from the judges that first year, really pushed me to get even better, and work on the aspects of my performance that I could best control to my advantage."

After her first attempt, and what she had learned from that tryout, Emily was determined to go back the following year, where she did much better in front of the judges. Though she didn't make the final cut, she did get to perform live in front of all of *The Voice*'s millions of television viewers two years in a row, and says the time she spent with the other artists and the judges has been very valuable in continuing her musical quest.

In addition to her performances – most recently opening for Cole Swindell this November – Emily writes and co-writes many of her own songs, and had

just returned from recording in Los Angeles the day before we sat down at The Wave in Destin for this interview. Additionally, she's made recent trips to Nashville where she is recording to work for future releases with other artists, as well as working on plans for more upcoming performances in the new year, both locally and throughout the country. "I've been writing a lot and really love the creative aspect of songwriting, both for myself and with other writers," Emily told me.

"Dear Emily," her breakup song about giving advice to her ex boyfriend's new love interest, is definitely an intriguing and well-written lyrical piece that gets even better when her passion for the self-written tune shows in her presentation. When you hear her lyrical composition, it really takes you by surprise that she's only 18 years old, yet has all this life experience to pull and write from. It's very akin to what people thought about Taylor Swift's first few albums of work. The same can be said for her single, "Sometimes," featuring her friend Michael Williams.

Emily says she is currently working on a new EP coming in the next six months, with one of her new singles "I'll Just Not" dropping on all platforms on January 21st. You can check out more of Emily's music on most all streaming platforms, as well as keep track of her upcoming shows and releases on her personal site: [EmilyBassMusic.com](http://EmilyBassMusic.com)

*Will Estell is a writer and magazine editor, with hundreds of published articles in various publications, as well as numerous additional online articles in an array of genres. He's founded 11 magazine titles from concept to fruition, both for other publishing companies and his own partnerships, while continuing to actively partake in freelance media projects for an array of local, regional, and national publications, such as this one. A father of three, Will splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his fiancée, ABC news anchor, Laura Hussey. When he isn't writing, creating or consulting in the media realm, he enjoys attending live musical events, hanging out with friends and the beach.*

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# A New Year with the 2022 30A Songwriters Festival!

For the past 12 years, the 30A Songwriters Festival has attracted thousands of die-hard live music fans from around the country to our area to hear original songwriters spanning many genres of music perform their songs. Highway 30A features 30 venues presenting over 230 songwriters and 300+ solo, band and in-the-round performances throughout the weekend of January 14 – 17. The 30A Songwriters Festival production team transforms amphitheaters, town halls, restaurants, theaters, bars and covered patios into unique music venues ranging in capacity from 75 to 750 seats indoors and 6,000 outdoors.

The Festival is celebrating its 13th year with performances on the main stage at presenting partner Grand Boulevard's Town Center in Miramar Beach with headline performances by renowned artists Brothers of a Feather (Feat. Chris & Rich Robinson Of The Black Crow-



es), Mavis Staples, Emmylou Harris, Dawes and Jenny Lewis.

Amy Grant and Ricki Lee Jones will be performing for the first time. Returning to perform two shows each throughout the weekend are songwriting legends Rodney Crowell, Patty Griffin, Steve Earle, John Paul White (The Civil Wars), Gary Louris (Jayhawks), Shawn Mullins and Dar Williams!

Additional artists include

Marc Broussard, Carlene Carter, Robyn Hitchcock, Sierra Hull, James McMurtry, Liz Longley, Dan Navarro, Sarah Lee Guthrie, Jeffrey Steele, Peter Bradley Adams, Kyshona Armstrong, Jeff Black, Mary Gauthier, Alex Guthrie, Toby Lightman, Charlie Mars, Michael McDermott, Leigh Nash, Abe Partridge, Alice Peacock, Darden Smith, J

Brown Band), Amanda Anne Platt and the Honeycutters, RB Morris, AJ Ghent, Sarah Lee Guthrie, Leslie Mendelson, Jeffrey Steele, Annie Mack, Kalen & Aslyn, Peter Bradley Adams, Kyshona Armstrong, Jeff Black, Mary Gauthier, Gretchen Peters, Brittney Spencer, Alex Guthrie, Toby Lightman, Charlie Mars, Michael McDermott, Leigh Nash, Abe Partridge, Alice Peacock, Darden Smith, J Barn-

rell, Jesse Terry, The Young Fables, Todd Snider, Madison Cunningham, Kim Richey, James McMurtry, Tommy Stinson (The Replacements), Adia Victoria, Will Hoge, Hayes Carl, Chris Stamey & Peter Holsapple (The dB's), Chuck Prophet, Lera Lynn, Paul Thorn, Allison Moorer, Tim Easton, Bob Schneider, John Driskell Hopkins (Zac

aby Bright, Meaghan Farrell, Jesse Terry, The Young Fables, Crys Matthews, Eliot Bronson, Heather Mae, Amy Speace, Pat McGee, Alexa Rose, Levi Lowrey, Wyatt Durrette (Yesterday's Wine), Krickets, Davin McCoy, The Bittersweets, Robbie Hecht, Seth Walker, Randall Bramblett, Web Wilder, Peter Karp, Max Gomez, Max McCann and many more!

Russell Carter, President of Russell Carter Artist Management and Festival Co-Producer points out that "this year — 2022 — we celebrate a New Morning. In honor of this theme, select musicians will showcase Bob Dylan's classic album, New Morning, performing all of the songs in the original album sequence."

For a complete artist lineup, visit [30aSongwritersFestival.com](http://30aSongwritersFestival.com). Tickets [www.freshtix.com/events/2022-30asongwritersfestival](http://www.freshtix.com/events/2022-30asongwritersfestival).

## Festival of the Arts Has a Record-Breaking Weekend

Fine art welcomed a record-breaking 6,200 plus art lovers to the 26th Annual Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) Festival of the Arts in October. \$10,000 in cash prizes awarded to 29 artists, roughly 6,200 plus attendees, and more made this festival one for the books.

The two-day signature art celebration featured exhibits of more than 110 premier artists from throughout the U.S. showcasing a diverse palette of artistic style. "This year's success is a testament to how important the arts are for our community and a direct reflection of the 100+ talented participating artists, musicians, food vendors, and most importantly, our incredible festival producer Deb Nissley," stated MKAF CEO Demetrius Fuller.

Guest judges awarded 27 rib-



bons and cash prizes including "Best in Show," three Awards of Excellence, five Awards of Merit, and 10 Judges' Recognition Awards.

Best in Show artist Curtis Whitwam expresses his love for waterways and wildlife, "I love to share the feeling of deep connection to nature through watercolor paintings and underwater videos that I create to inspire everyone to get outside and appre-

ciate the beauty and abundance of wild Florida," says Curtis.

The Best in Show Adult winner of the Collaborative Art Exhibit was awarded to Ian Fagan.

The Best in Show Student winner was Veronika Jacobson from Fort Walton Beach High School. The Collaborative Art Exhibit features adults and students

competing for the Special McIlroy Awards in honor of the late Patricia McIlroy, Destin's First Lady, and an MKAF advocate and patron.

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•10:45-11:15am: Pre Primary A (2-3 years)\*NEW

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**Saturdays**

9:30-10:00am: Pre Primary A (2-3 years)

10:10-10:40am: Pre Primary B (3-4 years)

10:50-11:40am: Pre Primary C (4-5 years) \*CLASS FULL\*

11:50-12:30pm: Primary Ballet (5-8 years)

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## Around Town

# Ask Destinities: Holiday Traditions



BY PATRICIA LEE

When I was growing up, my Daddy hunted Quail. We always had wild Quail as Christmas Eve dinner either fried with beer batter or baked in a wine sauce. Both were incredibly yummy

and worthy of any 5-star restaurant! It was a very fitting dinner for an Alabama family which we very much enjoyed. Daddy's health does not allow him to go hunting anymore, but I will forever cherish those memories. I asked our Destinities Facebook group what were some of their holiday traditions and here are some of their replies:

1. "Christmas Eve, we read a story from a Christmas book I purchased (a different story every year). Everyone reads a page and passes the book around. We also have to wear a Santa or Elf hat while reading. My kids, grandkids and whoever is with us has enjoyed this family tradi-

tion. Then we each tell what we did to help someone or family. I ask my family, kids and grandsons to do a good deed each year instead of a present to me. Even my children who don't live here FaceTime us and tell us what they did to help someone."

2. "Bellingrath Gardens every year."

3. "Boat Parade on the Harbor."

4. "We've done a low country boil for Christmas dinner for the last 12 years and oysters on the grill for Thanksgiving."

5. "I love the NWFL Ballet's rendition of The Nutcracker."

6. "We have an artificial Palm Tree we decorate with

beach theme ornaments we collect from our travels around Florida."

7. "Shrimp Boil for Christmas meal."

8. "We love to go walk our dog around Destin Commons because it's closed." (Christmas Day).

9. "Peppery Oyster stew on Christmas Eve."

10. "Always hang my 14x20 crab picture crafted with sticks and wearing his Santa hat."

Please remember that the holidays are not necessarily a fun, happy time for everybody. Keep that in mind and reach out to those who may be having a tough time. Be the reason

that someone smiled and forgot their troubles even if just for a few minutes. Your gesture could make the difference in someone deciding to stay in this world or leave it. Always be kind...always.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season no matter how you celebrate and a happy New Year! If you are a local and have not joined our private Destinities Facebook group (5400+ members), I invite you to do so at [www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities) and/or sign up for our monthly email newsletter at [www.Destinities.com](http://www.Destinities.com).

Patricia Lee, Creator: [www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities)

Owner: [www.Destinities.com](http://www.Destinities.com)

## AROUND TOWN

continued from page 40

and is part of the 100 Who Care Alliance with more than 700 chapters worldwide. Coining the phrase, "The Power of 100,"



each chapter meets quarterly gathering its 100-plus members at a rotating local venue. Each member contributes \$100 quarterly to a giving pool. Local charities and non-profits then have an opportunity to describe their mission, needs and plans before the membership. The evening concludes with members voting to choose one local charity to receive the proceeds. The result is a one-time donation of up to \$10,000 meant to have an immediate and meaningful impact for the chosen organization.

Scott Rude, management consultant and university instructor; and Andrew McDowell, Wealth Manager with Arbor Wealth Management, founded the local chapter and are recruiting local like-minded community members. In October, the chapter allocated its first award, \$2600 to C.A.L.M. House of Niceville. 100 Men Who Care is welcoming new members wishing to benefit our community. Email Scott at [100mwcec@gmail.com](mailto:100mwcec@gmail.com) or through the group's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/100MWCEC/>.

The next quarterly chapter meeting will be held at the Palms of Destin Resort on January 18, 2022 at 5:30 pm.

For more information, email [100mwcec@gmail.com](mailto:100mwcec@gmail.com) or visit the website at [www.100mwcec.com](http://www.100mwcec.com).

### "Eggs on the Beach" Cooking Competition Raises \$39,500 for Local Non-Profit Organizations



Presented by Bay Breeze Patio, the 7th Annual Eggs On the Beach cooking competition raised \$39,500 for local non-profit organizations, including its two non-profit partners—Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Food for Thought. Held at Seascape Resort in October, the family-friendly event welcomed more than 600 tasters and volunteers who sampled an array of delicacies cooked on Big Green Eggs by 22 cook teams. Food for Thought and the Fisher House of the Emerald Coast, received a \$16,250 donation.

"Once again, our cook teams delivered deliciously creative bites, which ranged from shrimp and grits and tuna dip to pork

belly, chicken and sausage bites to bananas foster dessert," said Bay Breeze Patio co-owner and event founder Susan Kiley. "It was such a fun day and it was humbling to see the community come together once again to support great local causes."

In addition, \$7,000 was donated to four local non-profits whose cook teams impressed tasters and earned the most votes. Healing Paws for Warriors served the winning bite and earned \$3,000. The Eggstras cooked for South Walton Academy and earned second place and a \$2,000 donation. Sinfonia Gulf Coast and Boys and Girls Club of the Emerald Coast tied for third place. Chef Pam Wellborn of 30A Destin Ice House cooked for Sinfonia and earned a \$1,000 donation. Going toe to toe with Sinfonia, the Boys and Girls Club of the Emerald Coast presented their scorched chicken wings earning \$1,000.

Overall winners included: 1st Place: Healing Paws for Warriors, 2nd Place: Saltwater Restaurants and 3rd Place BE-CI. Judge's Choice winners include 1st Place: Brock Landscaping Cooking for Fisher House of the Emerald Coast, 2nd Place: Blue Angels Foundation and 3rd Place: Saltwater Restaurants.

Eggs on the Beach has donated more than \$205,500 to local non-profits since its inception in 2013. For more information, visit [EggsOnTheBeach.com](http://EggsOnTheBeach.com). For more information about the Big Green Egg, visit [BayBreezePatio.com](http://BayBreezePatio.com).

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